

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 133: What if sabretooth tigers could be ninjas?](#)

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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, and today we're starting off with a question from a listener who called in and tweeted in and sent about a dozen videos and her first and middle names are Parson Daisy.

Parson: Hi, my name is Parson, I'm six years old and I like sabertooth tigers and my what if question is what if sabertooth tigers were alive and they could be ninjas?

Parson's Parent: Tell him what you think of the show?

Parson: I love your show, bye!

Mr. Eric: Well, thank you, Parson. A sabertooth would make a very formidable ninja.

And we've also got a write-in question from a patron named Everett. Everett asked us what if you had to keep your shoes on or your feet would keep growing and growing?

Ooh, as someone who's been accused of having Flintstone feet and Hobbit feet, I can say that question is my nightmare!

Fred the Dog: Oh, your feet aren't too bad, Mr. Eric. I like to sniff them sometimes.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, but Fred, you like stinky things.

Fred the Dog: They don't stink to me, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: Oh, thank you, I guess.

Fred the Dog: And also thank you to Ethan and Matthew and to Cassidy.

Mr. Eric: Wow, three shout-outs today?

Fred the Dog: Yes, Ethan, Matthew, and Cassidy are brothers and sister.

Mr. Eric: Well, thank you three for supporting the show.

JF Kitty: Well, I'm here to meow-out Sam from Dublin, Ireland.

Mr. Eric: Oh my goodness, I love Dublin. I lived there for six months!

JF Kitty: Sam likes to listen to *What If World* in the car and he enjoys riding on his bike and playing football.

Mr. Eric: But not American football?

JF Kitty: No, what every other country in the world calls football.

Mr. Eric: You mean soccer?

JF Kitty: I don't mean soccer.

Fred the Dog: I think he's talking about soccer, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: Well thank you, Cassidy, thank you Matthew, thank you Ethan, and Sam, too.

Now, let's find out what if you had to keep your shoes or your feet would keep growing and growing and what if sabertooth tigers could be ninjas.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Daisytooth the Tiger is one of the secret ninjas, a group of ninjas whose job it is to be professional secretive.

Daisytooth: That's right! So I don't know why you're telling them my name, it's a secret!

Mr. Eric: They're gonna need to know a few of the secrets for the story.

Daisytooth: Shh, pretend I'm not here. I'm hiding.

Mr. Eric: Okay. Well, Daisytooth is young as far as ninjas go, but she is as sneaky as they come, partly in thanks to her big, soft, feet, and her even softer footpads. Everyone who knew here—

Daisytooth: Which wasn't many people.

Mr. Eric: The few people who knew her thought that she'd be What If World's next great ninja, but then, one day...

Goodclimber: Ninjas... it's okay, you don't have to be secret right now.

Mr. Eric: It was Goodclimber, What If World's oldest spider ninja. Leg to leg, he was no bigger than your thumbnail, which of course made him very good at being secretive.

Daisytooth: What is it, Goodclimber?

Mr. Eric: Asked Daisytooth, silently stepping out of the shadows.

Goodclimber: Well, it occurred to me that a lot of our ninjas appear to be so sneaky because they're actually just not here anymore.

Daisytooth: Yeah, I didn't want to say anything because that sort of makes me the best ninja by default.

Goodclimber: Not necessarily, because now we've got a new ninja.

Mr. Eric: And a short, young human, covered head-to-toe in a black ninja's outfit, suddenly flipped out of a tree!

NinjagirlDen: I am NinjagirlDen.

Mr. Eric: NinjagirlDen's ninja gi seemed a little too big for her. The sleeves were rolled up and the pants were cuffed and her ninja sash was wrapped around four times.

NinjagirlDen: This giant tiger is my competition? Hahahaha! No contest.

Daisytooth: Hi, my name's Daisytooth. Nice to meet you.

NinjagirlDen: You just volunteered your name to me, that was a ninja mistake.

Goodclimber: Hey, you two, this isn't a contest. Until right now. Now it's a contest.

Daisytooth: Huh?

NinjagirlDen: I am prepared.

Goodclimber: Your first ninja challenge is to find and climb the secret staircase.

NinjagirlDen: I'm sorry, there's lots of staircases here, I'm not sure which one you're referring to.

Mr. Eric: NinjagirlDen hesitated, but Daisytooth was already sniffing out the stairs. They were invisible, but not to her nose, and in a moment, the sabertooth tiger had climbed the staircase without a sound.

Goodclimber: Well done, Daisytooth.

NinjagirlDen: You have bested me once, Daisytooth. It will not happen again.

Goodclimber: Your second challenge is to say the secret password while doing the secret flip on a balance beam of secrets.

