

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 211: Snail Mail Stories](#)

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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.]

Petey the Pirate: Ahoy there, folks and welcome back to What If World, the show where your questions and ideas inspire off-the-cuff stories, or in this case, an off-the-cuff press conference. [Record scratch.]

I'm Petey the Press-ecretey.

Fair Elise: It's pronounced Press Secretary.

Petey the Pirate: Not when I say it!

Fair Elise: Wow, okay.

Petey the Pirate: And President Fair Elise and I are here to answer all of your questions.

Fair Elise: Well, more questions than usual, but not quite all of them.

Venum: I've got a question.

Petey the Pirate: Y'arr, we're jumping right in. Go ahead, you slimy, human-shaped figure.

Venum: Uh, who am I and why am I here?

Petey the Pirate: How am I supposed to know?

Fair Elise: Ahem. The letters, Petey.

Petey the Pirate: Oh, right, right, right. I forgot that most of our questions today come from listeners who actually sent Mr. Eric snail mail. Let me just get out [paper rustling]. This one's from Pauly, who asks, what if Venum, spelled V-E-N-U-M, importantly. What if Venum the slime shaped like a human appeared in What If World? Does that answer your question?

Venum: So I am Venum and I appeared here because of Pauly?

Petey the Pirate: Precisely. Pauly the Pirate presumably pondered upon your precipitous appearance. And so, here ye be.

Venum: Oh, well, do I get to do anything today?

Fair Elise: The press conference is still young. I'm sure you'll have plenty of opportunities to interact—

Whendiana Joan: Whendiana Joan, here from the All Of Time Times.

Fair Elise: Yes, Whendiana.

Whendiana Joan: President Fair Elise. Can you tell us what is with all the fluffy, cuddly stuff around?

[Record scratch.]

Fair Elise: I am so glad that you asked, Whendiana. For you see, our patron Teddy asked, What if all the coziest items in the world surrounded you?

Petey the Pirate: And we figured since this is the first time many of you have gathered in one place socially that you might need a security fluffy to kind of cuddle and feel better.

Whendiana Joan: Follow up question. Is that why Petey the Pirate is snuggling that plush turtle?

Petey the Pirate: Y'arr, I forgot how to talk to people unless I'm hugging old Tito the Turtle.

Whendiana Joan: And the turtle is not alive?

Petey the Pirate: N'arr just one of those few things in What If World that isn't gonna come alive.

Whendiana Joan: Does that mean some of the things around us are going to come alive?

Petey the Pirate: I'm a bit surprised they haven't already. Next question.

Poppa Loo: Poppa Loo here from Poppa Loo's News.

Fair Elise: Ah. Poppa Loo. I'm sure you have a hard hitting question about the many sweeping reforms I have made throughout What If World in my short tenure as president.

Poppa Loo: Actually, I wanted to see if we could read this comic book created and mailed in by Griffin.

Petey the Pirate: How can you read a comic if people can't see it?

Poppa Loo: I don't know. I figured Mr. Eric could give a little narration, fill in the blanks.

Mr. Eric: What? Poppa Loo, I thought I had this story off.

Fair Elise: Well, this is highly unorthodox, but then again, so is a press conference where you read letters, so go ahead.

Poppa Loo: Our friend Griffin asks: what if J.F. Kat started an avalanche of 500 cans of tuna. And then he answered his own question with a comic so that makes our lives pretty easy.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat didn't know much but he knew that he was hungry.

JF Kitty: Purr, I'm so hungry. But I do not know what to make!

Mr. Eric: He snarled, pacing around in agitation.

JF Kitty: I hope my book of tuna comes soon. Mr. Mouser!

Mr. Mouser: Yes, J.F. Kat?

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat picked up Mr. Mouser and held him very close to his face.

JF Kitty: When is my book of tuna coming?

[Doorbell]

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat smiled widely and zoomed off to answer the door, leaving Mr. Mouser floating temporarily in the air.

