

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 32: What if sharks had legs?

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[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.

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 Luka.

Luka: Hi, my name is Luka and I'm five years old. I like Star Wars, and my What If World question is, what if sharks had legs?

Mr. Eric: Hm. Star Wars? Oh, gosh. I have never heard of Star Wars.

[Record scratch]

Haha! I'm just kidding. Of course I know what that is. And I'm very excited to tell you a story involving sharks with legs and Star Wars somehow. Gosh, you know, that reminds me of a What If World story called Shark Wars.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: A long time ago, in a galaxy far under the waves, the Shellactic Empire was ruled by the sharks. Now sharks back then in What If World had stubby little legs that they used to walk around. I guess later they evolve away from using them. But one shark, the ruler of the Shellactic Empire, Shark-Gator, he thought that only sea creatures with legs should be allowed to live in his castle, the Breath Star.

The Breath Star was a giant rolling ball of coral and stone that they built to house all the fish that Shark-Gator thought should live there.

Shark-Gator: [Darth Vader breath sound] Breathing the same air as those legless sea creatures [Darth Vader breath sound] is what makes it so hard for me to [Darth Vader breath sound] catch my breath. [Darth Vader breath sound]

Mr. Eric: So he'd only let sharks with legs live inside the Breath Star. Everyone else just had to get out of the way. Or that giant coral castle would roll right over their whole town or city.

But there is one little town about as far as you could be from the center of the ocean, named Turtoine. And in that town, where everyone lived under old tortoise shells, there was one little boy shark named Luka Seawalker. Now this little shark's legs were much smaller and flatter than stumpy little legs of his shark ancestors. And yet, all the other kids in Turtoine thought that was a reason to make fun of him.

Mean kid: Seawalker, more like sea crawler.

Other mean Kid: I think that turtle shell you live under is faster than you.

Mr. Eric: Luka was wiser than most boys and girls his age. He knew they were teasing him because they were just listening to the lessons of the Shellactic Empire and it taught them that all sharks with legs were important. And all creatures of any other kind were less important.

Luka: I don't care what you could say.

Mr. Eric: Said Luka.

Luka: I'm going to help bring down the Shellactic Empire so all the fish can live together and be nice to one another.

Kids: [Laugh]

Voice: You'll need to learn the ways of the Dorse, Luka.

Mr. Eric: And Luka turned around to see, looming over his little tortoise shell home, a giant megalodon shark!

Luka: Um, are you gonna eat me?

Mr. Eric: Asked Luka.

Voice: Heavens no. The Fisheye Knights only fight as a last resort. Besides, I'm extremely old.

Luka: You were a Fisheye Knight? I've heard of you. You're Megadon Conchobi.

Megadon: Guilty as charged. And if you want to defeat the Shellactic Empire, you're going to need to learn our ways.

Luka: Oh, I don't know. I talk a lot about making a difference, but look at my tiny little legs. I can barely walk.

Megadon: I told you, you need to use the Dorse, Luka.

Luka: Yeah, you said that before. I don't know what you're talking about. What's the Dorse?

Megadon: Dorsal fin. We call it the Dorse but short.

Luka: That's not really short. The Dorse, dorsal, it's the same amount of syllables.

Megadon: I guess I never counted the syllables... Listen, do you want to learn from me, or what?

Mr. Eric: So Luka started draining to be a Fisheye Knight. All the while the Breath Star was rolling closer and closer to Turtoine.

Tarkinfish: Lord Gator

Mr. Eric: Said a small gray shark to Darth Gator on board the Breath Star.

Shark-Gator: [Darth Vader breath sound] Yes, Commander Tarkinfish.

Tarkinfish: Lord Gator, we believe the rebel stronghold may be in the small town of Turtoine.

Shark-Gator: [Darth Vader breath sound] Very good. Roll the Breath Star toward Turtoine.

Tarkinfish: We're already on our way, Lord Gator.

Shark-Gator: Really? What if I hadn't wanted to go to Turtoine.

Tarkinfish: Then I presume we would have gone somewhere else at your command, Lord Gator.

Shark-Gator: That's right. At my command. [Darth Vader breath sound] You do not command the Breath Star.

Mr. Eric: Darth Gator held up one stumpy little leg. It was the signal to halt. And just like that, all the legged sharks that were pushing the Breath Star stopped. And so too, stopped the Breath Star. Without the constant flow of oxygen filled air. It got hard for the sharks to breathe pretty fast. Commander Tarkinfish gasped.

Tarkinfish: Lord Gator, show mercy.

