

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 33: What if snakes had feathers and birds had scales?

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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.

Mr. Eric: Hey there, folks, and welcome back to a very special episode of What If World!

Miss Karen: Hi.

Mr. Eric: Say the thing, the show where—

Miss Karen: The show where your questions and ideas inspire off the cuff stories.

Mr. Eric: I'm Mr. Eric, your host, and I'm here with Miss Karen, my producer and editor and the star of our very first guest episode.

Miss Karen: Thank you for having me.

Mr. Eric: Thank you for editing my podcast. I do a bad job of it and you're a lot better at it than I am. So, folks, I would love to just sit here and talk to Karen, but we should probably get a question. What do you think, Karen?

Miss Karen: I think that sounds like a great idea.

Layla: My name is Layla, and I like dragons. And my question is, what if question is, what if snakes had feathers and birds had scales?

Parent: Say bye.

Layla: Bye!

Mr. Eric: Layla, thank you so much for your question. I am really excited about that question. Because A, well you probably know about me. I'm pretty much a big fan of dragons. Karen, what are your feelings?

Miss Karen: What are my feelings about dragons?

Mr. Eric: Yeah, dragons, snakes, birds, the whole shebang?

Miss Karen: I really like dragons. I kind of like snakes, but they're a little bit scary. I like the really tiny ones.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, but what about snakes with feathers? Wouldn't you like snakes with feathers?

Miss Karen: I've never seen a snake with feathers.

Mr. Eric: Well, it looks like we're gonna meet some snakes with feathers, some birds with scales, and I don't know, maybe a dragon. We're gonna try to work it in there.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Once upon a time, there was a young woman named Lily, who worked at New What City's premier fashion magazine, Poppin Lock. Now Lily had a problem because there was an older woman who ran the magazine. Her name was Anna Summer, and she was looking for the latest trend.

Anna Summer: Now Lily, you said that you were going to bring me the latest in fashion, and all I've got is brown paper bag shoes. Surely that's not fashionable anymore.

Lily: But I saw the biggest pop star on the planet wearing them last week.

Anna Summer: Listen, Q Rex wears brown paper bag shoes because he's a dinosaur. You've got to do a little bit better than that. You're in New What City, young lady.

Lily: I'm so sorry, Miss... Miss Summer, I'll try and do better.

Anna Summer: You'd better, because the What Gala is this weekend, and I need the biggest thing. I need to blow everyone's hats off except not hats, because they won't be wearing hats. They'll be wearing something more popular than that, that we invented. Do you understand?

Lily: I think so.

Mr. Eric: And so Lily left.

Lily: Oh my gosh. I don't know what I'm going to do. I thought that brown paper bag shoes were going to be the biggest thing! Q Rex is my favorite rap star.

Mr. Eric: Just then she walked by What Square and saw a giant ad of Q Rex hanging out with his buds in the jungle.

Lily: I like the colors. Maybe there's something there. Maybe-maybe that's where I should be looking, in the jungle.

Mr. Eric: So Lily rushed down to JF Kat airport and hopped on the first Stevie Fleasel flying machine she could find, all the way to the jungle.

Lily: Wow, I'm sure I'm glad there was a nonstop flight to the jungle right as I got to the airport!

Mr. Eric: So she landed conveniently, right outside the nearest jungle. Meanwhile, deep in the heart of the jungle, something was awry.

Stu the Snake: [Hisses] We're never gonna get respect as snakes if we just slither around on the ground. Look at all those birds up there laughing at us.

Bird: Hehehehe!

Mr. Eric: Stu the Snake was kind of grumpy even as snakes go.

Stu the Snake: You bird. Get down here.

Bird: Eee?

Stu the Snake: Do you see any other birds in the jungle.

Bird: I mean, yeah, there's kind of a lot of birds. There's a parrot over there. And there's a cockatiel over there, and—

Stu the Snake: Okay, okay, well, all right. There are lots of birds in the jungle but I'm talking to you specifically, which is why I would have pointed except all I have is a tail, so I kind of indicated. And, anyway, what do you say we swap scales for feathers.

Bird: Do I still get to fly?

Stu the Snake: Oh, sure. You'll have like bat wings or something. Probably. I don't know.

Birds: What do you get out of this?

Stu the Snake: I get to have beautiful feathers like you, but you get to have armored scales, so snakes and cats won't be able to eat you anymore. Pretty sweet. Right?

Bird: Do snakes eat me? Should I be scared right now?

