



Kaijumax Season One: Terror and Respect

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THE COMPLETE SEASON ONE! On a remote island in the South Pacific lies KAIJUMAX, a maximum security prison for giant monsters. Follow doting father Electrogor as he stands up to the cruel space-superhero warden! See corrupt guard Gupta manage his illicit uranium-dealing empire and pay off his gambling debts to the Queen of the Moon! Watch Mecha-Zon battle his own programming when the monster he was created to destroy shows up on the pound! These stories and more will assault you from every angle in the cesspool of corruption that is KAIJUMAX.

Kaijumax Season One: Terror and Respect Details

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Author : Zander Cannon

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From Reader Review Kaijumax Season One: Terror and Respect for online ebook

Tom Ewing says

A brutal prison saga starring radioactive monsters, giant robots, cryptozoological beasts, aliens and more, Kaijumax is a tremendous advert for mashing-up unlikely genres. With a human cast, the stories of hopelessness, corruption, and relentless struggles for power wouldn't just be grim, they'd be corny, and visibly the product of a creator whose knowledge of the topic comes from watching the same shows as anyone else. But make it about movie monsters - in other words, explicitly about media tropes - and borrowings from Oz et al become just more references: two species of pulp thrill mingling.

That's enough to get you quickly used to Kaijumax's blend of the fantastic and the harrowing, but the combination would still just be glib if Zander Cannon weren't so good at execution - giving expression and emotion to his enormously varied cast (body language included, which is a tough task when almost nobody has a standard body) and skilfully setting up motivations and subplots for a dozen or so characters. Cannon is not kind to his monsters, particularly hard-luck protagonist Electrogor, but that's what makes the comic so engaging.

Devann says

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley

This wasn't a bad book, it just wasn't what I was expecting. Mainly I wasn't expecting it to be as dark and depressing as it was. I mean it's a really good story and it's interesting how they've used the kaiju as a metaphor for real-life prisons [although honestly I think a lot of kaiju related references went straight over my head, suuuper casual fan over here] but the whole thing is just ...so depressing. I mean I knew it was going to be serious but I thought they would try to balance it out or something and just ...nope. So if you want to read something super depressing and you think you will get all the in-references that I feel like I missed then this is probably for you, but it just wasn't for me.

David says

This comic series is just nuts. It's *Godzilla* meets *Oz*, *Shawshank Redemption* meets *Ultraman*.

"Kaijumax" is an island maximum security prison for kaiju - giant monsters who've been dragged away for various (literal) crimes against humanity, like stomping on cities and eating monorails. The guards maintain order with their ability to instantly transform into giant Ultraman-like forms.

The story is basically a prison drama, with gangs, drug dealing, corrupt guards, prisoner-guard romances (eww), and even the rape-in-the-shower scene, except all the characters are various types of kaiju. The artist/creator knows his kaiju history and *Kaijumax* is full of in jokes. There is not a single kaiju or prison drama trope that isn't parodied and stomped hard.

Don't be fooled by the cartoonish drawings and the big silly-looking monsters - there is a lot of violence and gore in this book. (Admittedly, most of the gore is various shades of green.) It's gross at times, and funny at other times. Most of the value comes from enjoying such a bizarre genre mash-up. But I admit I want to read the second volume and see what happens to Electrogor and Green Humongo.

Chad says

This is a genius concept. A mashup of Godzilla and prison shows like Oz or Orange Is the New Black. Kaijumax is an island where Kaiju (giant monsters like Godzilla) are captured and sentenced to. It's full of clever ideas like using waterfalls as a shower room, a weightlifting room where the monsters lift skyscrapers, using the hulls of ships as shivs, Ultraman as the guards, prisoners getting high off uranium and smog.

There's so many concepts here that just made me straight out laugh. But there's also this weird juxtapose, because Zander Cannon takes this shit seriously. It gets incredibly dark in places, like kaiju on kaiju rape dark. The artwork is not as defined as I've seen from Cannon in the past. He's opted for a simpler, cartoonier style in the book, full of bright colors.

I'll leave you with my favorite moment in the book, when a guard comes up to two monsters who are about to fight. One of the monsters replies to the guard, "We just redking around, no reason to go five lion on us." That right there sums up the warped genius of this book.

Christoph says

I started to follow Zander Cannon's work in the 90's with his "The Replacement God", a book filled with humor & fantasy unlike any other in those times. Somehow it got quiet, he only appeared as an artist, his work as a writer somehow didn't appear on my screen ... until last year.

