

LINMIPAW

derived from the narrative of
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Long, long ago, there were two siblings named Matur-i and Linmipaw. One day, they went to Finaruy to inspect their traps. Before they set out, though, they checked on their *apor*. Their *apor* was a stone-structured cave unlike other huts used as resting places in the forest.

“Start the fire and I will go to our bird traps,” Matur-i instructed Linmipaw. “I will also check on our animal traps. Prepare our pots so when I come back with our catch, we will be able to cook our food and eat.”

Linmipaw obeyed for Matur-i was his older brother. He started a fire, fetched water and prepared to cook.

Linmipaw was so preoccupied that it startled him when a boulder broke in half, revealing a woman. An immortal. “I have been looking for a husband and I choose you,” said the woman. “Come, be my mate.”

“Hold it,” answered Linmipaw. “We need to wait for my older brother.”

“No, come with me, or I will hurl a huge rock over you, and your brother will never find you,” threatened the enchanted being.

Left with no choice, Linmipaw dove into the stone where he suddenly found himself within the enchanted world of the immortals.

When Matur-i returned, he was puzzled to see Limipaw, whose feet were buried in the ground, caught between the boulders.

“What are you doing there?” asked Matur-i.

“Forgive me, brother, but I have been forced by an immortal into marrying her,” Linmipaw replied.

“That cannot be. Tell her you must return home and seek our father’s permission for he might think that I hurt or killed you,” said Matur-i.

“I can no longer leave from here,” answered Linmipaw.

“Please tell father that I am here if he wishes to speak to me.”

“But our father is old and can no longer walk.”

“I am sorry. There is nothing else that I can do,” Linmipaw said.

“So be it, then.” Matur-i said, mournful. “Let me just cook this wild dove for our meal.”

“It is not necessary, brother. There are plenty of chickens and hogs here. When you come to see me, I will fill your traps with animals that you could carry in your hunting pole.”

“But that will be too strange. How will father ever believe the story that I will tell him?”

“Don’t worry, father will believe you,” Linmipaw said. “When you come to visit me again, you will see that the rock will have gradually covered me. In a year, this rock will come up to my knees. It shall grow bigger and the time will come

that you will no longer see me. But I will still be here, and we can still talk.”

True enough, a year later, the boulder reached Linmipaw’s knees. But they were still able to tell each other stories.

On one occasion, though it was still early, Matur-i bid farewell. “I’m going home before it gets dark.”

“Stay a while,” Linmipaw said. “It is still some time before night sets in.” From the enchanted world, Linmipaw knew exactly when the sun would set. When he sensed the approach of dusk, he would tell Matur-i that it is time to go home. Before nightfall, he also told his brother to go to the traps where an animal was laid for Matur-i to take home.

Matur-i was curious. He asked his brother where Linmipaw got those animals that he put in the traps. “Come and see for yourself,” Linmipaw told Matur-i. From a concealed crack on the boulder, Linmipaw allowed Matur-i a peek into the world of enchantment. Matur-i saw many caged animals. “How were they able to wander into the traps?” asked Matur-i.

“We slay the animals and after eating them, we throw their bones into the traps. When the bones reach the mortal realm, the animals come alive again,” explained Linmipaw.

Matur-i now understood why the animals were no longer strong when he took them from the traps. “Can you keep the animals alive before throwing them into the traps, then perhaps they will be tastier?” he asked Linmipaw.

“It will be hard for you to catch the animals if we do not slay them first,” answered Linmipaw.

“Could we just try?” asked Matur-i.

Linmipaw dropped a live wild boar into Matur-i's trap. Despite his agility, Matur-i could not catch the animal, and was unable to pierce it with his spear. The boar dodged the spear and was even able to jump over the trap. Animals that had not been slain in the enchanted world truly possessed supernatural strength.

"What you have said is true," said Matur-i. He was truly astonished.

"Never mind, I will be sure to drop only newly slain animals into your trap to give you fresh meat," Linmipaw answered.

Once, Linmipaw asked Matur-i, "Brother, the next time that there is a feast, could you please bring us pork fat for oil?"

"Is that all? I shall be sure to bring you some," replied Matur-i.

Years passed and the boulder reached Linmipaw's waist, chest, and head. Matur-i never failed to bring home birds, wild boar and deer that Linmipaw dropped into his traps. In turn, Matur-i never forgot to bring pig's fat for his brother.

During one of his visits, Matur-i asked Linmipaw, "How many children do you have now?"

"I have three. Two girls and a boy," Linmipaw said.

"That is good to know," said Matur-i.

Suddenly, there was a trace of sadness on Matur-i's face. "Forgive me for I bear some bad news. Our father grows weaker each day. His time is drawing near," Matur-i said. Linmipaw was stricken with grief.

“It seems that when father dies, we won’t have enough food to feed the people during the wake,” Matur-i said.

“Don’t worry, brother. In the event of father’s death, just borrow animals from our neighbors and tell them that you will replace these. Then come here and I shall place animals in your trap for you to give in exchange for the ones you owe,” said Linmipaw.

When their father passed away, Matur-i borrowed a big hog from his neighbor to feed people who condoled with him. His agreement with the hog’s owner was that he would give three wild boars in exchange for the large hog.

Two weeks after their father’s burial rites, Matur-i went to the forest of Finaruy to talk with Linmipaw. “Our father has been buried,” he said.

“Then all is well. What is needed for the animal you slew and fed the people with?” Linmipaw asked.

“We agreed on three wild boars as replacement for the large hog,” Matur-i answered.

Linmipaw killed three wild boar and dropped them into Matur-i’s trap. The wild boar came to life. “Go ahead and check your traps, brother. The three wild boar that you need are there.”

Matur-i went home to Fiallig to ask his neighbor’s sons to help him carry the wild boar for he was unable to bring all of them back by himself.

Matur-i told his neighbor, “As agreed, here are three wild boars in exchange for the big hog you lent me.”

“No, just two,” his neighbor said. “I did say three, but I wish to offer you one, as I share in your sorrow at the loss of your father.” Matur-i thanked him.

Time passed and Linmipaw was totally encased in stone. Linmipaw had been claimed by the enchanted world. Still, Matur-i continued to visit and chat with him, and every time Matur-i went home, he brought animals that Linmipaw placed in his trap.

To this day, hunters offer pig's fat whenever they go to the forest. The Ifiallig still believe that animals caught by their traps are blessings from Linmipaw who in the enchanted realm remains immortal.