

Oceans

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Entertainment

Midnight Facts for Insomniacs

Podcast Transcript

**(Note: transcript
consists of episode
outline)**

We've talked a lot about space on this podcast. But the true final frontier may be a lot closer to home, a mostly-unexplored world that has been barely touched by humans. A dozen people have been to the moon, but as of the date of this podcast, only

8 people have visited challenger deep, the deepest part of the Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean, approximately 7 miles down, over 35,000 feet. Actually, we should probably clarify that there are a lot of people who have been to the bottom of the ocean. But most of them stayed there. There's a difference between piloting a submersible and walking a plank. Or sinking. Most of the people who have made it to the bottom of the ocean were not in any condition to explore. But even the ones who made it there and back didn't see much. all they've done is putter around a tiny bit in the darkness. One of those putterers, btw: James Cameron. That's a real thing. Cameron straight up

lives his movies. He visited the actual titanic, and was the first solo human to reach challenger deep. I have to assume he has time traveled and killed a cyborg and painted lots of French girls, the jury is still out.

Oceans cover 70 % of the earth's surface, yet we've explored barely five percent of the world's oceans. We think we've conquered earth, but really we've only conquered "earth." Like, earth in the sense of dirt.

Let's talk some quick numbers. Between 50 and 80% of life on earth is in the ocean. And since at this point we don't know of any life outside of earth, that means that the majority of life in the known universe is aquatic.

More than half of every living thing that we know of. Life came from the ocean, and most of it stayed there. Not looking like a bad decision, honestly. Life on land is kind of a clusterfuck right now.

So as noted, 95% of the ocean is yet to be explored. We've basically paddled around in the shallow end of the pool.

90% of ocean species have yet to be identified. The ocean is where the action is, honestly. Now I just wanna sing "Under Da sea." "Darling it's better down where it's wetter, take it from me." I always feel like that line is a double entendre. And look, we've explored so little of the ocean, Disney might be right, We don't

know for sure that there aren't mermaids. I mean I'm not taking bets. Do you know where they think the myth of mermaids came from? Possibly as a result of people seeing manatees. Sea cows.

Sailors clearly spent a lot of time at sea. Christopher Columbus reportedly mistook manatees for mermaids, and he reportedly said mermaids are not as beautiful as they are represented. Not AS beautiful. So like, Still fuckable. Desperate times call for...yeah. He spent a lot of time on ships

Why is the ocean blue?

Ocean water absorbs red light, etc, but reflects blue. That was pretty self explanatory.

The average depth of the ocean is 12,000 feet.

Under standard conditions most Light waves can only penetrate through an average of 700 feet of water. Below 3,000 feet, there's zero light. So The vast majority of the earth is pitch black all the time. Kind of scary to think about.

There are around three million shipwrecks in the ocean. That's a lot of skeletons. If ghosts exist, that's terrifying to me, not because I'm scared of ghosts but because I'm terrified of becoming a ghost at the bottom of the ocean. Like if you die in an old house that sucks, but at least you have furniture and chandeliers and shit. But being a ghost at the bottom of the pitch black ocean? At first, terrifying, and then super boring.

There are rivers and lakes under water, due to the different temperatures, densities, etc. of water. There are even waterfalls. I encourage everyone to take a moment right now and Google "The Denmark strait cataract." The tallest waterfall in the world is underwater. It's between Iceland and Greenland and is formed by the temperature differentials on either side of the Denmark strait. Colder water is denser and sinks, while warmer water is lighter and rises. It is the most voluminous waterfall in the world. The most water volume pouring down. I wonder if you could scuba dive it. That would be a wild ride. that's like the ultimate log ride. We should add that to our heroin pact. If the world is ending, we do heroin for

like two weeks, and then ride the underwater waterfall. While on heroin. That's how I want to go out. Bucket list: underwater heroin waterfall suicide.

The largest ocean is the Pacific. Which happens to be about twenty yards from this studio. We could go drink from the Pacific Ocean right now.

Obviously that would be unpleasant, but I would rather drink from it than swim in it. This is Northern California, people think California is warm, this isn't like Florida, that water is frigid. But yes, drinking the water would be a terrible idea. Ocean water is only 3.5% salt, which doesn't sound like much, but it's enough to kill you plenty dead. In order to flush out all of that extra

salt, you'd have to urinate more water than you actually took in via drinking ocean water, and you'd die of dehydration. Fun fact: the Atlantic ocean is the saltiest. I don't know what happened to make it so salty, it's just a salty bitch. maybe it's mad because it's smaller than Pacific. It has small ocean complex. That's why it's so butt hurt, or maybe because it has fewer islands.

The pacific contains approximately 25000 islands. To me that's a little bit of a sketchy statistic because "island" is subjective. What are we counting as an island... Sandbar, mud strip, just a single single rock poking up. You know those desert island cartoons where it's just a single palm tree?

There's a lot of that going on. I feel like if you can't build a house or land a plane on it, that shouldn't be counted as an island. Or if it doesn't exist like half the year, if it floods regularly, that's not an island either, that's a seasonal puddle.

There's a lot of ice on the ocean. The Antarctic ice sheet is the size of America and Mexico combined. So that sort of puts climate change into perspective. Melt that sucker, and sea levels would rise 26 stories. 260 feet, around the height of the Statue of Liberty. My house would be damp.

On the plus side, you can drink sea ice. But it takes a while. At first, there are brine pockets trapped in the ice, but over time the

salt drains away. So if you were on the titanic, and you found a chunk of that iceberg on the deck, at least you wouldn't die thirsty.

More ocean facts: 90% of volcanic activity on earth is underwater. Between 50 to 70% of the oxygen on earth comes from ocean algae, kelp, and phytoplankton. So you can quit worrying about the trees. Fuck the trees. Save the algae. Not as effective a slogan. Save the sludge!