Kaijumax ... imagine "Orange is the new Black" combined with the whole "Godzillaverse", a Universe filled with many monsters, most (if not only in the first season) of them coming directly from Japanese myths and Monster movies. The references are many, and fans of both main influence will be more than happy about this strange sounding mix but Zander also accomplishes the near-impossible task of also entertaining those who didn't grow up with all the pop-culture-references.

This is great, the artwork soon fits perfectly well and everything's coming together.

One main Recommendation - try to get your hands on the single issues, there is bonus material that not only helps but also entertains a lot, I love the part where old movies are mentioned. Love this, even more that it is successful enough and we are reaching the end of Season 2 and it is still great. Big Whoop ... Thank You, Zander!! Keep it going, love it.

Also visit his blog: <http://zandercannon.tumblr.com/>

Zedsdead says

Kaiju-movie skin stretched across a prison drama frame. KAIJUMAX is a remote island prison for the giant city-stomping monsters originating in Japanese rubber-suit movies after WW2 (and hailed in the classic arcade game Rampage). Monsters with names like Electrogor, Mecha-Zon, and Ape-Whale. Better yet, The Creature from Devil's Creek, and Giant Monster Terongo, Terror of Pago Pago. The guards are all sweet Ultraman variants who pop into giant form whenever the inmates get out of line.

Regarding the art, I'll just point out two things. 1) Awful colors. I haven't seen this much hot pink and electric yellow in one place since the 80s. 2) A manlike figure on the back cover is captured mid-stride...and I can't tell which is his right leg and which is his left. That's not right.

Fortunately Cannon is a MUCH better writer than illustrator, supplying excellent world-building to go with the ensemble cast prison drama. A lot of thought went into the details: the prison gym contains skyscraper machines that can be repeatedly pushed over or stomped on. Cargo shipping containers are used to carry things around. Waterfalls are used as showers. Shivas are made from the hulls of oil tankers. Monsters get hooked on depleted uranium and snack on megalodons. Prison intake involves deploying a submarine up an inmate's gigantic rectum to look for contraband. (And this last was so expertly put together that it took me two pages to realize what was happening. Appallingly delightful.)

Even the ways prisoners organize and speak are well thought out. The pseudo-mafia prisoners are old space kaiju; they've been in power a long time and don't get the respect that (they think) they deserve from the young upstarts. The giant mech monsters approximate a Muslim prison gang (as I recall them from Oz and other fiction); they worship "the Cloud" and preach self respect and renounce violence. A younger tattooed gang is called the cryptids. (Get it? CRYPTids? Heh.) The dialogue rings true, peppered with themey vocabulary substitutions like "megafauna" and "mon" and "lizza". Everything clicks.

But it's not for the faint of heart. The happybright color scheme makes for some disturbing contrasts, like happybright prison rape, and happybright beatings and amputations.

I have issues with the art but I do love the way the panels are composed. Occasional first-person robo-kaiju perspectives perfectly convey what's going on in the mech's head; a mix of closeups, long shots, deep shots and various angles keep the panels from getting boring. Really well done.

There are a LOT of plot threads to keep driving the series forward. The central one involves a new inmate with children hiding on the outside. But there's a corrupt prison guard who owes money to the wrong people, inter-gang power plays, a prison break, a good guard guilt-stricken over an arrest gone wrong, a seedy guard/inmate romance, and more. It's chock full of stories.

Apparently the book is LOADED with sly references to the abundance of kaiju movies from which Cannon drew inspiration. I don't have a lot of kaiju experience (Pacific Rim, a couple Godzilla movies, The Host) but I found Kaijumax to be vastly entertaining based just on general movie and pop culture literacy. Four and a half rounded up, in spite of the art. Can't wait for v2.

SECOND READ UPDATE

I was too hard on the illustration. In spite of the infrequent misfires, it just flat out works. Combines fun and functional without having to work at it.

And the more kaiju movies I see, the more this resonates. No rounding needed, this is just a hard five-star title.

Cale says

I'm not sure what I was expecting from the concept of giant monsters in prison, but somehow it wasn't this. I think the issue is tone - I was expecting the tone to be lighter and wackier, with the absurdity of the concept being played up. But no, this is more Oz than Orange is the new Black, complete with prison rape, shanks (radio towers rather than toothbrushes, though), converted zealots, and lots of corruption. The artwork is cartoonish, but that's really the only thing about this that is. And that's fine - if that's what you're expecting. There are some compelling stories being told, with the different types of Kaiju forming different gangs, and the prison officials often using those groups against each other. It's got some depth and heft to it. Just make sure you don't go in expecting a comedy, because this certainly isn't that.

Daniel says

A surprisingly dark tale, but a interesting, and good, metaphor for the realities of prison life.

