

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 093 What if blankets could talk and run and play and the whole town was a transformer?

File Length: 19:04

Transcription by Keffy

[Rising harp scales followed by the What If World theme song.]

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.

[Gentle bell music.]

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 I'm very excited to bring you another Mr. Eric, Eric Molinsky of my favorite podcast, *Imaginary Worlds*.

Hey, Eric!

Eric M.: Hey, how are you?

Mr. Eric: I'm so great. And folks at home, *Imaginary Worlds*, it's a podcast. I would say it's mostly for older kids to adults, right?

Eric M.: Uh, yeah, definitely. Yes.

Mr. Eric: It talks about all things fantasy and sci-fi and Eric's going to give us a great description of that after the show.

And you've done some children's theater and stuff, right?

Eric M.: I did, yeah, in Boston, when I was growing up. It was called the Freelance Players and everything was an original production written by the people that ran it. I was in it from the age of 12 to the age of 14.

Mr. Eric: Well, that's where I got my start as Petey the Pirate in a loosely adapted Shel Silverstein poem turned play. So we both got our children's theater origins in Boston and we both have our own little imaginary worlds.

So, today we have two questions and the first one is from Madeleine.

Madeleine: My name is Madeleine, and I love to jump and run and play, and my what if question is, what if blankets could talk and run and play? Bye!

Mr. Eric: Oh, that's great, Madeleine. You know, I had a blanket when I was a kid. I don't know if you had any toys or things like that that were nostalgic for you?

Eric M.: Me? Oh yeah. I mean, my blanket was called Blankie. I loved my Blankie.

Mr. Eric: Mine was called Bluey and then I lost it and picked out an orange one and still called it Bluey.

Eric M.: That's funny.

Mr. Eric: And then we have one more question from George.

George: Hello, my name is George. I'm six years old. My question is what if the whole town was a transformer and my favorite thing is cowboy. Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Ooh. A whole town is a transformer. Well that's going to be a tricky one to do. Do you think we can handle it?

Eric M.: Yeah!

Mr. Eric: All right, all right. So let's find out what if blankets could talk and run and play and the whole town was a transformer.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Zach was headed to school today and he wanted to take his favorite blanket, Fluffy. However, he was at that age where he didn't really like the other children to see. Fluffy was old, he'd had it since he was a kid and it was falling apart at the seams, but they still liked to have imaginary conversations all the time.

Zack: Hey, Fluffy, you want to play some catch?

Fluffy: Playing Catch by The Cure.

Zack: Fluffy!

Fluffy: Just kidding. That would be iFluffy. You know, like an iPhone.

Zack: [Laughs]

Fluffy: Got you, gopher breath!

Zack: Oh, come on, man. Hey, listen, I got to put you in my backpack so the other kids don't make jokes. Is that okay?

Fluffy: Yeah, of course. I'll still be there.

Zack: All right.

Mr. Eric: And off they went to school. Now their normal teacher, Abacus, was having a little bit of vocal trouble today.

Abacus: Excuse me [neighing between his words]. I've been turned into a horse by mistake by myself so your substitute today will be Pendulum E. Molinsky and old colleague of mine. Pendulum, would you like to teach the children about magic, today.

Pendulum.: Yeah, of course. It'd be my pleasure. It's entirely possible to make imaginary friends real in an imaginary world like ours. But sadly, we can only bring them to life for a short while.

Mr. Eric: Pendulum pulled out a little vial of purplish liquid and put it on the counter.

Pendulum.: All right, so, I'm going to pour just a few drops of my magical liquid, here, over Pogo, my childhood pogo stick.

Pogo: Ooh ho ho hoo hooo! Oh, hi kids! Everyone want to jump and play with me?

Mr. Eric: The classroom broke into chaos. This giant pogo stick Pogonomo, started bouncing all over the place.

Zack: Oh man, that's so cool.

Children: I want to jump on pogo stick.  
Can I take a turn?

