

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 126: What if baseballs and basketballs were alive?](#)

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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're starting off with a review question from a child called Wick-X and who asks simply, what if baseballs were alive?

Thank you, Wick-X and your question lines up beautifully with a question from a patron named Harper.

Harper: Hi, my name is Harper, I'm 10 years old and I like basketball. My what if question is what if basketballs came to life. Thank you, bye.

Mr. Eric: Ah ha. Baseballs and basketballs. But maybe I should answer one more review question from a listener named Julian, who asks, what if hamburgers could walk and talk, plus invisible talking clouds? Oh man, I don't even think there's any room for humans in this story?

Zack: Well, maybe there can be one human in the intro?

Mr. Eric: Hey, Zack. Of course, any time.

Zack: Oh, good, because I wanted to thank Nicholas.

Mr. Eric: Well, thanks for stopping by, Zack. And yes, thank you, Nicholas.

Dracomax: And I would like to give a shout out to Augie from Portland, whose favorite color is pink.

Mr. Eric: Hi, Dracomax. And thank you, Augie from Portland. Now, let's find out—

JF Kitty: Just one second! We've got a final shout out to Gus!

Gus loves sharks.

Mr. Eric: Oh wow! JF Kat and Shark Gator are here to shout out Gus. Well, thank you for waiting for your shout out, and thanks again to Augie and finally Nicholas.

Now, let's find out what if baseballs and basketballs were alive, and what if hamburgers could walk and talk, plus, invisible talking clouds.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Mitty was an old fashioned kind of baseball. He loved getting thrown right to the catcher's mitt, or flying out of the ball park. Or even grounding to the short stop. But the thing he loved most was his daughter, Alley-Oop. I know, I know, it's not a baseball name. And the thing is, Alley-Oop wasn't really a baseball. Well, sure she looked like one. She was the size of one. She even used to have a baseball name. But now she was Alley-Oop and that was okay by Mitty.

Mitty: Hey, Alley, first day of summer. How about you and your old man play a little game of home run derby.

Mr. Eric: Said Mitty.

Alley-Oop: No thanks, Pop. I'm just gonna go play basketball with my friends.

Mitty: Okay. Tell Hooper, I say hi.

Mr. Eric: And as Alley-Oop bounced and rolled her way toward the basketball court, Mitty couldn't fight that little worry that parents often get. So, as usual, he went to talk to his friend, Good Ol' Burger.

Mitty sailed into the outfield where his friend tended to walk around, and indeed, Mitty landed right on Burger's bun!

Good Ol' Burger: Okay, I caught you again, Mitty.

Mr. Eric: Said the burger, letting Mitty roll onto the ground.

Good Ol' Burger: Oh, now I know that look. What's troubling you, my friend.

Mitty: Oh, it's Alley-Oop, she's off playing basketball again.

Good Ol' Burger: Well, doesn't she say she is a basketball?

Mitty: I know, I'm just worried the other basketballs won't understand my daughter.

[Time skip noise.]

- Mr. Eric: Meanwhile, Alley-Oop was playing basketball with her friends. She wasn't as big as the basketballs and she usually couldn't bounce as high, but to her best friend, Hooper, that didn't matter one bit.
- Alley-Oop: Alley-Oop from downtown!
- Hooper: And Hooper with the block. Oh, you got stuffed!
- Alley-Oop: Oh, you got me!
- Mr. Eric: A curious little blue and red basketball rolled up to them.
- Basketball: You're a baseball...
- Mr. Eric: The young basketball said to Alley-Oop.
- Alley-Oop: I know I look like a baseball and I even sound a little like a baseball, but I promise you, I'm a basketball, okay.
- Basketball: Well, why don't you look like a basketball?
- Mr. Eric: Hooper bounced over to the little ball.
- Hooper: Listen, she doesn't have to explain it to you, kid. She is who she is.
- Alley-Oop: It's okay, Hoop. I got this. You see, kid... what's your name?
- Jump Shot: Jump Shot.
- Alley-Oop: See, Jump Shot, my name's Alley-Oop, and everyone used to tell me I was a baseball, I but I've always known I was a basketball, so one day I got tired of pretending I was a baseball at all.
- Jump Shot: Can you still play baseball, though?
- Alley-Oop: Sure, I can play any sport I like, so can you. But I love basketball the most because it's who I am.
- Mr. Eric: The little red and blue ball looked at Alley-Oop, and then started bouncing around excitedly.
- Jump Shot: Oh, okay! Then let's play basketball together.
- Hooper: Yeah, okay. Come on, kid.