Mr. Eric: NinjagirlDen saw that Daisytooth was already sniffing out the balance beam of secrets so she followed the tiger and flipped over her head onto the invisible balance beam.

NinjagirlDen: Now I simply have to guess the password.

Mr. Eric: But Daisytooth had already followed her on the balance beam and...

Daisytooth: Secret!

Mr. Eric: The massive tiger somehow flipped backwards while saying the password.

Goodclimber: Round two goes to Daisytooth.

NinjagirlDen: Your secret password is secret? Are you kidding me?

Goodclimber: Don't worry, NinjagirlDen. The third round is worth extra points so you can finish in a tie.

Daisytooth: That'd be great. Then we'd both be the best new ninjas!

NinjagirlDen: What is the final challenge, Master Goodclimber?

Goodclimber: Get ready. Now you both have exactly secret seconds to secret pass the secret secret. Secretly.

NinjagirlDen: I am sorry, could you repeat that?

Mr. Eric: But Daisytooth had already curled up in a ball, putting her front feet over her eyes and her back feet over her ears, and after a moment's meditation.

Daisytooth: It is done, Master.

Goodclimber: Congratulations. Once you've taught NinjagirlDen a few of our secrets...

Daisytooth: Oh, I'm sure she'll be every bit as good a ninja as me if not better in some ways.

NinjagirlDen: Do not feel sorry for me.

[Record scratch.]

NinjagirlDen: I feel sorry... for you.

Mr. Eric: Said NinjagirlDen, backing away from Goodclimber and Daisytooth.

Daisytooth: But why? Is something wrong with me?

NinjagirlDen: Yes, in fact, um... you have giant furry sneaky feet, which make you better at secrets. It's cheating.

Daisytooth: But they're just my feet, I'm a sabertooth tiger.

NinjagirlDen: Yes, that's what you are.

Mr. Eric: Said NinjagirlDen, stomping back toward Daisytooth angrily.

NinjagirlDen: A perfect apex predator with poor, plain, prodigious paws.

Mr. Eric: Daisytooth felt more hurt than she'd ever been, even in a ninja battle.

Daisytooth: Well, you're just mad because you're a puny little person. You're probably as big as you'll ever get.

Goodclimber: Now, let's not speak to each other in such harsh tones.

Mr. Eric: Said Goodclimber. But NinjagirlDen and Daisytooth tiger had already ran off to their separate rooms within the ninja hideout.

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: Daisytooth had never thought much about her feet. They were just hers! And she kind of liked that they were strong and sneaky, but now that she looked at them...

Daisytooth: Oh, you know, these feet are kinda big. And did they just... did my feet just...

Mr. Eric: Yep! As soon as she thought about her own big feet, they started looking bigger and bigger!

Daisytooth: Uh-oh, uh-oh!

Mr. Eric: Daisytooth rushed around her room trying to find her old shoes. As a sabertooth tiger, she couldn't remember the last time she'd worn them.

Daisytooth: Oh no, my feet! They're too big!

Mr. Eric: She could barely squeeze her paws into these shoes, but she did it anyway.

Daisytooth: Ooh, ouch!

Mr. Eric: Squeezing her toes together to keep them from growing and growing.

Daisytooth: There! That should hold them for now.

Mr. Eric: And she could barely sleep that night, but she didn't dare take off her shoes and let her feet grow even more.

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: The next morning, Daisy groggily limped to the courtyard in her too-tight shoes to find NinjagirlDen looking even more tightly wrapped up than before. But where were arms and legs somehow puffed out, like she had big puffy muscles that weren't there last night.

NinjagirlDen: Hello Big Foot.

Mr. Eric: Said NinjagirlDen.

Daisytooth: Mm, hey puny person.

Mr. Eric: Replied Daisytooth.

Goodclimber: Good, you're all here. We've got your first real secret mission. Okay, good luck.

NinjagirlDen: Master, don't you think you should tell us what the secret mission is?

Goodclimber: Wow, that is quite a secret, though. Hmm. Okay, just this once.

Mr. Eric: And Goodclimber climbed along a big white envelop, opening it with his little spider legs.

Goodclimber: All right, your secret mission is... to rescue me from our rival clan.

Daisytooth: I'm sorry, how is it that you know that?

Goodclimber: Well, they sent us this note.

Mr. Eric: And Ninjagirden went over to read it.

Ninjagirden: It says, "We're your rival ninja clan. We're going to ninjanap you. Warm regards, the not-so-secret ninjas.

NSS Ninjas: It is us, the not-so-secret ninjas!

Yeah! We are here and we intend to ninjanap you.

We're your rival ninja clan.

Daisytooth: Yeah, we got your letter.

