

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 144: What if mermaids turn into robots?](#)

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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.

Fred the Dog: Oh, before we start all that stuff, we've got a shout out for Arlo. She's seven and a half and loves animals, especially foxes.

Mr. Eric: Oh, thank you, Arlo. I think foxes are adorable.

JF Kitty: And I've got a shout out for James.

Mr. Eric: Hey, James.

JF Kitty: James is five years old.

Fred the Dog: And finally, we've got a big shout out for Noah, who's seven years old from Sydney, Australia. He likes to listen at bedtime and he likes to write stories.

JF Kitty: And he says, "I am a kid and not my mom typing this."

Mr. Eric: Wow, Noah, you are an excellent typist. So, thank you Noah, James, and Arlo. Now, let's meet our guest for this week, my friend and fellow storyteller, Charlie White!

Charlie: Hi! Thank you so much for having me, today, Mr. Eric. What If World is a favorite of me and my family and we're so excited to be on your podcast today.

Mr. Eric: Thank you. Just Us Weirdos, that's Charlie's show, it is a superhero podcast for kids and it also has lessons for adults, and I don't know. We

will talk a lot about that later. I love his show. And now we're gonna hear a question from a listener named Aaron.

Aaron: My name is Aaron, and my what if question is what if mermaids turn into robot superheroes? I really like superheroes.

Mr. Eric: Oh, well, you like superheroes, you've come to the right podcast, today. We've got our superhero expert here.

Charlie: I do my best.

Mr. Eric: We're gonna get one more question from a pair of patrons named Harper and Ethan.

Harper: My name is Harper.

Ethan: And my name is Ethan.

Together: And our favorite thing is reptiles.

Ethan: And our question is what if twins got powers and turned into mermaids.

E&H's Parent: Say it again Harper, just be clear.

Harper: Our question is what if twins turned into mermaids and had special powers.

E&H's Parent: You want to say you love his stories?

Harper: We love your stories.

E&H's Parent: Bye, bye.

Harper: Bye.

Ethan: Bye.

Mr. Eric: Whoa.

Charlie: This is mind-blowing, and I've just got to say, uh, Harper and Ethan, you're listening to the right podcast because I like reptiles, too. The only pet in our home is a red crested gecko named Scratch.

Mr. Eric: Whoa!

Charlie: And I think this might be Scratch's first appearance on a podcast.

Mr. Eric: Wow. I did not know that. That's news to me. Well, I'm glad this question is the one we've got. So we're gonna find out what if mermaids could turn into robots and what if twins turned into mermaids and had special powers?

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Most mermaids couldn't breathe air and most robots couldn't get their circuits wet but the merborg twins were different. They loved being underwater just as much as they loved being on the land.

Harponic: I've got you, Ethantricity. Hahah.

Ethantricity: You make think you have me, Harponic, but if you look more closely, you'll notice that I, actually, have you.

Harponic: Aaah!

Mr. Eric: Ethantricity and Harponic were twins and they were playing tag on the water. Their parents had built them both at the same time with the same schematics, but somehow they turned out very different. Ethantricity was always a robot on land and a mermaid under the water, but with Harponic, it was the exact opposite. And there was one more thing that set the merborg twins apart.

Ursa Minor: [Cackling laughter]

Ethantricity: Oh, no, Harponic, look over there! It's Ursa Minor, the sea witch.

Ursa Minor: It's a sea reptile, and I know you two are superheroes with the power to transform into mermaids and robots and back and forth and I want those powers for myself! And once I've got your super merborg powers, I will rule the seven C! Cookies, canaries, capes, candles, crabs, and coupons.

Ethantricity: One, two, three, four, that's only six Cs, Ursa Minor!

Ursa Minor: Then I also wish to rule Counting! And accounting, too! That's eight Cs.

Ethantricity: You need to pay attention to the fact that there are two Cs in accounting, so you're up to nine.

Ursa Minor: Two Cs? Blast!

Mr. Eric: And while Ursa Minor was distracted, Harponic dove up into the air, and even though she was a mermaid on air, she was able to swim through the sky, doing a cool aerial move, she took her electric harpoon and dove

back under the water, wrapping up Ursa Minor and dragging her under the sea.

Ursa Minor: Waah! Whyyy!

Ethantricity: Wait, Harponic! That looked cool. Don't swim away, wait for me.

