

Podcast: What If World

Episode: 072: [What if jellybeans worked at a grocery store \(plus talking cats\)?](#)

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Transcription by Keffy

Lyrics: What if kittens played the glockenspiel? And what if unicorns were real?
What if you could fly or travel back in time? We welcome you to What If
World. What If World. This is What If World.

Mr. Eric: Hey there folks, and welcome back to What If World, the show where
your questions and ideas inspire off-the-cuff stories. I'm Mr. Eric, your
host, and today we've got a question from Cleonfi.

Cleonfi: Hi, my name is Cleonfi. I like owls and JF Kat. What if jellybeans work at
the store?

Cleonfi's Parent: She's saying, Hi, my name is Cleonfi, I like owls and JF Kat. And she asks,
what if jellybeans worked at a grocery store? Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Oh-ho-ho. I've been waiting for JF Kat to come back. Especially because I
had a question from William that'll really easily add on to this story.

William: Hello, my name is William and my favorite thing is cats. What if cats talk?

JF Kat: It's about time.

Mr. Eric: Oh, hi JF Kat. But now we've got to get to our story. What if jellybeans
worked at a grocery store (plus talking cats)?

[Rising harp scale]

Mr. Eric: Mr. Bean ran a small grocery store, along with his daughter, Julie. Now,
Mr. Bean spoke fluent candy but he needed a little help from Julie Bean
to talk to the customers. They were a small grocery store, a pop and
daughter operation, Mr. Bean liked to say in his native tongue.

Mr. Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Mr. Eric: That's what it sounded like.

Julie Bean: Dad?

Mr. Eric: Asked Julie Bean.

Julie Bean: Why do the customers sometimes say weird things?

Mr. Bean: [Speaks candy language]

Julie Bean: Jokes? Why would they have to joke? They're just buying things from me.

Mr. Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Julie Bean: Sometimes I think I'd like them better if they just didn't joke.

Mr. Eric: It was early morning, or at least they thought it was. It was hard to tell ever since that phoenix taco stole the sun. But they went about stocking and cleaning up the grocery store, waiting for their first customer to arrive. Now, a grocery store run by jelly beans has to cater to all kind of folk, especially candyfolk. So while they had a big fresh fruit and produce section, on the other side of the store, there was a fresh chocolate and gummy section. In the middle, you had your canned goods, your soups, your syrups, dried pasta and instant cake meal. It was the most colorful grocery store you'd ever seen.

[Grocery door bell rings]

It was the sound of someone stepping into the grocery store, or more like, flying in.

Owl: Hoot hoot hoothoot hooooot?

Julie Bean: Um, I'm sorry, I don't speak owl.

Mr. Eric: Said Julie Bean.

Julie Bean: I speak Candy and Whatish and a little bit of Buggalese, but no Owl.

Owl: Whoall right, then. Who can tell me where your meat is?

Julie Bean: That's right. Owls are carnivores, hmm.

Owl: Whoo guessed it!

Julie Bean: I guessed it.

Owl: Please excuse my accent, that was a rhetorical who.

Julie Bean: Well, the meat's all the way at the back and we also have complete protein alternatives for the vegetarian owl.

Owl: Do you have soy mice-o?

Mr: Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Owl: Who said that?

Julie Bean: You have to look down a little further. That's my poppa, Mr. Bean. Jellybeans get awfully small in their old age.

Owl: Ooh, who's so little.

Julie Bean: He says we don't have soy mice just yet, but we have soy crickets.

Owl: Very well.

Mr. Eric: And the old owl started flying towards the back of the grocery store.

[Bell on door rings]

Another customer. It was a distinct black and white cat, but where had she seen its likeness before? It had a kind of a paunchy kitty belly that hung almost to the floor and it wore a smart little bow tie, or was that just the pattern of its fur?

Julie Bean: You're J-J-J-JF Kat!

Mr. Eric: Said Julie Bean.

JF Kat: Well, I just spell it with one J.

Julie Bean: [Giggles] You're our president. What are you doing grocery shopping?

JF Kat: Meow let me tell you, it's important to do your own chores sometime, even if you'd rather just nap in the sun for 19 hours a day. Meow, do you carry soy miso?

Mr: Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Julie Bean: Sorry, end of the week.

JF Kat: Very well, I'll just take that old owl.

Owl: Who, me?

JF Kat: Oh, I'm just kidding, I know you're a customer.

Owl: Hoohoo, oh, you.

[Bell rings]

Mr. Eric: The next customer was a very tall cat, like a lion, a fiery red lion who stood up on his rear legs, and he had hands of black iron that you could feel the heat coming off them from across the grocery store.

Julie Bean: Oh dear.

JF Kat: Meow, don't you worry. He wouldn't dare to cause trouble around the Purrsident.

