

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 212: What if a mermaid wanted to fly? \(w/ Miss Lynn\)](#)

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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. I am so honored to be joined by one of my absolute favorite children's entertainers. She has an awesome podcast called Good Words and her name is Miss Lynn!

Miss Lynn: Hey, Mr. Eric. I'm so excited to be here.

Mr. Eric: I am really, really excited to have you. Your son, Callum listens to your music every day. He is going to be star struck when he hears this episode. You do a podcast, too, isn't that right?

Miss Lynn: I do. My podcast is called The Good Words Podcast because I love good words. I love words that are fun to say and interesting and sometimes they take a little bit of explanation. Yeah, I love good words and so I have a whole podcast about them.

Mr. Eric: I'm always throwing some advanced vocab into a What If World episode—

Miss Lynn: Nice!

Mr. Eric: Without really any explanation, though, which is the less nice part of it, which is why I appreciate that there are shows like yours out there that really take a word and explore it. And we have sort of a new thing called the word bank or the imagination bank where kids, they can just let us know a word, you know, one or two words put together.

Miss Lynn: Yeah.

Mr. Eric: A few weeks ago, I introduced it. There's been some confusion about how it works so we're gonna use one of those words today for our story and we're gonna use some good words, as well, from the good words podcast, too.

Miss Lynn: Awesome.

Mr. Eric: So many great questions that we're answering and the first we're gonna hear from a listener named Tuvia.

Tuvia: Hello. I'm Tuvia. I live in Nairobi in Kenya. I like magic and listening to my favorite singer, China McClain. And my question is, what if Mr. Eric met a mermaid who wanted to fly? Thank you!

Mr. Eric: Great question, Tuvia. I mean, Mr. Eric meets all of the What If World characters when they're introduced so even if I don't make a personal appearance in this story, I will be meeting them, after all.

Miss Lynn: Sure, here you are right now.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, exactly. And then we have a good word from Barnabus. So Barnabus suggests a tower and he gave us lots and lots of cool descriptions for this tower that we might get into, but going with the imagination bank, we're just gonna take the word "tower" and use his suggestions and run with it.

Miss Lynn: Excellent.

Mr. Eric: So, Miss Lynn, are you ready to get started?

Miss Lynn: I think I am. I'm ready to jump into What If World and find out what if?

Mr. Eric: I am so excited. And I also have to say, about Tuvia's question, she is talking about her favorite singer and I am just so excited to have one of my favorite singers on this show today, and—

Miss Lynn: Oh, Mr. Eric, you're the best!

Mr. Eric: And for folks that are listening, even if you don't like the What If World podcast, you should listen to the end because we're gonna play one of Miss Lynn's songs at the end. But until then, let's find out what if you met a mermaid who wanted to fly and there was a tower?

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Alabaster Zero was keeping watch atop his lonely spy tower, staring through his lonely spynoculars for a crime or really anyone doing anything. Any reason at all to get out into What If World. As you might know, ever since his partner, Fair Elise, had become president, he'd been feeling a little lonely.

Alabaster Zero: Ugh, why don't these spynoculars ever reveal anything cool and interesting. I've just been staring through these—[crash!]

Tuvi: Aaah! Oh, these wings are so obstreperous.

Alabaster Zero: Obstreperous wings! That must be a crime. I actually don't know. Obstreperous sounds bad, though, to me.

Tuvi: Obstreperous just means that something is unruly and it makes things really difficult. These wings are ugh! They're ruining my plans.

Alabaster Zero: Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Back up, here.

Mr. Eric: Alabaster Zero was talking to a mermaid who'd just landed atop his spynoculars wearing a pair of wings that seemed to be carved and stitched together from things she found in the sea.

Alabaster Zero: Uh, you are a mermaid. Why do you have wings?

Tuvi: Because I have a dream to be the first merperson to fly.

Alabaster Zero: Well, that's a really, uh... lovely dream. However, there's actually a lot of people in What If World who've already learned how to fly and they've already got their own inventions that could help people to fly.

