

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 99: How could a chicken fly in the sky and lift all the stuff that he sees, but there was one more and he was a mystery guy?

File Length: 00:19:25

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 we've got a unique story. Not only was this story in part inspired by accompanying artwork, but the question itself is not a what if question. Felix's mom did translate it into a what if question, but I felt the way he asked it was really kind of perfect.

Felix: So my name is Felix and I'm seven years old and I drew a picture that's how could a chicken fly in the sky and lift all the stuff that he seed but there's one more and it was a mystery guy? Bye!

Mr. Eric: Thank you so much, Felix. So Felix asked: How could a chicken fly in the sky and lift all the stuff he could see, but there was one more and he was a mystery guy. And then his artwork, which you may have seen as the episode artwork shows a chicken with a bunch of clouds flying around and there's a castle on a cloud and a house in a cloud and a person he does seem to know and then a kind of mystery person. Then we're going to add in one more question from patrons Molly and Megan. They sent this in a long time ago and I thank them for their patience.

Molly: Hi, my name is Molly and my what if is that what if unicorns could talk.

Parent: And what do you like?

Molly: And I like unicorns.

Parent: And flowers.

Molly: And flowers.

Parent: Okay, [unclear]

Megan: Hi, my name is Megan and I like rainbows and Wonder Woman and my what if is what if is what if trees could talk and trees were made out of butterflies.

Parent: Thank you, we love your show!

Mr. Eric: Okay Molly, we'll make sure we have a unicorns and flowers in this story. And Megan, do you think we can squeeze in trees made out of butterflies that can talk and also rainbows and Wonder Woman? Well, Wondering Woman... I guess you'll just have to listen up and see.

Now, let's find out how could a chicken fly in the sky and lift all the stuff he could see but there was one more and he was a mystery guy. Plus unicorns, flowers, trees made out of butterflies, rainbows and Wondering Woman. Phew!

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Now a long time ago, at least in What If World time, we told a story about Charlie Chicken. That was back in episode 43. Charlie was a little brown chicken who, by some magical mishap, ended up having big brown human ears. Fortunately, they helped him fly whenever he jumped up on his little flying cloud. Charlie's brother was a lion named Carson and his father was a big walking ear of corn named Charson. But he usually went by Farmer Cobb.

What If World was getting lots of rain after a long, hot summer. Now, generally that'd be a good thing for farmers, but the rain just kept pouring and pouring until Farmer Cobb had no choice but to go out in that nasty weather and tend to his crops.

Farmer Cobb: [Coughs] Oh boy, I think I spent too much time out in that there rain.

Mr. Eric: Said Farmer Cobb, after a long, dark, rainy day of work.

Charlie Chicken: Aw, Dad. You got yourself sick?

Mr. Eric: Said Charlie Chicken.

Farmer Cobb: Now don't you worry, boy, I'll be better in the morning.

Mr. Eric: And Farmer Cobb crashed into bed, exhausted. But in the morning, he didn't seem better.

Charlie Chicken: Uh, Dad?

Farmer Cobb: [Coughs] Yes, Charlie.

Charlie Chicken: Is it just me or are you a little gray and puffy?

Farmer Cobb: Oh, boy. Looks like Farmer Cobb caught a case of the common huitlacoche.

Charlie Chicken: Papa Cobb caught a case of the common huitlacoche?

Farmer Cobb: Correct.

Charlie Chicken: What's that?

Farmer Cobb: Oh it's a fungus of sorts. A delicacy among some. 'Course, not among corn people. It's more of an irritation. [Coughs]

Mr. Eric: But Charlie didn't feel good about those gray lumps on his corn cob papa, and he fluttered out to fetch his big brother, Carson.

Charlie Chicken: Carson, come quick! Papa Cobb caught a case of the common huitlacoche!

Carson: Well, he gets the huitlacoche every year. Just let him rest.

Mr. Eric: Grumbled Carson Lion, stretching out in the few rays of sunlight that the morning afforded.

Charlie Chicken: Carson, what causes the common huitlacoche?

Carson: Corn gets wet and wet gets under the husk and uh, then you get a sort of a gray mushroom like thing. Some cultures call it a delicacy—

Charlie Chicken: A delicacy, I know.

Carson: But I make sure I don't eat people.

Charlie Chicken: Okay, Carson. You've been very helpful.

