

Podcast: What If World

Episode: 083: [What if I could be invisible and lights could shoot?](#)

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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 several months ago, when a
boy named Ben asked the following.

Ben: My name is Ben. I like superpowers and what if I could be invisible?

Mr. Eric: Wow, Ben. Thank you. And thank you for being so patient. We get new
questions in all the time, but I try to make sure I still get to some of the
older ones now and then. And since this was such a quick question, I
thought we'd add one more from Anderson.

Anderson: Hi, my name is Anderson and I like race cars. But what if lights could
shoot?

Anderson's Parent: Bye.

Anderson: Bye.

Mr. Eric: Ah, what if lights could shoot? That is a clever one. Now let's answer Ben
and Anderson's question. What if I could be invisible and lights could
shoot.

[Rising harp scale]

Mr. Eric: This story starts over 100 years ago, in a little village on the first night of
winter where a young elf just crafted his first toy at the tender age of 50.

Elf: Look, mum! I think I've find me super power! I've built a toy.

Mr. Eric: He was a remarkable elf in that he was quite unremarkable. You see,
every elf has a super power. Some can build 100 toys in a night, some can
make 100 shoes, and some are so good with a bow and arrow that they
never miss. Not him. He wasn't even all that bright. That's why he called
himself, Dimmer.

Dimmer's Mom: It's a lovely toy, son, but toymaker elves can make a hundred toys a night and it took you a hundred nights to make a toy. You're a good elf, Dimmer, and that's better than being a good toymaker.

Dimmer: But mom, it didn't take me a hundred nights to make it, it just took me that long to get it right.

[BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM]

Mr. Eric: A sound like thunder rang outside. Dimmer rushed to open the door of their little hut but there was no one there.

InvisiBen: I am InvisiBen, the unsightly troll. Tonight every elf must feed me their best toys or I'll eat you all, from the girls to the boys.

Elves: [Gasps!]

Mr. Eric: A collective gasp rang through the village, and all the elves rushed to bring their best toys to the square, but Dimmer had only ever made one toy, so that's what he brought. A pile of beautiful, perfectly handcrafted toys was growing at the center of the village and when everyone saw Dimmer walking up with his... toy... they all started to mumble.

Elves: What kind of toy is that? I wouldn't want to play with it. Oh, if only Dimmer didn't have to bring a toy.

Mr. Eric: But Dimmer heard their whispers—he had pretty big ears, even for an elf.

Dimmer: My toy's just as good as any of yours. It shoots light!

Mr. Eric: And he flicked a switch on his toy which just sort of looked like a metal handle, and suddenly a light shot off into the sky.

Dimmer: See, I called it a light shooter. Because it, uh, shoots light and whatnot.

Mr. Eric: But the other elves weren't impressed.

Elves: Dimmer, they've already invented the light bulb. And the battery. And even the steel you put around it.

Dimmer: But I put it all together to make a light shooter.

Mr. Eric: Suddenly the troll's voice rumbled.

InvisiBen: How dare you insult me by bringin' such a toy. Don't you know trolls hate light? All right elves, line up to get ate up!

Elves: No! Aw, man. Now look what you did, Dimmer.

Dimmer: Why should we do whatever this voice says. I say, show yourself first.

InvisiBen: I'm too busy... eatin' up these toys. Tell you what. I'll give you one more chance. Tomorrow night, I want every elf's best shoe or I'll have elf for dinner and I'll start with you.

Elves: Me? He means me. I think he means me.

Mr. Eric: And all the elves rushed away from the square, each of them off to find their very best shoe. Dimmer had awfully big feet for an elf, and when he looked down, he saw the big toe on each foot sticking right out of his boots. He ran back home.

Dimmer: Oy, Mum, I've got to give the troll me best shoe, but these are the only two I 'ave.

Dimmer's Mom: It's not hard, Dim. A shoe is just what gets you from here to there.

Mr. Eric: Suddenly, the young elf had an idea. He ran out back to his workshop garage and stayed up all night trying to finish his latest invention. Can you guess what it is?

By the time he had finished, night was falling over their little village, and along with it, a light snow. All the elves in town shivered as they each brought their very best shoe to give to the troll. The pile of toys had disappeared and in its place grew a little hill of shoes and sandals, boots and slippers, but Dimmer wasn't there, yet.

Elves: Oh, where is he, now? I hear he can't make a shoe. What kind of elf can't make a shoe.

[Vroom vroomvroom!]

Mr. Eric: Suddenly, they heard a distant rumbling.

[Vroom vroomvroom!]

Mr. Eric: But it didn't sound like the troll's thunderous footsteps.

[Engine revving and shifting gears.]