Shark-Gator: Very well. [Darth Vader breath sound]

Mr. Eric: Lord Gator lowered his fin and all the sharks gave a sigh of relief and started pushing the Breath Star along again. Back in Turtoine all the fish and sea mammals finally got word of the approaching Breath Star.

Luka: I'm not ready to face Shark-Gator.

Mr. Eric: Said Luka.

Megadon: No, you haven't mastered the Dorse yet.

Luka: Well, that's very encouraging.

Megadon: And you're not very handy with the bite saber either.

Luka: That's another thing. Why are we using bite sabers? It's just a long stick with a bunch of teeth at the end.

Megadon: An elegant weapon from a more civilized age.

Luka: It's neither elegant nor civilized.

Megadon: Well, sure, but it's really fun to watch people duel with them.

Mr. Eric: Just then they heard a noise outside of the turtle shell.

[Whistling noise]

Megadon peeked his massive head over the shell and Luka crawled out from underneath it.

Luka: It's A2-Me2, the anemone.

Megadon: What's he going on about?

A2-Me2: [Whistling]

Luka: He says they've discovered a way to defeat the Breath Star. Tiny little weakness inside the giant coral castle that will cause the whole thing to fall apart.

Megadon: That seems like an unlikely design flaw.

A2-Me2: [Sad whistle]

Luka: He says there's a whole 'nother story that explains why that flaw actually makes sense but it's too long to tell right now.

Megadon: Oh, well, then. We might as well get to it.

Mr. Eric: Now Megadon was an old shark. It took everything he had just to crawl out to the edge of town with Luka beside him. There was already a giant battle underway. Hundreds of sharks had poured out of the Breath Star. They couldn't really swim very well with those little legs. But they would jump off the side of the Breath Star and sort of flow down after all the other fish and sea mammals of Turtoine.

Luka: A2-Me2, why didn't you tell us the sooner? There's already a battle happening.

A2-Me2: [Whistles]

Megadon: I think I can guess that one. Sea anemones are even slower than old sharks.

Luka: Well, you cleaned it up a little bit but yeah, that's the gist of what he said.

Mr. Eric: Some fish were shooting spines from their dorsal fins in self defense.

Pew! Pew pew!

Octopi and squid were blasting out ink as they maneuvered this way and that to avoid the sharks. A big puffer fish even tried to stand up to Shark-Gator, blowing itself up as big as it possibly could.

Pufferfish: Leave our town alone, Shark-Gator!

Shark-Gator: [Darth Vader breath sound] Think you can have a deeper voice than me?

Mr. Eric: And Shark-Gator gave that little pufferfish the lightest tap with his bite saber. And that fish deflated like a popped balloon.

Pufferfish: I'm hit! Oooooooo.

Mr. Eric: It got smaller and smaller as it zigged and zagged all over the town.

Shark-Gator: All too easy,

Mr. Eric: Said Shark-Gator. Little Seawalker had been struggling this whole time just to get over to his friends to try to help, to do anything he could against this giant unstoppable coral castle. A2-Me2 said there was a

weakness in the middle of the Breath Star. But how do I get to the middle of that massive castle when I can barely even walk?

Megadon:

Use the Dorse, Luke.

Luka:

You mean my dorsal fin, Conchobi? How is that supposed to help?

Mr. Eric:

Luka spun around to face Megadon, his tail lashing back and forth in irritation.

Luka:

I'm not a Fisheye Knight. I don't know how to use the Dorse. I don't even want to use a bite saber. I just want to help my friends.

Mr. Eric:

Luka had been gesturing wildly with his little legs during that speech, his tail lashing back and forth. And suddenly he felt his dorsal fin moving, too.

Megadon:

Focus, Luka.

Mr. Eric:

But this time, little Seawlker heard that voice in his head.

Luka:

What's happening?

Mr. Eric:

Luka looked down to see he was floating three feet off the ground.

Luka:

Oh, oh, oooh!

Mr. Eric:

And he fell back down. All around him, the battle continued to rage. Sharks were falling out of the sky. Whole schools of fish were flashing their silvery scales as they swam away. And Luka was on his back, losing hope.

Luka:

No, I can do this. I was floating. I was flying.

Mr. Eric:

Luka flapped his little legs, realizing they they weren't really legs so much as fins. And he moved his tail and his whole body. And he used his dorsal fin to help stabilize him as he got faster and faster swimming towards the center of the Breath Star. And just then it cracked into a million pieces.

Shark-Gator:

That was very unfortunate.

