

Podcast: What If World

[Episode: 148: What if dragons can't fly?](#)

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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 we're starting off the new year with a review question from a listener named Maya.

Maya writes: me and my brother love your show and I have a what if question. What if dragons can't fly?

Nice! Starting the year off right with a really big question. And let's add one more from a patron named Enda.

Enda: Hi. My name is Enda. I'm five years old and I love drawing and my what if question is what if carrots ate rabbits? Bye.

Mr. Eric: Very cool. Well, not so cool for the rabbits, but we're gonna add a character as well, this week. A patron named Esha submitted a character named Sticky who's a giant green gecko with wings. Sticky lives in an enchanted forest and we'll find out more about him when we get into the story.

Fred the Dog: Well, we can't begin the story without saying a big shout out to Silas.

Mr. Eric: Oh, hey Fred. Yeah, you're right.

Fred the Dog: Silas is in fifth grade. He's from Rochester, Minnesota, and is a competitive swimmer on a team. He loves music, math, and the skate park.

Mr. Eric: Thank you, Fred the Dog.

Fred the Dog: No, I got all the shout outs today, Mr. Eric, so just relax.

Mr. Eric: Oh, okay.

Fred the Dog: I'm also shouting out Raya who's eight, almost nine, and she's from Singapore, and she just entered the third grade.

Mr. Eric: Hi, Raya. Congratulations.

Fred the Dog: Then, there's Orin, who's four years old and is from Albuquerque and loves Spider-Man.

Mr. Eric: Hi, Orin!

Fred the Dog: And finally, there's Emma H. And her favorite character on the show is me, Fred the dog.

Mr. Eric: Well done, Fred. And did I notice you enunciating a little bit better?

Fred the Dog: Oh, I'm glad you noticed. I have been taking speech lessons. I'm not embarrassed by the way that I talk because my tongue is too long for my mouth. But I want to learn to enunciate a little more just fo' me.

Mr. Eric: Just "for" me. You gotta hit those Rs.

Fred the Dog: Yeah, I'm from New York and my daddy's from Boston, so I don't think I'm gonna be hitting those Rs any time soon, Mr. Eric.

Mr. Eric: Okay, Fred. Fair enough. So let's find out what if dragons can't fly? And what if carrots ate rabbits?

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Dracomax is the biggest dragon in all of What If World, which isn't always a good thing.

Dracomax: Oh dear. I am stuck inside a hill. How do I always do this in my sleep?

Mr. Eric: Said Dracomax, wriggling around inside a hill.

Lola: Oh, don't worry about it. You were just cold so our hill mon, Hilda Hill just snuggled you up in the middle of the night.

Mr. Eric: It was Lola Rabbit. She was bounding about, all around Dracomax while Hilda Hill gently rolled her rocks and grass and dirt off of the massive dragon.

Dracomax: Cold? I never get cold. I always use my dragon wings to wrap around my...

[Record scratch.]

Where are the rest of my wings?

Mr. Eric: Dracomax looked back to see that half of each wing was missing as if it had just disappeared into thin air.

Lola: Oh yes, it's the strangest thing. While you were sleeping, it looked like your wings started to unravel from the tip down to the middle, and then they just disappeared and you were shivering so Hilda Hill came up and hugged you.

Dracomax: Yes, I know that part. Did you see where my wings went?

Lola: Of course!

Mr. Eric: And Lola bounded up to the top of Hilda Hill, pointing across the horizon to a big old forest.

Lola: They went to the Enchanted Forest.

Dracomax: Lola, can you help me? I cannot fly with only half of my wings. I'll need you to show me how to walk to the Enchanted Forest. I've never been much good at walking.

Lola: Me neither, walking's really hard, but I'm really good at hop hip hip hoppity hopping!

Dracomax: Oh, great, great. Let's just go.

Lola: Ohgreatletsjustgo! But I'm gonna grab a quick snack for energy!

Mr. Eric: And Lola opened up a pre-packaged carrot, chewed it about halfway down, then threw the carrot and the package on the ground.

Dracomax: Ooh... isn't that a little wasteful.

Lola: Yes, it is a waste, how carrots have a whole half that I don't like to eat. It gets too wide and crunchy at the end.