Pendulum.: No, kids. See, this is why imaginary friends aren't allowed in school because you notice, he's destroying the entire classroom.

Pogo: Ooh hooohooohooo! I'm not destroying, I'm improving! [Crashing glass]. Ooh hoo I feel like my magic's starting to wear off, ohhh.

Mr. Eric: And the pogo stick fell over and when it tipped over and hit the teacher's desk, that purple potion knocked to the ground and spilled everywhere.

Pendulum.: Oh my God, the potion's everywhere. Everybody, quickly clean up this potion because we don't want anything else to come to life.

Zack: I'll clean it up right away. If only I had something to clean it with.

Mr. Eric: And Fluffy whispered to his friend.

Fluffy: Zack, why don't you take me out?

Zack: Oh, I don't... oooh.

Fluffy: Yeaaaah.

Mr. Eric: And Zack took out his blanket and mopped up all that purple goo with it.

Zack: Oh man, Fluffy, you're... Fluffy?

Mr. Eric: Huh. It hadn't seemed to work just yet. Oh, and it was a long day of school left. But, as they finally finished up and walked out of the school to head home...

Fluffy: Oh, my gosh, I'm feeling different right now.

Zack: Whoa. Fluffy! You can move. You're aginary instead of imaginary!

Fluffy: Yeah, I don't even know what that means, but I think so. Hold on, can I actually unzip this backpack myself.

Zack: Whoa.

Mr. Eric: And the blanket was floating in midair.

Fluffy: Oh my gosh! I can fly like a magic carpet.

Zack: That is so cool. Oh, man. Where should I take you today?

Fluffy: No, the question is where can I take you today?

Mr. Eric: And just like that, Fluffy wrapped up Zack and started bouncing all the way out of town.

Zack: Whoa, what? I've never seen that big town. It looks like half machine, half cowboy village. What's going on there?

Fluffy: I don't know, let's go check it out!

Mr. Eric: And as Fluffy kept Zack wrapped up and bounced all the way to the strange transformer town, one long thread unwrapped from the blanket and slowly they landed right in front of the transformer town.

Cowboy George: Hey, you gotta help me! Oh dear! If'n we don't jump and run and play all over town, Transformadeleine might get bored and then she'll float back up to them there outerspaces.

Fluffy: Oh, my goodness. Zack, we gotta help these people!

Zack: Oh, you need our help? I'm Zack, this is my aginary or imaginary, I don't know. This is Fluffy!

Fluffy: Hi.

Cowboy George: Oh, I'm Cowboy George and you two best get to playin afore it's too late!

Fluffy: Sounds good to me!

Mr. Eric: And Fluffy took off like a flash. He was bouncing up a growing tower, blocks building upon themselves as it climbed higher and higher into the air.

Zack: I'll race you to the top, Fluffy!

Fluffy: Not if I don't get there first. I think I can actually... I think I can run on two legs on the back of my blanket! Or I could run on four corners like a puppy.

Zack: Ah, whoa. That's so- whoaaaa!

Fluffy: Whoa! Careful!

Mr. Eric: Suddenly, the climbing tower tipped upside down and turned into a transforming water slide!

Zack: [Laughs]

Fluffy: This is fun!

Mr. Eric: And down they went all the way to a colored floor, many different panels lighting up every time they touched them, with different tones.

Fluffy: Oh my gosh, I've seen people, is this called dancing?

Zack: Wow! You've never been able to dance before. Well, check out my moves!

Mr. Eric: And he danced on the floor, all the tiles lighting up underneath him.

Fluffy: Oh, let me try. Okay, everyone, do the Fluffy!

Zack: Whoa! Oh, you're bending in half! Oh, you're turning into a ball, and wow, now you're back. I don't know if I can do that because of my bones.

Fluffy: That's okay. I guess only Fluffy can do the Fluffy.