Mr. Mouser: I don't think this is how gravity works... [thud!] Ow.

JF Kitty: It's here!

Mr. Eric: Meowed J.F. Kat, holding up the Book of Tuna. Not to be confused with the Book Full of Tuna. It was a book full of delicious tuna recipes. So he went over to his cabinet, opened it wide and...

JF Kitty: There's no more tuna! Simply a spiderweb in the corner! And is that a suspiciously well-fed looking spider?

Mr. Eric: But the spider simply gave an eight-legged shrug and ignored J.F. Kat.

JF Kitty: This can't be. How much tuna have I been eating?

Mr. Mouser: Well, don't you remember earlier this morning?

[Flashback starting]

JF Kitty: It took a while, but I opened 500 cans of tuna and filled this conveniently empty swimming pool.

Mr. Eric: Said J.F. Kat, holding a knife and fork while balancing at the very end of a very high diving board, overlooking this pool of tuna.

JF Kitty: Meow-m!

[Flashback ending]

JF Kitty: I don't understand. Did I eat the tuna?

Mr. Mouser: Yes, I think that was implied by the flashback.

JF Kitty: Then I guess I'll go shopping.

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: One and a half hours and 500 cans of tuna later—

JF Kitty: Ugh, this is impossible to pull.

Mr. Eric: Said J.F. Kat, struggling with a red wagon that was overflowing with 500 extra-large cans of tuna.

JF Kitty: Good thing I'm nearing the top of this hill. Going down the other side should be especially easy so I'm just gonna focus on pulling this wagon and not look behind me.

Mr. Eric: And so, when J.F. Kat crested what he thought was a hill, he didn't look back to see that in fact he was stepping over the edge of a cliff.

JF Kitty: Meow to simply pull it down the gentle slope and get all of my cans of tuna!

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat was hanging from the edge of this cliff with one paw, his other paw somehow managing to hold onto the handle of his wagon while can after can tumbled out of the wagon onto the jagged rocks below.

JF Kitty: Help, I'm dropping my tuna!

Mr. Eric: J.F. Kat wasn't going to let go of this tuna or this cliff, but the cliff had other ideas.

[Crash!]

JF Kitty: Meow I need help, too!

Mr. Eric: Fortunately, at that very moment, Fred the Dog had been flying with his helicopter tongue to go visit his friend, J.F. Kat.

Fred the Dog: Oh no! J.F. Kat, you're falling!

JF Kitty: I know, save me!

Fred the Dog: Oh yeah, easy.

JF Kitty: And also all my tuna!

Fred the Dog: That's actually gonna be hard.

JF Kitty: Just do it!

Mr. Eric: Fred the Dog flung his tongue around his friend and tugged the tuna with trepidation while clicking his claws with a clamor all across the cliff!

Fred the Dog: My tongue is not strong enough!

Mr. Eric: And then Fred slid off the edge, too!

Abacus: Abra-ma-sham!

Mr. Eric: Incanted Abacus P. Grumbler, who had appeared atop the avalanche of fallen tuna cans and so the tuna, the other tuna, and the more tuna all turned into marshmallows. The very last extra large can of tuna in this avalanche turned into a big, fluffy marshmallow, as J.F. Kat finished falling.

JF Kitty: That was purr-ty close.

Mr. Eric: And then, half a cliff landed on top of him.

Abacus: Oh, good thing this is What If World or that cliff could have really hurt him.

Fred the Dog: Hey, Abacus, what are you doing there?

Abacus: I heard the distinct thunder of free-falling tuna.

Fred the Dog: So you're not here to teach us a lesson?

Abacus: No, we've got to get back to the press conference.

Fred the Dog: Oh yeah, that's right.

Mr. Eric: And at that very moment, J.F. Kat woke up.

JF Kitty: Phew. Meow I know it was just a dream.

Mr. Eric: Said J.F. Kat, climbing off of his soft marshmallow bed, which was mysteriously shaped like an extra large can of tuna fish.

