

Dictionary

Ulu: A inuit knife

Pisiksik: inuit bow and arrow

Kakivak: Inuit spear

Shaitan: demons in islam

Ijiraq: a shape shifting monster that feeds on humans (mainly women and children)

"Rubi, what are we going to d-"

"Shhh," I interrupted. "Look," I said, pointing across the trees, Ollie's grey eyes widened. He opened his mouth to scream, but I covered it with my hand.

I couldn't blame him for yelling; it was an Ijiraq, a 9ft tall figure, hunched back in a matted dark green cloak, its 'face' was a deer's skull, with two sets of long, massive antlers, and it grasped a large staff with a giant crab claw on top with its long bony claws. As it studied its surroundings, its eyes glowed a crimson red.

"All right, Ollie," I said quietly, "I'll make a distraction, you go to camp and help Eric pack up, we're going to have to relocate."

Ollie's eyes turned pink, as tears streamed down his flushed cheeks.

"What about you?" It's going to kill you!" Ollie objected.

My chocolate-coloured hands cuffed over his pale face.

"It'll be fine," I lied, "but now on my signal, go."

He nodded solemnly.

I crawled into the tall dark green grass, looking for a distraction, I stumbled upon a medium sized rock and clutched it in my hand, took a deep breath and prepared to throw it, I looked back to see if Ollie was still there, and in the bushes I saw his sparkling grey silver staring at me, I nodded and returned to work, I clutched the rock in my hand, raised it into the air, and I threw it across the field, the Ijiraq head perched up as his skin began to liquify.

It's an absolutely horrid thing to see an Ijiraq change form. Its body became a mixture of liquid and solid, the antlers in its skull began to fold over as flesh from its chest crawled up to its skull

head and covered its face, and its body bucked over from standing on two legs to standing on all fours. The ljiraq shrank in size as the hue of its fur changed from dark brown to light grey. In the span of a minute, The ljiraq went from a monstrous half elk demon to a slick arctic fox, Despite the change in appearance the ljiraq's crimson eyes remained the same.

Now in its new form, it pounced towards the direction where I threw the rock.

That was the signal, I heard rustling as Ollie sprinted away, unfortunately the ljiraq heard too, its head snapped in Ollies direction as its fur went from grey to a light brown, and its sharp snout shrank into a button nose, its ears also rounded as it developed muscle mass, and its crimson eyes remained glowing in its new grizzly form.

Oh no. It knew about Ollie, I had to do something. I took a deep breath and sprung from the dense grass to confront him.

As its head bent unnaturally in my direction, I reached into my pocket and pulled out my sharp grey Ulu, and prepared to fight a fatal battle.

"Stay away from him, shaitan" I warned in a forced deep voice.

The ljiraq looked at me as its face melted out of its bear form and its bulky back flattened out as the ljiraq stood on its hind legs. When it was finished morphing, it smiled at me. With a chocolate brown complexion, the monster grew shiny black hair and turned its cloak into a dark green hijab.

To my horror, I was staring at myself.

"Stay away from him?" I don't think so," the ljiraq echoed my forced deep voice. "But don't worry, he won't even notice you're gone."

I clutched my Ulu and charged at the beast, the ljiraq dodged with ease, its fingers changed into razor sharp claws. It swung at me, scratching my arm. I cried in agony as I dropped my weapon, But the fight was far from done.

I leaned down and hurled a sharp rock at the monster's face, it yelped and stumbled backwards, quickly I picked up my Ulu and with one swift movement I stabbed it in the stomach,

The Ijiraq buckled over screaming in pain, its antlers began to sprout out of its head, as it spit blood, its eyes glowed red. I raised my Ulu to strike again, but wings sprung out of its back and began to fly away clumsily.

"This isn't over," the Ijiraq threatened.

Still bleeding, the demonic bird flew away. Once it was out of view, I collapsed on the ground from exhaustion.

In a haze, I awoke to see someone with dark brown skin, black hair flopping over his black eyes, and glossy round glasses.

"You're awake!" He exclaimed.

"Hey, Eric," I said, "how long have I been asleep?"

"Only a couple hours, once Ollie came back here, the two of us went to make sure you were ok"

Ollie walked in holding some berries and a small cod fish.

He set it on an old tree trunk and sat down next to us.

"If you're hungry, I've found some crowberries." Ollie signed. I nodded and reached for the berries, but my effort was cut short by a sharp pain rushing up my arm.

"Ahhh," I wailed, Eric dashed over to me, a scared expression on his face.

"What happened?" he asked. Ollie gave me a worried look.

"We came across an Ijiraq while scouting the woods, and I made a distraction so Ollie could escape. I ended up face to face with it, and it scratched my arm while I stabbed it in the chest with my Ulu." I explained.