Mr. Eric: And as the three of them started bouncing around together, a big blue and red ball suddenly bounced itself right into the middle of them.

Momma Ball: Get away from my son, Baseball.

Jump Shot: No, it's okay, Mom. She's a basketball. Her name is Alley-Oop.

Momma Ball: Jump Shot, get behind me. And you, Alley-Oop. I don't know what you baseballs are up to, but I want you off this court, right now.

Mr. Eric: Alley's friend Hooper was very upset.

Hooper: Hey, you don't get to talk to her that way.

Alley-Oop: Forget it, Hoop, I'm just gonna go.

Hooper: No, you don't have to go. Jump Shot's mom should apologize to you.

Momma Ball: Well, that's not gonna happen.

Jump Shot: Mom! I just wanted some friends to play with.

Alley-Oop: Hey, Jump Shot, don't worry about it. You're a good little basketball. You're gonna make lots of friends, okay. I'm just gonna go.

Mr. Eric: And the little basketball bounced away, and Hooper wasn't far behind.

Hooper: I'm not going back to that court. We can find a new court.

Alley-Oop: Look, I appreciate that, Hoop. I just kind of want to be alone right now, okay.

Hooper: Yeah, okay.

Mr. Eric: And as Hooper rolled away, Alley-Oop shot off like a 95 mile an hour fast basketball and landed by Good Ol' Burger and her dad, Mitty.

Alley-Oop: [Crying]

Mitty: Hey, Alley, what's wrong? Did something happen at the basketball court?

Good Ol' Burger: Oh, I reckon something did.

Alley-Oop: It was just one of the moms. She didn't want me to play with her son, Jump Shot.

Mitty: Oh, is that right? Well, I'm gonna find this Jump Shot's mom and I'm gonna give her a piece of my cork center.

Alley-Oop: Dad, that's not gonna help anything.

Mr. Eric: But Mitty was already off.

Alley-Oop: Dad!

Good Ol' Burger: Oh, Alley-Oop.

Mr. Eric: The soggy old burger walked over to the little basketball. Your dad's just trying to help.

Alley-Oop: Nobody can help me.

Good Ol' Burger: Well... I do happen to know a place up in the clouds where they say folks can be whoever they want to be.

Alley-Oop: That sounds like make-believe.

Good Ol' Burger: Alley, you're talking to an old hamburger with toothpick legs. You might want to start believing in make-believe.

Alley-Oop: Oh, okay. How do I get there?

Good Ol' Burger: You're going to go way back. Way back, deeper in the outfield than you ever been. And up high, til you hit some invisible clouds. They can take you the rest of the way.

Mr. Eric: Off in the distance, she thought she heard her father's voice and the dribbling of basketballs.

Mitty: Hey, get out of here! Alley, get outta here!

Alley-Oop: Get out of here?

Mr. Eric: Alley looked to see her father fast approaching with a court full of basketballs on his heels. Or stitches, I guess.

Basketball: We don't want that baseball living anywhere in our park!

Mitty: I'm telling you, she's a basketball.

Basketball: No, she needs to go!

If she can't stay in her field, she can't be in our park!

Mitty: Well, if you wanna get her, you're gonna have to go through me!

Mr. Eric: And Mitty was bounced off a basketball fast down the first line where he bounced off another basketball and made his way to second. As the balls tried to catch him, he ricocheted from one to the next. To the pitcher's mound, to the catcher's mitt, to center field and back. It was almost like these basketballs were playing a kind of baseball game.

Alley-Oop: Dad!

Mitty: Don't worry about me. These basketballs are really bad at baseball. I can do this all day.

Basketball: We are not bad at baseball, we just don't like it!

Mitty: Oh, sure, sure, then why don't you catch a baseball?

Basketball: Because we don't have hands.

Mr. Eric: A few of the basketballs saw Alley-Oop, in the tall, unkempt grasses of the outfield and started bouncing menacingly toward her.

Good Ol' Burger: Alley, get out of here! Find the clouds! Tell them Good Ol' Burger sent you. Your dad and I will be just fine.

Alley-Oop: But... but... I can't! I'm scared!

Good Ol' Burger: Sometimes it's scary to be who you are. And you gotta be brave enough to take that leap on your own. Although you can bounce off my bun head, if you'd like.