Stu the Snake: Oh, no, I'm definitely going to eat you. That's probably another good reason why you should make this deal.

Bird: I guess okay, then.

Stu the Snake: Okay, you've just got to sign this standard jungle swap skin form here.

Bird: How did you sign this?

Stu the Snake: Oh, yes, it was very difficult. I used a pen. Here it is.

Bird: Okay.

Mr. Eric: So with a flick of the pen, Stu the Snakes swapped skins for feathers with BB Bluebird. Only they didn't realize the contract that he'd signed was in the name of all birds and all snakes in the entire jungle!

At that very moment, Lily finally reached the heart of the jungle.

Lily: Whoa. It's really dark in here.

[Jungle animal noises, including birds and monkeys]

Lily: And loud.

Mr. Eric: She looked all over the jungle for inspiration. What was going to be the new fashion trend?

Lily: Maybe I could take these leaves and sew them into a really nice dress, or, I don't know. I guess they get old and kind of gross. Or over there. There's some moss.

Mr. Eric: Just then, Stu the Snake slithered by, enjoying his fancy new feathers.

Stu the Snake: Wow, I'm so handsome now. I've never I've never felt so buoyantly vivacious!

Lily: What was that? Aah!

Mr. Eric: All Lily could hear was the hissing. She didn't speak snake language.

Stu the Snake: You there! Human. Don't you think I just look lovely? Divine, even?

Lily: What is this? It kind of looks like a snake but it's so pretty. And so friendly.

Stu the Snake: Exactly. I'm pretty and friendly now. Good thing I took those English lessons.

Lily: This would look amazing as like a scarf or shawl. And it's gonna love—

Stu the Snake: Why are you picking me up? What? What are you? Why are you wrapping me around you? I'm supposed to wrap myself around you. You don't wrap me around you.

Lily: I wish I had a mirror because I bet this looks awesome.

Mr. Eric: All the bird, in their scaly, new skin, were gathering around the forest and looking down as Lily picked up every snake she could find. Without their scales, they weren't really that scary anymore. And they couldn't really do much constricting, either. They were kind of just soft and fluffy.

Lily: And here's a pink one and a green one. And this one has stripes!

Snakes: [Intense angry hissing]

Mr. Eric: They were objecting with every hiss out of their mouths, but she just couldn't understand them. And one by one, she stuffed 100 snakes into her luggage.

Lily: In order to make space in my bag, I'm gonna have to throw out this Oscar de la Whenta coat but I think it's worth it. I think Anna's really gonna like this.

Mr. Eric: So out went her Oscar de la Whenta coat and a lot of other very fashionable things that we just didn't have the puns for. And Lily hopped back on that plane. I guess it was still waiting for her.

Lily: Thanks, Stevie!

Stevie: Yeah, so, uh, you want to go back to the city or what?

Lily: Yeah, I have to. I have the latest thing in fashion in my bag.

Stevie: No way. Let me see.

Lily: I mean, it's definitely not going to get caught in customs or anything.

Stevie: Ah, okay. You know what? I don't want to see it. Let's go.

Mr. Eric: And Stevie Fleasel on his flying machine took Lily all the way back to New What City. Meanwhile, the birds were left in the jungle.

Bird: Hey, BB, you got rid of all the snakes in the jungle. Nice work.

BB: I'm feeling kind of bad about it now.

Bird: What for?

BB: Didn't you hear them all ask for help?

Bird: Ah, but they're slithery snakes. They'll be fine.

BB: But they're in trouble. We don't know even where they're being taken. And there's this big thing that's that's flying in the sky over there.

Toucan: Oooh.

Mr. Eric: Said a big toucan.

Toucan: I want to fly after that.

Mr. Eric: And it spread out its scaly wings and took off after Stevie Fleasel's flying machine.

BB: I mean, everybody even if you don't want to go save the snakes we got to go after Tony.

Bird: You're right. Tony's the coolest! Yay Tony! Yay Tony! We'll follow you to the ends of the earth, Tony!

Mr. Eric: And every scaly bird in the jungle took off after that plane. Of course, birds aren't quite as fast as planes, not nearly as fast even. So before they could get there, Lily had touched down back in New What City with the latest fashion trend.

Anna Summer: All right, dear. Wow me. What have you got?

Mr. Eric: Said Anna Summer.

Lily: I think it's gonna be the next big thing. I'm calling it the feather boa.

Anna Summer: A name like that'll never fly. Let's call it a feather boa constrictor because it looks like a snake.

