

Here Be Dragons - Episode Four

"Bakekujira"

by

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Black Lace and Laser Beams
Productions

SCENE ONE

INT. Corridor, U.S.S. Rusalka - DAY

PIP
Coming through!

Pip comes racing down the hall, her arms full of tools. Harper, coming from the opposite direction, is forced to hop out of the way.

HARPER
Whoah! Hey... You need a hand there?

PIP
No, that's okay! I got it!

HARPER
You sure? I could-

But Pip is already moving away.

PIP
(calling over her shoulder) It's just another little glitch in one of the Ops systems, I've got it covered! I'll see you later, Harper!

ATLAS
Officer Bennett.

Harper jumps, and turns to find Dr. Atlas standing behind her.

ATLAS
You're blocking the hall.

HARPER
Sorry.

ATLAS
(stepping past her, mildly amused)
Some of us DO have work to do around here. Try to keep up? Or at least out of the way?

HARPER
Right... Yeah... Sure thing...

But Atlas has already walked away. Sighing, Harper moves to press one of the computer interface buttons scattered across the ship.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER (cont'd)
(pressing the button) Hey, Ophelia?
Patch me through to the commander,
would you?

We hear a musical chime, then the crackle of the intercom.

SCARLETT
Scarlett here.

HARPER
Commander? Uh, it's... it's Harper.

SCARLETT
Harper... what's going on? Is
something wrong?

HARPER
No! No, nothing's wrong, I just...
um...

SCARLETT
Harper, I'd LOVE to sit around and
chat, but I'm kind of in the middle
of something here.

HARPER
No, I-... I know you're busy and
stuff. That's... sort of why I was
calling. I just wondered if... you
know, there was anything I could do
to... you know, help...

SCARLETT
(skeptically) You want to know if
you can help...

HARPER
Well... yes? Everyone else seems
like they have so much to do. I
thought that maybe I could...
assist? Or run errands or... I
don't know... clean?

There's a long pause.

SCARLETT
You're serious right now?

HARPER
Um... yes?

SCARLETT

Harper, you were hand picked by the United States government to hunt and study sea monsters.

HARPER

Yeah, but-

SCARLETT

Look, are you the historian on this trip, or aren't you?

HARPER

Well, yeah-

SCARLETT

So make some history! Record events. Do some research. Find me a sea monster, or tell me where it came from, but PLEASE do not EVER call me again tell me you have no work to do. You're our expert, out here. Go be an expert.

Scarlett hangs up, leaving Harper standing there, somewhat nonplussed.

HARPER

I... Right... I'm the expert...
I'll just... go... be an expert.
Sea monster expert.

CUT TO:

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SCENE TWO

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - DAY

Meanwhile...

Scarlett turns off the intercom, rolling her eyes.

SCARLETT

(to herself) Run errands...
Unbelievable.

She turns to Pip, who is seated at a console, working with a handful of wires.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

So? Any luck?

(CONTINUED)

PIP

I think so, commander! Just a few more adjustments.

SCARLETT

Exactly how many systems did we lose with this update of yours?

PIP

Well we only LOST Navigation, but we've got eight or nine that were knocked offline. Nothing REALLY serious, now that communication's patched up... Ophelia's still working a few bugs out of her system, aligning everything, but everything else SHOULD be pretty much in ship-shape!

SCARLETT

Let's hope so.

PIP

Okay! That should do it. You can give ship to shore a try now.

SCARLETT

Copy that.

Scarlett switches on the long-range radio transmission, which crackles into life.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

Canaveral, this is Commander Scarlett of the U.S.S. Rusalka, requesting assistance. Over.

She pauses, waiting for response. The static continues to hiss. Frowning, she tries again.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

Canaveral base, this is Commander Adrienne Scarlett calling from the U.S.S. Rusalka, requesting immediate assistance. Over.

Again, no response. Scarlett glances over at Pip, before trying again.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

Mayday! Mayday! We are under attack! This is the U.S.S. Rusalka, requesting urgent assistance! Our

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT (cont'd)
 engine is on fire! I repeat, our
 engine is on fire! Hello? Hello?
 Canaveral, do you read me?

PIP
 Commander!

SCARLETT
 Well if they're not going to
 answer-

There is a sudden break in the static. A noise, half formed,
 just barely comes through, catching both women's attention.

