

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 159: What if there was such a thing as magic shoes?](#)

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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—
- Alabaster Zero: And I'm afraid you're being interrupted by Alabaster Zero.
- Mr. Eric: Hey, Alabaster.
- Alabaster Zero: I'm giving a shout out to Zoey, who's nine years old and is from Australia.
- Mr. Eric: Well, thanks, Zoey.
- Fred the Dog: And I have a quick bark to give to William.
- Mr. Eric: Well, thank you, Fred.
- Fred the Dog: William is five years old. He loves bike riding, recently without training wheels, and he loves swinging.
- Mr. Eric: Thank you, William, and congratulations.
- Abacus: And I have quite the slew of shout outs today.
- Mr. Eric: Cool, Abacus.
- Abacus: First, we're shouting out Sadie and Kate from Toronto. Sadie loves to swim and Kate loves tickles. They listen to What If World together at bedtime and I'm their favorite characters.
- Mr. Eric: Well, thank you Sadie and Kate.

Abacus: And finally, one last shout out for Lucas who loves *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, me, of course, as well as Fred the Dog.

Fred the Dog: Oh, yay! Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Well, thank you Lucas, Kate, Sadie, William, and Zoey. Now, let's meet our guest today. A great author and friend of the show, Scott Cranfield.

Scott: That's great. Really pleased to be here and thanks for having me.

Mr. Eric: Thank you so much for coming and speaking of social distance, we are very, very far away. Where are you at right now?

Scott: So I'm in a place called Hartsford, which I know you have a Hartford in Connecticut in America. This is Hartford just outside London, in UK.

Mr. Eric: Now you have a series of books, is that right?

Scott: Correct, yeah. So, just a quick background on that. I wrote a series of books called the *Wise Bear* stories and they're really all about helping children develop a new perspective so they can keep a balanced mindset on the various different challenges they face in life, different things they go through: school, with friendships, with worries, concerns, anxieties. And in the story, the Wise Bear is the character that helps them to look at things in a new way so they can actually see the truth behind things and that can help to calm their mind down and bring them back into balance.

Mr. Eric: We're really, really excited to have you. And we're gonna get a question going right away.

Scott: Okay.

Mr. Eric: The first question is from Bridget.

Bridget: My name is Bridget and I'm six years old and I like my teddy bear. And my what if world question is what if [unclear] has magic shoes? Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Ooh, magic shoes, that sounds fun.

Scott: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think for kids to have any part of magic clothing, that would be good.

Mr. Eric: Yeah. We've got one patron who submitted a character idea and we've been doing this a little more often lately. So, Bob the Blob was submitted by Jonah. And Jonah just turned 11, happy belated.

Scott: Okay.

Mr. Eric: Bob is shy and kind and lives under a rock. He is a blob of slime.

Scott: Okay!

Mr. Eric: He's good at expanding and contracting and he struggles with lots of people. So I imagine crowds and such would be difficult for Bob. Well, this is a really, really great place to start. I think we should just jump right into our story.

Scott: Definitely.

Mr. Eric: Cool. So let's find out what if there was a such a thing as magic shoes and maybe we'll meet Bob and Wise Bear along the way.

[Rising harp scale.]

Bob the Blob has been stewing alone under his rock for some time.

Bob: Uh... I'm bored... bored... bored...

Mr. Eric: When his teddy bear suddenly decided to come alive.

Bob: Hi, Bear. What's new with you?

Wise Bear: Well, Bob, I've been out and about and I have seen people doing all sort of things outside. You can't believe it. They're playing different games but they're keeping their distance at the moment, so really strange world.

Bob: Oh, I wanna play outside but Ma Slime gave me loads of chores I gotta do. Pick up my ectoplasm, dissolve the trash, empty the dishwasher. I just really want to go play Blob Ball by myself.

Wise Bear: That's your favorite thing, isn't it, Bob? To play that.

Bob: Yeah, it is.

Wise Bear: And don't forget, the chores you're being asked to do, they're gonna help you get better at Blob Ball.

Bob: Really? Huh...

Wise Bear: Well, during Blob Ball, don't you have to change shape and size and move around in different directions in different shapes and speeds.

Bob: Yeah, yeah you do.

Wise Bear: Well, imagine the different things that Ma is asking you to do, you're gonna have to be so adaptable to get good at the chores won't that help you with your Blob Ball?

Bob: Maybe... I just don't know. See, you have such a Wise Bear brain and you've got those Wise Bear shoes and I don't have Wise Bear anything. I'm just a bloob...

Wise Bear: Well, Bob, what if just today I let you have my magic shoes. Would you like that?

Bob: Magic... shoes? I've never had shoes. I've never had feet! Okay, okay, okay.

Mr. Eric: And Wise Bear took off his very big Wise Bear shoes and handed them over to Bob the Blob.

Bob: They fit really well, if I can squish my blob in there well enough.

Mr. Eric: So Bob the Blob went around doing all the chores around the house. With his magic shoes on, he felt stronger than ever and faster than ever. He was changing shape this way and that. He was reaching up to put dishes in the very, very top cabinets and all the way down under the sink at the same time.

I don't know if you should put dishes under the sink, but Bob the Blob's still learning how to do chores.

[Plates clatter and break.]

Bob: Hey, Wise Bear! I finished my chores as fast as ever. I think these shoes are really, really magic.

Wise Bear: They are, Bob. And the magic doesn't end there. The magic of these shoes is it helps you to think differently, as well, Bob. It's not just your body changing shape. You can now think in magic ways.

Bob: Wow! I was just thinking that I'd like to go to the park but I'm nervous to see other people. Can my magic shoes help?

