

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 130: What if trees fell and another one grew back right away?](#)

File Length: 00:16:41

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 listener named Anna.

Anna: Hi, my name's Anna and my what if question is what if trees had eyes and could walk around? And my favorite thing to do is make forts. Thanks!

Mr. Eric: Oh, Anna, that's a great question. I really loved making pillow forts as a kid but I never really had a tree fort tree. Hmm.

Okay, let's get one more question from a patron named Astrid.

Astrid: Hi, my name is Astrid and I'm five and a half years and my what if question is what if trees fell over and another one grew back right away. Thanks, bye! I'll see you later, alligator!

Mr. Eric: Thank you so much for letting your personality shine through in that question and thanks to your sister, Izzy. The two of you have submitted lots of questions together. So let's find out what if trees had eyes—

Abacus: What if Connell, age five, got a shout out from Abacus P. Grumbler?

Mr. Eric: I almost forgot about the shout outs.

Abacus: Connell likes Pokemon and he wanted to hear from the world's greatest wizard.

Mr. Eric: Oh, you mean your stepmom, Phantasma?

Abacus: [Grumbles]

JF Kitty: Quit your purr-uh...grumbling! We've also got to shout out Bronwyn.

Mr. Eric: Oh, I almost forgot about Bronwyn.

JF Kitty: She's from Kirkland, Washington and yet her name is not Kirk.

Mr. Eric: Well, that's not very unusual in What Is World. After all, I'm not from Mr. Eric Land.

JF Kitty: Really?

Abacus: Ooh, Is World makes very little sense.

Mr. Eric: Well, thank you Bronwyn and Connell. Two of our patrons, William and Sean from Australia sent in a whole load of characters to add to a story but I think we can squeeze in two of our characters since they know each other. So, today we're going to meet the Flying Mr. Slime. He's good at changing shape and he struggles with flying. Then, of course, we'll meet Tom the Cloud who's good at making people happy and struggles with dancing, and loves to vomit rainbows.

[Record scratch.]

Oh. William and Sean! I really have to have a cloud horking up rainbows in this story, oh, what am I gonna do... you two got me.

Now, let's find out what if trees fell over and another one grew back right away and what if trees had eyes and could walk around.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Mamma Jamma had worked hard day and night to become the regional manager of the Bakeroo factory.

Mamma Jamma: Okay, Tom Cloud, you said it looks like rain up there.

Tom Cloud: It is right.

Mamma Jamma: So we're gonna need a thousand new muffin top roofs for when the old ones get too soggy.

Tom Cloud: Can we make them rainbow colored?

Mamma Jamma: Tom Cloud, you are not going to do that on top of my roofs again, do you understand?

Tom Cloud: But a rainbow roof makes everyone happy.

Mamma Jamma: Okay, maybe. But a puke roof makes people less happy, so let's just drop it for right now.

Mr. Eric: And Tom Cloud rose up into the sky, grumbling.

Mamma Jamma: [Sigh]

Mr. Eric: Sighed Mamma Jamma, just as the flying Mr. Slime slurped and glurped his way through the factory to report to Mamma Jamma.

Mr. Slime: So the workers need more flour to make the roofs and the bakers are getting hungry because they're only baking roofs and not food.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, the Flying Mr. Slime, do you got to bring all the problems right to my doorstep?

Mr. Slime: I don't see a doorstep. Do you want me to shape change into a doorstep?
[Changes shape]

Mamma Jamma: Ew, oh, no, I was speaking figuratively.

Mr. Slime: What's wrong, Mamma Jamma?

Mamma Jamma: Oh, I don't know. I've been making roofs out of muffins since before Zack was born and there's just always another problem.

Mr. Slime: Sounds like you need a change.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, I don't know, maybe.

Mr. Slime: You should quit your job and move to a chicken farm and wear rocks for shoes and learn to speak the language of the universe.

Mamma Jamma: What... what are you even talking about?

Mr. Slime: Change, Mamma Jamma. It's the only constant.

Tom Cloud: Eek! Mamma Jamma, change! Horrible change!

Mamma Jamma: What is it, Tom Cloud?

Tom Cloud: It's the trees! The trees!

Mamma Jamma: Oh, let me guess. When they fall over, another one grows right away?

Tom Cloud: Aye.

Mamma Jamma: And then the fallen ones get up and walk around?

Tom Cloud: Aye.

Mamma Jamma: And they've got eyes?

Tom Cloud: Eyes!!!

Mamma Jamma: That's all normal.

Tom Cloud: But they're building forts out of wood!

Mamma Jamma: Building forts out of wood.

Tom Cloud: Aye.

Mamma Jamma: Instead of muffins?

Tom Cloud: They've lost their noggins!

Mr. Slime: No, they're just changing. We all change every day. Tom Cloud, you change my slime face.

