

Podcast: What If World

[Episode 242: The Pirate, the Penguin, and the Pickle](#)

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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've got a question from a patron named Claire.

Claire: Hi, my name is Claire, and I have an idea for a new what if character. It is a great, green penguin that likes eating pickles and his name is Bob! Thank you, I love your show! Bye.

Mr. Eric: Ooh, a new character suggestion. Well, I'll take it. And I'll also take another question emailed in from a listener named Victoria Lion. Victoria writes, what if Zach was potty training? Oh, that's so good of Zach. Potty the Pirate needs lots of training, so Zach will be doing so much Potty training in this episode, I'm sure. As we find out: what if there was a new character named Bob, the great green penguin who ate pickles, what if Zach was Potty training?

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Our last story ended on the shores of Why-why-ee, one of What If World's most beautiful and relaxing islands. And that's just where today's story begins. You see, Potty the Pirate has packed his picklenic basket and is bringing it down to the beach. Potty's picklenic basket is filled with pickled cucumbers, radishes, string beans, eggs, and all kinds of other vinegary treats.

But this isn't just a picklenic for Potty the Pirate, oh no. For today our pirate is getting some much needed Potty training.

Potty the Pirate: I'm gonna win this pickle-eating contest if it's the last thing I do.

Mr. Eric: Said Potty the Pirate. He'd been named by his father Stewie, because of how much he loved stirring Stewie's pots of stew, but Potty's other passion was making and eating his own delicious pickled treats.

Zach: Come on, Potty! You can do it!

Mr. Eric: Said Zach. He'd put himself in charge of the Potty training.

Zach: Let's go! Faster! Harder! Bigger!

Mr. Eric: Shouted Zach, handing Potty the Pirate pickle after pickle after pickle!

Potty the Pirate: Thank you, Zach, for me Potty training.

Zach: Less talking, more Potty training!

Mr. Eric: Said Zach, clapping Potty the Pirate on the back.

Potty the Pirate: [Coughs]

Zach: Okay, maybe we should take a break.

Mr. Eric: And as Potty the Pirate spat out one big green pickle, he seemed to see another sailing towards him from the horizon.

Zach: Okay, Potty, quick break. And if that's a pickle floating towards us from the ocean, you're gonna eat it!

Potty the Pirate: I don't know if that's a good idea, or if that's even a pickle.

Zach: But what else could it be?

Mr. Eric: Potty the Pirate dramatically flipped up the lid of his picklenic basket, and taped to the inside was a newspaper clipping of a giant green inflatable penguin, the kind that are weighted at the bottom so that no matter which way you pushed it, it would come right back up.

Zach: You don't mean... it couldn't possibly be...

Potty the Pirate: I think it's Bob, the pickle penguin.

Mr. Eric: They watched with bated breath as the pickle penguin floated to shore, briefly getting tangled up in some seaweed [Record scratch.] Then, getting knocked around by a wave, but always bobby back so its head was floating straight up.

Potty the Pirate: Oh, she's a relentless one.

Zach: She's unstoppable!

Potty the Pirate: She's the reason I started making and pickling me own pickles.

Zach: She's the reason why we're Potty training!

Potty the Pirate: She's the reason why we're taking so long talking about why she's the reason.

Zach: Yeah, she is taking a long time to float up here. Could I just drag her a little closer? Would that be?

Potty the Pirate: Yeah, I think we should. She's a little stuck in the sand.

Mr. Eric: And Zach and Potty the Pirate dragged up Bob the pickle penguin until she was right in front of their picklenic basket.

Zach: What are you doing here, Bob? There are still two more days until the pickle eating contest.

Mr. Eric: A stiff breeze blew, rocking Bob side to side as if to say, no.

Potty the Pirate: What do you mean, Bob? Just because you're always ready to eat pickles doesn't mean you can get dragged over here by us and bob about like you own the beach.

Zach: Yeah, we've still got a lot of Potty training to do!

Potty the Pirate: And there's nothing wrong with that! I can Potty train for as long as I have to.

Mr. Eric: The wind blew again. This time, bobbing Bob, the pickle penguin, back and forth as if nodding agreement.

Potty the Pirate: Well, thanks for listening.

Zach: So you'll let us get back to our Potty training?

Mr. Eric: And Bob continued to nod.

Potty the Pirate: Oh, thank goodness. So many people told me that you were a relentless pickle-eating machine, and you know I've always looked up to you for that reason. But I'm glad you've got a softer side—

Mr. Eric: But suddenly, the penguin bobbed forward so quickly that it crashed into the picklenic basket, smashing it to smithereens and absorbing all the

pickles inside, getting a shade greener and slimier and bigger in the process.

Zach: Bob, no fair!