"Did you kill it?" Ollie asked.

I shook my head.

"It turned into a bird and flew away."

"It just flew away? After one hit?" Eric motioned, sceptical.

I shrugged,

"We should move camp tomorrow." I signed. "The Ijiraq is going to want revenge,"

Eric and Ollie exchanged nervous glances before turning to face me and nodding, "I'll gather the food, Rubi, put down the tents, and Ollie can keep watch," Eric instructed us.

I started rolling up our sleeping bags when I felt a strange chill run down my spine; we were being watched, I could feel it.

I crawled out of the tent and approached Ollie.

"Have you seen anything new yet?" I asked aloud.

"Nope," he replied, "have you?"

"I'm not sure, I just have this feeling."

Suddenly a large silhouette flew over us, panicked. I grabbed Ollie and rushed over to find Eric.

When we arrived at Eric's spot we saw him laying on the rough ground, unconscious.

"Ollie, go get some sage and water!" I ordered, Ollie nodded and rushed back to the camp.

I held Eric's head as I gently placed it on a pillow.

I didn't know what to do so I checked his head for any signs of injury, there were no bruises or scratches, but when I checked his face I noticed his eyes, red, not hazel.

I recoiled in horror, as his eyes began to glow, I pulled out my Ulu and prepared to strike.

Then I heard a rustling coming from the bush, Ollie emerged. I dropped my Ulu in shock.

He had matching glowing red eyes.

Once he saw me, he had a look of terror on his face as the berries fell out of his hand.

Not taking his eyes off of me he reached down and picked up his Pisiksik.

"What did you do with Rubi?" He shouted at me.

"Listen" I began, trying to sound threatening "you only have a vendetta with me, leave Ollie and Eric out of it" Ollie gave me a confused look, then he looked at Eric and he jaw dropped.

"You got Eric, too?" he exclaimed. Suddenly Eric began to stir, he stood up massaged his head and looked up at us, surprised.

"What is going on?" He signed shakily. I was surprised by that. How does an animalistic monster learn sign language?

I picked up my Ulu and stared at it. Once I saw the reflection I shrieked.

My eyes glowed a vibrant red.

"I think I know what's going on" I signed. As I spoke, "The Ijiraq has cast some sort of Illusion over our eyes."

"Even if that's true, there still is an Ijiraq" Ollie pointed out "It still could be one of you"

"It's not me, I was unconscious during most of this" Eric signed in defence.

"You could have faked it," Ollie retorted.

"We can't bicker," I said, trying to defuse the situation. "All the Ijiraq wants to do is eat us, right now it's just playing with its food."

Ollie and Eric exchanged glances before taking a deep breath and facing me.

"If one of us is the Ijiraq, we have to find out who it is and save the real one." Eric pointed out.

"OK, everyone, put your weapons in the centre," signed Ollie "The Ijiraq can take our faces, but it can't take our memories."

We all nodded. Knowing what we were going to do.

"All right," Eric began "the first round of questioning."

"OK," I said, pointing to Ollie, "what's your name, age, and birthplace?"

"My name is Ollie Tuktu, I'm 11 and a half years old, and I was born here in Labrador," Ollie replied promptly.

"Your turn," Ollie signed to Eric.

"Eric Flores, 12 years old, and from Newfoundland" They both looked at me.

"I'm Rubi Abdali, I'm almost 13 and I'm from Pakistan." I responded.

Eric looked at me and continued the questioning.

"Rubi how did you get here from Pakistan?" Eric asked, seemingly knowing the answer.

"My family wanted a fresh start with more opportunities."

"And what happened to them?" Ollie asked.

"What happened to all of our families" I shrugged "The Ijiraqs"

Ollie nodded, but Eric looked a little uneasy.

"Eric, how did you lose your hearing?" Ollie motioned.

"When an Ijiraqs attacked me and my family, the monster transformed into a wolf and scratched my cochleas." replied Eric

"How old were you when it happened?" I questioned.

"I think it was 3 or 4"

"Ollie, how did we meet?" I asked.

"I was about 8 years old when an Ijiraq attacked me and my family; I managed to escape, I found a small cave, and fended for myself for a while; then I heard someone screaming, I went to investigate, and it was an Ijiraq attacking you. I helped you get away." He explained.

"Okay, so far so good," remarked Eric.

"Eric, how did you meet us?"

"Me and Amaia were hunting elk, and other than my sister, I hadn't seen any humans since I was about four, anyway we ended up finding your cave and we spent the night there. In the morning you two found us, and we may have tried to" Eric cringed at the memory "Kill you, but then we learned that we weren't enemies and the rest was history." he signed.

I nodded awkwardly as I recalled the moment.

"Rubi" said Ollie, his voice sounding guarded, "what happened to Amaia?"