Mr. Eric: And Ethan dove after his sister. She was now a robot sinking deep under the sea with Ursa Minor wrapped up in the rope of her harpoon. And Ethan was struggling to catch up. By the time he got there, Ursa Minor was already trapped at the bottom of the ocean floor and a bunch of sea creatures were gathering around Harponic, celebrating her victory.

Sea Creatures: You did it, Harponic!

Yay, Harponic! We're so impressed with you!

Harponic: Oh, I know, but it was very helpful to have Ethan distracting Ursa Minor so that I could capture her with my harpoon.

Sea Creatures: Who's Ethan?

You mean your sidekick?

Ethantricity: Hey, I'm not a sidekick. I'm actually the one who makes more sense. I'm a robot on land and a mermaid underwater.

Harponic: And he is my twin brother. We're a team.

Sea Creatures: Oh yeah, a robot who can't use his electric powers underwater, snore.

Harponic is so cool with that musical harpoon, why wouldn't everybody want to be like her?

Mr. Eric: And the sea creatures continued to fawn over Harponic.

Ethantricity: But I was—

Mr. Eric: And ignore poor Ethan.

Ethantricity: Didn't you see when I—

Mr. Eric: And they all swam away, taking Ursa Minor back to her watery jail yet again.

[Time skip noise.]

Ethan tried to distinguish himself any way he could, but it seemed like no matter what he did, everyone wanted to pay attention to his sister rather than him. He saved a family of baby fish from a sea snake.

Ethantricity: Oh, look at these cute guys. I think they're about to say their first words.

Baby fish: Harponic's autograph please?

Ethantricity: Oh...

Mr. Eric: He restored electricity to all of New What City during a blackout.

Ethantricity: There, now you can all see and keep your food refrigerated, and it's I, Ethan, wait... wait, is that a musical harpoon I hear.

Fred the Dog: Oh my goodness! Harponic is hosting an impromptu rock concert, let's all go celebrate!

Ethantricity: Oh...

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: He even saved hundreds of sailors from a sinking aircraft carrier.

Sailor: [Coughing]

Ethantricity: I'm so glad I was able to swim under your boat as a mermaid and then climb back up as a robot and use myself to recharge your battery and we'll make it back to shore safely.

Sailor: Oh man, I was almost going under just the--what is that?

Ethantricity: I don't know, I smell something.

Sailor: Oh, my goodness! It's... seaweed pizza!

Ethantricity: Do you guys have a kitchen on board?

Sailor: No, we don't have a kitchen on board.

Ethantricity: It's being flown in! Who... who is... oh, Harponic!

Harponic: Hello, everyone. I am here with your seaweed pizza. I heard you were very cold in the waters. This will warm you up.

Sailors: Wow! Harponic's a hero!

Hip hip hooray!

Hip hip hooray!

Ethantricity: But you wouldn't have even been able to do this if I hadn't have saved your ship...

Sailor: We said, hip hip hooray!

Ethantricity: For me, right?

Sailor: For Harponic.

Ethantricity: Oh...

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: Ethantricity had had just about enough. He went to find the only magical person he knew under the sea. He swam back up the Where River to the fortress of Wherecatraz where Ursa Minor was being held.

Ethantricity: There's only one person here who will get me noticed the way she gets noticed.

Ursa Minor: [Laughs] Come to break me out of prison?

Ethantricity: I want to be more like my sister. I want to be able to use my robot powers when I'm underwater.

Ursa Minor: Well...

Mr. Eric: And she opened up her prison gate. Somehow it had already been unlocked.

Ethantricity: Wait, how did you do that?

Ursa Minor: Oh, that's a story for another time. So, you wish to have what is it?

Ethantricity: I wanted to be a robot when I was underwater, but now I also kind of want to know why that door's open.

Ursa Minor: Well, I'm sorry. I can grant one of those requests and only one.

Ethantricity: I guess the robot one. I want people to just notice me.

Ursa Minor: Oh, like they do your poor sister, hmm?

[Someone trying to shout in the distance, as if they're gagged.]

Mr. Eric: There was a distant clattering from down the hall of Wherecatraz prison.

Ethantricity: Is that another prisoner, Ursa Minor?

Ursa Minor: Oh, don't worry about that. We've got some magic to do.

Mr. Eric: Ursa Minor was already casting her spell upon Ethantricity who turned from a robot into... a mermaid.