Potty the Pirate: Yeah, we needed those pickles for our Potty training.

Zach: You can always make more pickles, Potty the Pirate. We're not gonna let ourselves be pushed around by the likes of Bob the pickle penguin.

Mr. Eric: Zach and Potty the Pirate gathered up the broken pieces of their picklenic basket and headed back to Potty's pickling ship.

Zach: It's time you sailed me home, anyway, Potty.

Mr. Eric: Said Zach.

Zach: My mom wants us back early so we can help finishing the trophy.

Potty the Pirate: First we'll finish it, then we'll winish it.

Zach: I agree, but the rhyme needs work.

Mr. Eric: And Zach and Potty the Pirate hopped upon Potty's pickling ship and set sail for Zach's rocketship house, which was presently parked upon the water. But there, bobbing right ahead of them, was—

Potty & Zach: Bob!

Zach: How did you swim ahead of us so fast? You're just a giant inflatable toy!

Potty the Pirate: No, she's a pickled penguin's their natural habitat.

Mr. Eric: And there was Bob the penguin, balancing atop the water with their weighted-down bottom, as the wind bobbed them back and forth, bashing into Zach's rocketship house with a crash!

Zach: Come on, Potty! We've got to go faster!

Potty the Pirate: We can't all live in rocketship houses...

Mr. Eric: And by the time they finally sailed over to Zach's house, Bob the pickle penguin was bobbing away on distant waves, looking perhaps a little greener, a little slimier, and a little bigger.

Zach: Mom! Is everyone okay?

Mr. Eric: Said Zach, taking the ladder down off the ship and rushing through his front door, Potty the Pirate close behind.

Mamma Jamma: Oh, everyone's fine, Zach. That was just the pickle trophy inspector. She said she'd pay for the broken window. It's an honest mistake when you're a giant pickle penguin, right?

Zach: Trophy inspector?

Potty the Pirate: Oh dear.

Mamma Jamma: Yeah, I was almost finished putting together the trophy for the pickle eating contest that you left me alone to make by myself.

Zach: But Mom, that was Bob the pickle penguin!

Potty the Pirate: Ten time champion of the pickle eating contest.

Mamma Jamma: Exactly. That's why she has lot of experience with pickle trophies.

Zach: Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no!

Mr. Eric: Zach rushed into the kitchen where they'd left the pickle trophy.

Zach: Mom?

Mamma Jamma: Yes, honey?

Zach: Remember how Potty pirate pickled a peck of pickling peppers?

Mamma Jamma: Perfectly! Potty pirate pickled a peck of peppery pickles perchance to pick up plenty a proper pickle prize.

Potty the Pirate: But where's the peck of peppery pickling peppers Potty pirate pickled?

Mamma Jamma: It appears apologies are probably appropriate. Potty, your peck of peppery pickles were purloined by pickle penguins!

Potty the Pirate: Not any pickle penguins. Bob the pickle penguin. Me hero has become me nemesis.

Mr. Eric: The trophy was to be a giant glass pickle jar in the shape of a pickle itself and full, of course, of pickles. But the trophy jar had been unscrewed and all the pickles, pepper or otherwise, were gone.

Potty the Pirate: Oh, that's it. I'm through making pickles and eating pickles. I never want to see another pickle again. [Cries]

Mr. Eric: And Potty the Pirate ran back to his ship. Potty the Pirate had been named by his poppa for Potty loved stirring the pot of stew, and poppa pirate was the stew-maker for all the pirates of pirate land, or pirate sea, depending on who you asked. But pickles had been the first thing that Potty the Pirate had ever felt were his. He loved making them, he loved eating them, and he felt like he'd never be his own pirate until he had proved himself by winning this pickle-eating contest.

But now, there he stood at the bow of his ship, holding his last and biggest jar of pickles, preparing to pour its plentitude of pickles into the ocean.

Potty the Pirate: [Sniffing] Sometimes you just can't win and some people you just can't beat.

Mr. Eric: Said Potty, unscrewing the jar.

Zach: But is that any reason not to try?

Mr. Eric: Called out Zach from behind him.

Potty the Pirate: If I can't win, then why bother?

Zach: Oh, you know, I'm not the best at Potty training.

Potty the Pirate: Oh, no. Stop.

Zach: No, it's true. My mom encourages my Potty training, but sometimes I just want to give up. And I don't even know if I'm any good at it.

Potty the Pirate: Then why do you keep Potty training?

Zach: Because I enjoy it and I don't need to be the best. But I like practicing and playing and growing as I go.

Potty the Pirate: You know what? I like that, too, Zach.

Zach: Then screw that lid back on that jar. We've got some Potty training to do!