I was put off guard by the question,

"Are you sure you don't want to give me a harder question?" I asked

"Answer the question," Ollie reiterated in a cold tone.

"Okay, okay" I said, unnerved by Ollie's seriousness.

"Stop stalling," motioned Eric.

"I'm not"

"Then answer"

"fine" I began "she was off hunting when she disappeared"

The two exchanged glances and turned to face me.

"Rubi," Eric slowly signed. "Do you know how my sister disappeared?"

I gave him a puzzled look; they don't know what happened to Amaia.

"Probably the Ijiraq," I shrugged awkwardly.

Then Ollie bent down and grabbed his Pisiksik and my Ulu from the pile, while Eric took his Kakivak.

"We know what happened to Amaia," Ollie revealed.

"An Ijiraq didn't kill her." Eric signed angrily "You did."

I could feel my face heat up, how did they know, no one was supposed to know.

"W-what are you talking about?" I stuttered.

"We know what you did," Ollie signed seriously.

I began to step back as they approached me, weapons in hand.

"Please I can explain" I motioned desperately.

"You took the only family I ever had" Eric pointed his spear at me. "And you tried to cover it up?"

"It was an accident," I pleaded.

Eric and Ollie continued to close in on me. Frantic, I looked around me for something I could use to defend myself, suddenly I had an idea. Quickly I grabbed a stick and ran towards our campfire, the boys chased after me, I was just about to reach the fire when I felt a large pain explode in my left leg, I fell to the ground screaming in agony,

Eric and Ollie loomed over me as Eric pulled his Kakivak out of my leg, heat washed over me as blood began pouring out of my leg. Ollie kicked me and turned me on my back, as I looked up at them, they're red eyes dimmed into their natural colour.

"Listen I'm not an Ijiraq" I tried to plead. "I swear by Allah"

"The real Rubi would've been honest" Eric asked.

"I didn't know you knew the truth" I signed knowing how bad it looked. "How did you find out?"

As the boys loomed over me I saw a pair of eyes in the distance.

Crimson eyes.

I shakily raised my hand and pointed towards them.

"Behind you" I signed loosely "ljiraq!"

The two turned behind them,

"What if she runs?" Eric asked

"Look at her, she's in no shape to walk"

"alright"

They both walked towards the eyes.

I took that moment to rest and fully collapsed in the dirt, suddenly the ground next to me began to stir as a small grey rat arose from the dirt, with glowing eyes.

"G-get away" I cried as I desperately reached for a rock.

"You thought you could best me?" the rat talked in a deep distorted voice "silly humans, so fragile, so weak"

tears were pouring out of my eyes as the rat flashed an unnatural grin.

"Leave them out of this" I pleaded desperately.

The ljiraq rolled its eyes and shook its head.

"Why are you doing this?" I shakily asked "all you do is eat us, why are you making it so personal?"

"I wanted to show you humans how weak your mind is" the rat said "that you'll never truly trust each other and how easy it is to betray each other. You humans turn on each other like the wind, you call yourselves family but they couldn't even figure out the truth,"

"I-I don't understand, how did they know about Amaia?"

"We told them the truth" the ljiraq explained

"We've been watching you and your friends for a long time M.s Abdali"

"Even without our help you still lied about Amaia"

"It was an accident" I tried to explain "I-I never meant to hurt her-"

"Oh but you did, and you covered it up"

"I wanted to tell them I-I just didn't know how" My face began to heat up.

Then the rat began to grow, its tail disappeared and its fur pulled back to reveal a beautiful dark complexion, it grew long wavy black and brushed it away from its crimson eyes.

Amaia Flores. my best friend's sister, the girl I killed.

"Get out of her face!" I screamed, water began pouring out of my eyes, I tried to stand up but I crumbled as pain vigorously shot up my left leg,

"you called me shaitan but we're the same"

"Th-that's not true" I interjected desperately

"Oh ya? she was the closest thing you had to a sister, and what did you do?" It asked, knowing the answer.

"I-I didn't mean to"

Amaia's voice hardened

"What did you do?"

"Y-you got caught in o-one of my traps" I stuttered "I tried to s-save you b-but it was to late"

"And you lied. Like you always do"

You lied, like you always do, those words rang in my ears, I didn't want to hear them but it's true.

I killed Amaia and I lied about it. I tried to fill in Amaia's role as a leader so I lied about being capable. Maybe the Ijiraq is right, maybe all us humans do is lie and manipulate people just to get what we want.

The Ijiraq grabbed my chin and stared at me "you know I'm right, all everyone does is lie, us Ijiraqs are just more transparent about it.

And the Ijiraq walked away, leaving me alone in the middle of the forest. Maybe I could convince Eric and Ollie that I'm real, maybe I couldn't, but all I know is that whatever happens.

Us humans will keep lying.