Jason says

Elevator pitch: Orange is the New Black meets Pacific Rim

By far one of the strangest and most unique graphic novels I've read in recent memory.

Patrick says

A unique concept here. This story is a prison story (think OZ) combined with a Kaiju story. (Kaiju are giant monsters, like Godzilla and Mothra and the like.)

It's a cool idea. And well-executed. The characters come across really well, and there are a lot of clever things to enjoy here, even for someone like me who isn't a huge Kaiju fan. (I really only know the term because I have a friend who is into it.)

What's more, there's some real emotion tied up in this story. A really startling amount, considering the cartoonish look of the book, with big primary-color monsters. This book managed to play on some emotions really well...

Here's the problem. I didn't necessarily like the emotions it evoked. There's some really dark stuff in here, of the sort that you might expect from a gritty prison story.

Intellectually, I really appreciated what's been done here. But I didn't really enjoy it. A lot of this is probably because I'm not a big fan of the two genres being mashed up here. (I picked up this book because I'm a fan of

Zander Cannon.)

So how do you rank a book like that? Original, well-executed, evocative.... but I didn't enjoy it.

Not knowing what else I should do, I'm giving this a conflicted 4 stars.

But the key is, if you *do* like either of these two genres, odds are you'll really enjoy the book and should pick it up.

Daniel says

Well, I went into this one not sure if I'd like the art style or not. It's very cartoony and seemed to be light and kinda superficial. I was wrong. Kaijumax is just weird and funny and it works. How in the heck these guys came up with this concept is beyond me, but they made it work.

Basically, there is an island in the ocean, somewhere that has been converted into a maximum security prison that has one purpose; to hold Kaiju. There are many of the standard Kaiju from the movies and anime and manga that we love. They didn't use their names, but the look of many of them is spot on. Rodan, Smog Monster, King Kong, MechaGodzilla, etc., yeah they are all here. Many are hardened criminals and the standard stuff you would expect from a prison series or movie goes on here. They need pure Uranium as their drug of choice. Some build homemade stills where they can siphon off electricity for its mind altering features. There are gangs and there is a quasi religion, led by mechanical Kaiju who are peace loving and pacifists.

Sounds crazy and a little dumb, don't it? Well all in all this is a fun read with some story and substance behind it. It was really kind of fun and I read the graphic novel in one sitting. I enjoyed it thoroughly, and I will refrain from my normal goings on about art, but in this one the art kind of fit this mish-mosh of ideas and tropes and for me, it was just fine.

Danny

Brian Dickerson says

A much deeper storyline than I imagined, super-max for giant monsters. Chatty for a comic, but still a quick read. Zander Cannon is awesome with cartoony depictions of the typical prison and very real social problems with a twist. I cannot wait until season two!

Rod Brown says

I think people who grew up watching the Godzilla movies and Japanese TV imports like Ultraman would probably get a big kick out of this. Alas, my local TV stations didn't carry much of that when I was a kid, feeding me mostly a diet of John Wayne westerns and American sci-fi like Star Trek and that movie with the Michael Ironside lookalike where women rule the world and men are mutants (every other weekend at least).

I like this as a parody of prison movies and the HBO Oz series, and I started getting caught up in all the scheming and plotting by the end despite not much caring about all the big monsters and robots.

Wayne McCoy says

'Kaijumax Season One: Terror and Respect' by Zander Cannon seemed like an interesting premise, but by the end, I felt like it had worn out its welcome with me.

A remote island in the South Pacific serves as a supermax, or kaijumax, prison for out of control monsters. They all live here in uneasy peace. There are radioactive monsters and robotic ones and weird natural ones like giant goats and a bigfoot. The guards manage them using powered suits that help them grow to a size that helps give them an advantage. Not all the guards are clean though. Some have their own cons and blackmail going on.

I really liked the concept. I liked how it mimicked a prison story. I even liked the slang and profanity that was made up for the story. The art is pretty average, and the writing just left me wanting it to be over. I have the next volume to read, and I'm hoping that one is more interesting.

I received a review copy of this graphic novel from Oni Press and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this graphic novel.

Alex Sarll says

The island where giant monsters are deposited after their rampages recast as a brutal prison drama a la Oz, complete with Ultraman-style guards and its own grubby slang (humans? 'Squishers'). And it all fits surprisingly well! There are rackets trading in highs like uranium and electricity, horrific incidents in the showers (well, waterfalls), and gangs divided by origins and attributes. One of which even has to put up with the boss' son, who really isn't cut out for the life. I expected this to be funny, and it is, but also more affecting than I bargained for.
