

# Kaiju

## I

[from the Jogira *Blazon*, Frost Moon, 4<sup>th</sup> day]

SUMORA, DEIAI PREFECTURE:

...when the freighter *Dolphin Leader*, seventy leagues northeast of Jogira harbor, encountered a convergence of two Force 6 typhoons. The seas and winds were so violent that the vessel was stressed beyond its strength and in danger of breaking apart. No other ships were near enough to answer its distress signals, and the gale made air rescue impossible. At 1:35 A.M. all contact was lost. The Naval Ministry began preparations for a search, to commence as soon as the storm abated.

Four hours later a trunk call was received from the Coastal Watch station at Sumora, reporting that the *Leader* was at anchor there, and its crew all landed safely! This seemed impossible: oceangoing ships do not enter Sumora fjord, for though it has sufficient depth, it is too narrow for them to turn about. Yet the *Leader* was facing outward, its prow towards the sea. No one had witnessed its arrival, the heavy rains having kept all residents indoors.

The statement of Captain Teilloban Svari: “Shortly after a wave had flooded the radionics cabin and rendered it useless, there was a sudden blow as if the ship had struck on rocks, even though we were in open sea. Many of the crew cried out, fearing the vessel would sunder. Then, *two giant claws rose from the water*. They were covered in greenish-black scales, with curved talons the color of stained ivory. They clasped us just aft of the prow and athwart the wheelhouse, and *lifted* us above the waves. Then they began carrying us towards shore on a west / northwest bearing.”

“As we approached shallow water, the rest of the creature began to

appear. Its head was reptilian, with a heavy bone ridge above two forward-facing eyes, which held a faint glow like marine phosphorescence. The half-open mouth revealed carnivore teeth. A line of bony plates ran down the spine. It only emerged to the waist, but I would estimate its full height at 90 ells, perhaps ten taller than the *Leader* is long.”

“I could scarcely believe what I was seeing. I in fact wondered if we had sunk, and I was having my death-vision in drowning. But I strove to maintain my composure, as was my duty. I made every observation verbally, confirming them with First Officer Noglei and Radionicist Agdoro, who were with me on deck.”

“When we reached Sumora, the creature set us down with our prow facing seaward, and slowly pushed us into the fjord, beyond the reach of storm swells. It then *made a gesture!* It folded its claws together at its breast, and *bowed* to us, shutting its eyes as it did so...”

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[from the diaries of Prof. G---, S. Hist., retired]

*Frost Moon, 5<sup>th</sup> day.*

...how the Prince would have loved this story: a ship in peril, rescued by a Monster! Any tale of the uncanny captivated Him: alien starships in the skies or primal hominids in the northern forests; spirit-prophecies, warlocks, revenants; the legends of psychic powers among His own ancestors such as Prince Gamanto. So often He would ask me to smuggle Him the *Blazon* or other sensationalist papers. I always obliged, despite the risk. To be noted reading anything of less status than the *Royal Informator*, in particular any publication closely watched by the Ministry of Information, could have ended my tutoring position even more abruptly.

And on the topic of Monsters, or things considered monstrous: the Triune Court has given its decree on the “Invert Social” case, in the Invertists’ favor! The landlord is directed to return the balance of the year’s rent they advanced him, as they had done no physical damage to his meeting hall. A strict Ahrebi (though if such a thing as a lenient Ahrebi exists, I have yet to encounter it), he insisted his household suffered “moral damage” from their presence. The

Triune put this interesting claim aside as “a subjective concept, not provable by currently accepted forms of evidence.” The case aroused much feeling, as anything concerning Invertists always does. The Justices were called to the Palace, at the request (Rumor’s whisper says) of the Imperatrix Herself, a rare event. The ruling, however, was not rescinded.

Was the Prince was allowed to attend their conclave? He would have wished to when young, full of queries about ethics and sympathetic to the outcast or oppressed. He was eleven when He first asked about Invertism, to the consternation of all. None could tell how He came to hear of it, the Court priests having been scrupulous in His moral instruction (though I do not doubt Raghidoh suspected me). I answered Him with the greatest discretion, referring Him to writings by doctors and mentalists.

I worry for Him, beneath Raghidoh’s stern guidance. On the rare occasions when He speaks in public, His sentiments, and even phrases, are Raghidoh’s: I recognize the style. Family, Duty, Morality; our glorious martial traditions and the sacredness of our ancient culture; the Nineteen Truths, immoveable and inarguable. (We Historians know *nothing* is immovable.) My Prince! – is Your mind still the brilliant, questing spirit it was my joy to tutor?...

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[Session: patient A---]

I don’t know why I keep dreaming about Godzilla.

Maybe it’s these damn meds they’ve got me on. I’m so baked, half the time I can’t tell if I’m dreaming or awake. Maybe I’m already dead, and they’re keeping me going for the interns to practice on.

They’re experimental, and they’re not working. The doctor doesn’t want to say so, but I can see it in her face. You know how it is: every couple years they say “We’ve found a new cure for AIDS!” Then the virus develops a new strain that it doesn’t work on, while the Fundamentalists sit back and smirk to themselves. Mine’s like, HIV-14 or 15. So between that and the cancer, I’m not getting out of here alive.

She says there’s a new kind of cobalt treatment that might help. But it’s “experimental,” meaning, public option ain’t paying for it.

Maybe it’d turn me cobalt blue, and kids could use me for a crayon.

At least it pays for you, which is better than nothing. No offense. It’s nice to be listened to once in a while.

So I dream I'm Godzilla. I'm wandering around Tokyo. I guess it's Tokyo, it's got both office buildings and pagodas. Only I'm not squashing people or wrecking stuff. I'm trying not to. Because that's what I would do, if I was him. The last thing I'd want to do is hurt people.

Like, I'm walking up Tokyo Bay and come to a railroad bridge. It's too big to step over but not high enough to crawl under. Now Godzilla would smash right through it; he'd probably wait until a train was crossing so he could kill as many people as possible. But I see the bridge-tender guys down there in their cabin: a couple little faces in the window staring up at me, probably freaking out. I can't talk, just roar, but I can make a lifting motion with my hands. It's the kind where the main span lifts up between two towers, instead of pivoting in the middle or folding up from one end. They understand, and they raise it. Then after I go through I make a namaste to them. "Humble monster self thanks honorable bridge workers. Not wishing to squash or inflict property damage –"