Under Attack!

The dark shape hurtles upwards. Suddenly, the peaceful feeding scene is chaos as the whales turn and swim frantically in all directions.

No Escape

One young whale is the giant predator's target. As the great mouth sweeps by, the whale's fin is sheared off. Shocked, bleeding and unable to swim, the whale is helpless.

The Killer Blow

The attacker turns and makes its second approach. The cavernous mouth opens and the killer teeth emerge from the front of its head. It crashes into the side of the paralysed whale, tearing off flesh, crushing ribs, ripping through organs and shearing through the whale's backbone.

The attacker is a shark. And it is bigger than the whale.

This is Megalodon . . .

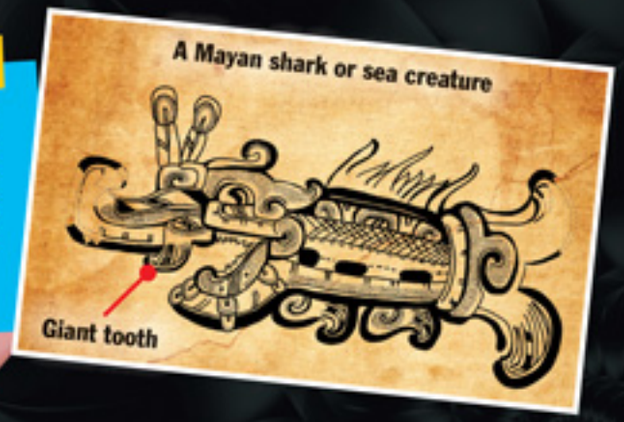
. . . the largest shark that ever lived!

Discovering Megalodon

Around 16 million years ago, a new species of giant shark evolved. Megalodon. The biggest shark ever. The only Megalodon fossils we have are a few surviving pieces of backbone and its teeth. Thousands of enormous teeth!

Gods and Sea Monsters

Megalodon teeth have been found by archaeologists at ancient Mayan ruins in Mexico. Around 1500 years ago, the Maya people used fossil Megalodon teeth as offerings to their gods. Mayan gods and sea monsters were often drawn with just one huge tooth. This idea may have come about because the Mayans found single Megalodon teeth.





Big Tooth

The size of Megalodon's teeth give it its name. The word Megalodon means "big tooth".

Dragon Teeth

In medieval Europe, fossilised Megalodon teeth were called "tongue stones". People thought the big, dark pointed teeth were the tongues of dragons that had been turned to stone.

A Shark from the Past

In 1667, Swedish scientist Nicolas Steno made an important discovery. Steno had examined many tongue stones. Then, one day, he was given the head of a freshly killed shark to cut up and study. Steno noticed that the shark's teeth looked very similar to tongue stones. He realised that tongue stones were the teeth of huge sharks that no longer existed.

Nicolas Steno's drawing of fossil teeth compared to a shark's head





Bashford Dean with his model Megalodon jaws at the American Museum of Natural History, in New York City



A great white shark's tooth

Big Jaws

In 1909, a scientist named Bashford Dean built a replica of Megalodon's jaws using real fossilised teeth. He based the shape of the jaws on modern-day sharks. Today, scientists think the model was the wrong shape. But it gave us a first glimpse of Megalodon.