



"Dawood, a warlock, commanded them to pin her down by her arms and legs."

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possessed by a jinni

In Islam, the Jinn are spirits who live alongside mankind and can interact with humans. **YOUSUF TILLY** introduces the world of the Jinn and then goes on to describe the exorcism of a Jinni which he witnessed in South Africa.

Though the idea of demons is universal, Islam is the only monotheistic religion that addresses its message to both mankind and the demons themselves. Even in daily prayers, Muslims acknowledge the presence of realms outside the perception of man when they refer to Allah as 'Lord of the worlds'.

The demons of Islam, the Jinn, have been fashioned from a 'smokeless fire'. They find consciousness in a spirit, much like our perception of the soul, but have no physical body and are therefore free of the constraints of three-dimensional space. Among them are several species, including the Ifreet and Marida which can shape-shift into physical forms.

Though our realms exist alongside each other, time operates differently in the Jinn universe. This affords the Jinn great agility in our dimension, moving vast distances in mere seconds. It also allows them to live ten-thirteen times the average lifespan of humans, with some reported to live up to 2,000 years.

Their civilization is assembled in nations not nearly as intellectually advanced as ours. Feeding mostly on bones, they sometimes occupy the oceans, but also live alongside man, where their mischief interferes with normal life. Some claim that the Jinn are jealous of humankind's achievements and possess people to gain the experience of our superior being. A morbid jealousy characterises the behaviour of jinn when they are manipulated by humans in spells to harm others.

The Quraan mentions that secrets of the occult were divulged to mankind by the angels Harut and Marut. They came to earth because they believed themselves resilient enough to resist the temptations assailing man, but when they approached Allah with the idea of their visit, He advised them they would do no better under the circumstances.

Man was taught secrets of the occult by the two angels as a means to protect themselves from demons but, though their gift came with a stern warning to use the power responsibly, consistent abuse eventually led to the practice of the dark arts and black magic.

Witches typically bargain off some of their human traits in exchange for favours from Jinn, which are used mischievously in return for a payment that earns them a living. However, the dark arts have a high price for all involved especially since common motivations for its use include extreme jealousy, vengeance or greed.

Humanity's physical composure is considered unique in creation since it derives from both the lower compounds (plant and animal matter) and higher angelic entities which, in

the spectrum of creation, is considered to be superior. Mankind and the Jinn are, however, both free and can exercise choice at will, for which they are both accountable, and therefore face the same destiny.

An Islamic exorcism

Locked in a room with a feverish, twitching girl, four men – myself one of them – looked disbelievingly at each other when Dawood, a warlock, commanded them to lay her beneath a blanket on the floor and pin her down by her arms and legs.

Whispering to himself, Dawood held her head and then, rolling her eyes, the young woman suddenly burst into a violent spasm. Then there was laughter and she wore a devilish smile: the Jinni had appeared. Although they have their ASBO moments, Jinn are more often off on a lark. Interrogating a Jinni – a he in this case – is made more complicated by subterfuge, since the conduit through which you're communicating with the unseen is a flawed human being.

Demons are merely symptomatic when dealing with the black arts. The Jinni took possession of the girl because of a spell cast by some malicious individual. The chances of relapse would be high if the enchantment used against the girl was not first found, and undone. Since the Jinni was simply deputed to take-up residence in the victim and bully her, Dawood must entertain him rather than try to evict him.

After the spell lodged the Jinni within the woman, she gradually declined through a mysterious illness. Merrily, the Jinni related to Dawood how attempts by doctors to diagnose her •