Tom Cloud: Only to make it look normal.

Mr. Slime: And you change your position in the sky.

Tom Cloud: No, the earth moves 'round but I stay fixed. I don't ever change.

Mamma Jamma: Okay, yeah, you like change and you don't like change. But if people start building things out of wood, we could be out of a job! Tom, you wouldn't want that to happen, right?

Tom Cloud: Nay.

Mamma Jamma: Well then fly me over to the forest right away.

Tom Cloud: Nay.

Mr. Slime: I can fly you to the forest.

Mamma Jamma: Oh no, I've seen you fly. You keep changing shape and you're not aerodynamic at all, and you flop around—

Mr. Slime: I'll cover you in a protective layer of slime.

Mamma Jamma: Well, that's just swell. [Spleurk]

Mr. Eric: And the flying Mr. Slime started weaving his way toward the forest with Mamma all wrapped up in a safe film of slime.

Tom Cloud: I can cover you in rainbows if you prefer, Mamma Jamma.

Mamma Jamma: [Muffled] No, I'm good, thanks!

Mr. Eric: And Tom Cloud went back to his perch in the sky, unmoving, as the world shifted below him.

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: They arrived at the forest to see trees falling down left and right. And these trees uprooted themselves after falling and got up and started walking around.

Harrigo: No no no, please don't go go go. Please go go go go go!

Mamma Jamma: Oh, Harrigo! Nice to see you. You're my favorite magical talking tree.

Harrigo: Mamma Jamma, we're not here for niceties, my forest is fleeing. My family fades away.

Mr. Slime: But don't you see? New family springs up. They're just changing, HG.

Harrigo: Don't call me that.

Mr. Slime: And then look, new saplings spring up from where they left.

Mr. Eric: And indeed, just as the flying Mr. Slime described, little trees sprung up where the old ones left, climbing rapidly into the air.

Harrigo: But some of them only go a few feet away and some go beyond the horizon, and others go to that hill and make themselves into forts. I don't understand!

Mamma Jamma: Wooden forts? I don't get it, either? How old are these trees, Harrigo?

Harrigo: A hundred years or so.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, no wonder they've got such silly ideas, they're practically babies.

Mr. Eric: And she raised her voice, addressing the entire forest.

Mamma Jamma: Homes are made out of muffins, okay? Or sometimes rocketships. But never wood! Who would do such a thing?

Mr. Eric: All the trees creaked and groaned. Various knots and holes on these trees shaped into very human looking eyes and looked upon Mamma Jamma in confusion.

Harrigo: I don't think they understand.

Mr. Slime: No, it's you two who need to understand. Change is happening and there's no quick fix that's suddenly gonna stop it altoge—

Mamma Jamma: Oh, a song!

[Record scratch.]

Harrigo: We could sing a song!

Mamma Jamma: That'll fix everything.

Harrigo: [In the background] Please don't go, please don't go go go. Please don't go go go go go, please don't go go go, please don't go go go...

Mamma Jamma: [Singing] His name is Harrigo, he loves all trees you know, so please never go away. You should all stay the same nothing's scarier than change, so please never go away. I hear building wooden forts gives you horrifying warts so just come on back and always stay. Don't go away.

Mr. Eric: Many trees had gathered 'round as they sung and even a few of the wooden forts had grown closer.

Mamma Jamma: It's working! They're coming home.

Harrigo: Okay, trees. I remember where you all came from... so just climb back into your... um, oh.

Mr. Eric: But new trees had already grown up where the old trees had left.

Mamma Jamma: Well, where's everybody going to fit?

Mr. Eric: A few of the old trees tried to crowd in with the new and a few of the forts tried to squeeze in between. There was crunching and scratching and groaning of wood sounding all through the forest. Tree knot eyes scrunched up in discomfort and dismay. Dark clouds drew over them and a heavy rain started to fall.

Tom Cloud: Eek, look at all this horrible change.

Harrigo: Don't worry, Tom Cloud. We're putting everything back the way it was.

Mamma Jamma: Well how do you plan to do that, exactly?

Harrigo: I'll just grab them with my roots while you stomp with their boots, then they'll never go away again.

Mamma Jamma: Excuse me, no. I'm not stomping on anyone with my boots.

Harrigo: Ooh...

Mamma Jamma: Harrigo, you can't force this. You're gonna make people unhappy.

Tom Cloud: Oh, I know! I can vomit rainbows. That'll make everyone happy.

Mamma Jamma: Please don't, Tom Cloud.

Harrigo: Please DO, Tom Cloud.

Mr. Eric: Harrigo's roots stretched as far as the eye could see and started reaching up and locking all the crowded trees and forts into place, just as Tom Cloud went around, well, doing what Tom Cloud does.

Tom Cloud: And horking up rainbows, Mr. Eric!

Mr. Eric: Okay, everybody knows that, Tom!