Alley-Oop: Oh, I've totally always wanted to do that.

Mr. Eric: And Alley-Oop overcame her fear and bounced Good Ol' Burger's bun, still springy after all these years, launching way back, way back, and right out of the the park. She could see from the sky that her dad was still playing this strange baseball game with basketball players. And just when she reached the apex of her arc through the sky—

Gust: Hey, what's this little ball doing flying through the skies?

Mr. Eric: Alley-Oop found herself stuck in the sky. There was something slightly damp and shimmering about her, like an invisible cloud.

Gust: Oh, it's one of them balls what gets bounced up from the park sometimes, Mum.

Alley-Oop: Yeah, my name's Alley-Oop and I'm looking for a city in the clouds. Good Ol' Burger sent me.

Windy: Oh, Gust, have you been blabbing about the secret city again?

Gust: I might have mentioned it in passing over a sip of the morning dew.

Windy: Morning dew, indeed! It was midnight mist and it was more than a sip.

Gust: Oh, Windy, not in front of the wee one.

Alley-Oop: Listen, I feel like I'm in the middle of a whole thing between you two invisible talking clouds and...

Gust: We ain't invisible talking clouds!

Windy: We're transparent loquacious vapors.

Alley-Oop: Transparent loquacious vapors.

Gust: That's right. You ought to show a little respect.

Alley-Oop: No, I totally get it. See, people call me a baseball even though I'm a basketball and even when I tell them I'm a basketball, they still call me a baseball. So I promise I'll always call you transparent loquacious vapors.

Gust: Well, you can just call us Gust and Windy. It's our names, you know.

Windy: Would have been polite to ask those, first.

Alley-Oop: I'm sorry, Windy. It's just my first time leaving the park and...

Gust: It's all right, Alley, you're learning about us and we're learning about you. That's how it's supposed to go when you meet new people.

Windy: Oh dear, quite the ball game going on down there.

Alley-Oop: Oh, yeah, yeah yeah, so Windy and Gust, my dad might be in trouble down there, so...

Gust: Right, to the secret city you go.

Windy: Good luck, little one.

Mr. Eric: And Windy and Gust blew as hard as they could, carrying Alley-Oop all the way to a massive stretch of fluffy clouds, where she landed lightly by a little thimble.

Alley-Oop: Hello? Anybody there? I found your lost thimble. Cloud people?

Mr. Eric: And as the little basketball pressed up against the thimble, she found herself shrinking as she got sucked inside it.

Alley-Oop: Whoa!

Fair Elise: Oh, hello little basketball. You must be here to see Pixicato.

Alley-Oop: What... what did you call me?

Fair Elise: I'm sorry, little basketball. That was rude of me. I'm Fair Elise. And what's your name?

Alley-Oop: How could you tell I was a—

Pixicato: Lola, Lola! You're here already? Oh, I'm sorry, we haven't met. I'm Pixicato, this is my mom, Fair Elise.

Sprite Alright: All right, I guess your other mom doesn't get an introduction.

Pixicato: Oh, and that's Sprite Alright. She got turned into a lamp again, it's a long story.

Sprite Alright: A lamp out in the kitchen for some reason.

Fair Elise: Oh, Sprite, I'm sorry. We're still working out the kinks of our restorative spell.

Mr. Eric: And Fair Elise floated into the kitchen and pulled in the tall lamp that was Sprite Alright.

Alley-Oop: Well, I'm not here to play with you, Pixicato, although that sounds like a lot of fun and we should do that sometimes.

Fair Elise: Are you here speaking a spell, then?

Alley-Oop: How did you know?

Fair Elise: Oh, I'm not the most powerful of magical creatures, but I have a knack for setting things right.

Sprite Alright: All right, I wouldn't exactly call it a knack.

Fair Elise: Well, yes, and you should be warned. If I use my restorative magic on you, it will be forever.



Alley-Oop: But I'll look like a basketball on the outside.

Fair Elise: You might not ever be quite as big as the biggest basketballs.

Pixicato: But you can bounce around with me as much as you want!

Mr. Eric: Fair Elise took out her wand and the little twinkle of starlight at the tip of the wand started shining with every color in the rainbow.

Fair Elise: Have you talked this over with your parent or guardian?

Alley-Oop: Yeah, we just didn't know it was a real thing.

Fair Elise: And you know you'll never look like a baseball again.

Alley-Oop: I never was a baseball.

Fair Elise: I know. Shut your little eyes and focus on who you are.