Mr. Eric: They saw Dimmer racing up the hill to the town square in what looked to be some sort of horseless metal wagon.

Elves: Oh, what kind of shoe is that? Maybe it's for a troll's foot? No, Dimmer blew it again.

Dimmer: Just listen, hear me out. It's not a shoe but it can get ya from place to place. I call it a race car.

Elves: A race car? They've already invented wheels. And carriages. And I heard about engines. And steel isn't anything new.

Dimmer: Yeah, but I put it all together and made a race car.

[BOOM BOOM BOOM]

Mr. Eric: Thunder shook to mark the arrival of InvisiBen, the unsightly troll.

InvisiBen: Now, this is some fancy footwear, I must say. Only, not everyone brought a shoe, today.

Mr. Eric: And all eyes turned to Dimmer.

Dimmer: Oh, I'd give you the shoe off of me foot, but I thought maybe you'd like a race car. Every kid wants a race car.

Elves: What's a race car? What's a car? I don't know, but I think I want it.

InvisiBen: No, no, no. That's too big for us.

Dimmer: What do you mean, too big?

InvisiBen: I mean, it's too big for us to eat.

Dimmer: You're big enough to eat an elf but not a race car.

InvisiBen: We just wanted snack-size shoes. Quit questioning me!

[BOOM BOOM BOOM!]

Mr. Eric: And thunder shook through the square again.

Elves: Now you've done it, Dimmer. He's going to eat all of us. I think I'm being eaten right now.

Dimmer: You're not being eaten right now!

Elf: How do you know? He's invisible.

Dimmer: If he's even here, why can't we see his footsteps in the snow?

InvisiBen: Now you've done it, elf. You questioned me for the last time. Tomorrow, I want every elf's arrow and bow, or I'll eat you all from your head to your toe.

Mr. Eric: And all the elves rushed away from the square, except for Dimmer. He climbed back inside his race car and kept the engine running to keep him warm.

InvisiBen: Go on, now, Elf! Let me enjoy my dinner in peace.

Dimmer: Oh, got a little stage fright, have ye. Well, I'll just leave you alone to enjoy your shoes.

Mr. Eric: And Dimmer started up his race car and:
[Engine revving.]

Mr. Eric: He peeled out of the town square and still got home before any of the other elves.

Dimmer's Mom: Hi, Son. Are you getting into trouble again?

Dimmer: Oh, Mum. I'm never gonna find me super power. I thought I'd made a special toy and a super shoe, and tomorrow I'm going to fail with a bow and arrow, too.

Dimmer's Mom: Oh, Dimmer. You don't need to have super powers. You're a good elf and a smart one, and anyone who can't see that, well, they can't see nothing at all.

Dimmer: Oh! Mum, you're a genius!

Mr. Eric: And Dimmer rushed out back to his workshop again. He worked all through the night and the day as well. He was so tired the next evening, that his mom had to help him fill up the trunk before driving the race car up the hill.

Dimmer's Mom: Now, I just turn this key here, and then put my foot there and then...
[Engine revving.]

Dimmer's Mom: [Engine squealing in the background] Oh, this car really races.

Dimmer: I know, Mum. That's why I called it a race car.

Mr. Eric: This time they drove up the hill so fast that they beat all the other elves, and Dimmer pulled a big sack out of the trunk.

InvisiBen: Did you bring me a whole sack full of bows and arrows to make up for all your wise crackin'?

Dimmer: Listen, listen. I'm tired. You win, troll. I brought an extra shooter for every elf so we can finally be done with this whole mess.

InvisiBen: Well, now. Maybe I won't have to eat you after all.

Dimmer: Okay.

Mr. Eric: And Dimmer started dragging the bag away from the hill. [Snoring]

InvisiBen: Hey, where you going.

Mr. Eric: It looked like he was sleep walking, and all the other elves were finally catching up.

Elves: Look at him, he's sleep walking. At least he brought a bag of bows. I bet the bows aren't even good.

Mr. Eric: Suddenly, Dimmer opened his eyes. He'd been awake all along.

Dimmer: Psst. Hey, listen. Each of you take one of these and stick them on your bow, right? And when I say go, you all press the button.

Mr. Eric: All the other elves started to object, but then Dimmer's mom gave them, The Look. You know that look that a mom can give a kid? Well, she raised three other elves so her look had about 200 years of no nonsense behind it.

Elves: [Whimper.]

Mr. Eric: All the other elves fell in line and took Dimmer's gadgets and strapped them to their bows. Then, they entered the square.

InvisiBen: Hey, I thought y'all was bringing extra bows tonight.

Dimmer: I only said we was bringing extra shooters tonight.

InvisiBen: Well, what kind of shooter.