Wise Bear: They definitely can, Bob. These shoes can help you. They will give you magic thoughts and give you a confidence that maybe you've never seen before but it's inside you, Bob. That confidence is in you. The shoes will just help that magic come out.

Bob: Let's try!

Mr. Eric: The barefoot Wise Bear and Bob the Blob and his magic shoes rolled outside and he saw, at the park, that there were still a few kids playing. Granted they were all nice and stretched out, it was a nice, big, park, and they were really, really lucky to have this space. And Bob the Blob walked up, or rolled up. It's kind of a walking roll when you're a blob wearing shoes. It's pretty hard to picture.

But when he got to the park, he decided he would try Blob Ball in front of his friends for the very first time.

Bob: Wise Bear, I'm feeling a little nervous. I'm just gonna shrink down to a really, really, really, really, really small blob. And that way if I feel nervous, then no one's gonna have to see me.

Wise Bear: Bob, I want you to remember a time when you felt confident in something even when you was on your own. What was that time? Tell me about a time when you've been confident in the past.

Bob: One time I was playing outside and I decided that I would try to stretch myself out as big as I've ever been and I went from one tree on one side of the park to the other tree at the other side of the park. And... but that was a long time ago.

Wise Bear: Yeah, but, Bob. The question is: was that you, doing that?

Bob: Well, yeah...

Wise Bear: So doesn't that mean that confidence is still inside you?

Bob: I don't know, let me see.

Wise Bear: And let those magic shoes work, as well, Bob. Use that memory of confidence and the magic shoes and let's see what happens.

Mr. Eric: And Bob the Blob looked down at his magic, slimy, shiny shoes, and he thought to himself about that time that he'd stretched out as big and wide as he ever had before, and suddenly, he was back to his normal size. And he separated out one blob of Bob slime and started playing Blob Ball with it: throwing it up in the air and it would come down as a football.

Then up again and come down as a frisbee. Then up again and down as a baseball.

Bob: Oh, this is fun!

Mr. Eric: And some of the other kids started to look over in Bob's direction.

Kids: Hey, what are you playing over there?

Bob: It's uh... it's uh... I'm nervous. Um...

Mr. Eric: He looked down at his shoes. He looked over at Wise Bear who gave him a Wise Bear nod.

Bob: I'm playing Blob Ball. It's a game I made up.

Girl: Well, I've got some magic clay. Maybe I'll try to play.

Mr. Eric: And the little girl from far away took out her magic clay and threw it up in the air. It came down as an American football. Then it came down as a proper football. Then it came down as a cricket bat.

Girl: Ooh!

Mr. Eric: And soon kids all over the park were playing their own versions of Blob Ball. Some were using their magic, some were using mud, and some were just using clumps of grass.

Bob: I never thought that I'd have so much fun playing with friends even from this far away.

Wise Bear: Bob, can you see that you've become a leader. Look, you're teaching other kids how to do something. Isn't that amazing?

Bob: It's the best I've felt in days.

Wise Bear: Yeah, but see, Bob, I want you to realize that everybody has some special magic, even if they have the shoes or not. Everybody inside has something that's special to them that they can do and you might just be a world champion at Blob Ball.

Bob: Ooh, ho hoo, I don't know about that. Although I did make it up, so why not?

Wise Bear: Yeah, absolutely. And look at all the other kids, now, playing a version of that game. You've become a leader and taught them.

Mr. Eric: And all the other kids played until it was time to go home. And when Bob the Blob finally walked home with Wise Bear beside him, he looked up at him friend, his teddy bear, and smiled.

Bob: You know, I don't think I could have ever done this without you and your magic shoes. Hang on...

Mr. Eric: Bob the Blob looked down at his feet. Do you think he was still wearing those magic shoes?

Bob: Oh no! I lost your shoes, Wise Bear! Where'd they go.

Wise Bear: Bob, you never needed the shoes in the first place. The magic was always inside your mind.

Bob: Oh, now I see! You're wearing the slimy shoes. You know, you probably should have cleaned them off, first. It's a devil to get out of teddy bear fur, believe me.

[Record scratch.]

Wise Bear: Oh... no... it's all sticky.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Scott, we did it!

Scott: Yeah, very good.

Mr. Eric: Could you tell us a little bit about where Wise Bear came from?

Scott: So really it was because as a father now, my first child came along 16 years ago, and I think as every parent would relate to, you want the best for your own kids. You want them to learn the things that you think are important. And so once I had two children, they've started to go to school, they would come home with different challenges and things and having been a coach for over 30 years, my initial coaching was actually teaching some of the best golfers in the world and then it became life coaching and business coaching.

I would share stories with them, and the way I shared them was literally at the end of the day we would take the content of some of their day where they might have had a challenge and I would make up a story, a bit like we've just done and the Wise Bear would be at the center of the

story and he would help the children see that challenge in a whole new light. And what I found was it really worked for my children. They started to solve some of their own challenges and that was the skill I wanted them to get, because you're not gonna get rid of the challenges, you just want to have the skill to know how to see them in a way that they don't become insurmountable, they don't bother you for two long.

Mr. Eric: What would you say the approximate age range for these would be?

Scott: I would say they're 5-11 in the style they're written. I mean the principles, I mean we get parents saying to us, "Wow, I can't believe how much I've learned from reading these to my kids."

Mr. Eric: Yes.

Scott: But I think the style of them is written probably that 5-11 bracket.

Mr. Eric: Oh, awesome.

Scott: Thank you very much. Thanks, Eric, thanks for having me on.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, absolutely. Stay safe out there.

Scott: Thank you.

Mr. Eric: Bye.

I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all you kids at home who practice seeing your problems in a different light. It's a really useful skill, even for grownups.

And until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]