Mr. Eric: And there were the three not-so-secret ninjas. They were brightly colored sabertooth tigers. But instead of camouflage stripes, one had brightly colored polka dots and another had a plaid pattern that was almost neon. And the third tiger was just tie-dye. And they started flipping and jumping around everywhere.

NSS Ninjas: I'm right behind you.

I am right in front of you.

I'm distracting you while my partner ninjanaps Goodclimber.

Daisytooth: What? How is this working?

Mr. Eric: Daisytooth tried to chase them but with her feet all bound up, she winced with every weary step. Meanwhile, Ninjagirden flexed her somehow overly puffy arms and stood barring the exit to the hide-out.

Ninjagirden: Never fear, I will stop them.

Mr. Eric: But they'd already shoved Goodclimber into a bag.

Goodclimber: Don't worry, I'll just climb out of this... unless they tie it closed, but. Oh, they tied it closed. I'm in real trouble, now.

Mr. Eric: And the three brightly-colored sabertooth tigers barrelled right towards NinjagirlDen.

NSS Ninjas: We're running right towards you, little girl!

Mr. Eric: Daisy tiger tried to rush to NinjagirlDen's side but... all three of the not-so-secret ninjas bumped into her as they rushed out the secret door.

Daisytooth: NinjagirlDen, are you okay?

Mr. Eric: Pillowly fluff had fountained out of NinjagirlDen's arms and legs and NinjagirlDen's oversized gi had unrolled, dragging on the ground.

Daisytooth: What in the world?

Mr. Eric: But before Daisytooth could ask what was going on, she noticed her own shoes starting to split and was that... were her feet growing again?

Daisytooth: Oh, I'll be right back.

NinjagirlDen: Yes, I have to gather up this fluff that appeared for no reason and I'll be right back, too.

Mr. Eric: A moment later, Daisytooth was back, her four feet wrapped up in half split shoes and old ninja sashes, whereas NinjagirlDen waddled in with a gi that seemed more puffed out than ever.

Daisytooth: Much better.

NinjagirlDen: Much better.

Both: What do you mean, much better? This is all your fault!

NinjagirlDen: Whatever, Big Foot.

Daisytooth: Whatever, Puny Person.

NinjagirlDen: Where do you think they are taking him?

Daisytooth: Oh, they left us a map.

NinjagirlDen: They are kind of thoughtful for evil ninjas.

Mr. Eric: And so the two ninjas teamed up despite their disagreements, to follow the not-so-secret map to Goodclimber. They followed the redundant river.



NSS Ninjas: Let's go 'round and 'round and 'round and 'round and 'round and 'round...

Mr. Eric: They legged it down Left Turn Lane.

NSS Ninjas: Take a left here, and a left here, and a left here, and a left here... okay, you're done.

Mr. Eric: They even operated the Obvious Automobus.

Bus: Last stop, not-so-secret hideaway. It's also the first stop. It's also the stop you're at right now. Would you like to ride again?

Daisytooth: Uh, no, thank you.

NinjagirlDen: Are you telling me we've traveled for three days to end up...

Daisytooth: Exactly where we started, yeah.

Mr. Eric: NinjagirlDen and Daisytooth got off the bus and GirlDen angrily kicked it.

Bus: Your kicks can't hurt me. I'm a bus. But I still don't like it.

NinjagirlDen: It is right here under our noses and we cannot even find it.

Daisytooth: GirlDen, stop it.

Mr. Eric: But when Daisytooth tried to stop NinjagirlDen from kicking the Obvious Autobus, she squeezed out some of the fluff of NinjagirlDen's fake leg muscles.

NinjagirlDen: No, wait!

Mr. Eric: And when NinjagirlDen pulled her foot back, she accidentally kicked a hole in Daisytooth's shoe.

Daisytooth: Oh, no!

NinjagirlDen: Not again, not again!

Mr. Eric: NinjagirlDen's extra long pant leg had unraveled all the way to the ground again and Daisytooth could practically see her foot growing.

NinjagirlDen: Oh no!

Daisytooth: Oh no!

NinjagirlDen: I'm shrinking!

Daisytooth: I'm growing!

[Record scratch.]

Daisytooth: What did you say?

Ninjagirliden: What did you say?

Mr. Eric: But Ninjagirliden started rolling her pant leg up quickly.

Ninjagirliden: Fine. I am shrinking. Ever since you pointed out how short I was, I shrink whenever my pant legs touch the ground.

Daisytooth: But you don't look any smaller than me. Those pants are just to big.

Ninjagirliden: Do not feel sorry for me.

Daisytooth: I don't. I feel sorry for me.

Mr. Eric: Said Daisytooth, trying to wrap up her foot as it seemed to grow bigger and bigger.