SCARLETT (cont'd)
 Pippa-

PIP
 On it!

We hear her making adjustments to the communications array,
 isolating the sound. As soon as she's got it, she nods to
 Scarlett, who grabs the transceiver.

SCARLETT
 Canaveral? Hello. Canaveral! This
 is the U.S.S. Rusalka, do you read
 us?

Nothing happens. And then the static breaks, and the
 unmistakable sound of whale song starts to echo around Ops.

SCARLETT (cont'd)
 You have got to be kidding me.

CUT TO:

3 SCENE THREE

INT. Library, U.S.S. Rusalka - Meanwhile

Harper has seated herself in an armchair with a tape
 recorder and her copy of Legends of the Deep.

HARPER
 And... we are recording... Okay...
 Um... This is Harper Bennett,
 resident historian aboard the
 U.S.S. Rusalka. And this is my
 first log! Probably... not a great
 sign. Didn't realize I should have
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARPER (cont'd)

been doing this the whole time. My bad. Um... Oh! Thanks to Dr. Atlas for lending me this tape recorder. I didn't know they even made these things anymore... I guess I should start with the basics. It's about 1100 hours. And our mission...

There's something in the water. It's been sinking ships. We've found a real live sea-monster in the 21st century, if you can believe it. Well. We didn't find it. The Navy did. Or the CIA, I guess. Really seems more their territory... We're supposed to track all the others down, study them... We know enough to say that they're supposed to be operating SOMEWHERE around the Bermuda Triangle, so that's where we're headed... or... are... I think. We got a bit... side-tracked. We lost navigation and several other systems a few days ago, so we've been star-charting our way around. So far we haven't seen anything. I don't even know if Commander Scarlett knows where to start looking... But she'll figure it out eventually. I have a feeling she's good at that sort of thing. Under all the... you know... militant rage. (beat) That doesn't even come close to explaining what the hell I'm doing here... Somebody called in the middle of the night, and told me I was special, and I was stupid enough to believe them. Great gag, right?

She hesitates. Glances at the tape recorder. This IS a private session, right?

... I know I shouldn't complain. People would kill to be here. **I** would kill to be here. But between you and me? I don't know what I'm doing on this boat. It's not like I have any extraordinary skills. I'm not a leader, or a scientist, or an engineer... I'm not gifted, or a soldier, or particularly good with

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARPER (cont'd)
 puzzles, or even funny... I'm not special... I'm starting to think it's just because three is an awkward number, and Killian just needed somebody to round things out.

She sighs, then takes a deep breath, forcing herself to smile. Think positive!

I guess you can just call me lucky number four! So, now it's just me, and a tape recorder, and this big book of myths. Best place to find a sea monster is between the pages of a good book. So I might as well start looking. This is Harper... signing off for now...

She clicks off the recording, and opens the massive book of mythos.

Right. Just you and me. Let's see what we can do...

FADE TO:

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SCENE FOUR

INT. Ops. U.S.S. Rusalka - Meanwhile

The whale song is continuing to echo through Ops, louder now. Scarlett is pacing. Pip is just trying not to laugh.

SCARLETT

Well?

PIP

He's still following us, sir.

SCARLETT

Take us into a dive.

We hear Pip making the adjustments.

PIP

(checking) ... He's still on the radar.

SCARLETT

Well then surface! Just... shake him off, do something.

She grabs the radio transmitter.

(CONTINUED)

GO AWAY!

She pauses, watching the radar. The whale calls out again. Scarlett rolls her eyes and leans against the helm.
What the hell is it doing now?

PIP

I think he wants to play.

SCARLETT

What, it thinks we're another whale?

PIP

Maybe... Commander... Will you-... Say something into the transmitter again.

SCARLETT

What are you doing?

PIP

Trying to get the internal speakers to pick up the outgoing transmission... Go on! Say something.

Pip starts typing rapidly. Scarlett raises an eyebrow at her, but reaches for the mic.

SCARLETT

Hey, Herman! Captain Ahab's not home right now. Leave us alone!

As she's speaking, the internal speakers crackle into life, and we hear Scarlett's voice, distorted, and sounding just a bit like whale song. The sound dies away, but is almost immediately answered in kind. Pippa starts to giggle. Scarlett switches off the transceiver.

PIP

Herman?

SCARLETT

Melville. I thought you said you fixed this thing!