Ursa Minor: Now I've got your superpowers. You're just a regular mermaid. But you will turn into a robot underwater, just as you wished.

Ethantricity: So you made me just Harp?

Ursa Minor: Just like Harp was.

Ethantricity: Maybe now I'll be able to deliver pizzas at least.

[Muffled yelling again!]

Mr. Eric: He heard that distant murmuring again and a clatter.

Ethantricity: Wait, I recognize that clatter. I've heard it before.

Ursa Minor: Oh, maybe you have. Ta-ta, toodle-oo!

Ethantricity: Harponic, is that you clattering!

Harponic: [Muffled shouting.]

Ethantricity: Are we playing a game right now. Um, three words.

Harponic: [Negative muffled shouting.]

Ethantricity: First word is trap. Okay, there's a trap. I'm looking around for the trap. Second word?

Ursa Minor: She is trapped! Oh, I can't bear this. I trapped your sister, I thought that. I feel like everyone figured that out already. She's down the hall.

Ethantricity: You trapped my sister? Why would you do that?

Ursa Minor: Oh, you'll see! [Cackles]

Ethantricity: I guess I gotta go get my sister, now. Hold on, Harp. I'm coming. Oh. Curse these robot fins.

Mr. Eric: And flopping around like a mermaid was really hard without Harp's flying powers, but he managed to get down the hall, open up a cell door and find his sister... except...

Ethantricity: Harponic, is that you? But... why are you in a robot form. You're not underwater.

Harponic: [Muffled grumbling and frustrated muffled screaming.]

Ethantricity: And what's that around your mouth? Is that a new fashion choice? I can't understand you. I'm just going to take it off for a minute.

Harponic: I am now a robot on land.

Ethantricity: But that doesn't make sense because I'm a mermaid on land.

Harponic: I went to Ursa Minor. I was tired of all the attention all the time.

Ethantricity: You went to Ursa Minor? How could you do that?

Harponic: I thought I would finally be like you and we could just have a normal life.

Ethantricity: I thought I could finally be like you and be noticed for cool things and have people ask about me instead of asking about you all the time.

[Distant crashing]

Mr. Eric: They heard crashing and flooding. Ursa Minor was tearing down the prison. It was all crumbling back into the Where River.

Ethantricity: Oh no!

Ursa Minor: I will free all of What If World's most dangerous villains.

Ethantricity: Oh no, and it looks like she's starting to go after the six Cs. Oh, and the seventh, and look out accounting, she's coming for the eighth and ninth!

Ursa Minor: Yes. All the Cs, well, at least nine of them, are mine!

Harponic: We've got to stop her, but we don't have our super powers anymore.

Ethantricity: I don't think it was our powers that made us special.

Harponic: I mean, they really helped us beat sea monsters.

Ursa Minor: Sea reptiles!

Ethantricity: I know people don't always call me the smart one, but I'm gonna prove it.

Mr. Eric: The halls of Wherecatraz were flooding and Ethan flopped his way into the water, and the moment the mermaid Ethan struck water, he turned back into an underwater robot and swam down to find Ursa Minor surrounded by the crumbling prison and reveling in her super powers that she'd stolen.

Ursa Minor: Oh, I have electric powers and flying powers! And my own magic! Hahaha!

Ethantricity: You also have some pretty stinky sea serpents around you!

Ursa Minor: Sea reptiles!

Harponic: Uh, Ethan, what are you doing?

Ethantricity: I'm pointing out that those sea serpents that the sea witch has don't look like they can even swim in a straight line.

Ursa Minor: I'm gonna teach you a lesson that you'll never forget! Well, you'll probably forget it once I've finished eating you, though.

Mr. Eric: And Ursa Minor eat Ethan and Harper in one giant gulp.

Harponic: Oh great. Now we're eaten.

Ethantricity: This is going exactly to my plan.

Harponic: We are powerless superheroes in the belly of a giant sea reptile.

Ethantricity: But it wasn't our powers that made us special.

Mr. Eric: And Ethan started opening up his fingerplate to expose a wire.

Harponic: Ethan, your wires cannot get wet. It's too dangerous!

Ethantricity: But being heroic isn't just about the powers that we have. It's about what we decide to do and this is something I can decide to do. I'm gonna chance it.

Mr. Eric: Ethan held up the exposed wire of his finger and slowly eased it down toward the sea reptile's stomach acids. A shock rang through and Ursa Minor convulsed, spitting out the twins.