Potty the Pirate: Well then shouldn't I leave the lid off so that we can get the pickles out?

Zach: Okay, yeah, but I just didn't want you to toss it in the ocean, basically.

Potty the Pirate: Oh, and if the lid's on, then when I toss it in the ocean, it won't spill out.

Zach: No, actually, we're not tossing the pickles in the ocean. Am I not making myself clear?

Potty the Pirate: Uh... I'm just gonna hand you the jar of pickles.

Zach: Yeah, that's probably for the best.

Mr. Eric: And Zach was Potty training day and night or whenever Mamma Jamma allowed them to play together. Potty ate pickles of all different shapes, sizes, and colors. He ate them standing up, sitting down, upside-down, and turned around. He ate them on the crow's nest of his ship, and off the atomic engines in the basement of Zach's house.

Zach: Oh, wait, you know what, actually those might be radioactive, let's not eat those.

Mr. Eric: He ate all the pickles everywhere except the radioactive ones. And at the end of two days' time...

Zach: Our Potty training is complete.

Mr. Eric: Zach said, as Potty the Pirate sat down at a giant picklenic table alongside all of What If World's most famous pickle-eaters.

Fair Elise: Good luck, fellow contestant.

Mr. Eric: Said President Fair Elise, sitting to Potty's right side.

Bob: [Wheezes and squeaks]

Mr. Eric: Said Bob, the pickled penguin, bobbing gently in the breeze to Potty's left side.

Potty the Pirate: Fair Elise, I didn't know you were a pickle eating champion.

Fair Elise: There's a lot of things you don't know about me because we've never met.

Potty the Pirate: Oh, sorry. I just knew you because you're the president.

Fair Elise: I assumed. Good luck to you. May the best pickle eater win.

Potty the Pirate: Well, I've been Potty training for the last 48 hours so I'm ready.

Fair Elise: Oh, then you'll have plenty of room in your stomach, I suppose.

Potty the Pirate: Quite the opposite. I'm absolutely full to the gullet of pickles.

Fair Elise: Well, I am very confused.

Zach: Oh, sorry, Fair Elise, don't mind him.

Fair Elise: Oh, hello, Zach, this is a friend of yours, then?

Zach: More like a student.

Mr. Eric: Said Zach, and grabbed Potty the Pirate's shoulders.

Zach: Hey, we didn't do all that Potty training together for weeks for you to get distracted now.

[Record scratch.]

Fair Elise: And you train with this adult pirate?

Zach: I know what you're thinking, and my mom thought it was weird, too. But he's like an uncle to me and we both really needed this!

Fair Elise: To potty train together?

Zach: Well, how else would we do it?

Potty the Pirate: It hasn't been easy.

Zach: Oh yeah, remember when this inflatable penguin balloon interrupted our Potty training on the beach?

Fair Elise: On the beach you say?

Potty the Pirate: On the beach, in the ocean. We even did Potty training in outer space.

Zach: And we didn't make that mess in zero gravity for nothing!

Fair Elise: Okay, I forfeit.

Mr. Eric: Said Fair Elise, flying up from the picklenic table and far away from Zach and Potty.

Potty the Pirate: What's her problem?

[Ding ding ding ding!]

Mr. Eric: The bell rang and the pickle contest had started. Everyone had a plate piled high with pickles and lines of jars spread before them holding more and more pickles. All the other contestants were digging in. Potty the Pirate reached out to one long, soggy, green, rather unappetizing-looking pickle, took a slow, cautious bite...



Potty the Pirate: No, that's not good.

Mr. Eric: Said Potty, and put the pickle back on the plate.

Potty the Pirate: I prefer me own pickles.

Mr. Eric: The pirate slid his plate over to Bob the pickle penguin and the extra jar, and Fair Elise's plate and extra jar.

Potty the Pirate: If you really like these pickles, you can have 'em.

Mr. Eric: And as Potty the Pirate stood up from the picklenic table, a stiff wind blew in from behind him, knocking Bob the pickle penguin toward the table, where—

[Sucking and whistling noises]

He quickly absorbed every pickle in front of him. The pickle penguin grew and stretched and turned even greener and slimier. Their inflatable green balloon skin was stretched so thin that you could see the countless pickles floating inside.

[Ding ding ding!]

And just like that, the contest was over.

Zach: Uh, Potty, what just happened?

Potty the Pirate: I think Bob won the contest.

Mr. Eric: And Judge Poppa Loo walked over to Bob the penguin.

Poppa Loo: Well, she ate the max amount of pickles for three contestants in about 15 seconds, so, uh, we have a winner, people.

Contestants: Boo!

I didn't even start eating pickles!

That's no fun!

Pickles are kinda gross.