Oceans are obviously dangerous in lots of ways, but Tsunamis are pretty much the scariest things I can imagine. They can move at 500 miles per hour in deep water, but if you were above them in open ocean you wouldn't even know it. The waves

are only a few inches high. But when they reach the shallows, they gather into a massive wave like a freight train. And then you'd better find some high ground. I mentioned that we live yards from the ocean, but we're actually on a hill, so my only real fear is being inundated with people trying to escape the tsunami. I'll survive the tsunami but suffer from social anxiety. It's always something.

Mythology and sea monsters:

Sea monsters are a staple of mythology and lore from every civilization on earth. And it's not difficult to figure out where those legends come from. There are some massive, terrifying creatures in the ocean that we KNOW of.

Great white Sharks, whale sharks (which is actually a shark and not a whale... i'm always confused by these animal mash ups. Like "chicken fried steak" I was like is it chicken or is it stake? I think it's chicken, but I'm still not 100% sure) , anyway, there are a lot of giant monsters under the ocean, whales bigger than buildings, giant squid, even colossal squid. colossal squid can be over 1000 pounds, while giant squid can be over 40 feet long. Much of the mythology around sea monsters come from sea-animal corpses that have washed ashore. Known colloquially as globsters, most are later determined to be whale carcasses, but they're often difficult to identify because of rot and degradation, and they fuel the rumors. In fact, sperm

whale carcasses degrade in a very specific way, their blubber sort of disengages and washes up on beaches separate from the animal, and it's covered by collagen fibers, so you end up with featureless blobs that look almost scaly or even hairy. So that's a fun day at the beach. Daddy, what's that?

Let's talk about some of the most famous sea monsters.

The kraken: by the way, the viral phrase "release the kraken" comes from the film "Clash of the Titans," and is what I say every time I take off my pants. Gf does not have a sense of humor. The kraken is a Scandinavian creation, a monster like a giant octopus or squid but

much bigger and more aggressive. From an anonymous ancient text, "It is said to be the nature of these fish that when one shall desire to eat, then it stretches up its neck with a great belching, and following this belching comes forth much food, so that all kinds of fish that are near to hand will come to present location,." So it's a giant house-sized octopus that hunts by vomiting. It's a vomit-hunter. Make your own chum. That's creative. I didn't know that was a technique. Back when I drank a lot, I could have been a prolific hunter, just in the wrong setting. if you're going to get blackout drunk, make sure you do it on a boat, because then you can hork over the side, and everyone can gather the

fish. Instead of a party foul it's like a party bounty.

The leviathan: there's a sea monster in the Bible that is so engrained in our culture that the word leviathan has become generic for sea monster. It's like how jacuzzi became another word for hot tub. Leviathan has solid brand recognition. The leviathan is featured in the book of Enoch, which we've discussed before in our apocalypse episode, depicts the leviathan as a female dragon, the counterpart to the male monster "behemoth." In the Bible the leviathan breathes fire, "Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goes smoke as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindles coals, and a flame

goes out of his mouth." Some biblical scholars point to aquatic dinosaur skeletons as evidence that leviathan was real, and I found an account from genesis park (the Christian answer to Jurassic park, a website dedicated to explaining how dinosaurs are proof of god) that explains how it's possible that many dinosaurs were in fact fire-breathing, "the hadrosaur nasal cavity could easily have connected to chemical reserves in the hollow, horny crest. There are four separate passage in the crest, two running up from the nostrils and two running down toward the throat." So the world is 6,000 years old and dinosaurs had flamethrowers in their skulls.

Cthulhu: i'm biased toward this one, because I'm a big Lovecraft fan. Not a fan of the man himself, who apparently was a racist douche bag, but I'm kind of a nerd about the whole Cthulhu mythos.

Cthulhu appears in the story "call of Cthulhu," which is believed to have been inspired by an Alfred tennyson poem about the kraken. Lovecraft is always best when he doesn't actually describe the monster...he's famous for passages that basically say, "it's too terrifying to describe, so mind-blowingly hideous that seeing it would drive you mad." Because when he actually attempts descriptions...oof. the actual description of Cthulhu is "A pulpy, tentacled head surmounted a grotesque

and scaly body with rudimentary wings." So it's a bird-fish-squid...creature. What's scarier though are the Cthulhu cults and ritual killings etc. in the stories there are cults and tribes that wait to serve Cthulhu when he wakes from his slumber at the bottom of the ocean.

Dagon:

Bruce: do you know what Bruce is? That was the on-screen nickname for the shark from jaws. Named after Steven Spielberg's lawyer. Not sure if that was a compliment, like he was a killer lawyer or he was just ugly. Big teeth.

Godzilla isn't really a sea monster, but he's sort of a hybrid. He's the Prius of

monsters. There's actually a film called Godzilla versus the sea monster, in which the sea monster is a giant lobster. That one's pretty disappointing. On the plus side, all you need is some giant butter. I've had dreams about giant lobsters, and they're not nightmares.

Sirens are mythical women who would hang out on rocks and sing beautiful songs that would lure sailors to their deaths. Like sexy pied pipers. typically they were depicted sort of like harpies, a combination of birds and women, which is apparently irresistible to sailors. They have bird fetishes. People who want to mate with human/animal hybrids are usually called furies but this would be what...featheries? As

previously mentioned, sailors have questionable standards.

Gyarados : finally, the most terrifying sea monster of all, from Japanese lore, the magicarp. Are you familiar with this thing? Legend says that it begins as a small fish that you can find flopping on beaches, but it eventually transforms into the giant ravenous sea-dragon known as gyarados. none of this is ringing a bell? This is Pokémon. Never mind.