

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 120: What if my lunch lady was an octopus and the sky had a mouth?](#)

File Length: 00:17:47

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 question from a patron named Felicity.

Felicity: Hi Mr. Eric! My name is Felicity and I'm six years old and I have a question for you. What if my lunch lady was an octopus and the sky had a mouth and we had to feed it?

Mr. Eric: Wow, that is a very wacky question. And since we didn't answer any patron questions last week, let's add on one more from Andreas.

Andreas: Hi, it's me again, Andreas, Mr. Eric. What if earrings were wingings.

Andreas' Parent: Earwings.

Andreas: Earwings.

Mr. Eric: Earwings, I like it.

JF Kitty: Not as much as I love giving shout outs like to Lydia. I'm her favorite character.

Mr. Eric: Welcome JF Kat, and yes, thank you, Lydia.

Fred the Dog: Oh wow, you got one shout out JF Kat, that's really good.

Abacus: Why are you saying that, Dog? You have three shout outs to give.

JF Kitty: Three shout outs?

Fred the Dog: It's okay! Getting any shout outs is really an honor. My first shout out is to Harper who likes basketball.

Mr. Eric: Hi, Harper!

Fred the Dog: And also to Kanen, who's about to be a big brother.

Mr. Eric: Congratulations, Kanen.

Fred the Dog: And finally to Joshua who we got to meet in person one time at the library.

Mr. Eric: Hello, Joshua. Nice to hear from you, again.

Abacus: And finally, I have a last but not least shout out for Tyson who's hard at work imagining his greatest what if question.

Mr. Eric: Well, I look forward to hearing it, Tyson. Thanks again, Tyson, Joshua, Kanen, Harper, and Lydia. Now, let's find out what if earrings were earwings and what if my lunch lady was an octopus and the sky had a mouth and we had to feed it?

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Zack and Zizi were headed to school during a beautiful spring... snowstorm.

Z & Z: [Shuddering with cold.]

Zack: I don't get, why is it so snowy.

Mr. Eric: Zack and Zizi looked up at that tear across all of spacetime.

Zizi: You know, it's kind of starting to look like a mouth.

Zack: I was just thinking the same thi-

Mr. Eric: And just then, that giant hole across the sky seemed to sneeze more snow onto them.

Zack: Does that mean that this snow is really...

Zizi: Sky boogers? Yes, Zack.

Zack: Ugh...

Mr. Eric: And as they continued their walk to school, instead of sneezing and shivering, that hole in the sky started coughing. And when the sky coughed, great plumes of hazy, smoky air came out and melted all the snow away. By the time they actually got to school, it felt as hot as summer.

Zack: Zizi, I think the sky may be sick.

Zizi: You want to go find out?

Mr. Eric: Asked Zizi, pulling out two pairs of earrings.

Zack: Oh, but Zizi, I don't have my ears pierced.

Zizi: Neither do I, these are clip-ons.

Zack: Um...

Zizi: Zack, there's nothing wrong with a boy putting on earrings.

Zack: Oh, I know that. It's just the earwing part I'm afraid of. Aren't they gonna pull our ears off?

Zizi: No, no no. They're magic. They won't pull your ears off at all.

Zack: Then won't they pull our heads off?

Zizi: They won't pull any part of you off, Zack. I enchanted them myself.

Zack: Oh... kay.

Mr. Eric: Zack and Zizi clipped on their little heart-shaped earrings which grew over their ears, head, and neck so they were covered in feathers except for their face. Then, they stretched out into massive, colorful bird wings and started flapping, lifting Zack and Zizi into the sky.

[Time skip noise.]

Zack: What am I supposed to do with my arms?

Zizi: Superheroes usually put a fist forward.

Zack: I know, it just feels so pose-y.

Zizi: I think I'm gonna do the Peter Pan, hands on hips.

Zack: I think I'm gonna flap 'em, so it looks like I've got four wings.

Skymouth: [Coughs] What are you kids doing here? Are you coming to bring me some delicious treats?

Zack: What's delicious to the sky?

Skymouth: Oh, I love whatever you kids send up here. Clouds of gas, mm-mm-mm.

Zizi: I heard that clouds of gas are bad for the sky.

Skymouth: Ho ho! Nonsense. [Coughs] I love it. Send more of it. Give me more cars! Make more jets. Oh, give me all that gassy, smokey.

Zizi: I think you're addicted to junk food, Skymouth.

Skymouth: Skymouth can take it! There's no such thing as bad food for the sky. It's all good. Just keep sending it up.

Zizi: No, I think you need a healthy meal.

Skymouth: A healthy meal? Give me a break, kid. Give me gas, give me smoke, give me all the stuff you choke on. Give me gas, oh give me smoke, give me dirty artichokes, and...

Zack: Dirty artichokes? I don't think you know what's good for you, Skymouth.

Zizi: Yeah, didn't your mom and dad ever tell you what you should eat?

Skymouth: A mom and dad? Uh, oh, the world down there is my mom, so whatever she sends my way must be yum yum yum in my tum tum tum, must help me get big and strong and healthy. [Cough].

