

## A monster's attack in Kholodgorod

**Y**esterday night, at the time people usually end their dinner, a gigantic monster appeared in our hamlet, bringing great fear with him. No injuries are to deplore, but the fiend left with all our winter food supply. I will do my best to recount this incredible story for you.

Kholodgorod; the hamlet I chose for my retirement. People asked me why I had chosen such a small village on the frozen sea. My answer was: "Because it is so quiet, it is a place so full of beauty, that it is the only place on Earth where a man can understand the meaning of "peace" ". I built here a hovel, and I own a small fishing shop in order to keep meeting my needs, as I decided not to write for the "Russian Daily Newspaper" anymore.

Yet, as too convince me that it was too early for my retirement, an incredible event happened yesterday night.

I was finishing my dinner of soup and dark bread, when I heard a scream. It was the most terrifying sound I had ever heard... I rushed out to rescue the woman who had screamed, but as soon as I had stepped outside, my body stopped, paralysed by fear. It was here. It was in front of me. The woman who had certainly gone out to get some wood for her fire had fainted, and her thin body was lying motionless on the snow. I dared not approach her. The daemon was standing between us, glancing at her, then at me, and again. For a moment, I feared he was thinking of whom he was to eat first. My blood froze inside my body, my members were shaking. I was petrified. After what I thought was an eternity, the fiend finally moved, and entered my little shop. A very short time was needed to recover the usage of my body and mind, I ran to the woman, still lying. It was Macha, I recognised her in spite of her blue lips. She had hurt her hand in her fall, and it was bleeding. I took her in my arms and hurried into her house. Her husband, a gun in his right hand, was standing there, behind the door, so scared that he had not been able to help his own wife. Here is his testimony:

*"I heard Macha scream. I thought it was a wolf, or any kind of wild animal... I grabbed the rifle that is always on the wall, above the window. And there, by this very window that I am showing you now, sir journalist Ivanov, I saw her, facing the most dreadful apparition I could imagine. She fell, my poor lovely Macha! Then I'm not sure. I remember that I*

*couldn't move. I was only half conscious of what was happening around me... I was so afraid that this monster would kill my dear Macha! Oh this memory is so painful! Vika asked me what was happening. But how could I tell an angel that his mother was going to be eaten by a daemon? Then he asked me if it was the Devil himself... He thought he had been bad. He is only four years old you know, but it's a good child. Anyway, now, I hope the monster is far, and Macha is recovering."*

I stayed at Macha's for the whole night. I tried to put a smile on Vika's face, and to make him sleep, but he was too worried about his mother, and I was myself not in a proper mood to play with a child. We could hear the monster searching for goods in every single shops of Kholodgorod. This night, all men must have kept their guns ready to shoot, and all women kept their children hidden in the folds of their skirts. We could feel the tension all around us. The air was full of fear. As dawn approached, the fiend's sounds faded, and finally disappeared. Nevertheless, it took time before people got out of their houses, or before the children dared to sleep.

Morning was here, with a beautiful sun that was making the snow shine, as if it wanted to make us forget. I left Macha's house, and walked around the hamlet with the men, to see how much it had been damaged. It was a great disorder everywhere. One shop had collapsed because the daemon had stolen one of its beams, our food stock was empty, and the wretch had left with old Dima's sledge and dogs.

Sitting on his doorstep, old Dima was crying on the body of a lifeless dog, whose neck had been broken. Dima remembers:

*"It was so scary... I saw this gigantic creature approaching my house. The dogs were barking. First, I thought it was a giant. But when the moon lighted his face, I thought I was having a nightmare... His face was unbelievable... I shouldn't say this, but maybe, for once, God's mighty hands have made a mistake? He had a big hooked nose with holes as big as my fist, slaver was escaping out of his enormous mouth, and his eyes... hi eyes were those of a daemon! Yellow, and they could pierce your skin. We stared at each other through the window, and I'm sure he was reading my mind... He took my dogs and killed this poor one I don't know why... I felt that he only wanted to hurt me because I had dared staring at him. He is evil! My dogs and my sledge! It is such a misery! How will I move now with my tired legs? I'm not rich you know, I will never be able to buy new dogs and a new sledge... And my health will not allow me to make a sledge myself..."*

I continued my walk around Kholodgorod, Only the shops were damaged, and nobody was hurt. Macha and Dima were the ones who had most suffered. As I was walking through the main street, I met Lara, a young girl of a modest family. When the fiend arrived she was outside to make the dog stop barking:

*“He stepped very close to me, says she, but I got time to hide with doggy. For sure we were afraid, me and the dog; so much, that doggy had stopped barking... I didn't see his face very clearly because the moon was also hiding, behind a cloud it was. For sure it was afraid too sir... It was a giant! My dad, he was crying when he saw the shop this morning. It is empty. Oh you should see it sir, it will need days before it is all repaired! My mum, she said we are going to die because there ain't enough food for the cold months.”*

Lara's father was idle in his shop, not knowing where to start. He is the father of a large family of soon nine children, and his whole family lives on the incomes of the shop. He was too upset to confess his feelings for the newspaper.

Mach's face was still expressing fear, yet she accepted to tell me:

*“I had gone out to take some wood. I wanted to dry it for tomorrow. I took two big pieces, and when I turned, it was here, staring at me. His yellow eyes looked like sparks, and his teeth were shining in the moonlight. His hair was dark and filthy... And it was the most gigantic creature I had ever seen! I screamed. He was repeating words about killing I don't know who, he was moaning about revenge and sufferance, I thought he was threatening me. The idea crossed my mind that it might kill my dear little Vika... Then all is black, I cannot recall what happened afterwards... I woke up here, thanks to you, my friend, and now, each time I close my eyes, I can see this nightmare, this fiend, this daemon, and I think I am dead...”*

Dear readers of the “Russian Daily Newspaper”, this is the story of Kholodgorod, which I wanted to recount. We do not know at this time, where the monster is, nor if anyone has been able to stop it.

*An unknown man arrived a few minutes ago, and hope is back in the village: life shall go on. Be sure dear readers, that if any new elements of this story are revealed, the “Russian daily Newspaper” will be the first to be informed.*

Dimitri Ivanov, March 28<sup>th</sup> 1799.