Mr. Eric: And as Charlie Chicken turned back to go check on his papa, thunder sounded in the distance and rain clouds gathered in an instant so Charlie climbed up on his quiet cloud and flew across their fields to try to scare away the rain.

Charlie Chicken: Rain, rain, go away, you gave my dad huitlacoche!

Mr. Eric: But the thunder just thundered! And the rain just rained!

Charlie Chicken: Oh, what am I gonna do?

Mr. Eric: Cried Charlie, as fat drops of rain fell right on his chicken head and his big brown ears and down below to a wide field of flowers that seemed to drink the rain up thirstily.

Charlie Chicken: Flowers?

Mr. Eric: Charlie asked.

Charlie Chicken: You seem to like the rain. It doesn't give you huitlacoche?

Mr. Eric: And the flowers turned their petals up toward Charlie and worked them open and closed like mouths.

Flowers: Only the corn gets huitlacoche. It's no concern of ours.

Charlie Chicken: Aw, but too much rain is bad for anybody, so we should look out for one another.

Flower: If our soil gets too wet, we just turn into a flowercorn and fly away.

Mr. Eric: And suddenly half a field of dewy flowers drew together to form a massive horse with a unicorn horn, all made of flowers.

Flowers: See. See. See!

Mr. Eric: And a million tiny petals flapped at once to lift the flowercorn into the sky and away from the rain.

Charlie Chicken: Oh, I wish I could turn into a flowercorn. This rain is cold.

Mr. Eric: But Charlie refused to let the rain get his father wet again so he stayed outside through the storm, giving his best young rooster crow at every gust of rainy wind.

Charlie Chicken: Cock a doodle doo! Cock a doodle doo, I said! Doodle you understand? Cock a doodle?

Mr. Eric: And finally the rain did calm down and the unicorn of flowers flew back into the field and a rainbow sprung up amongst the sudden rays of light. But not long behind that rainbow were more storm clouds.

Charlie Chicken: Not again!

Mr. Eric: Charlie flew his quiet cloud up to the arch of the rainbow.

Charlie Chicken: Rainbow, you're supposed to tell the rain to end but there's more right behind you.

Rainbow: More rain, you say?

Mr. Eric: And a bar of green light twisted back to look at the approaching storm.

Rainbow: Oh, that'll be lovely. It'll make more rainbows left and right.

Charlie Chicken: But my father's got a case of huitlacoche.

Rainbow: Oh, it's a delicacy, you know.

Charlie Chicken: I know.

Rainbow: Then what are you complaining about.

Charlie Chicken: Because huitlacoche is not good for corn.

Rainbow: But rain's good for rainbows, my boy. Just enjoy the sun while you can. The rain will always come again.

Charlie Chicken: Is that supposed to rhyme or something?

Rainbow: Ah, when you talk like this, you can make anything rhymish.

Mr. Eric: And the storm clouds overtook the rainbow.

Rainbow: Ahoy, wee lad! Don't be sad!

Mr. Eric: And there was just one long strip of sunlight left where a kaleidoscope of butterflies seemed to be drinking up the dewy nectar of the nearby flowers.

Charlie Chicken: Hey, where'd you butterflies come from?

Mr. Eric: Asked Charlie, flying down to greet them.

Butterflies: Oh, us? We're buttreeflies. Didn't you know?

Charlie Chicken: Well, I know now.

Buttreeflies: Well, we buttreeflies usually live in the clouds where the rain can't get us wet.

Charlie Chicken: Oh! Oh! That's perfect! My father, he's made of corn and he's got a case of huitlacoche.

Buttreflies: Sorry, buttreflies can only carry buttreflies up to the clouds.

Charlie Chicken: Maybe if we worked together, you and I could—

Buttreflies: Hey, I'd love to stay and chat, but there comes the rain again. Buttreflies, assemble!

Mr. Eric: And as the shadows grew, the buttreflies all flew together to turn into a big tree. And then that tree of butterflies started flapping its wings as it rose above the rain.

Charlie Chicken: Aw, no fair. I bet my dad could sit on top of there.

Mr. Eric: Charlie's feathers were wet and his quiet cloud was getting all soaked up with rain. And the flowercorn flew by him again.

Flowercorn: On your left! On your left! No, your other left.