Mr. Eric: And then suddenly, the floor shrank down into a big door that lifted up into the air and cracked open to reveal a field of frolicking robot griffins!

Fluffy: Oh my goodness, is that? What is that?

Zack: I guess that's what we gotta play with next. Oh, but there's so many of them.

Cowboy George: Oh, there's too many griffins! You all can't frolic fast enough to play with them. We're doomed!

Fluffy: Wait, I have an idea. What if I wrap up all the griffins in my blanket, and then we could play with them all at once?

Zack: Oh, wow, that's a great idea!

Mr. Eric: And Fluffy stretched farther and farther, his fibers pulling until he looked like a big wide net more than a little blanket, and—

[Weird creaky horse noise]

I guess that's the sound a griffin makes, as he wrapped them all up for a big hug.

Fluffy: Come on, guys, let's all play at once.

Mr. Eric: And they were all hanging and frolicing, jumping around. Ooh, but griffins do have sharp claws and beaks.

Fluffy: Oof!

Mr. Eric: And a few more threads of Fluffy floated away into the air.

Zack: [Laughs] Ooh, that's... that can't be good. Are you okay, Fluffy?

Fluffy: Uh, yeah? I'm a little. I feel a little lighter than I did before, but I think so.

Mr. Eric: And on and on they played, the griffin bots kept transforming into different mythical creatures as the sun wore on.

Cowboy George: Keep playin, you two! We've gotta do it or Transformadeleine'll... Transformadeleine?

Mr. Eric: And the whole transformer town started to settle down, finally, spreading out into a wide cowboy town once more.

Fluffy: We did it, Zack! We saved the town!

Zack: Oh my God. I couldn't have done it without you, Fluffy.

Fluffy: High five!

Mr. Eric: And Cowboy George sauntered up to them holding two little badges.

Cowboy George: Well, you two saved the day. I'm gonna make you honorary Deplayties.

Fluffy: Deplayties?

Cowboy George: You get it? It's like deputies.

Fluffy: Oh, but you play.

Cowboy George: Exactly.

Zack: Yeah, that's, I get it.

Cowboy George: Okay, I mean it's not like I was thinking about that all day or got those badges engraved or nothing.

Fluffy: No, it's really cool.

Cowboy George: Oh!

Fluffy: It's like you're, you do transformer stuff with words, too.

Cowboy George: Hey! Now you are quite the diplomat, young blanket.

Fluffy: Ah, well, thank you.

Cowboy George: Okay, deplayties, come by any time.

Mr. Eric: So Fluffy the blanket with whatever few threads he had left after playing all day, wrapped up his friend Zack and off they bounced.

Fluffy: I'm so tired. Let's go back home.

Zack: Okay. That was a fun day. Hey, there's only one strip of you left, Fluffy. Are you gonna be okay?

Fluffy: Uh, I think so. Gosh, I'm a little slower now than I was earlier today.

Mr. Eric: And they bounded along, and now that one thread seemed to be slowly slipping away as they neared Zack and Zizi's house.

Fluffy: Zack, I'm not sure I'm gonna make it to the house.

Zack: You can't come home? But you're my blanket.

Fluffy: I think this is as far as I can go. I mean, all of my life, I've been on your bed, I've been in your backpack, you were kind of afraid to take me out and this was amazing. This was like a dream come true. If this could be my last day, this was perfect.

Zack: Oh, well, I'm glad you had a perfect day, Fluffy. And, you know, I'm really gonna miss you.

Fluffy: I'm gonna miss you, too, Zack.

Mr. Eric: And with one last leap, the little strip of cloth started to slip away, lowering Zack gently down in front of his house. Zack turned to see the little cloth floating on the breeze. He wasn't sure if the laugh he heard was in his imagination or was still his old friend, Fluffy.

[Fluffy's laughter echoing.]

Zack: Bye, Fluffy.

Fluffy: Whoohoo! I'm flying into the sky!

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Oh, Eric, that was so much fun.