PIP

I thought I did!

SCARLETT

So what are we supposed to do? Play tag?

(CONTINUED)

PIP

If I can fix the transceiver, then he'll probably realize his mistake, and leave us alone.

SCARLETT

And if you can't?

PIP

At least we don't have to feed him?

SCARLETT

Okay... Okay. You get to work on fixing communications. See if you can get in touch with Canaveral. I'll see what the doctor knows about whales. See if she can give us a hand with any of this.

She heads for the door.
And Pippa?

PIP

Yes commander?

SCARLETT

Don't get any ideas. We're not keeping him.

She leaves Ops, and we hear the door close behind her.
beat.

PIP

Damn it.

FADE TO:

5 SCENE FIVE

INT. Sick Bay, U.S.S. Rusalka - Later

Harper enters the lab, head down, nose stuck in Legends of the Deep. She promptly walks into one of the lab benches.

HARPER

Ow!

ATLAS

Harper!

(CONTINUED)

HARPER
(rubbing her bruised elbow) Sorry,
doc.

ATLAS
Walking and reading make for a
dangerous combination, it seems.
That's hydrochloric acid you nearly
spilled by the way. I was wondering
where I put that...

HARPER
You just leave that lying around?!

ATLAS
No, of course not. But it COULD
have been. So maybe next time you
come to visit, you'll pay a little
more attention to where you're
going?

HARPER
Right...

ATLAS
Good book?

HARPER
Yeah, actually. There's... a lot in
here I didn't know...

ATLAS
Did you bring that with you?

HARPER
No, uh... Pip found it in the Gift
Shop.

ATLAS
Of course... She's an excellent
writer. I met her, once.

Harper looks up.

HARPER
You did? When?

ATLAS
Oh, years ago... Brilliant woman.
But a bit... well. Brilliant people
are all a bit... strange.

Atlas shakes her head and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

ATLAS (cont'd)

Now, what can I do for you?

HARPER

Do you have any pictures of the Hound? I thought maybe Killian might have given you a copy of the case file, or something...

ATLAS

And why would he do a thing like that?

HARPER

Well... I mean, I can't imagine he'd just send us out here without any information, or even a reference point... And... he likes you... You've worked with him before... That's what I thought, anyway. The way he talked to you... I mean, he trusts you.

ATLAS

And you think he trusts me enough to just hand over important classified information like that?

HARPER

Yes?

ATLAS

Well you would be correct. You're quite perceptive.

She stands and crosses to the other side of the lab and opens a drawer. She pulls out a file and hands it to Harper.

ATLAS (cont'd)

It's not much. But it's a start. Pictures from the attack sites and the laboratory at Canaveral, the sailors reports, lists of the boats we've lost, other sightings... A lot of speculation and rumors... not a whole lot to go on.

HARPER

(taking it) It's gotten us this far.

(CONTINUED)

ATLAS

What are you going to do?

HARPER

Find a pattern. Maybe there's something in here that'll match up with one of the myths, and we'll start to know what we're looking for.

Commander Scarlett enters the room, and the other women look around.

HARPER (cont'd)

Commander Scarlett.

ATLAS

Well, I certainly am popular today.

SCARLETT

Hi Harper. Dr. Atlas. Weird question... What do you know about whales?

BOOM.

The whole submarine is shaken by a colossal force, that sends all three women staggering.

HARPER

What the hell was that?!

SCARLETT

That... was Herman.

CUT TO:

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SCENE SIX

INT. Ops. U.S.S. Rusalka - Moments Later

HARPER

You got a whale?

SCARLETT

We did not GET a whale. Our communications relay is malfunctioning and we attracted a whale. TEMPORARILY. We are not keeping the whale!

(CONTINUED)

PIP
But you already named him!

SCARLETT
No, Pippa!

ATLAS
Why is he attacking us?

PIP
He's playing tag.

HARPER
Tag?

Another huge boom as Herman bumps up against the ship.

ATLAS
Feels a little more like football
to me.

SCARLETT
At this rate, he's going to break
us in half. We're lucky we haven't
sprung a leak already.

The whole ship rocks again, and the ladies brace themselves against the helm. Herman lets out a cheerful noise, and the Rusalka starts tipping to one side as he nuzzles the side of the ship. We hear the hull scraping against his side.

SCARLETT (cont'd)
Campbell, I'm going to need a
damage report!