Zizi: I think maybe you need a change to your diet.

Zack: We'll get you something healthy from the lunch lady.

Skymouth: Aw, sounds good.

Mr. Eric: And so, the kids flew back down and took off their earwings, which changed promptly back into earrings, before scrambling straight to the cafeteria.

Z & Z: Mrs. Crawly! Mrs. Crawly!

Mr. Eric: They ran up to their green, eight-armed octopus lunch lady, Mrs. Crawly, who was busy single-handedly, well, octo-handedly whipping up a breakfast for all the early arrivals.

Mrs. Crawly: Hello Zack and Zizi, you're gonna have to wait in line like everybody else.

Zizi: No, we don't need a healthy meal yet.

Zack: Yeah, we've got a food emergency.

Mrs. Crawly: Well, it's too early for cake, Zack, so don't give me those eyes.

Zack: No, we don't need an unhealthy meal, either.

Zizi: The sky needs something good to eat or its gonna keep getting sick all over What If World.

Mrs. Crawly: The sky, you say? You didn't go up flying and talking to that big tear across all of spacetime, did you?

Zizi: Well, it's really more of a Skymouth...

Mr. Eric: While the big, green octopus spoke to Zack and Zizi, she was slinging eggs and potatoes to some children and peeling stubborn bananas and oranges for others.

Mrs. Crawly: Well, you know, you can't just feed the sky people food.

Zack: Oh.

Zizi: Well, what do skies eat?

Mrs. Crawly: What do you think they eat, children?

Zack: I guess anything we put up there...

Mrs. Crawly: Exactly. There's over a billion people driving automobiles and flying in their jet-powered flying suits every day, sending up gas and smoke for that sky to eat.

Zizi: Well, we've got to do something.

Mr. Eric: Two of Mrs. Crawly's legs started opening cans of tomato sauce and two other legs started making big piles of dough.

Zack: And we've got to do it fast or else we're gonna miss pizza day.

Mr. Eric: Zack grabbed the two pairs of earrings out of Zizi's bag and the two of them flew right out of the cafeteria window.

Mrs. Crawly: Where are you two going?

Mr. Eric: Asked Mrs. Crawly, but the kids were already out of sight flying with their earwings all the way to New What City.

[Time skip noise.]

Stevie: Alright Ms. Mouser, how many super jet powered flying suits are we producing this month?

Miss Mouser: 200,000. It's down a little from last month.

Mr. Eric: Stevie the Fleasel was talking to Miss Mouser, his assistant at the top of his big old business building.

Stevie: Down a little from last month—oh, sorry, I was looking at that giant mouth in the sky and I got distracted.

Skymouth: [Coughs and wheezes]

Mr. Eric: And the sky mouth started coughing back all of the smoke and heat that New What City's factories were sending up into the air. Just then, Zack and Zizi flew in through his open window.

Zizi: Stevie the Fleasel.

Stevie: Oh, whoa whoa whoa, hey.

Zizi: You've gotta start making cleaner burning flying suits.

Zack: Yeah, or else the sky is gonna keep getting sicker.

Stevie: Kids you gotta understand. I make what people want. [Singing] You want to fly into the sky? You wanna go faster than anyone you know? I'll make a flying suit that you can use to go a boop boop boop, up in the sky.

Zack: But you're not actually helping anyone... they could use earwings if they needed to.

Zizi: Well, that's not true. I actually had to use my magic to make earwings and not everyone has that kind of magic.

Stevie: See. I'm just helping everyone in town get around. You can get on board with that kids, can't ya?

Zack: Well, I don't know.

Stevie: Ah, kids. That's the price of progress. I make these affordable. I make 'em fast. [Singing] I didn't plan to sing again. But I see I didn't convince ya

just then. But every kid wants what every kid wants and that's to fly, oh me oh my.

Zack: But ever since you started using rockets, you're making the sky sick.

Stevie: Ah, I talked to the sky mouth. It loves all the pollution, all the gas. It's like delicious candy for it.

Zizi: Well kids can't eat candy all the time and neither can the sky.

Stevie: Oh, okay. [Singing] I'll try to help just any way I can. Think that you might need to talk to someone else that can really help you out now, other than myself.

Zack: So you're passing the buck?

Stevie: If I stop making these machines, somebody else will.

Zizi: So we have to make all businesses agree to pollute less?

Stevie: Exactly. Then I promise I'll make cleaner burning flying machines and cars.

Mr. Eric: So Zack and Zizi took off.

Zack: Aw, Zizi. There's no way we can make all the businesses work together to give the sky a healthy meal.

Zizi: Well, we certainly can't on our own, but I think I know who can help.

Mr. Eric: And Zizi soared ahead, Zack flapping his ears and arms to keep up. Can you guess where she was headed?

[Time skip noise.]

Fred the Dog: Mr. Mouser, who's our two o'clock today?

Mr. Mouser: Uh, my sister just called and said we should expect a pair of belligerent children to fly into the What House at any moment.

Fred the Dog: Oh no. Not two belligerent children. I can't say belligerent that many times.

