



QALUPALIK

by Jeff Dunne

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# QALUPALIK

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## CHARACTERS

- KALLIK** A hot-headed, hormone-driven, young Inuit man, interested in romance only in so far as it leads to sex, and hungry to feed his ego.
- AMKA** A shy young Inuit woman, timid from a practical, reserved nature. She is insightful and supportive, which results in a deceptive appearance of weakness.
- QALUPALIK** A creature of the sea taking the form of an old woman. She gives the appearance of being kind and feeble to mask a sly and selfish nature.

## SETTING

The shore of a sea in Alaska.

SCENE

*(It is a seashore, with the gentle sound of waves in the background. Shortly after the lights come up, Kallik enters boldly, walking right up to the edge of the stage to look out over the water.)*

KALLIK

Come on, Amka. The sunset won't wait for you!

AMKA (OFF)

I'm coming, I'm coming.

*(Amka enters, and immediately sees that Kallik is very close to the water. She's suddenly worried.)*

AMKA

Kallik! Come away from the water! Have you lost all sense?

KALLIK

Oh please. You don't really believe all that nonsense, do you?

AMKA

I...

KALLIK

She isn't real, Amka. Qalupalik's a made-up monster that parents use to keep their children—

AMKA

Hush, Kallik. Hush. Don't speak her name. Not so close to the water's edge.

*(Kallik shakes his head at Amka.)*

Please just come away from there. We can watch the sunset from over here just as easily—

KALLIK

I can't believe you still hold on to those little girl fears. It's just water. Here.

*(Kallik turns and reaches out.)*

I'll show y—

AMKA

No!

*(He stops, turns back.)*

Just come back.

KALLIK

Come here.

AMKA

If you want more than a cold shoulder to watch the sunset, then *you* come *here*.

*(He stares at her, defiance giving way to hormones. He walks back to her.)*

KALLIK

Honestly, Amka, we're not children anymore.

AMKA

No? *(Amorous now that the fear is gone.)* Show me.

*(They begin to kiss, but after a moment, an old woman enters. Amka notices, pulls away, and hides behind Kallik. He turns to see her. Fear rises in him, but he quickly suppresses it.)*

KALLIK

Who are you? What are you doing here?

QALUPALIK

The shore belongs to no one. We all have the same right to be here. I might ask you the same question.

KALLIK

We're here to watch the sunset.

AMKA

We should go.

KALLIK

No. As she said, the shore belongs to no one. If we want to stay, then we can stay.

AMKA

We can watch the sunset from anywhere, Kallik, We should—

QALUPALIK

Kallik, is it? I've heard of you. Come, let me see your face. These eyes are not what they once were.

*(Kallik studies the old woman, suspicious. Amka tries to pull him back, but he pushes her hands away.)*

Come now. What do you have to fear from an old woman?

KALLIK

I am not afraid you.

*(He steps towards Qalupalik, who hobbles over to him, studies him.)*

AMKA

Who *are* you?

*(Qalupalik looks over at her, assessing, then...)*

QALUPALIK

My name is... Qalupalik...

*(Amka jumps backwards, terrified, and even Kallik starts to take a step back.)*

But I am not what you think! I am no monster, no stealer of children. Just an old woman who lives by the shore.

KALLIK

You lie. I've walked this beach for miles upon miles. I've never seen a dwelling.

QALUPALIK

It is no lie. I live in the sea. I paddle to shore in the evenings to fish. And to stretch my legs, for my island is not large. *(She sees that he does not believe her.)* My umiak is just over the rise *(she points the way she came)*. Come see it if you do not believe me.

KALLIK

It makes no difference whether you live in the sea, on the shore, or even in the sky. I am not afraid of you.

*(Qalupalik finished studying him and takes a step back.)*

QALUPALIK

Nor should you be, a strong young man such as yourself. Kallik, indeed. Your name means—

KALLIK

Lightning. I know what it means.

QALUPALIK

It is no coincidence, your name. I wonder if your parents even knew.

KALLIK

Knew what?

AMKA

Come, Kallik. I'm frightened. Let's leave. I don't want to see the sunset anymore.

KALLIK

In a moment. *(Turning back to Qalupalik.)* What did you mean? What did my parents know?

QALUPALIK

I would say it is no matter, for you are clearly in a rush to leave, but I wouldn't lie to you. It is something you should know, but... it is also something that can wait for a better time. For when you have leisure to listen and consider.

AMKA

Kallik, please! I'm scared.

KALLIK

She won't harm you. I won't let her. *(Back to Qalupalik again.)* Tell me.

QALUPALIK

I merely wondered if your parents even knew that you were a...

KALLIK

A what?