Tuvi: Yeah, okay. But my invention comes from where I come from, the sea. So I'm using all the things at my disposal in the sea to make wings. They're made out of—see this?

Alabaster Zero: Ooh.

Tuvi: It's made out of the thinnest seaweed and the lightest driftwood. Feel how light this is.

Alabaster Zero: Wow, yeah, that's very light. That should uh help you float, probably. I don't really understand much about physics.

Tuvi: It's gonna be great, but so far they're not cooperating. Like I said, obstreperous.

Alabaster Zero: Ostreperous. Oh, wow, what a good word.

Tuvi: Thanks.

Alabaster Zero: Wink.

Tuvi: It's kind of my thing.

Alabaster Zero: And presumably that's why you climbed up to the top of my spy tower, because it's pretty dangerous up here. It's kind of a stormy night, if you didn't notice.

Tuvi: Yeah, but I need to be up in the highest point on the highest tower on the windiest night in order for my wings to work.

Alabaster Zero: Uh, that sounds pretty dangerous, don't you think?

Tuvi: Not if I do it right.

Mr. Eric: And just like that, she leapt off the top of the tower!

Tuvi: Whee!

Mr. Eric: And she started gliding out into the stormy waters. She did seem to be, well, almost flying. But more like falling outwards, gliding faster and faster towards the dark, stormy sea.

Alabaster Zero: I've got to do something!

Mr. Eric: Said Alabaster, scanning about the top of his tower for something that could help. He saw Stevie Fleasel's flying machine covered in dust, a pair of Dracomax's paper wings as a back-up, oh, one of Whendiana Joan's rocket legs, and—

Alabaster Zero: That's right! Perfect! A pair of circular life preservers! That's what I need.

Mr. Eric: And he grabbed on over each arm and dove—

Alabaster Zero: [Screaming]

Mr. Eric: Towards the water, off the edge of his tower.

Alabaster Zero: Wait! I didn't learn your name! Also, I'm coming to rescue you.

Tuvi: It's Tuvi and I'm fine! Remember? I'm a merperson.

Alabaster Zero: Oh, oh!

Tuvi: Except I'm not in the water, I crashed into a boat.

Mr. Eric: And yes, indeed, she had crashed into a rowboat.

Fred the Dog: Whoa, whoa, whoa, quit rocking the boat, merlady.

Mr. Eric: Said Fred the Dog.

JF Kitty: Purrsonally, I think it was a nice change of pace. I was getting bored.

Mr. Eric: Meowed J.F. Kat.

Tuvi: Ugh, this is so discouraging. I just can't figure out how to get my seawings to work.

Fred the Dog: Oh, you're trying to fly? You know, I can fly. Watch this.

Mr. Eric: And Fred started spinning his extra long tongue about. Now, it did make it difficult for him to talk but it also helped him fly like a helicopter.

Tuvi: I mean, that's pretty cool but it doesn't make me feel much better about my wings.

JF Kitty: Oh, don't worry about it. I, myself, can turn into a rocketship and blast into outer space. I just never feel like doing it because I'd rather nap.

Tuvi: That's on point.

Mr. Eric: Tuvi saw these two random creatures who she'd never met before flying right before her eyes whereas her wings that she'd worked so hard to invent and create, learning lots of physics and engineering in the process, and yet, here they sat before her, already half-broken.

Tuvi: I feel like I'm never gonna be able to realize this dream of being the first merperson to fly.

[Screaming and gulping noise]

Fred the Dog: I think we're getting eaten, again, everybody. Strap in.

Mr. Eric: Fred the Dog did strap them around with his tongue, just for extra safety as the three of them and their entire boat was eaten by a giant, sparkly, purple, spiky, winged whale that came up out of the ocean.

Tuvi: What is going on?

Niamhiathan: My name is Niamhiathan and I eat everything in my wake, which just happened to be you.

Mr. Eric: They were inside the belly of this giant, sparkly, purple, spiky, winged whale, Niamhiathan.

Tuvi: Why did you eat us? Niamhiathan?

Niamhiathan: Well, really I'm more of a metaphor for hopelessness than an actual monster who's eating you if it helps to think of it that way?