Charlie Chicken: Aw...

Mr. Eric: Charlie saw that tree of buttreflies and that unicorn of flowers and he even saw a rainbow swirling up into the sky.

Charlie Chicken: While my dad's left here to get sicker still. It's just not fair.

Mr. Eric: And Charlie flew his cloud far higher than ever before. Right through a rumbly, thundering patch of clouds up into the bright and clear air above.

Charlie Chicken: Ooh, it's cold up here. Phew. Everything feels a lot lighter, especially my head.

Mr. Eric: There was a whole kingdom in these clouds that Charlie had never seen before. Up here the buttreflies weren't just trees, they were also butterfly houses and multi-colored castles. And the flowercorns weren't just unicorns. There were flower sloths hanging from the trees. And flower cows grazing on clouds. And around them all looped a laughing rainbow, sparkling in the sunlight.

Rainbow: Oh, it's such a nice day, it is up here. Oh, I wouldn't want to be down there in the rain and the cold.

Charlie Chicken: But my dad's down there in the rain and the cold. And none of you will help him.

Mr. Eric: The flowercorns glanced his way and then went back to their play. The buttreeflies were as still as trees and buildings where they stood, simply swaying a little bit in the breeze. Then the little rainbow skipped by underneath them before stretching in a bright shining arch over the whole tranquil scene.

But Charlie didn't feel tranquil or peaceful, or calm.

Charlie Chicken: Is this all you cock a doodle do?

Mr. Eric: Charlie flew over to the nearest cloud where a flowercorn lounged lazily.

Charlie Chicken: You lounge up here while people down there could use your help?

Flowercorn: They'd do the same in our hooves.

Mr. Eric: And Charlie was so mad he lifted that cloud right up into the air.

Charlie Chicken: Why I oughta...

Mr. Eric: He went to throw the cloud but it just floated even higher.

Flowercorn: Well, if you want to hurt us then why would we help you?

Charlie Chicken: I don't know what to cock a doodle do!

Mr. Eric: Charlie flew around in a fury. He lifted up the buttreeflies whether they be trees or houses or castles. He chased away the rainbows higher into the clouds. But when he lifted them up, the clouds just flew even higher, leaving Charlie Chicken alone again in the rain.

Mystery Guy: I'm wondering what you thought would happen?

Mr. Eric: Said a mysterious figure in a cloak. He was suddenly floating right next to Charlie.

Charlie Chicken: Oh, what do you want, Mystery Guy? So I messed up, but they were all being mean.

Mystery Guy: I'm wondering if other people are mean does that mean you get to be mean.

Charlie Chicken: No, you should be nice. But they wouldn't be nice no matter what so I got mean.

Mystery Guy: I often wonder how to change the minds of mean people.

Mr. Eric: Said the mystery guy, suddenly holding a cloak over the head of Charlie Chicken.

Charlie Chicken: Oh, Mystery Guy. What am I supposed to—hey! You're not a mystery guy!

W Woman: I never said I was.

Charlie Chicken: You're Wondering Woman.

W Woman: I was wondering when you'd figure that out.

Charlie Chicken: Well, you're a grown up, what should I do?

W Woman: Well, some of them were grown ups too.

Mr. Eric: She said, pointing up to where the rainacorns [flowercorns] and buttreeflies and rainbows flew.

W Woman: Do you know how the question mark of answers works?

Mr. Eric: Asked Wondering Woman.

Charlie Chicken: Sure, it makes people tell the truth.

W Woman: Not exactly. Most people think the truth is the first thing they see, the first thing they feel, the first thing they say, but this little wand helps you find the deep down answers.

Mr. Eric: And she offered the magic wand to him.

W Woman: Maybe you should ask yourself why you're really so mad?

Mr. Eric: And Charlie touched the golden handle shining even within this storm. And suddenly he had his answer.

Charlie Chicken: Because they don't know how we feel. If they really knew, I think they'd care.

W Woman: Oh! Then I'm wondering how pushing them away was going to teach them that.

Charlie Chicken: I know, I know! But it's not like I can just flip over the clo— aaah.

W Woman: Ahhh.

Charlie Chicken: Hey, Mystery Guy?

W Woman: Yes.

Charlie Chicken: I mean girl.

W Woman: I know.

Charlie Chicken: I mean, woman.