Mr. Eric:

Said Shark-Gator.

Luka:

I did it?

Mr. Eric:

Said Luka.

Luka: Wow, the doors is more powerful than I realized.

Megadon: More powerful than you can possibly imagine.

Leia: Excuse me, it wasn't you or the Dorse. It was me, your sister Leia.

Luka: Leia? Where have you been all these weeks?

Leia: Oh yeah, Megadon Conchobi taught me how to swim like a month ago so I figured I'd come here and destroy the Breath Star.

Mr. Eric: Said Leia. All the other fish and sea mammals were cheering in victory.

Fish: Hip-hip-hooray!

Mr. Eric: Said the fish.

Whales: [Wookiee noises]

Mr. Eric: Said the whales.

Squids: Blerblerbler blah.

Mr. Eric: Said the squid and other invertebrates.

Luka: Leia, why do you always have to take all the fun away?

Mr. Eric: Asked Luka.

Shark-Gator: [Darth Vader breath sound] Do you mean this kind of fun?

Mr. Eric: Answered Shark-Gator, holding his bite saber in one stumpy little leg.

Luka: Oh yeah. Finally, battle, like a real—aah!

Mr. Eric: But Shark-Gator was actually pretty good with that bite saber. Luka, Leia, they had to do their best to stay out of the way.

Shark-Gator: And just because my castle is destroyed [Darth Vader breath sound] doesn't mean my sharks are.

Mr. Eric: And hundreds of other sharks started walking towards them, all drawing bite sabers of their own. Luka and Leia swam up where it was safe. And those stumpy legged little sharks couldn't follow.

Luka: But Leia, we can't leave.

Leia: I know Luka. Our friends. A2-Mez, and the old Megadon Conchobi would be trapped.

Luka: Sharks, please listen.

Mr. Eric: Said Luka, swimming back and forth and speaking as loud as he could

Luka: Shark-Gator was trying to control the very air you breathe and in your little coral castle you couldn't see the rest of the world. Look at all these different kinds of people working together.

Mr. Eric: The sharks grumbled and looked around.

Shark-Gator: Don't listen to them. [Darth Vader breath sound] We will build a bigger, stronger Breath Star and only the best legged sharks will be allowed to live there under my...

Mr. Eric: Commander Tarkinfish swam by.

Tarkinfish: Even when you had things your way you weren't good to your own people.

Mr. Eric: All the other sharks were nodding along.

Shark-Gator: [Darth Vader breath sound] It's not fair. I was trying to protect you.

Luka: Protect them from what? They're sharks, I think they're pretty capable of protecting themselves.

Mr. Eric: Said Luka.

Sharks: Yeah, we can handle anything. We don't need this guy. We don't need this guy!

Luka: So put down those bite sabers.

Mr. Eric: Said Luka.

Leia: And we can teach you how to swim like us even with those stubby little legs.

Mr. Eric: Said Leia.

Shark-Gator: But Luka, I am your father.

Luka: Really?



Mr. Eric: Asks Luka.

Shark-Gator: I mean, it's possible. Male sharks don't really look after their children at all. Luka join me. Join the shark side.

Luka: Jeez, Dad. Or, maybe not-Dad. I think it's pretty obvious I don't want to do that.

Leia: Yeah, why don't you just join the everybody plus shark side with us?

Shark-Gator: Would I get to be your Emperor?

Megadon: Luka is clearly not going to join you.

Mr. Eric: Cut in Megadon.

Megadon: Why don't you all just have one big epic bite saber battle and see who's left at the end?

A2-Mez: [Whistles]

Mr. Eric: Said A2-Mez. Suddenly Shark-Gator was crying.

Shark-Gator: [Darth Vader breathing sounds as if he were crying in his helmet]

Megadon: That's words of beauty, oh ooh.

Mr. Eric: And Conchobi was crying, too.

Leia: Uh, Luka?

Mr. Eric: Asked Leia.

Leia: What did the anemone just say?

Mr. Eric: All the fish and sharks and sea mammals were suddenly crying and hugging each other.

Luka: Uh, you know, I actually can't understand them one bit.

Mr. Eric: Said Luka. But then he, Shark-Gator, and Leia were all hugging too. But I think we got the jist.

The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric:

Oh man, Luka, I hope you liked your story. That one was really fun for me. I don't know if you could tell.

I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor and producer, Craig Martinson for our awesome theme song. Jason O'Keeffe for our great artwork, and all you kids at home for being accepting of each other's differences.

Until we meet again.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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