Tuvi: Really? Because it's really stinky and there sure are a lot of fish bones for the belly of a metaphor.

Niamhiathan: Of course there are many bones. I eat lots of fish, just like I'm eating you. Now, what's got you feeling so hopeless that you would summon the Niamhiathan?

Tuvi: Well, I've had this life-long dream of being the first merperson to fly and so I've learned all these lessons and physics and science and aerodynamics and I gathered all the materials from under the sea and I constructed these beautiful wings out of the lightest driftwood and the thinnest seaweed. And it still didn't work.

Niamhiathan: So what? You think you're the first person to have the same dream as someone else? If you have trouble, either keep working at it or pick a new dream. It's that simple.

Tuvi: A new dream? I'm not opposed to the idea of coming up with a new dream but it's gonna be hard to achieve a new dream here in your stinky belly.

Niamhiathan: I've heard that one before. I'll tell you what. I'll agree to spit you out if you'll agree to keep working at it, whatever that "it" may be.

Tuvi: All right, Niamhiathan, you've got yourself a deal. You spit me out and I will pursue a new dream.

JF Kitty: [Record scratch.] Uh, just uh, please don't spit us out. I'm smelling some tuna leftovers here, I want to investigate that.

Fred the Dog: Wait, I don't want to... oh, fine. I'll stay in here. I don't mind a good stink, anyway. I'll just fly him out later, if that's okay by you.

Niamhiathan: Oh, you two aren't hopeless. Well, not in the same way.

Mr. Eric: And just like that–

Niamhiathan: [BLECH!]

Mr. Eric: Niamhiathan spat out Tuvi, all the way towards the shore.

Tuvi: Oof, that was harrowing.

Mr. Eric: And Tuvi saw Alabaster Zero by the same shore. And right next to Alabaster Zero, she saw the broken pieces of her once-wings sitting next to the two circular life preservers that Alabaster Zero had tried to save her with. They had been crashed onto the shore as well.

Alabaster Zero: This counts as me saving you, right? Even though I ended up having to be saved by these snakes.

Mr. Eric: And indeed, a bunch of seaside snakes had dragged Alabaster onto shore.

Snake: And who are you?

Mr. Eric: Said the snakes.

Tuvi: I'm Tuvi and I'm an inventor mermaid.

Snake: Why, an inventor? Oh, that's delightful. We've just always wanted someone to help us with an invention. You see, every time we drag someone up to shore onto safety, we have to continue dragging them all the way home or to the hospital to get their boo-boos tended to. It's so much work.

Tuvi: Yeah, that's a real drag.

Alabaster Zero: I get it.

Tuvi: You know, now that you mention it, when I'm on shore, I have to drag myself around, too, and it is really arduous. I wonder if I could invent something that would help us get around without the need to drag ourselves everywhere. Hmm, what would be...

Mr. Eric: She scanned about looking for an idea and she saw the two little life savers, perfect circles, right next to the bits and pieces of driftwood. And sitting there, laying beside the pieces, it kind of looked like...

Tuvi: What about a bike? If I used these life preservers as wheels, maybe I could invent a bike that would let mermaids and snakes and anybody else who doesn't have feet, get around.

Alabaster Zero: I bicycle for people without feet. I'm not an inventor but this is giving me a headache.

Tuvi: But I am an inventor and as long as you have an idea and inspiration, the rest is just a matter of invention.

Mr. Eric: And just like that, she got to work measuring the seaside snakes and salvaging detritus, flotsam, and jetsam to build the most efficacious bike for footless creatures that had ever been seen. And a few days later, the very first snake ever to ride a bike was seen riding next to the very first mermaid ever to ride a bike as well as the very first detective to ever ride a bike that was meant for snakes and mermaids.

Alabaster Zero: Aaah, this would be easier if I didn't have feet. [Crash]

Tuvi: Yeah, Alabaster Zero, that is precisely the idea. Whee!

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Lynn, we did it!

Miss Lynn: [Laughs]

Mr. Eric: I don't know why I have to shout that every time I finish a guest episode.