Mr. Mouser: You just did, Mr. President.

Fred the Dog: You can call me Mr. Fredsident.

Mr. Mouser: I'd rather not.

Mr. Eric: And just then, Zack and Zizi flew through the windows of the What House.

Zack: Oh, I like what you've done with the place.

Zizi: Zack, the whole What House is made out of mud bricks.

Fred the Dog: Yeah, we had to rebuild it, I ate the stick house. It's a long story. You two must be the belligerent children I was hearing about.

Zack: I'm not a bridge you can rent or buy!

Zizi: No, he means we're upset. And yes, you're letting companies pollute the air and the sky needs a healthy meal.

Fred the Dog: Oh, everybody needs a healthy meal sometimes. Let's give the sky some sticks.

Zack: No, the sky doesn't want sticks. The sky wants healthy air.

Zizi: Well, the sky actually kind of enjoys pollution, but it's like junk food, and it's bad.

Fred the Dog: Oh yeah, that's like when I eat too much sticks sometimes, I get a bellyache. Because really sticks aren't very good for dogs. Why Daddy takes away my stick sometimes and it makes me really mad.

Zack: I think we're getting a little off track here.

Fred the Dog: Oh yeah, okay. What do we need to do?

Zizi: We need the people at the top.

Zack: To see the sky mouth hack and cough.

Zizi: They'll see pollution's not a treat.

Zack: And give Skymouth something good to eat.

Fred the Dog: But progress has a price, you see. Skymouth pays our convenience fee.

Zack: A fee? That always works on Dad.

Zizi: He pays our Mamma when he's bad.



Fred the Dog: You're saying if we tax pollution...

Zack: Big businesses will make solutions.

Fred the Dog: It won't be simple or even quick.

Zizi: But will you do it for a stick?

Fred the Dog: Yeah, okay.

[Record scratch.]

Fred the Dog: Oh, give me that stick right now. And never take my stick away just let me chew it every day!

Zizi: Fred, you haven't learned a thing.

Fred the Dog: Sticks are better when you sing! [Chewing] [Singing and chewing] Oh the yum yum stiiiick.

Zack: I think we should just go.

Zizi: But is he gonna do it.

Fred the Dog: Yeah, I already said so. We're gonna do the carbon tax. It's fine. I don't know why we didn't do it years ago.

Mr. Mouser: We'll start on the paperwork immediately, children. But it's after two o'clock. Shouldn't you be getting back to school.

Zizi: Oh no! It's after two o'clock!

Zack: Oh no, pizza day.

Mr. Eric: Zack and Zizi took off as fast as their earwings could carry them. A massive gust of wind rocketed Zack and Zizi ahead on their earwings, launching them through the sky faster than they've ever flown. They were diving down toward the Observatorium so fast in fact...

Zack: Uh... Zizi, are we gonna crash?

Zizi: It totally feels like it, yeah.

Zack: If I don't make it, tell Mom and Dad, pizza...

Zizi: Oh, Zack.

Mr. Eric: And just before they crashed through the roof, the wind became gentle again and they slowly drifted down through an open window to find Mrs. Crawly cleaning up after all the lunches were over.

Zack: Mrs. Crawly, we missed pizza day.

Mrs. Crawly: Well, you did scuttle off without even getting a Save the World pass.

Zizi: It doesn't matter. We couldn't even get the sky something good to eat.

Zack: It might take years or decades to get even a little better.

Mrs. Crawly: Oh, children. I coulda told you big change doesn't happen overnight. It can take a lifetime.

Mr. Eric: Mrs. Crawly put her dust pans and brooms and mops away and pulled out her big wooden pizza paddle just as a nearby oven went off.

Zack: Did you save a pizza for us?

Mr. Eric: Mrs. Crawly used her long wooden paddle to pull out a tiny orange seed.

Zack: Ew, seeds?

Zizi: That doesn't look nearly as good as a pizza.

Mrs. Crawly: Okay.

Mr. Eric: And Mrs. Crawly flung the seed out the window.

Zack: I didn't say I wasn't gonna eat it!

Mr. Eric: And where it landed in the ground, suddenly shot up a giant tree. But instead of fruit hanging from its branches, it had.

Zizi: Pizza.

Zack: Pizza...

Mr. Eric: The kids ran outside and each pulled a slice of cheese pizza off the tree. The massive, thick tree seemed to be soaking up all the smog and gas in the neighborhood and the sky took a mouthful of clean, fresh air.

Skymouth: Hey, I feel a little bit better. Maybe I can live without unhealthy food.

Zack: Zip it, Skymouth! I'm eating pizza.

Zizi: Yeah, we're starving.

Skymouth: Oh, excuse me. Carry on, children.

Zack: Om nom nom pizza.

Zizi: Oh, just one more slice.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Okay, Felicity and Andreas. I hope you enjoyed your story.

I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, Mrs. Crowley, the lunch lady growing up, who didn't mind sneaking me a piece of chocolate cake when I'd had a particularly tough day. And all you kids at home who use your big powerful words and you little everyday actions to help make this world a healthier place for everyone.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]