

**Podcast: What If World**

**Episode: 076: [What if houses could fly and butterflies could walk and talk and cheetahs could jump the sky and never fall down?](#)**

**File Length: 11:40**

**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. It's question time.

Lila:                     Hi Mr. Eric, my name is Lila, I'm four years old and my favorite animal is cheetahs. And my what if question is what if houses could fly and what if butterflies could walk and talk, thank you.

Mr. Eric:                Lila, that is an excellent question! That gives me so many characters to play around with in this story. We're gonna add one more question from another child who likes cheetahs.

Milo:                    My name is Milo and like ninjas and my what if question is what if cheetahs jump the sky and never fall?

Milo's Parent:         Bye, thank you.

Mr. Eric:                All right, Milo, what a good idea! Now I get to throw in a ninja, too. It's been a while. What if houses could fly and butterflies could walk and talk, and cheetahs could jump the sky and never fall?

[Rising harp scale]

Mr. Eric:                Once upon a time, there was a young lady cheetah named Chentle and all she could ever think about was running.

Chentle:                [Growling and huffing like a runner.]

Mr. Eric:                Her coalition was cheetahs, that's what you call a group of them, like a pride of lions, and her coalition was the fastest on What If World.

Chentle's Mom:        You see, Doctor[?], we are born fast which gives us many advantages, but there are still many skills a cheetah needs.

Chentle: Uh, please. I think I know what a cheetah needs. A cheetah needs to be the best.

Mr. Eric: She seemed to be trying to outrun the entire coalition.

Chentle's Mom: Chentle, do not run too far!

Chentle: [Laughs] You just don't want me to be faster than the rest of you, but I'm going to be the best.

Mr. Eric: Chentle was young and her legs were long and she had a full belly from the last hunt, and she felt invincible. As she lengthened her stride, the rest of the cheetahs fell behind.

Chentle: Oh, it's good to be the best.

Mr. Eric: And as she outran the rest of the coalition, she got all the way out of the dry, sunny, savannah, and fell into the shadow of a mighty mountain. There seemed to be some figures dressed in black trying to scramble up its side.

Chentle: Oh, you all are so bad at climbing.

Mr. Eric: Chentle said to the ninjas.

Old Ninja: We climb as a team so that we may catch one another and grow stronger together.

Chentle: What about your best ninja?

Old Ninja: If you mean our best climber, that would be Milo Ninjilo. He's that little speck there, halfway up the mountain.

Mr. Eric: And Chentle took off after that little speck on the mountainside. The old ninja called after her.

Old Ninja: But he has much to learn about being a good ninja!

Chentle: She scrambled up, faster than any of the other ninjas until that little speck of a ninja in the distance was right in front of her.

Milo Ninjilo: Wow, you are so fast!

Mr. Eric: Said Milo Ninjilo.

Chentle: I know. I'm the fastest.

Milo Ninjilo: It is good to have someone to climb beside. I have been lonely, ever since...

Chentle: [Laughs] Climb beside? I'm here to win, Milo.

Mr. Eric: The ninja had claw-like tools on his hands that helped him climb as fast as any cheetah she'd ever seen. But Chentle's belly was still half full of food and her legs were long and her claws were sharp, and as she reached from stone to stone and scrambled up the mountainside...

Milo Ninjilo: Hey, where are you going? I thought we could be friends.

Chentle: Oh, right. You just don't want to lose the climbing race.

Milo Ninjilo: Well, you have bested me. I guess it is time to return to my clan. It's so lonely up here.

Chentle: Sorry! Can't hear you from waaaay up here!

Mr. Eric: Said Chentle. And to Milo Ninjilo, she was little more than a spotted speck dashing up the mountainside.

[Stomach grumbling noise]

Her stomach gave a grumble, but it was still a quarter full as she burst through a patch of wildflowers near the top of the mountain.

Butterflyra: Hey, watch it!

Mr. Eric: Said a little butterfly, who seemed to be walking around on the ground.

Chentle: You watch it!

Mr. Eric: Said Chentle.

Chentle: What business does a little butterfly have walking around on the top of a mountain?

Butterflyra: See, no butterfly ever flew up this high before, so I thought, Butterflyra, you're gonna be the first.

Chentle: I don't get it. If you're the best butterflyer ever, then why are you walking around on the ground?

Butterflyra: I'm just so tired.

Mr. Eric: Said Butterflyra.

Butterflyra: See, these flowers up here, they got hardly any nectar and I don't know how I'm gonna fly all the way back down.

Chentle: Back down? Never back down.

Butterflyra: I don't think I follow. I know a whole kaleidoscope of butterflies back in the city and I'm a long way from home.

Chentle: So this is the highest any other butterfly has gotten?

Butterflyra: Yeah. The rest of my kaleidoscope never even left the city before.

Chentle: Well, I bet I can fly higher.