Dracomax: Oh, um...

Mr. Eric: Dracomax was about to say more, but then Lola Rabbit bounded off toward the Enchanted Forest! And Dracomax had no choice but to do his best hopping after her.

Dracomax: Hop! [SLAM] Hop! [SLAM] Hippity! [SLAM] HOP! [SLAM].

[Time skip noise.]

Mr. Eric: They reached the Enchanted Forest as the mid-day sun glared down upon them brightly.

Dracomax: I miss having my wings for shade.

Lola: I miss having my carrot for a snack. Oh, wait! I've got another one!

Mr. Eric: And Lola pulled another carrot out of the little belt pouch, opened up the wrapper, threw it on the ground, ate half the carrot, then threw the other half away.

Dracomax: Do you really need the carrots to be individually wrapped?

Lola: What, are my carrots supposed to touch? Ew, gross. Come on, let's go find your wings.

Mr. Eric: And Lola quickly bounded into the forest with Dracomax doing a slow sort of clumsy hop after her, and he didn't get much more graceful now that he was surrounded by trees.

Lola: Oh, come on, Dracomax! What's taking you so long? Let's go, let's go, let's go!

Dracomax: We don't even know what we're looking for. Shouldn't we scout around or something?

Lola: Ah, once you've seen one forest, you've seen 'em all!

Mr. Eric: But then Lola took a minute to really take in the forest around here. There was something weird about the trees. Sure, they had big green leafy tops, like you'd expect, but the trunks themselves were all different colors. Bright orange, golden yellow, vibrant red and purple, and instead of getting wider at the base, these colorful tree trunks seemed to taper down before just shooting right into the ground with no visible roots whatsoever.

Lola: Now that you mention it, these tree trunks are kinda strange.

Dracomax: I'm not sure that those are tree trunks. I think those are roots.

Lola: What are you talking about?

Dracomax: Like root vegetables. I mean, they normally grow underground entirely and just the leafy parts are up here. But here, let me show you.

Mr. Eric: And Dracomax walked up to one of these "roots" or "tree trunks" or whatever they were, and he took a big, crunchy bite out of it! Big orange bits of root vegetable were flying out of his mouth as he spoke.

Dracomax: Yeah, kinda tastes like a carrot although not as sweet.

Giant Carrot: You think I'm not a sweet enough carrot? Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Eric: Dracomax's bite mark had somehow formed into a big carrot mouth.

Giant Carrot: You try being stuck in the dirt for 200 years and see how you taste.

Mr. Eric: And her tree-length leafy green hair flailed about wildly.

Dracomax: I am so sorry. I didn't realize you were talking food.

Lola: Yeah, we're not supposed to eat talking food, it's just too weird.

Dracomax: Also, it is not right.

Lola: Yeah, that, too.

Mr. Eric: And two of the carrot creases narrowed like frowning eyebrows as the carrot tree slowly turned its root and it's leafy greens started to reach towards them menacingly.

Giant Carrot: Yeah, well, carrots aren't supposed to eat talking rabbits, but maybe I'll make an exception this time.

Dracomax: But I'm not a rabbit! I just hop like one!

Lola: I don't think she knows a rabbit from a dragon anyway, let's go, let's go!

Mr. Eric: Lola and Dracomax bounded through the Enchanted Forest of carrot trees. Each of the different colored carrots would turn on their roots and reach with their leafy greens, but Lola would dive through with her speed and finesse, while Dracomax would crash through with his size and might.

Giant Carrot: Get those rabbits!

Mr. Eric: The first of the carrot trees called after them as they burst into a clearing.

Lola: Oh, finally! No carrot trees around.

Dracomax: Oh... we forgot to ask her about my wings.

Sticky: Eh, don't bother asking Carrotrea. She's a real grump.

Lola: Okay, thanks for the advice.

Mr. Eric: Said Lola as she noticed a shadow suddenly stretching over her.

Dracomax: There has to be someone in this forest who isn't a giant monster.

Sticky: No, sorry, just me, another giant monster.

Dracomax: Oh, that's okay, Giant Monster.

Lola: Dracomax--

Dracomax: We'll just have to find my wings on our own.