Mr. Eric: And JF Kat stalked off confidently, leaving Julie Bean alone with the new customer. She looked up at the giant lion who walked around just like a human. She felt pretty nervous talking to someone who could squish her in one step.

Jesús Ironhands: Hello, I am Jesús Ironhands, the fire lion.

Julie Bean: I'm Julie Bean, the jellybean.

Jesús Ironhands: I have conquered countless lands in the name of Queen Cleonfi.

Julie Bean: I help my dad run the grocery store.

Jesús Ironhands: Then you must answer this question truthfully. Do you yet carry—

Julie Bean: Soy miso? No. But we do have rice mice. Four out of five carnivores can't tell the difference.

Jesús Ironhands: That ratio is too low for my queen. I must stalk your aisles in search of a substitute.

Julie Bean: I must... get to the register.

Owl: Whooo-ee, this was a fun trip for an old owl. Now, where is your father? I would like to say goodbye to whom.

Julie Bean: To him?

Owl: Oh, that's just a little owl whumor.

Julie Bean: Well, I've heard a rumor that you're a late bloomer to-whomer.

Owl: Hooohoo, you've got me, little girl. Well, tell your father goodbye.

Mr. Eric: And the old owl paid for his food and flew out of the grocery store.

Julie Bean: She rolled her eyes at the old owl's jokes and looked up to see Jesús Ironhands.

Jesús Ironhands: I see it is customary to exchange jokes with the register slave.

Julie Bean: I'm not a slave. Mr. Bean gives me an allowance.

Jesús Ironhands: Very well. Here is my joke. You are a jellybean, so I will eat you, hahaha.

Julie Bean: P-p-p-please don't.

Mr. Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Mr. Eric: Mr. Bean stomped over to the giant, who was about a thousand times his size.

Mr. Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Jesús Ironhands: [Laughs] I am sorry if I have offended you. I still do not understand how the humor works.

Mr. Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Julie Bean: Oh, he says that I didn't know you were joking because your joke wasn't very friendly.

Jesús Ironhands: But I watched the owl closely. When he joked, he used the word, whumor, which is not a word. So I said that I was going to eat you, even though I did not intend to eat you. [Laughs]

Julie Bean: Well, it wasn't funny to me or anyone here. Are you going to buy something?

Jesús Ironhands: Oh, of course. I will continue to hunt through the aisles for what I seek.

Julie Bean: Whatever.

Mr. Eric: Just then, she noticed JF Kat had stacked up a tower of sardines that went almost up to the ceiling. He had climbed to the top of the highest shelf with one last sardine can in hand.

JF Kat: One more can and it should be enough to get me through the week.

Julie Bean: Jojo Fluffy Kat, what do you intend to do with that ten foot tall tower of sardines?

JF Kat: I intend to buy and eat it.

Julie Bean: How are you going to get it out of here?

JF Kat: Well, er, uh, it's quite simple. I will demonstrate.

Mr. Eric: And JF Kat ever so carefully placed that last can of sardines atop the tower.

Julie Bean: Okay, and now what?

Mr. Eric: But JF Kat didn't seem to hear her. He was just judging the tower as it swayed to and fro. He would push off with his paws just a little bit, and then lean back and then he would sway with the tower and turn his head this way and that.

Julie Bean: Don't you dare jump on top of that tower!

JF Kat: Geroni-meee!

Mr. Eric: And the cat leapt off the grocery shelf onto the tower of cans, which toppled right towards the register, when—

Secret Service Dogs: Woof woof woof woof.

Mr. Eric: Two dozen secret service dogs rushed into the grocery store and caught four sardine cans apiece in their mouths and—

Secret Service Dogs: Woof woof woof woof.

Mr. Eric: Stacked them all up by the register.

Julie Bean: Oh, JF Kat.

JF Kat: You see, if a cat wants something picked up, they just have to knock it over.

Julie Bean: Okay, you got me.

Mr. Eric: And JF Kat paid for his groceries and left. Jesús Ironhands had been watching this particular trick and now he thought he understood humor.

Jesús Ironhands: Oh, piteously small market girl, come back to the butcher case.

Julie Bean: Oh, what now?

Mr. Eric: Groaned Julie Bean, and went to find the lion.

Julie Bean: [Gasps] What have you done?

Jesús Ironhands: I have simply decided what I want to buy. All of this meat I have thrown on the floor.

Julie Bean: Well, you'd better buy it, you just ruined all of it.

Jesús Ironhands: Ha ha ha! You only think I have ruined it. Watch!

Mr. Eric: And Jesús reached out with his iron hands and burst a jet of flame over all of the meat. It crisped up in a minute, but all the smoke it made... set off the sprinklers throughout the entire grocery store!