Butterflyra: Hey, I'm walking here. I'm too tired to fly. Besides, I miss my—

Mr. Eric: [Whoosh] Now, you might think, they're at the top of the mountain, where else is there to jump? But Chentle still had a quarter-full belly of food and with a stretch and a push and a leap, she was in the sky. Her jump kept going and going until she hit the clouds and broke through them, too! [Zoom!] She was still rising into her jump through the sky when a rocketship house caught up with her.

Howie House: I have never seen a cheetah fly so high.

Mr. Eric: Said Howie House.

Chentle: Obviously. Because I'm the only one to ever do it.

Howie House: Do you know where you will land?

Chentle: Land? Why would I land? If there are houses flying in the sky, I need to fly higher.

Howie House: The only place higher than here is outer space.

Chentle: Oh, you're afraid you can't jump all the way to outer space?

Howie House: Yes, I am. The family who lives inside me are not trained astronauts. It would be very dangerous.

Chentle: Well, as long as you have them weighing you down, you'll never keep up with me.

Mr. Eric: And just as they reached the tipity top of What If World's atmosphere and Chentle reached the peak of her jump, she pushed off the house with

everything she had left. Her tired muscles pulled, her empty stomach growled, but the jump was just enough to get her orbiting earth.

Howie House: Had flown just a little bit into outer space to keep up with Chentle Cheetah.

Chentle: I win! I win!

Mr. Eric: Chentle said, or at least she tried to say it, but she couldn't breathe. And she was so cold and everything was going back to normal. It seemed Howie House had covered her with a spare space suit just in the nick of time.

Howie House: I cannot stay here in space with you. Shall I tow you back with me?

Chentle: Uh, yeah, so you can tell everyone you won the race?

Howie House: As you wish.

Mr. Eric: Said Howie, floating back down toward What If World.

Chentle: I can't believe it! I jumped so high that I'll never fall.

Mr. Eric: She looked down at the world just then. The mighty mountain she had climbed, the savannah she had run across, the sea she had never seen.

[Stomach grumbles]

Chentle: I'm so hungry. This space suit's gotta have some Tang in it, or something.

Mr. Eric: Nope.

Chentle: Well, the cheetahs will come get me.

Mr. Eric: But the savannah was so far away.

Chentle: Well, if Milo Ninjilo climbs to the top of the mountain then he'll see me up here.

Mr. Eric: But the mountain was just as small a speck as Milo had been.

Chentle: Butterflyra, she'll fly up here and... Oh, but she'd been headed home. [Stomach grumbles] Oh, I'm so hungry and thirsty and a little lonely, but I'm the best. Howie?

Mr. Eric: But there was no sign of the house.

Chentle: I don't know anything about outer space.

Mr. Eric: Hungry and thirsty and tired and alone, she drifted off to sleep.

Chentle's Mom: Wake up, Chentle. Wake up, my little cheetah.

Chentle: Oh, I had the weirdest dream.

Chentle's Mom: That you ran faster than a coalition of cheetahs?

Chentle: Yeah.

Milo Ninjilo: And climbed faster than a clan of ninjas?

Chentle: Yeah.

Butterflyra: And flew higher than any kaleidoscope of butterflies?

Chentle: Yeah.

Howie House: And then got yourself stranded in outer space?

Chentle: Yeah.

Mr. Eric: She rubbed at her eyes and saw her mother and Milo Ninjilo and Butterflyra and Howie House all around her as she lay in her space suit back in the savannah.

Chentle's Mom: You are lucky that you met so many helpful strangers along the way.

Chentle: No, I'm just lucky they all liked me for being the best.

All: Sheesh.

Chentle's Mom: Over the next three months, you're going to be the best of staying right by my side.

Chentle: Aw, Mom!

Butterflyra: You're lucky she doesn't break out the leash, Chentle.

Chentle's Mom: Oh, a leash is a great idea.

Chentle: I'll—I'll be good.

Chentle's Mom: Yes, I bet you'll be the best at being good.

Chentle: I left you all behind, how did you save me?

Milo Ninjilo: Maybe we shall teach you if you spend some time with our clan.

Butterflyra: Yeah, you can fly with our kaleidoscope any time.

Howie House: I, however, will not be taking you back to outer space.

Chentle: That's okay, I still think I have a lot to learn on this world.

Mr. Eric: And Chentle drifted back off to sleep.

Chentle's Mom: So, Butterflyra, about those leashes?

Butterflyra: Oh yeah, I got red, green, cheetah print.

Chentle's Mom: How about a red and green cheetah print.

Milo Ninjilo: I know we just met, but that is a terrible idea.

Howie House: Do you have leashes for baby houses?

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale]

Mr. Eric: All right Lila and Milo, I hope you enjoyed your story. I'd like to thank Karen Marshall O'Keeffe, my editor and producer, Jason O'Keefe for our artwork, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all those kids out there not trying to be better than all the other kids—just making sure you're the best you you can be. That's enough work to keep you busy for life.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]