Lily: I mean, that seems a little... but I trust your instincts.

Anna Summer: You know what? I've just figured it out. Feather boa constrictor's too long of a name. We're gonna call it the feather boa, or boa for short.

Lily: That's-that's... that's a super great idea, Anna. You're... you're so smart.

Anna Summer: I know. That's what I'm the boss.

Lily: You know, you can do so much with it. It's great. You can use it as a scarf or a stole. But the great thing is it moves. It has a life of its own. It really adds a third dimension to your fashion.

Anna Summer: 3D fashion? Now we're talking.

Mr. Eric: Anna Summer rushed a special edition of the Poppin Lock magazine to print. It had the feather boa right on the cover. And two days later, they were premiering it at the Whatropolitan Gala.

Snooty Guest: Wow. I look lovely covered in feathers.

Mr. Eric: Said a particularly snooty guest.

Reporter: Mr. Q Rex! Mr. Q Rex! Can I ask what you're wearing tonight?

Q Rex: Uh, yeah, I'm wearing a brown paper bag shoes. But now I'm thinking they're not so cool anymore, so I'm gonna put on one of these feather things.

Reporter: Yay.

Feathered Snake: [Hisses]

Q rex: Oh, it makes a cool noise. I want to do a rap for that noise.

Reporter: Anna, these feather boas look like a huge hit. Congratulations!

Anna Summer: Oh, I know. But I can't take all the credit. After all, I had a lot of help from my brain and fashion sense. And nobody else.

Mr. Eric: Lily was standing right beside her and didn't look too happy.

Anna Summer: Lily, what are you doing just standing there? Pass out the boas to all of our guests.

Lily: Okay, I'm on it, Miss Summer.

Mr. Eric: Lily went around handing these feathery snakes out to every single guest at the Whatropolitan Gala. And soon they were all bedecked from head to toe in moving, slithering, creeping, featherssnakes. Q Rex said.

Q Rex: Oh, you know this, uh... [Sneezes] I'm allergic to this, which is weird because I thought I was only allergic to snakes.

Mr. Eric: Lily started to sweat.

Lily: I mean, it's clearly a fashion item and not a snake. When have you seen a snake with feathers?

Q Rex: Yeah, you're right. That'd be as crazy as seeing. I don't know, a bird with scales.

Mr. Eric: And everyone at the Gala laughed.

Guests: [Various laughs]

Stu the Snake: Listen, snakes. I've got an idea. We are to feathery and soft and cuddly and cute and adorable and just plain fashionable to do anything to these people. Right?

Other snake: Right.

Stu the Snake: Exactly. So what we've got to do is get down towards their legs. And when they're walking by each other, we all tie together and make like a big trip wire.

Other snake: That seems overly complicated.

Stu the Snake: Do you have a better idea?

Other snake: I mean, what do we do in the jungle?

Stu the Snake: We eat things in the jung—Oh, yes. Why don't we just open up our mouths and eat them?

Other snake: I'm not sure that's a proportional response

Stu the Snake: Then, like, legitimately it's not a better idea.

Other snake: I'm just saying sometimes when we want to trap something, we'll wrap around it. Squeeze it. We're already around these guys. I know you think you're too soft and cuddly to squeeze anymore, but nothing's changed on the inside. You just look different on the outside.

Stu the Snake: Are you saying we can still be feather boa constrictors?

Mr. Eric: And just then Stu started to tighten up.

Flustered Guest: Oh oh... this feather boa is awfully [wheeze] tight around the—[wheezes]

Lily: Oh dear. Anna? Anna! What's happened?



Anna Summer: Oh, it's perfectly natural. When fashion is embracing you sometimes you feel a little [choking] ... Lily... what's happening?

Lily: I think I have a confession to make.

Mr. Eric: CRASH [Sound of glass breaking]

All the windows of the Whatropolitan Gala suddenly burst inward as a horde of flying birds with scales flew in.

Guests: [Shrieking and harrumphing]

Older guest: What's this? Are these birds?

Stu the Snake: Birds, you've come to save us?

BB: Yeah, I mean there's a condition to it, we kind of want our feathers back but we don't think you should be whatever is happening to you right now.

Stu the Snake: You're right. I don't think we should be whatever's happening to us right now either. Let's do it.

Mr. Eric: And so all the birds from the jungle started flapping down towards the guests at the Gala.

Guests: [Shrieking] AAA! Birds! Superman!