Ursa Minor: Blech!

Harponic: Ethan, Ethan! Put back your wire!

Ethantricity: Oh, oh! Did you see what I just did, though?

Harponic: You saved us, you silly.

Ethantricity: Ow.

Harponic: But we've got to get that wire in. You can't get anymore water in your circuits, they could be permanently damaged.

Mr. Eric: She used her wooden harpoon to slowly ease the wire back into his finger and close the plates over the exposed wire before collapsing from the shock.

Ethantricity: I always wonder why this creator put this weird stinky pump on my robot body, but now I know. I've just got to get my hand over there and... [beep].

Mr. Eric: And Ethan hit the water pump on his side, expelling all of the corrosive seawater from his circuits. And then went over to check on his sister.

Ethantricity: Harponic, are you okay?

Harponic: I think... I will be.

Sea Creature: Oh, wow, look what they did! They saved the seven Cs!

Ethantricity: But my sister! Can someone get her help?

Sea Creature: What? You two are a couple of superheroes, you don't need help from some normal underwater people?

Ethantricity: We're not people, you see, Harp is now a mermaid and I'm a robot.

Sea Creature: Come on, get up! Be super. You're gonna have to rebuild this whole Wherecatraz now you've torn it down.

Ursa Minor: Yes, you need to reimprison me or I'll never give you back your powers.

Ethantricity: You know what, Ursa Minor? I discovered I have powers even when I'm a robot underwater, and my sister still has powers. And if no one else is gonna be helpful here. I'm gonna help my sister, and I think you're gonna help me, Harponic.

Harponic: You've got that right.

Ursa Minor: Ow! I ruled the seven Cs... eight and nine, as well.

Ethantricity: You can have accounting, as far as I'm concerned. Hey, look. I see one C that Ursa Minor doesn't rule. It's a cuttlefish in the crowd and it's coming towards us.

Cuttlefish: I think it's really cool what you two did today. I'm kind of a little fish but I'll do what I can to help.

Ethantricity: Oh, that's so nice, but didn't you hear, little cuttlefish? We're not special anymore.

Cuttlefish: Well, you are to me.

Mr. Eric: And Ethantricity offered his hand to the little cuttlefish and his other hand to his twin sister and the three of them swam off together.

Sea Creature: So we're gonna have to rebuild this prison by ourselves.

Ursa Minor: You know, you could all just work for me. I'll take over the prison and we'll rebuild it together.

Sea Creatures: That sounds like a great plan.
Can't see any problems with that.

Harmonic: Do you think they'll ever learn, Ethan?

Ethantricity: I bet if they get swallowed by a fish, they'll learn.

Ursa Minor: A reptile!

Mr. Eric: The end.
[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: All right!

Charlie: That was great.

Mr. Eric: So many mermaids, so many robots. If you want to get more than your fair share of superpowers, you should really check out Just Us Weirdos.

Charlie: Thanks so much. And the other thing Just Us Weirdos has in common with this episode is that we feature superpowers that aren't exactly, how do you say it, useful.

Mr. Eric: I mean, the title is appropriate. These are misfit superheroes. Can you tell us about some of their powers?

Charlie: One of the original weirdos is Baninja, who has the power to throw a banana anywhere he wants and make sure that you will slip on it.

Mr. Eric: I would take that power. Although I would probably misuse it, so maybe you shouldn't give it to me.

Charlie, you're a writer and it really has a long arc that kind of sneaks up on you from episode to episode, like...

Charlie: Yeah, I wanted to tell an epic story that listeners that decide to tune in from episode one and listen through it are gonna be satisfied with, but I do try to keep the episodic constraints in mind so that somebody listening to just one episode can get a snippet of what it's like for someone to have a nearly useless superpower and see how they decide to use it to solve a problem.

Mr. Eric: Charlie, it was so great having you here, today. Thank you, thank you, thank you for coming on the show, and I look forward to hanging out with you again soon.

Charlie: Absolutely. It was a blast to be here. What If World accompanies my family in the car on many journeys and I hope my kids get a kick out of hearing my voice on it.

Mr. Eric: I hope so, too. Well, give my best to the family and I'll talk to you soon, Charlie.

Charlie: Thanks, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: All right, bye!

Charlie: Bye!

Mr. Eric: I'd like to thank Charlie White for guest-starring on the show today and our listeners Aaron, Harper, and Ethan for their great questions.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]