Dimmer: Now!

Mr. Eric: Dimmer shouted. And every elf in the village pressed the button on the side of their light shooters and the entire square filled up with light.

InvisiBen: Hey, put out them lights right away. Or I'm gonna eat you up.

Dimmer: Okay, sure. Make me into a nice elf stew.

InvisiBen: I'm certainly about to.

Dimmer: Fine, then.

InvisiBen: Well, then I just will.

Elves: I think I see an invisible stew around Dimmer. Yep, I see it, too. He's a gonner.

Dimmer: Would y'all do me a favor, Dimmer said to the elves. Just point those little light shooters a little farther down, towards the ground, eh?

Mr. Eric: And so they aimed their bows down and the beams of light pooled all over the grounds of the town square.

Dimmer: There you are.

InvisiBen: Uh, pay no attention to the little critter by your foot.

Mr. Eric: And Dimmer bent all the way down to the ground and seemed to pick up something that none of the other elves could see.

Dimmer's Mom: My boy's found his super power, he can see the invisible.

Dimmer: Sorry, Mum. I don't have a super power. Fortunately, neither does InvisiBen.

Mr. Eric: And Dimmer held his arm forward and all the elves gasped.

Elves: [Gasp!] I knew it.

Mr. Eric: It turns out InvisiBen was only unsightly because he was so small.

InvisiBen: I seem to have suddenly shrunk. You must have a magic super power of shrinkin', but soon I'm gonna grow big again and then I'm gonna—

Dimmer: No, you're not. All right, where's the rest of him?

InvisiBen: What are you going on about?

Dimmer: The rest of the trolls. Where are they?

InvisiBen: Um. Hmm.

Mr. Eric: He saw InvisiBen's eyes dart to the side of a little house so Dimmer shone his light in that direction to see about a hundred trolls working together to hold a stump in the air with some crazy system of ropes and pulleys.

Dimmer: I've got to say, that's rather clever. Now, I think my friends might like their toys back. And their shoes. And, you know, maybe we're just gonna keep our bows and arrows.

InvisiBen: But we needed them shoes to live in, and those bows and arrows for firewood.

Dimmer: What about the toys?

InvisiBen: Well, to play with, of course.

Trolls: Duh!

Dimmer: Now I'm getting attitude from the trolls!

Mr. Eric: And Dimmer put down InvisiBen and turned back to the elves.

Dimmer: Mum, I want you to drive out with these trolls and get everything they tricked us out of.

Dimmer's Mom: All right, that seems fair.

Mr. Eric: And all the trolls got driven away with more than a few grumbles. But when they came back with every elf's best shoe and favorite toy, there was stack in the town square filled with sturdy boots and firewood, beloved old toys and dolls, piles of hearty elven bread, and gallons of spiced cider.

InvisiBen: Now, what's going on? Are you playing some kind of trick on us?

Dimmer: Oh, a little bit. You see, it's gonna take us a while to fix you up some fresh new toys and boots. I thought maybe these would do in the mean time.

Mr. Eric: And Dimmer's smile was gap-toothed and crooked, but when it stretched wide across his face, every elf and troll in the town square couldn't help but smile, too.

InvisiBen: We don't really deserve this. We was playing tricks on you.

Dimmer: I figured we was 500 foot tall giants to you, so maybe I ought to go easy this time. But no more tricks, eh?

InvisiBen: Troll's honor.

Mr. Eric: And a bunch of elves and trolls busted out music instruments and started playing a song together as everyone loaded the gifts into the race car.

Dimmer: Well, that's one super power, I wish I had. Playing an instrument.

Mr. Eric: And InvisiBen looked up from his fiddle work.

InvisiBen: Heh. You think I was just born able to play this here fiddle?

Dimmer: Well, that's how super powers work.

InvisiBen: How long it take you to make that there light shooter?

Dimmer: About a hundred nights.

InvisiBen: And the race car.

Dimmer: I'd been working all night for decades. It's nothing special.

InvisiBen: Well, it was nothing special about all the wrong notes I played before I learned to find the right ones.

Dimmer's Mom: Well, if you're all done with your merry-makin', we've got some trolls to help.

Elves & Trolls: Hooray! Hooray!

Mr. Eric: And she got the trolls with her look, too!

Dimmer's Mom: Less hooray-in' and more away-in'. Get in that race car!

Trolls: [Whimper.]

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale]

Mr. Eric: All right Ben and Anderson. I hope you enjoyed your story. I'd like to thank Karen Marshall O'Keefe, my co-editor and producer, Jason O'Keefe for our artwork, Craig Martinson for our theme song, and all you kids at home who know that there's no super power quite like practice.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]