Tom Cloud: HEearuughhh.

Mr. Eric: Could you just not make the sounds, please.

Tom Cloud: I've got to make the sounds or it's not a proper hork.

Mr. Eric: Okay, Tom Cloud was horking up rainbows. And as he did, big happy smiles across every tree face.

Mamma Jamma: These rainbow smiles aren't gonna last, you two. We've got to deal with this problem.

Harrigo: We are dealing with it. We're putting it all back to normal.

Mr. Eric: Mamma Jamma rushed for shelter inside one of these new wooden forts.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, it's so cozy in here.

Mr. Eric: She saw two knotted tree eyes form inside one of the fort walls and glare at her grumpily.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, I'm sorry little wooden fort. I should have stepped inside one of these buildings before saying they were terrible. Things are just changing so fast.

Mr. Eric: Mamma Jamma inspected the wooden fort.

Mamma Jamma: So, when it rains you don't need a new roof?

Mr. Eric: And the tree eyes seemed to smile at her.

Mamma Jamma: Wow, that'd let us build new homes faster because we wouldn't be fixing up all the old muffin homes. You've even got a stone fireplace. What a great idea.

Mr. Eric: And the friendly tree face on the wall seemed to nod.

Mamma Jamma: So change can be good. Oh, but I don't know how I'm ever gonna convince Harrigo and Tom Cloud.

Mr. Eric: The flying Mr. Slime squeezed up through a pair of floor boards.

Mr. Slime: You should tell him to uproot himself and go live in outer space and make maracas for aliens.

Mamma Jamma: I think that might be a little too much change for him. Oh, I just don't know what to do.

Mr. Eric: And as Mamma Jamma warmed her hands over a fire of old fallen sticks. A tree branch reached towards a pot of something brewing over that fire and poured Mamma Jamma a mug of hot chocolate.

Mamma Jamma: Just to be clear, this wasn't talking chocolate, this is just regular chocolate.

Mr. Eric: The tree face nodded.

Mamma Jamma: Chocolate.

Mr. Slime: Change.

Mamma Jamma: Chocolate.

Mr. Slime: Change, Mamma Jamma.

Mamma Jamma: Chocolate, the Flying Mr. Slime!

Mr. Eric: And Mamma Jamma rushed out into the storm of rain and roots and rainbows, hugging her mug of hot chocolate tight.

Mamma Jamma: Harrigo!

Harrigo: Look! We're almost finished.

Mr. Eric: And Mamma Jamma dodged between Harrigo's grappling roots and Tom Cloud's... you know.

Tom Cloud: It's called rainbowk, like rainbow barf!

Mr. Eric: Okay, thanks.

And Mamma Jamma skipped, dodged, and rolled past it all, getting right up to Harrigo's face and...

Mamma Jamma: Harrigo, try some of this.

Mr. Eric: With a tip of her mug, she poured a single drop of hot chocolate into Harrigo's mouth.

Harrigo: I understand, now.

Mr. Eric: And Harrigo's roots started to loosen and withdraw, and all the trees grumpily wiped off the rainbowk and started pulling away from one another.

Mr. Slime: Now you get it.

Mr. Eric: Said the Flying Mr. Slime as the rain dried up and the clouds began to part.

Mr. Slime: You've got to embrace all change all the time, it's the only constant.

Mamma Jamma: What are you talking about?

Harrigo: I think he needs another song.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, definitely.

Mr. Slime: No... I really don't.

Tom Cloud: I'd like a song. I want to dance even though I'm bad at it.

Harrigo: [In the background] Harrigo go go go go, Harrigo go go, Harrigo go go...

Mamma Jamma: We're all like Harrigo, it's tough to change and grow, but at least there's always chocolate. It's not too late to start, just open up your heart, then go have a bite of chocolate. Admitting when you're wrong will help you join the song of growth and change and chocolate.

I'll take mine to go.

Mr. Eric: And after listening to their last song, the trees didn't seem so angry anymore. Some of them moved right next door to their old roots, and some went back over the horizon, and some of the big trees picked up the little forts so even more families could live together.

Mr. Slime: So wait. We don't need to change everything all the time?

Mamma Jamma: Oh, sweetie, have a sip of this.

Mr. Slime: Whoa. So the only constant is chocolate.

Mamma Jamma: Yeah, just don't think about it too hard.

Mr. Slime: Whoa...

Mamma Jamma: Bye bye! See ya later, alligator.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: All right Anna and Astrid. I hope you enjoyed your story and William and Sean, thank you for challenging me with those new characters.

I'd like to thank Karen O'Keefe, my co-creator. Craig Martinson for our theme song, Jason O'Keefe for our art work, and all you kids at home who face big changes head-on. Can you think of something in your life that's changed recently? How are you feeling about it? Let us know.

And until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]