Eric M.: That was really neat. I totally saw that in my mind, too.

Mr. Eric: I'm really glad. I know, folks at home, it might have been kind of a sad story, but we've all been there. I mean, Eric and I literally gave up our blankets, and it's a tough moment in a kid's life. But I had a lot of fun with that story.

Eric M.: Yeah, it brought me back to Blankie. And man, by the time I was done with Blankie, that was a very shredded blanket. It was a very threadbare blanket by the time I was done with Blankie as a kid.



Mr. Eric: Yeah, my orange blanket just absorbed every fiber of dirt it had come across over the years, so it eventually got retired, too. But I still have fond memories of it.

Now, Eric Molinsky is the host of *Imaginary Worlds*. I've been listening to it for over three years, ever since I started listening to podcasts, really. It's just my favorite show, so why don't you tell us about it?

Eric M.: Sure! Well, I work for public radio, or have worked for public radio for a long time, over ten years and when podcasting came out it was kind of great because if you're just a producer, if you just work behind the scenes like I did, there're not a lot of chances to be a host, to be the person in front of the mic. So I thought, well, I'd love to have my own show as a podcast, so I thought, well, what do I love? What could I do differently. And I just remembered, wait, I love science fiction, I love fantasy. I grew up on *Star Wars*.

I thought, what if NPR, what if public radio went to a comic convention, went to Comicon and suddenly became fascinated with this stuff and took it as seriously as they take everything else, because the conversations that the fans have about *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*, or *Harry Potter*, or *Doctor Who*, is really interesting.

Mr. Eric: Totally.

Eric M.: So I interview a lot of people that create this stuff. I talk with a lot of fans about why they like these things, and I always say it's a show—*Imaginary World* is a show about how we create them and why we suspend our disbelief and every episode kind of falls in one of those two categories. It's either talking to people, writers, filmmakers, video game designers, artists, or talking to fans about why certain characters really resonate with them.

The episodes are about 25 to 30 minutes, so from what I hear, they're very bingeable.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, they really are.

Eric M.: People binge on them. I live in New York City, so in fact that's perfect for me for any podcast because my commutes are always about 25 to 30 minutes on a subway, so I make it about as long as I would spend on a subway listening to an episode of a podcast.

Mr. Eric: I can't tell you how many commutes it's gotten me through. Oftentimes you're doing both. You're interviewing fans and specialists at the same time and talking about the philosophy and the world behind the world.

I know most of my listeners are young kids but I do have a lot of 9, 10, 11, 12 year olds who could probably handle some of these themes and mostly just parents, if you're like me, if you enjoy the nerdy, weird jokes that I make in this show, you are going to love *Imaginary Worlds* and just finding out about those jokes in those worlds.

Eric M.: Yeah, definitely. I mean, my niece is 13, she started listening recently, and she's like, oh, I like Uncle Eric's podcast.

Mr. Eric: Oh, right. We're both Uncle Eric.

Eric M.: Yeah.

Mr. Eric: Eric, it's just been such a pleasure having you and really, really an honor to work with someone who just took something that they were passionate about and ran with it. That's what I did with *What If World* and when I settled on a title that had "world" in it, I was like, oh, maybe that has something to do with the fact that *Imaginary World* is my favorite podcast.

Eric M.: Ah, that's nice. Thank you. I'm very flattered.

Mr. Eric: Thank you.

So, folks at home, check out *Imaginary Worlds* and Eric, thank you again. We'll see you next time!

Eric M.: Yeah, thanks a lot. That was fun.

Mr. Eric: All right. Bye, Eric!

Eric M.: Bye bye!

Mr. Eric: I'd like to thank Karen Marshall O'Keefe, my co creator, Jason O'Keefe for our artwork, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all you kids at home who've ever had to say goodbye to a beloved pet or toy. Talk to us grown-ups about it. We've all been there, and sharing your feelings is a great way to find new stories.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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