PIP
Yes, commander!

SCARLETT
Atlas, what can you tell me about
whales?

ATLAS
Well seeing as I'm not a
cetologist, I'd need a good look at
him first. Ophelia, can you bring
him up on the screen?

There's a musical beep as the computer complies.

ATLAS (cont'd)
Oh my-

SCARLETT

What the hell is that?!

PIP

It... it looks like a skeleton...

ATLAS

It is a skeleton.

SCARLETT

It CAN'T be, it's *moving*.

ATLAS

Could be the current?

HARPER

It's the Bakekujira...

PIP

What?

HARPER

It's an old, old legend... There were these Japanese fishermen. One night they saw this white shape on the horizon... Like a huge island had sprung up out of the sea. Only when they got closer, they saw it was the skeleton of a massive baleen whale. But it had no flesh... no eyes... not an ounce of blood, or skin... But it moved through the water, and cried out over the waves, and it was alive. (beat) They called it Bakekujira -- The Ghost Whale.

Herman lets out another low cry, almost as if in response.

FADE TO:

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SCENE SEVEN

INT. War Room, U.S.S. Rusalka - DAY

The crew is gathered around the table. Legends of the Deep sits open in front of them. We hear the distant, musical call of Herman from somewhere outside the ship.

PIP

I don't think he's going away.

(CONTINUED)

SCARLETT

(rubbing her temples) No. I don't think so either. So what do we do?

ATLAS

Well, captain, I'd say that decision largely lies with you. If I might make a suggestion, I'd say we have a few solid choices. We can dive below where it can stand the pressure-

PIP

You know some whales can dive down to 100 meters, right?

ATLAS

It's a skeleton. Bones have to break sometime.

SCARLETT

First of all, it's commander, and second, we don't know what kind of damage he's done to the hull.

ATLAS

We could capture it. We could surface, trail a net in the water... I certainly wouldn't mind getting a closer look.

SCARLETT

Have YOU got space in your cabin for that monstrosity? I don't.

PIP

Well, what did the fishermen do?

HARPER

You mean in the legend? They tried to kill it.

ATLAS

Good luck with that, seeing as it's already dead.

HARPER

Yeah, they did sort of run into that issue. But eventually, the Bakekujira swam away. What if we just wait-

BOOM. The submarine shakes as Herman bumps up against the hull.

(CONTINUED)

ATLAS

Everyone okay?

PIP

Commander, I don't know if the ship can take much more of that.

SCARLETT

Does that answer your question, Officer Bennett?

HARPER

Well if we're not going to do something about it-

PIP

Maybe we could train him! How cool would it be to have an attack-whale following us around? We could give him battle armor, and treats, and-

ATLAS

What if there's a way to entice Herman away from the ship?

SCARLETT

How?

ATLAS

I'm not sure. Some sort of fish bait? What do whales eat?

HARPER

I'm not sure Herman eats much of anything anymore...

PIP

What if we could trick him into thinking there's another whale nearby? That's what got us into this mess. I could remove the broken communications relay and we could jettison it. I can rig up a speaker, and keep it playing on a loop. If it's still making those whale noises, Herman should follow it, not us. It's not like he'll be able to see the difference.

SCARLETT

That... actually might work. Except then we don't have a communications relay.

(CONTINUED)

PIP

Technically speaking, we don't have one now. Or sonar, or navigation, or-

SCARLETT

Alright! Alright, I get your point. How much time do you need?

ATLAS

I'd be happy to lend a hand.

PIP

Then it shouldn't take more than an hour.

SCARLETT

Good. I'll man the helm, while you two rig up the voice box. Harper, keep going through that book, maybe there's something in there you missed.

HARPER

I'll see what I can find.

SCARLETT

Let's get to it.

FADE TO:

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SCENE EIGHT

INT. Ops, U.S.S. Rusalka - DAY

About an hour later, the crew is gathered back in Ops.

SCARLETT

How're we doing?

PIP

Voice Box is operational, and launch is primed. We're ready when you are, commander.

SCARLETT

Okay. Jettison the package on my mark. 3... 2... 1... Launch!

(CONTINUED)

We hear Pip making some adjustments to the controls. There is a beep, and then a hiss as the Voice Box is fired out into the open ocean from one of the lower decks. We hear it piping whale song, which fades. The computer lets out a musical chime.