Daisytooth: If these shoes pop off my paws again, my feet will just keep growing and growing.

Ninjagirliden: Well, those shoes are obviously too small for your feet.

Daisytooth: Oh, we're a couple of failures.

Ninjagirliden: We can't even find a not-so-secret hideout.

NSS Ninjas: That's because we're hiding!

Our layer is cleverly concealed right below your feet.

You'll never get through the not-so-secret door.

Mr. Eric: And yes, the two ninjas noticed they'd been standing on a big metal door concealed with about a handful of dirt.

Ninjagirliden: Daisytooth, you can claw through it. You must release the feet.

Daisytooth: Oh, I can't. They'll just get too big.

Goodclimber: Please save me! These ninjas are just so obvious about everything.

NSS Ninjas: Yes, we are. That's our whole thing.

Obviously!

- Mr. Eric: Daisytooth and NinjagirlDen were struggling at the big heavy door, but they couldn't budge it an inch.
- NinjagirlDen: Please, Daisytooth. Release the feet! You were made big. It's part of who you are!
- Daisytooth: Oh, I don't know.
- Mr. Eric: But Daisytooth tried, taking off her shoes even though she could feel her feet growing! She unsheathed her claws and scratched at the door vigorously. But it was really slow going.
- NinjagirlDen: That door is even stronger than it looks.
- NSS Ninjas: That's because we learned the secret of forging steel.  
Steel is made of iron and carbon.
- Mr. Eric: Daisytooth finally managed to make the smallest of scratches through the door but it was too tiny of an opening for a sabertooth tiger.
- Daisytooth: NinjagirlDen, you can do it.
- NinjagirlDen: No I cannot! Look at how big and puffed out I am with muscles.
- Daisytooth: You don't need any of that fluff stuff in your muscles. You were made small but every inch of you is powerful.
- Mr. Eric: And NinjagirlDen started taking the fluff out of her arms and legs, feeling like she was shrinking by the second.
- NinjagirlDen: Even if I get through, how am I going to get by a clan full of full-grown sabertooth ninjas?
- Goodclimber: You have to secret by the the secret secret secretly.
- Mr. Eric: And NinjagirlDen did slip through the little clawed crack in the steel, then she covered her eyes with her hands and her ears with her feet and meditated for a moment. And she was outside of the not-so-secret lair holding a rescued Goodclimber.
- Goodclimber: Well done, my students.
- NSS Ninjas: What happened?

You didn't even send a letter.

Now we intend to come out of the hideout and get him back.

Mr. Eric: And the three colorful sabertooth ninjas burst out of their hideout.

NSS Ninjas: [Growling] ARRR-O-A-R spells roar! Roar is an onomatopoeia.

Mr. Eric: The three not-so-secret ninjas rushed towards Daisy and Girden and suddenly, Daisy's paws seemed to get really big.

NSS Ninjas: Oh! Ow!

Ow is also an onomatopoeia. A word for a sound that sounds like the sound.

Mr. Eric: The three tigers were piled up together and Ninjagirden ran towards them, holding a piece of spider silk as it unraveled from Goodclimber.

NSS Ninjas: We're gonna get you.

Oh, tiny one, you do not stand a chance.

Big people can underestimate little people.

Mr. Eric: And as the three tigers swatted at Ninjagirden, she shrunk so small that she slipped between their toes and wrapped up their three paws together in an unbreakable cuff of spider silk.

NSS Ninjas: Hey, get off of me!

But you are on me!

We're defeated.

Daisytooth: That's right, you are!

Ninjagirden: Oh, but now I am going to keep shrinking.

Daisytooth: Oh, and my paws are gonna keep growing.

Goodclimber: No, you are just focusing on what you thought were flaws. But now they're your super ninja powers.

NSS Ninjas: Yeah, you've got shrinking powers.

And you have super growing feet.

It will make you formidable opponents.

Daisytooth: Yeah, you really don't have to narrate everything.

Mr. Eric: Yeah, tigers, we're sort of wrapping up here, so... and I usually do that part.

NSS Ninjas: Oh, fine, we'll go hide in our lair again.

We will let you say the end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: The... the end.

NSS Ninjas: Sorry, you say the end!

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: The end. Ooh, you threw off my whole thing.

NSS Ninjas: Say it more calmly, like the end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: The... oh forget it.

NSS Ninjas: That's a good choice.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: All right Everett and Parson, I hope you enjoyed your story. I'd like to thank Karen O'Keeffe, my co creator, Craig Martinson for our theme song, Tony Morrison for being an inspiring teacher, storyteller, and person. And all you kids out there big and small for liking yourself whatever size you are.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]