Mr. Eric: And Alley closed her eyes so tight all you could see were those little red baseball stitches. And when she opened her eyes, they weren't red baseball stitches. They were purple basketball ribs. And when she looked down, she saw she was covered in purple and green rubber.

Alley-Oop: You did it! I'm a basketball!

Mr. Eric: She tried to bounce for joy!

Alley-Oop: Ooh! That's a little tender.

Pixicato: Yes, it will be for a little while.

Sprite Alright: All right, congratulations. Pixicato, can you guide your friend home? Fair Elise still needs to cast her restorative magic on me.

Fair Elise: Oh, I'm sorry, my dear, but the little girl was so upset.

Sprite Alright: Oh, and I just love being turned into a lamp!

Fair Elise: But it's been so nice to read by your light.

Sprite Alright: Have you been keeping me this way?

Fair Elise: Oh, no... maybe.

Alley-Oop: Wow, I keep sorta getting in the middle of these things.

Pixicato: It's okay, but we really should be going.

Mr. Eric: And Pixicato used her little pixie stick to help Alley-Oop float alongside her as they traveled all the way down to the park... to see baseballs and basketballs bouncing, rolling, and sailing all over the baseball field and the basketball court.

Alley-Oop: Oh no, things have really gotten out of hand.

Mitty: Oh! I'm gonna make one of those four point shots!

Basketball: There's no such thing as that!

Basketball: Okay, pitch me an air ball, please.

Baseball: You can't ask for your pitch in baseball and I don't even know how I'd pitch an air ball, anyway.

Mr. Eric: It looked like baseballs and basketballs were playing with one another and as Alley-Oop landed gently in the tall outfield grass, Alley saw, playing at center field, the blue and red Momma basketball who had been so cruel to her, before.

Momma Ball: You must be new to our park.

Alley-Oop: I'm not sure I'm in the right park.

Momma Ball: Alley? Alley-Oop?

Mr. Eric: Her question echoed through the park and all the sounds of play stopped. Soon a field full of baseballs and basketballs were rolling towards her and a hamburger on little toothpick legs was running as fast as it could.

Good Ol' Burger: Alley! We thought you'd never come back.

Mitty: Is that my daughter? Get out of my way! That's my daughter!

Alley-Oop: Pixicato... how long did it take that magic to work?

Pixicato: A month, silly! You didn't know that? Oh, you didn't know that!

Alley-Oop: No, I didn't know that!

Pixicato: It's a forever spell... they don't happen over night.

Mr. Eric: And there was Hooper and Jump Shot, and Good Ol' Burger, and the little baseball, Mitty, who looked like he was nearly coming apart at the seams.

Mitty: Oh, Alley! I thought you were gone.

Momma Ball: We thought we'd driven you away.

Mr. Eric: Said the big blue and red basketball.h

Hooper: Alley, look at you!

Mr. Eric: And Hooper bounced up and down in joy.

Jump Shot: I think my mom has something she wants to say to you?

Mr. Eric: Suggested Jump Shot.

Momma Ball: Well, after you left, it rained and rained and no one seemed to want to play and I realized how wrong I'd been to say those things to you.

Windy: Well, we also kept tell you, you were wrong.

Gust: And raining on you, too.

Momma Ball: Yes, Windy and Gust were very convincing.

Windy: And loquacious.

Gust: As a vapor is wont to be.

Mitty: Hey, Alley, I was learning to play basketball, because I missed you, but then I realized I love it. It's really fun.

Momma Ball: I'm so sorry I said those things to you. I'm sure anyone from our court would love to play basketball with you. Even me. Once I finish this baseball game.

Mr. Eric: And if you were to play at that park from that day forward, you might think it strange at first to see basketballs playing baseball and baseballs playing basketball, and hamburgers on stick legs and transparent loquacious vapors chattering in the sky. But before long, you'd see it as just another place where it's okay for people to be themselves.

Mitty: Look at this, I call this one a grand slam dunk.

Alley-Oop: That's not a thing, Dad!

Mitty: It's worth four points!

Jump Shot: Your dad's really bad at basketball.

Alley-Oop: I know, isn't it great?

Mr. Eric: The end.

Mitty: [Thud] Ah, oh, I'm okay. Oh, wait, now I'm okay.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Okay Julian, Wick-X and Harper. I hope you enjoyed your story.

I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all you kids at home who are true to yourself and accepting of others. And until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]