Jesús Ironhands: Ha ha ha! Laugh at my feline antics!

Mr. Eric: But Julie Bean wasn't laughing.

Julie Bean: [Cries.]

Mr. Eric: Jesús Ironhands looked at the little girl, and then looked all over the grocery store. It wasn't just his meat that was getting rained on.

Jesús Ironhands: By Queen Cleonfi's ten foot tail... what have I done?

Mr. Eric: With quick, tiny little jets of flame shot from his iron fingers, he fused shut each of the sprinklers so that the water stopped. Then he spread out his hands in a shimmering wave, and a balmy heat spread through the whole store, turning all the water into just a whole lot of humidity.

Julie Bean: What kind of joke was that supposed to be?

Jesús Ironhands: Just... wait... just give me a chance!

Mr. Eric: Lastly, he ran around the grocery store. It was so humid the very air made his fur wet, but he opened every door and window wide and watched the steamy air slowly spill out of the store. Exhausted, he padded over to little Julie Bean.

Jesús Ironhands: It seems I owe you my deepest apologies.

Mr. Eric: And the great lion bowed low to the little jellybean.

Jesús Ironhands: I just do not understand your humor.

Mr. Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Julie Bean: My father says that humor should be like a friendly trick, and you can play it on yourself, or on anyone that won't really get hurt.

Mr. Eric: She had little syrupy tears clouding up her gummy eyes and she couldn't quite make out the giant lion as he spoke.

Jesús Ironhands: I see. So the owl just played a trick with words, but he did not threaten to eat you. And the little cat king—

Julie Bean: President.

Jesús Ironhands: He made you think he was going to destroy your store, but he did not.

Julie Bean: Not like you.

Jesús Ironhands: You are right. Until I get the hang of it, I should stick to playing tricks on myself, I think?

Julie Bean: I think that would be a good idea. You've still melted our whole sprinkler system.

Jesús Ironhands: I can give you 50 scales from a golden dragon in recompense.

Julie Bean: We accept cash, credit, or check...

Jesús Ironhands: Ah, but I was making a joke.

Mr. Eric: And Julie blinked away her tears to see a credit card held in the iron hands of a big, wet, cat.

Julie Bean: [Giggles]

Jesús Ironhands: Ah, you see. I am getting the hang of this humor. Ha ha ha.

Julie Bean: [Giggles]

Mr. Eric: He was so wet from the sprinklers, she realized the big, puffed out giant lion, when his mane and fur was matted down, was just a long, lanky cat wearing big iron gloves.

Julie Bean: [Giggles]

Jesús Ironhands: Yes, you thought I only had dragon scales to pay, but I had other ways to pay.

Julie Bean: That was kind of funny, but...

Jesús Ironhands: I don't understand, what?

Mr. Eric: Then he looked down at his own fur.

Jesús Ironhands: Wait, this whole time, I thought I was mighty, but I am mini!

Julie Bean: [Giggles]

Jesús Ironhands: It's not funny.

Mr. Bean: [Speaks Candy language]

Julie Bean: It's a little funny.

Jesús Ironhands: I must fix this! I cannot be seen this way.

Mr. Eric: And his black iron hands lit up red again, coursing around him in a flash of fire and [POOF!] his dried up fur puffed out until he looked like a big, red, fluffy ball reaching nearly to the ceiling. Julie and Mr. Bean looked at the mighty fluffball, and—

Mr. & Julie Bean: [Laugh]

Mr. Eric: Jesús Ironhands raised his chin nobly.

Jesús Ironhands: Hmph. I believe I must leave while I still retain my dignity.

Mr. Eric: And the giant, noble fluffball rolled himself to the register to pay for his meat and melted sprinklers.

Julie Bean: If you would like to come back sometime and not destroy our store, I would like to see you.

Mr. Eric: No one had ever said those words to Jesús before, "I would like to see you." For that matter, he'd never made anyone laugh before, either. It was a really good feeling and so, Jesús looked back at little Julie Bean with a wink and his iron hands blasted with fire again, sending him gently floating into the sky, like a furry red balloon.

Mr. & Julie Bean: [Laugh]

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale]

All right, Cleonfi and William, I hope you enjoyed your story.

Folks at home, before we go, I want to let you know that we have a PO Box. A lot of you have asked about mailing in your letters and your artwork, and now you can. It's PO Box 4905, Panorama City, California, 91402. We'll put that in the link to the episode, too.

I'd like to thank all my new patrons and we'll be shouting out some more next week. And as always, Karen Marshall O'Keeffe, my editor and producer, Jason O'Keefe for our artwork, Craig Martinson for our theme song. And all you funny kids out there for your friendly tricks, because a mean joke isn't really a joke at all.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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