Sticky: You're looking for wings? I've got wings.

Dracomax: Oh, no, I'm looking for my wings, not a giant monster's wi--uhh...

Mr. Eric: And Dracomax, the biggest of all dragons, turned around to see an even bigger reptilian creature towering over them.

Sticky: Hi, name's Sticky. Nice to meet you.

Lola: D-d-d-dragon!

Mr. Eric: And Sticky stretched out his big, leathery, red-spotted wings.

Sticky: No, no, no. I'm just a flying gecko who lives in an Enchanted Forest.

Lola: Well, if you're good and kind, you'll tell us where Dracomax's wings are.

Sticky: Sorry, haven't seen any wings other than mine.

Dracomax: I'm never gonna be able to fly again [crying].

Sticky: But listen, there's lots of other ways to get around. For example, you can ride a bicycle.

Mr. Eric: And Sticky the gecko folded up his wings to reveal three different bicycles parked in this clearing. One big enough for a colossal gecko,

next to a smaller one sized for a dragon next to an even smaller one just right for a rabbit. They hopped on the bikes to go for a ride, but as soon as they got back into the woods... [Pew pew laser noises!] Smaller carrots from the Enchanted Forest started blasting at them, getting stuck in the spokes of their wheels.

[Various chewing noises.]

Lola: I think these carrots are still trying to eat us.

Dracomax: I keep telling you, I'm not a rabbit. I'm a dragon.

Carrotrea: That's just what a giant draconic rabbit would say!

Dracomax: I can't argue with that.

Mr. Eric: And they wheeled the bikes back to the safety of the clearing.

Sticky: Well, my other favorite way to get around is to fly on seagulls.

Dracomax: You like flying on seagulls even though you have wings?

Sticky: Well, a swimmer can still enjoy a surfboard even though they can swim.

Lola: That makes total sense. So let's see how a giant flying gecko flies on top of a seagull.

Sticky: Oh, don't be silly, it's not just one seagull, it's a flock of seagulls. Ca-caw! Ca-caw! Sorry, my seagull's a bit rusty. [More squawking noises].

Mr. Eric: And the three of them tried to fly away on an incredible magic carpet of seagulls, but... the giant leafy green carrot tree tops reached out towards the seagulls and started tickling them, and... the three of them fell back down to the ground.

Lola nervously unwrapped another pre-packaged carrot and started chomping away at it.

Dracomax: Oh, ooh, maybe you shouldn't do that where they can see.

Lola: Oh yeah, you're right.

Mr. Eric: And Lola threw the whole carrot and wrapper back into the forest!

Carrotrea: If you're not gonna finish your carrots, then these carrots are gonna finish you!

Dracomax: Okay, that did not seem to help. Maybe if we were just less wasteful in general...

Sticky: Wait, I've got an idea. I don't know where your wings are, but I've been trying to knit sweaters for my wings. You know, because they get cold up in the sky.

Dracomax: Naturally, yes.

Sticky: But maybe my sweater wings could become your new wings.

Lola: It's worth a shot.

Dracomax: I have seen more ridiculous things than this, believe it or not.

Mr. Eric: And Sticky led them deeper into the Enchanted Forest where instead of carrot trees there dwelt massive snail stones.

Dracomax: This forest is too enchanted for me.

Lola: I don't know, I'm starting to like it.

Sticky: Oh, don't worry! These snails are my pet spinning wheels. See, their shells spin round and round gathering thread from all over the world so I can practice my knitting.

Dracomax: Wow! Where does the thread come from?

Sticky: I don't know, but I never run out.

Dracomax: Um...

Lola: That's really cool! Can we see the sweater?

Sticky: Well, it's not quite finished, but I'll show you what I've got.

Mr. Eric: Sticky led them to the center of this circle of snails, whose giant stone shells each spun out a different color thread. And there, in the middle, was a giant tangle of something, like hundreds of ugly half-finished sweaters stacked atop one another.

Sticky: Sorry, it's getting better but those are just earlier fits.

Dracomax: Kind of a waste of fabric, don't you think?

Lola: Didn't you hear, Dracomax? He never runs out thanks to the snails.



Dracomax: Oh, well...