PIP

Launch successful. We should be-

BOOM! The Rusalka rocks with the force of impact as Herman rams the side of the sub.

ATLAS

Holy mother of-

SCARLETT

Campbell!

PIP

Uhh... I think we've confused him!
He's definitely not going for the
Voice Box!

SCARLETT

Gee, you think?

Boom. We hear the whine of bone scraping against the metal hull.

SCARLETT (cont'd)

Atlas, give me options!

ATLAS

Well there are always the
torpedoes.

PIP

No!

SCARLETT

I-... I don't want to do something
like that.

ATLAS

(exasperated) You can't outrun him.
You don't know how to evade him, or
want to capture him. What EXACTLY
do you intend to do?

SCARLETT

Not that! Not without a good
reason.

(CONTINUED)

Another boom as Herman shakes the ship. The screeching whine of the hull grows louder.

ATLAS

Oh, well then! By your leave, captain. I'm sure he'll stop before he pulls apart the hull.

SCARLETT

(through gritted teeth) It's commander.

ATLAS

Not for very much longer if you don't make a decision.

beat.

SCARLETT

Officer Campbell... step away from the helm. I need to arm the torpedoes.

PIP

Commander, no!

SCARLETT

Officer Campbell-

PIP

I can fix the transceiver! If you just give me a few minutes-

SCARLETT

Officer Campbell, I'm ordering you to step aside.

PIP

But we're too close! He doesn't have eyes! He's blind! And confused! And... and HELPLESS! If you fire a torpedo at this range, you'll kill Herman.

SCARLETT

Herman's already dead! And if I don't, he's going to kill us too. MOVE.

PIP

But commander-

(CONTINUED)

HARPER
Commander, wait!

SCARLETT
Not you too, Bennett. Look, it's
great that you two take up for one
another, but this isn't the time!

HARPER
No, commander, wait, PLEASE. If you
shoot that thing at this range, you
won't just kill it, you'd
obliterate it. That thing, whatever
it is, hasn't been seen by human
eyes in hundreds, maybe thousands
of years! And it is wholly and
undeniably unique. We came here for
THIS! For exactly this. We can't be
the ones to destroy it. We can't.
There has to be a better way!

beat.

Pip, give me the transceiver.

PIP
But it doesn't work...

HARPER
I don't need it to. Just give it to
me!

She takes the transceiver.
Cover your ears!

Harper shoves the microphone right up next to one of the
helms speakers. The feedback is instantaneous, high pitched,
and LOUD. All the other women clap their hands over their
ears.

Herman lets out a pained, unhappy wail, and starts to swim
away.

PIP
He's leaving!

We hear another piping of Herman's whale song, more distant
now, as he disappears.

SCARLETT
He's gone...

PIP

Bye Herman...

SCARLETT

How did you-

HARPER

I guessed. Sensitive ears. Nobody likes when you scream in their face, I figured whales were pretty much the same, given the whole sonar thing... (to herself) Score one for Lucky Number Four!

SCARLETT

What?

HARPER

Nothing...

SCARLETT

Well... That's... Good job. I'm glad we didn't-... Pip, you should... Keep working on that communications relay.

PIP

Aye-aye commander.

SCARLETT

Dr. Atlas. You might want to consider stopping by the library and pick up a book on marine biology.

ATLAS

(tersely) Of course, captain.

SCARLETT

What was that?

ATLAS

My mistake, commander. How could I have forgotten? (to Harper, sincerely) Well done. That was... a very near miss. I'm glad one of us understands why we're here.

Atlas leaves Ops.

SCARLETT

Well. This should give you something to write about, eh Harper?

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

(grinning) Definitely one for the memoirs. "Did I ever tell you about the time I saved a ghost whale?"

SCARLETT

I have a feeling I'm gonna regret putting you on scribe-duty.

HARPER

I'd be happy to switch with you...

SCARLETT

Oh, no way in hell.

Scarlett exits. Pip glances over at Harper, and raises an eyebrow.

PIP

So... Lucky Number Four?

HARPER

You know what? (smiles) Yeah. It's fitting. ... Come on. Let me give you a hand with that... show me what to do.

Pip smiles and makes room for Harper at the helm and the two girls get to work on fixing the transceiver. Far off in the distance, we hear the last low, musical echoes of whale song.

FADE OUT.

END.