Before we get to Good Words, the podcast, and your music as Miss Lynn, we did include two more questions, here. The first was from Niamh who wrote in, what if Fred the Dog and J.F. Kat got eaten by a sea monster. And she described the sea monster as being purple and sparkly.

Miss Lynn: Wow!

Mr. Eric: And then we have one final question from Reed, what if snakes rode bikes. And that's what got us to our ending.

Now, Miss Lynn, can you tell us a little bit about the awesome things you are up to?

Miss Lynn: You know, I've been making music for kids for, gosh, a long time, now. And then a couple years ago, I started the Good Words podcast, inspired

by a song I wrote about how I love really good words. I take a single word and then spin it off. It's the inspiration, for a whole episode of my podcast just from that one word. So like, one of the words that we talked about in the story was obstreperous and I did an episode about the word obstreperous.

Mr. Eric: And can you tell us just a little bit about your music, as well?

Miss Lynn: I'm the kind of person that gets songs stuck in my head very easily and it's just a great way to keep those stories with you all the time. I have a song about learning to do more things as you get big, just like Callum is doing right now. It's called "Easy Peasy" about how things that were really hard when you were littler, then you learn how to do them and you master them, and then they're easy-peasy mac'n'cheesy.

Mr. Eric: Oh, yeah, I love that one. I'm pretty sure that's from Outside the Lines.

Miss Lynn: It is.

Mr. Eric: And Something New, that's the album I think we're gonna sample a song from, right? At the end of this episode.

Miss Lynn: Yeah, so I have the title song from my CD, Something New. The song is actually called "Make Something New" and it's about taking something old and making something new which is exactly what Tuvi did in our story today.

Mr. Eric: So, thank you, again, Lynn, so much. This is a blast.

Miss Lynn: Thank you so much for having me, Mr. Eric. This has been so much fun.

Mr. Eric: My absolute pleasure and I'll talk to you soon.

Miss Lynn: Bye!

JF Kitty: Meow it's time to shout out Lucas Hagist who just turned eight on July 18th! He loves Super Metroid, Minecraft and music.

Fred the Dog: Then there's Oliver, who is seven years old and lives in Urbana, Maryland. Oliver loves Pokemon and Greek mythology, and has a sister named Nora.

Mr. Eric: And I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co-creator, Craig Martinson for his theme song, my helper, Miss Lynn, yes, that Miss Lynn, Dessiree McFarland for her sound design and all you kids at home who know that

failure is just another chance to grow. And until we meet again, keep wondering.

Miss Lynn:

[Singing Make Something New]

How I love to eat oatmeal
oh, it is unsurpassed
'cause it makes such a wholesome meal
for me to break my fast.
When the box is empty with no oatmeal left,
it leaves me feeling so sad and bereft.
I hold the box above the trash to drop it
when from the other room my brother's voice at once cries
"Stop it!"
He says, "Open up your eyes, take a look, now, don't you see
that empty oatmeal box is full of possibility."

Hey, hey, hey, don't just throw it away,
there might be something else
that we could make from that today
He says, "Oo-oo-oooh, here's the thing to do:
you just take something old, make something new."

I could use it store things, like my ball and jacks,
or maybe a coil of string and some old thumb tacks.
It could be a hideout for my army guys,
a cave where they interrogate the spies.
Or if you don't have something already planned
we could spend the afternoon making an awesome garbage base.
Grab those cans and bottles and that pickle-less pickle jar.
Oh, we can rock the house with our cereal box guitar.

Hey, hey, hey, don't just throw it away
there might be something else
that we could make from that today
He says, "Oo-oo-oooh, here's the thing to do:
you just take something old, make something new."

[Jamming]

Hey, hey, hey, don't just throw it away
There might be something else that you could make from that today
Oo-oo-oooh, here's the thing to do:
you just take something old,

scrape off a little mold
just imagine and behold,
make something new.

A paper towel roll kazoo,
or a tissue box shoe,
coffee can stilts, too.
So many things you could do
with imagination and some glue.
Make something new.

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