

The Monster and the Thinker

1. Yamane Hears the Forgotten by the Sea

Kyohei Yamane, a retired paleontologist, sits on a rocking chair by the beach. He steps outside most nights to hear the waves crash onto the shore. He cannot see much, but he does enjoy looking up at the moon. Tonight, there is no moon.

Yamane: Ah, tonight it is dark. Or perhaps my vision fails me faster than I thought. When was the last time I saw such darkness? We would turn off the lights during the war to hide from the bombers, but there was always a candle on. Was it when Gojira knocked down the power lines that had been sent to ensnare it, plunging the world into darkness?

[A sound emanates from the deep ocean, not unlike a whale]

Yamane: What could that be? Is there anyone or anything there? My eyes are cloudy, but my memory still serves me well; I know that sound.

[The sound continues, and Yamane can just barely make out a figure breaking the surface.]

2. Gojira Sings a Tale of Woe

Figure: Have I drifted all the way out to sea only to be beaten back into the arms of the animals that tried to kill me? The bomb that they sent blinded me and boiled the water against my skin. The krill and fish that I had eaten and carefully cultivated died; I was the only thing left alive in that underwater abyss. When I clawed my way out there were animals floating on carefully carved pieces of wood and iron, infesting even the ocean.

Yamane: Could it be? Are you the Gojira?

Figure: A long time ago, I was just *a* gojira. I was one of many that hunted in the sea but lived on land. We'd sun ourselves after feasting on schools of fish and laze under the shade of palm trees. I alone was lucky enough to be in the deep sea when the world as I knew it ended. I have lived there alone for hundreds of millions of years, surrounded only by my food.

Yamane: If it is indeed you, then how did you survive the oxygen destroyer?

Gojira: I don't know how I survived, and I wish that I hadn't. When that animal in the suit came down with the weapon, we locked eyes. I understood what he was going to do, and I understood why. The pain that I felt after losing my kind and my desperation after losing my food supply; he felt the same way about losing his people, his city. The difference between him and me was that he allowed to die and to move on. I felt suffocated, for the first time like I was drowning. Since then I find myself too weak to swim, too unstable to walk. I go where the currents take me.

And yet, I didn't die. Perhaps I have sinned too much to just be let go. Truly, I didn't mean to kill you land-animals. I was just forced out of my hiding place and terrified by all of the

Katrina Gonzalez
EASTD 115 Noh Play

things that I had never seen before. All of the lights around your cities looked like tiny fires to me, ones that I tried to stomp out. When I picked my foot up, I could see little spatters of blood. I should have stopped and gone back out to the sea, but I kept going. Curiosity got the better of me so much so that I didn't think or care. Maybe my penance is staying alive until I've been killed hundreds of times, one for each of the animals that I crushed.

Yamane: I've studied your kind for decades, and I sought to prevent your destruction. I wanted to study you, to learn why it was you who lived when thousands of Japanese people were killed by radiation! You could not have sinned, for you know not the difference between right and wrong! Please, stay and help me with my research. I know the pain of losing a loved one to the bomb – my wife was among its victims – and I want to make sure that nobody else suffers the way that I did.

Gojira: You lost your wife to the bomb; children lost their mothers, their fathers to me. The world is no longer big enough for monsters and because of this I cannot help you.

Reciters: Who should feel the pain of loss, and who should bear the coffins? Will you trade my mother for your child?

3. Gojira Moves on, Floating in the Current

Gojira: No, I must go. I can feel the currents shifting now; it is time for me to leave. My only request is that each time I wash up, kill me. Do so without restraint so that one day I may be freed.

[Gojira sings a sorrowful tune, and the tide begins to carry Gojira away. His figure begins to recede.]

Yamane: Gojira is wrong. The world is not yet done with the age of monsters; it's just that most of them look like people. Worst of all, they rarely even realize what they've become.

[Yamane sighs, and heads back in. He lies down and closes his eyes; the darkness of sleep, not unlike the darkness of that night, overtakes him.]

Reciters: Who should bear the burden of life? Who should be rewarded with death? Has the age of monsters ended, or just begun?