

Unigkuat

Kodiak Alutiiq Legends

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Arnam Iraluq Wiklluku

The Girl Who Made the Moon Her Husband

They used to tell us legends about the *iraluq-moon*. Whenever there was a full moon, children always used to play in the moonlight that shone through the skylight. They'd all get mixed up, boys and girls together. One woman lived by herself, without a husband. So, every time the *iraluq* would shine, she'd step right into the moonlight and say, "Oh, I'm going to take the *iraluq* as my husband."

The woman sat right by the shining moonlight, watching him right from her *ciqlluaq-sod house*. She followed him around the house wherever he went, pretending that he was her husband. Oh, they played there all the time. Then all of a sudden, the *ciqlluaq* got dark. The children got all excited and started running out one at a time. This woman was the only one who stayed back. All the rest left. They ran out. When she looked at the door, the moon-man was there. He said, "Come on now, since you wanted me, a moon-man, as your husband." She knew it was the *iraluq*, so she went right to him. She went out to him and told him that she was going inside to get her clothes.

When she returned with her clothes, the *iraluq* took her and told her not to look back. (See, now they say that people always want to go up to the *iraluq*. This girl had no trouble getting up to there. If I could see them, I would tell them, "If you pretend that the *iraluq* is your husband, it'll come alive on you!") And then they got stuck in the dark clouds. The moon-man wanted to clean it up and

make the sky clear. He made a whooshing sound, "Guu gu gu (hoo hoo hoo)," and put her on the *iraluq* beside his *ciqlluaq*.

And so, that woman had an *iraluq* husband. That's how she lived. He always took care of her and told her that whenever he went to do something, he would do it. After the *iraluq* rises at night, he'd come back to her right away, without hesitation. So that's how he was all the time. After being the *iraluq*, he'd come down to her.

Well, there was another little room in the *iraluq's* house. When the woman was in that room, her husband would tell her, "Never look outside. Never look out there." She started wondering why. "I wonder why I shouldn't go out there?" And her husband gave her something. "Please, if you need me touch this. Touch this, and I will come right back up here to you." Then one time, his brother peeked at her through the window. After he peeked at her, she touched the little button as she was told, and as soon as she touched it, the man at the window disappeared. Her husband came right in, and asked her, "What is the matter?"

"Somebody came and peeked in through the window!" she said.

He went out and when he returned, he told her not to be afraid. So, she lived in that little place.

She stayed like that all the time, and one time her husband came and told her, "How are you? If you are lonesome, I could send you back home." He took her outside and took her down to the beach by the shells and rocks. He was turning them over and she could see that there were little holes underneath. They peered through the holes and saw villages. He asked her, "Is that your village?"

"No."



He kept turning rocks and shells over, searching for her village.

When she recognized her village, he let her go visit. So she returned to her village. She traveled to her house down there, and beside the house, she saw boys and girls playing the arrow game. As she got closer, the boys disappeared; they ran away. After they disappeared, she went into their *ciqlluaq*. As soon as she went in, they all ran away from her again. She didn't know it, but she had come down to her village as a moon-person herself. So she went back to the place her husband had told her to go to. He told her that if she wanted to come back, she should go back the way she had come. She returned to the *iraluq* and he took her and went back to the *ciqlluaq* with her. She told him, "My family doesn't want me anymore." So she never went back again. She stayed with her husband on the *iraluq*.

I told someone once, "If you want a wife, just look at the moon and take her as your wife." Now, it's not so easy to get up to the *iraluq*. I've finished my story.

Adapted from an Alutiiq legend told to Irene Reed in Karluk by Fedosia Laktonen of Cape Douglas in 1962 with an unknown translator, possibly Katya E. or Gladys Chichenoff. Alaska Native Language Archive, AS077, with additional translation by Dehrich Chya, 2021.

The Girl Who Married the Moon. Watercolor painting by Cheryl Lacy, 2021.