W Woman: It's fine.

Charlie Chicken: Do you think you could help me?

W Woman: I already am, Charlie.

Mr. Eric: And there went Wondering Woman, her question mark of answers lashing out to the nearest cloud and flipping it upside down. And Charlie went around lifting these clouds that were light as a feather and flipping them over. Now half the clouds were raining down and the other half were raining up! Upside-down houses fell apart and buttreeflies scattered in every direction. Flowercorns felt the rain and fell apart into thousands of falling flowers. And all the rainbows flew away looking for one last strip of light and they found it shining off a lantern inside Farmer Cobb's barn.

Rainbow: Oh, it's not a fluffy cloud, but it'll do.

Mr. Eric: And so it flew. And the flowercorns and the buttreeflies all followed along, crowding into that barn away from the rain.

Charlie Chicken: Thanks, Wondering Woman.

W Woman: You should probably thank gravity for forgetting how it's supposed to work.

Charlie Chicken: Oh, uh, thanks gravity.

Gravity: Charlie Chicken and Gravity!!!! Are best friends you and meeeee!

Charlie Chicken: Well, I wouldn't say best friends, but I certainly owe you one.

Gravity: Best friends forever! Charlieeee and gravityyyyy.

W Woman: I wonder if you should get down to the barn before gravity floats you away.

Mr. Eric: And Charlie rushed back down to the barn to see if all his flying friends had learned their lesson. And there they shivered and dripped, butterflies

crowding every rafter, flowers rolling around to dry off in the hay, and a tiny little rainbow shivering in the weak lantern light while Farmer Cobb and Carson the Lion went around serving everyone tea.

Charlie Chicken: Oh, no, Dad! We were supposed to teach them a lesson. And you should be getting your rest!

Farmer Cobb: Why no, I feel fine, son. See I got rid of all that common huitlacoche.

Mr. Eric: And he lifted up his arm and indeed, underneath his husk there were no more gray blobs of huitlacoche.

Carson: I told you he'd be fine, Charlie.

Mr. Eric: Growled Carson.

Farmer Cobb: Well, I'm almost better, anyway. I'm well enough to help these poor folks out of the rain.

Charlie Chicken: But they were perfectly healthy and they wouldn't help you one bit.

Buttreeflies: Yeah, what gives? Corn helps corn, buttreeflies like me help other buttreeflies, that's the way it goes.

Farmer Cobb: Oh, if I believed that, I wouldn't have adopted a chicken and a lion, now would I have.

Flowers: You wouldn't have.

Rainbow: And yet you did, so people can look out for other kinds of people after all.

WWoman: I was wondering when you all would figure that out.

Mr. Eric: Said Wondering Woman as she stepped into the barn and shook off her cloak.

Farmer Cobb: Now, listen. I got a big old farm here so any time you need to come out of the rain, you can just come right back to my barn.

Flowers: That's so nice.

Charlie Chicken: That's my dad.

Farmer Cobb: [Coughs] Oh, well, maybe I should get a little more rest now.

Charlie Chicken: You know, maybe I should rest up there with you.

Carson: And I'll keep pouring the tea. Wondering Woman, would you like some?

WWoman: Oh, yes, please. But I do have one more question.

Rainbow: And what might that be?

Buttreflies: Yeah, spill it.

WWoman: Well, I was just wondering, what did you do with all that huitlacoche?

Farmer Cobb: Oh, me? I just made some tea with it.

[Record scratch.]

All: [Splutter]

Farmer Cobb: Oh, just kidding.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Felix, Molly, and Megan. I hope you enjoyed your story. 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 enjoyed a good grilled huitlacoche. Or helped out a friend in need. Maybe even one you didn't know so well.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[These are outtakes with different voices for Gravity.]

[Beep]

Charlie Chicken: Oh, uh, thanks gravity.

Gravity: Anything...

[Beep]

Gravity: Anything for Charlie Chickeeeen.

[Beep]

Gravity: Ahhh, you're welcome Cha-

[Beep]

Gravity: Yes, you were [unclear]

[Beep]

Gravity: Charlie Chickeeeen and Gravity are best friends you and meeeee...

Charlie Chicken: Well, I wouldn't say best friends I certainly owe you one.

Gravity: Best friends forever! Charlieeee and Gravityyyy.

[What If World theme plays.]

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