JF Kitty: Mr. Mouser, has my Book of Tuna arrived, yet?

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

Poppa Loo: My goodness, Griffin. What an amazing comic book.

Mr. Eric: I hope my narrating did it justice, Griffin. I know our story was a little different from your comic and I can't thank you enough for inspiring this story we got to tell together.

Petey the Pirate: Mr. Eric, I hate to interrupt, but we be running out of time.

Mr. Eric: Oh, I'm sorry. Please, finish your press conference.

Fair Elise: We do have a final question with a letter and a drawing from Sophia, age 10, of Maryland. She asks, what if Fred the Dog found a stick that came to life and they saved the world from evil squirrels.

Oh dear.

Venum: Yeah, I just realized that half of the fluffy, cuddly things around here are squirrel dolls.

Fred the Dog: Hey, everybody! Sorry I'm late to the press conference. I just met my new friend Twiggy and he wanted to say hi to everybody.

Twiggy: Fred the Dog's slobber mutated my stick DNA, bringing me to life. Frankly, I'm surprised it hasn't happened before.

Petey the Pirate: Y'arr, Fred. You're here just in time.

Fred the Dog: Oh, good! You got more sticks?

Fair Elise: No, but we do have evil squirrels who just came to life.

Petey the Pirate: Y'arr with torpedo tails and acorn cannon balls.

Squirrel: [Squabbling noises] Sorry! I had to cough up some stuffing in order to speak properly. I am Squirrelphia, here to liberate What If World from Fair Elise's reign of tyranny.

Fair Elise: Tyranny? I think you are mistaken. I am working to create opportunity and art, protect the environment, and reform our judicial system.

Squirrel: Well, that all sounds pretty good, but we showed up here with our torpedo tails and our acorn cannon balls, so I feel like we've got to have a sort of epic battle. You know, good versus evil, that whole thing.

Squirrel 2: Well, I have existed for 30 seconds longer than you and in that time I learned that the dichotomy of good versus evil is inherently problematic.

Fred the Dog: Yes, like, one side gets wronged over and over again, and then they do something wrong because they're sick of being wronged and then the other side thinks that they've been wronged even though they did the wronging first. And then it keeps going back and forth, and most people just let it because it's not affecting them that much.

Squirrel: So, you're saying we don't get to blow anything up?

Whendiana Joan: Excuse me, Whendiana Joan, All of Time Times. We're actually running out of time, but I could take all of you squirrels with me to a future where every stuffed animal is alive and they're treated equitably along with every other living creature.

Fred the Dog: Oh, but then none of us would have learned anything.

Twiggy: Yeah! I want to help my new squirrel friends to build a world where all sticks and squirrels and talking creatures can get along.

[Explosion]

Squirrel: Oops, my tail went off. Please, I didn't mean it. I was built with a live torpedo for a tail.

Fred the Dog: And I've got a tongue that's too long for my mouth. We've all got challenges in this life, and...

Petey the Pirate: Y'arr, y'arr, everything's a complex tapestry. But we really are out of time.

Venum: I feel like I didn't get to do much.

Petey the Pirate: Sorry Venum spelled V-E-N-U-M.

Fair Elise: You could use your natural sliminess to stick back the roof of the What House that that torpedo just shot through.

Venum: Ah, rebuilding. Perhaps that is my calling. [Crunching and hammering]. I'm bored.

Mr. Eric: The end.

Petey the Pirate: Of the press conference.

Mr. Eric: Oh, yeah, of course, Petey. Sorry.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Well, Sophia, Griffin, and Pauly. I hope you enjoyed your story. I also want to thank Levi, age five from Laurel, Mississippi who mailed in his own wonderful What If that we didn't quite have time for.

I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator. Craig Martinson for our theme song, my helper, Miss Lynn, and all you kids at home who know it takes a while to find out your passion and what motivates you. So keep exploring, keep trying new things.

And, until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]