Potty the Pirate: That's what I'm saying. What's the point of a pickle eating contest when the pickles are all, well, that.

Mr. Eric: Poppa Loo tried to hand the giant glass pickle-shaped pickle jar to Bob the pickle penguin, but seeing as the bobbing inflatable green penguin pickle didn't actually have hands, the glass jar just weighted the top half of the penguin down. The strain of the glass jar on the perfectly packed pickle penguin was just too much for her, and—

[Hissing sounds]

With a spray of vinegar and a blob of pickles, Bob the pickle penguin started emptying out.

Poppa Loo: Is there a doctor here? Or perhaps a balloon specialist? A clown, maybe?

Contestants: No.

Uh-uh.

Not me.

Sorry.

Poppa Loo: Anyone that knows the least bit of magic?

Mr. Eric: Fair Elise wavily flew into view, looking a little green, herself.

Fair Elise: I will try to be of assistance.

Zach: Don't worry, we can handle this with our Potty training!

Mr. Eric: Fair Elise saw the spray of pickle juice and heard the plop of pickles.

Fair Elise: You know what, I'm just gonna sit this one out.

Mr. Eric: And she flew away again. Thinking quickly, and knowing all about pickles and pickle jars, Potty pushed the heavy glass trophy off of Bob, then found a pickle jar that was longer than it was wide, and used it to plug up the gap in the inflatable penguin. Just a little bit of pickle juice was still leaking out and Zach and Potty the Pirate looked around for something to bandage up the balloon.

Zach: All I could find is this magazine.

Mr. Eric: Said Zach.

Potty the Pirate: It'll do until we get her to a proper hospital.

Mr. Eric: Potty slapped the magazine on the balloon and the wet pages seemed to sop up the last of the pickle juice, sticking themselves in place over that tiny split in the damaged penguin balloon.

Potty the Pirate: Well, that was close. You're lucky we found this issue of The Pirate Post.

Zach: Oh, I remember you had a feature that month for your piratey pickles.

Potty the Pirate: Yeah, but who here would'a had me magazine.

Mr. Eric: A gentle breeze carefully blew by lifting Bob the pickle penguin back up to standing.

Potty the Pirate: You know you should be resting, Bob. You're only patched with a pickle jar and a magazine, for crying out loud!

Mr. Eric: But the penguin only shook slightly. It seemed to be looking down at the magazine.

Potty the Pirate: This was yours?

Mr. Eric: Bob bobbed back and forth like a nod.

Zach: You like Potty's pickles?

Mr. Eric: The wind grew stronger and Bob's nodding grew more emphatic.

Potty the Pirate: You really really really like them a lot and that's why you've been harassing me?

Mr. Eric: Wind gently shook Bob side to side, flapping the magazine open to the article, one paragraph near the end had been circled.

Zach: What does it say?

Potty the Pirate: Oh, it's from me interview. It says, "When asked if he'd be sharing his pirate pickles with the world, Potty the Pirate shook his head, saying humbly, it's just me making pickles, and while a few pirates like 'em, no one else has ever made a fuss."

Mr. Eric: Then the magazine blew closed again.

Zach: Are you making a fuss, Bob?

Mr. Eric: She nodded.

Potty the Pirate: But you grew frustrated when I didn't seem to understand you, and thus you lashed out, eating all me pickles?

Mr. Eric: She nodded again.

Zach: And now you want to team up with me and Potty the Pirate and help us make pickles?

Mr. Eric: Another nod!

Potty the Pirate: Well, Bob, you would make a perfect pirate catapult to help me launch me pickles all over the world.

Zach: Oh, that sounds like it's gonna take a lot of practice, though.

Potty the Pirate: Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

Together: More Potty training!

Fair Elise: Please no more Potty training.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Well, Claire and Victoria, I hope you enjoyed your story.

Abacus: Abacus P. Grumbler here to belatedly shout out the birthday girl, Jonvie. Jonvie turned five on April 29th and she and her brother Viehan live in Christchurch, New Zealand. Thank you Jonvie and Viehan.

Whendiana Joan: Whendiana Joan, traveling through time to shout out Zella and Jadzia, who love listening to What If World at bedtime.

Fred the Dog: And of course, Fred the Dog here to shout out Harrison. Harrison is nine years old and I'm his favorite character. Thank you so much!

Dracomax: Finally, it is I, Dracomax, here to shout out Humphrey. Humphrey lives in France near Paris. Humphrey is crazy about our podcast and thinks it's awesome. We think you are awesome, too.

Mr. Eric: I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, my producer, Miss Lynne, who pitched this story and came up with the term picklenic, which I love. And all you kids at home who know we don't have to be the best at everything we do. We grow by trying and failing and figuring ourselves out along the way.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]

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