Mr. Eric: And the gecko picked up a pair of knitting needles and started working again on a pair of really sloppy, loose-stitched, multi-colored gargantuan sweater wings.

Dracomax: Ooh, uh...

Lola: They're really colorful! And I like all these big, tangly gaps, they look snuggly for a rabbit.

Dracomax: Do you really think a dragon could fly with those?

Sticky: Oh, you're right, I messed this set up, too. That's okay, I'll just start a new one.

Mr. Eric: And Sticky tossed the sweater on the pile and picked up a new thread and started knitting again. Just as he did, all the snail shells started turning at once, turning out more and more fabric for the gecko. And as they did...

Lola: D-d-d-dracomax, look!

Dracomax: Oh, come on, there can't be another even more giant monster behind me this time.

Lola: N-n-n-n-no...

Dracomax: Then what's got you so... ooh, no!

Mr. Eric: The last half of his stubby wings seemed to unravel, getting pulled in a dozen different directions by these giant stone snail shells, and spun into more fabric.

Dracomax: Sticky, Sticky, stop! You're knitting away my wings!

Sticky: Oh, I had no idea! I'll stop right away.

Mr. Eric: And as Sticky dropped his knitting needles, a bunch of carrots started shooting into the circle of stones! Clanging off the giant stone snail shells, but also hitting some of the poor, pet snails.

Stone Snails: [GRUMBLING!]

Mr. Eric: And scaring them into spinning again.

Dracomax: No, no! Snails! Stop!

Lola: Carrot trees! Please stop shooting.

Sticky: I know, I'll knit us a shield.

Carrotrea: Even I know that's a terrible idea!

Mr. Eric: Shouted the leader of the carrot trees.

Lola: Carrot trees, I'm sorry for being wasteful, but aren't you being just as wasteful by throwing more carrots away trying to get us.

Carrotrea: Ah, man. That's good logic.

Mr. Eric: Said the carrot tree, and she ordered her fellow carrots to stand down so the giant snails could finally calm down.

Dracomax: Oh... no.

Mr. Eric: But it was too late! Dracomax's wings were gone.

Sticky: Dracomax. I'm so sorry.

Dracomax: I know you didn't mean it, Sticky, but I've got to go help plant these carrots again. Maybe we'll talk later.

Mr. Eric: And as Lola and Dracomax helped the carrot trees plant themselves back throughout the Enchanted Forest, they saw a giant flock of seagulls fly overhead. With the last of the carrot trees replanted, Dracomax turned around to leave the Enchanted Forest for good, when...

Sticky: Wait, wait, wait, wait! We just finished!

Mr. Eric: Sticky burst into the circle trailed by a flock of seagulls. They were carrying a set of four incredible dragon sweater wings. The wings were lined with feathers and Lola and Dracomax saw that the seagulls had donated half of theirs.

Dracomax: Wow, they're beautiful.

Mr. Eric: The most ancient of the carrot trees pulled off their leafy greens and stuck them to Dracomax's back where his wings once flew. They stretched out like a massive green skeleton, which the sweater wings fit over like a glove.

Dracomax: I still don't know if I can fly with these.

Sticky: I'm sorry, it might take you a while to learn, that's why we made you an extra pair, in case it gets damaged.

Mr. Eric: And Dracomax was able to reach out with his magical sweater wings as if they were his very own.

Sticky: I promise next time I knit, I won't let my pet snails spin the fabric.

Dracomax: That's probably best.

Lola: And I promise not to throw my carrots away! I'll only take what I can eat.

Mr. Eric: And Dracomax and Lola hopped their way out of the Enchanted Forest.

Dracomax: Hop! [SLAM]

Mr. Eric: To go practice flying.

Dracomax: Hop! [SLAM!]

Carrotrea: You sure we can't just eat the big rabbit?

Dracomax: Hippity! [SLAM]

Sticky: You really are heartless, aren't you?

Carrotrea: Yep! Brainless, too. I'm a carrot.

Sticky: Oh, right.

Mr. Eric: The end.

Dracomax: HOP! [SLAM]

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: All right Maya and Enda, I hope you liked your story. And Esha, thanks for giving us the character of Sticky the gecko.

And until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme plays.]