Older guest: Or his What If World equivalent, of course.

Mr. Eric: And all the little birds were trying to pull the snakes off of the guests and fly them back to the jungle but you know, birds are little and boa constrictors are very, very big. But there was one scaled bird who wasn't so small.

Dracomax: GRRR! Dracomax does not like getting trapped.

BB: A dragon!

Stu the Snake: I should have seen this coming.

Mr. Eric: Dracomax had flown all the way into the Gala. Apparently he'd seen these little tiny scaled birds and thought they were baby dragons.

Dracomax: If you Whatropolitans wish to trap my scaly friends. You'll have to get through me first.

Reporter: Dracomax! Dracomax! What are you wearing?

Dracomax: Oh, it's some Dolce and le Gabbana. I mean I actually just swam through some ice cream rivers on my way here.

Reporter: It's beautiful.

Dracomax: No, I it was a joke. It's really just I'm covered in ice cream.

Anna Summer: Oh, it's just all the rage. I can just—

Older guest: 12 ice creams, please!

Lily: Is no one worried about the snakes on their necks anymore?

Anna Summer: Oh Lily these snake things are so five minutes ago.

Mr. Eric: And Anna Summer took off her feather boa constrictor and threw it on the ground where it slithered all the way back to Dracomax.

Stu the Snake: Draco, you have saved us.

Dracomax: What? I wasn't here to save you! I was here to save the scaled creatures.

BB: Draco, you saved us too! I mean, we were trying to save them but then you came in and you did, thank you!

Mr. Eric: And it seems like he saved Lily, too.

Lily: Draco max. I'm so glad you accepted my invite to come here. I knew you'd bring the latest fashion trend.

Dracomax: Uh...

Mr. Eric: Dracomax saw all the snakes and birds winking at him a lot.

Dracomax: Uh...

Mr. Eric: And BB Bird flew up to him and started packing them on the side of their head.

BB: Go with it.

Dracomax: Oh, yeah, of course. Lily. I'm here for fashion.

Mr. Eric: And Dracomax tried to fly out of the Whatropolitan Gala. But of course, in typical Dracomax fashion, he got stuck inside!

Dracomax: All right, well, take your pictures while all the snakes and birds fly away. Maybe once this ice cream melts I'll be able to squeeze back out of here. And all the guests started taking pictures and covering themselves in delicious ice cream.

Guest: This is gonna get me on the front page! Anna Summer walked up to Lily.

Anna Summer: I don't know how you did it with this with this fake feather fashion trend followed by the real deal, ice cream fashion. You're quite the rising star.

Lily: Thank you, Miss Summer, but I couldn't have done it without some help.

Anna Summer: From me. Yes, of course. I know. You're welcome.

Dracomax: She means from ME!

Mr. Eric: And Dracomax breathed ice cream all over all of the Gala guests.

Older guest: [Harrumphs]

Other guest: Plum raisin is my favorite.

Another guest: Uh, plum raisin's my least favorite, but this one's pretty good.

Mr. Eric: And the scaly birds flew all the feathery snakes back to the jungle. They tore up that contract and went back to normal, but a few snakes actually liked having feathers. And a few birds liked having scales.

So one by one a handful of each sign their own contracts and went on living their own weird crazy cool lives in the jungle. And every now and then they get a visit from Lily, who finally learned to speak Snake and Bird.

Lily: Stu, BB! It's so good to see you guys.

Stu the Snake: Oh, Lily, you are such a love. Here, let me give you a feathery hug.

Lily: Ooh, it tickles

BB: Lily, I'm so glad you're here.

Dracomax: Lily, it's me, Dracomax! Remember me? The dragon. The biggest dragon. Dracomax.

Lily: Of course I remember you, you're, you know, the biggest fashion icon in New What City now.

Dracomax: You know what I'm into now?

Lily: What?

Dracomax: Wearing paper bags on my feet. It's retro.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Wow. Layla, I hope you liked your first very special guest story. Did you have fun Miss Karen?

Miss Karen: That was a lot of fun. And not at all scary.

Mr. Eric: Now you know what I go through every week. It is a joy. And Layla, you call twice with two very well spoken questions, and I hope you really like the story you ended up with.

I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor-producer.

Miss Karen: That's me!

Mr. Eric: And guest storyteller. I'd like to thank Craig Martinson for our awesome theme song, Jason O'Keeffe for our cool new artwork. And all you kids at home for being you, whoever that you is.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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