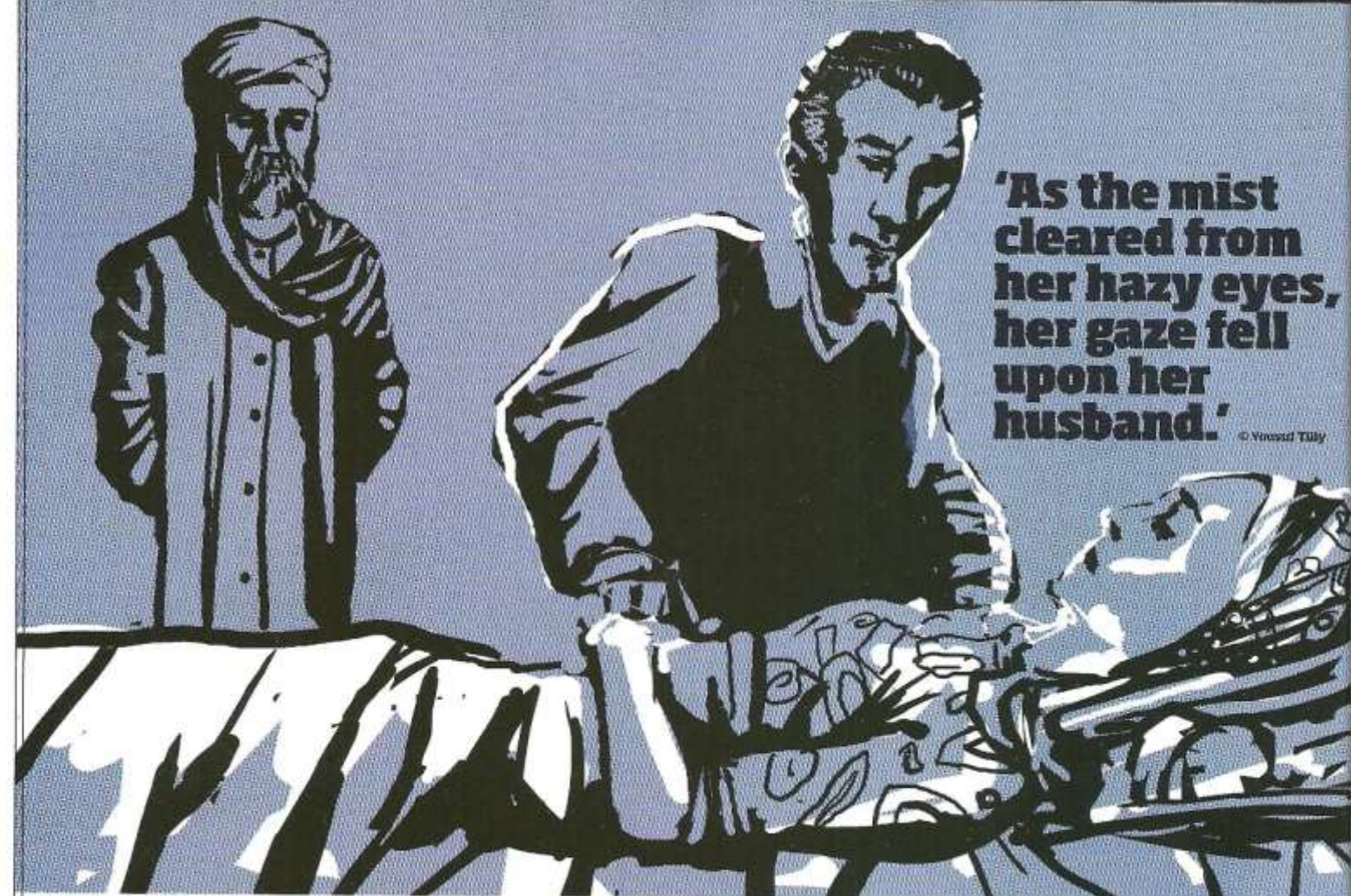


Yousef Tilly abandoned a long career in software engineering after selling a concept for a music video. He has run his own art studio, which included a collection of his own paintings and has written film scripts. However, he modestly states that 'the experience of both projects proved me neither painter nor scribe'. Instead, he simply states that he is 'good at ideas'.



"Her voice and manner, even her facial expressions, changed dramatically."

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'As the mist cleared from her hazy eyes, her gaze fell upon her husband.'

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sickness were thwarted by his meddling. Since she wasn't levitating or doing the spider-walk, no one would have guessed she was possessed but otherwise physically healthy. Her husband was furious when he heard this: the wild goose chase to relieve his ailing wife had left him and her father, also present at the exorcism, at their wits' end, unwilling to put her life at risk on speculative medical procedures or, worse, send her to a mental institution.

Eventually, they had turned to Dawood. People like Dawood can't be found in the Yellow Pages, however. Ghost-busting for the greater good is a risky business and practitioners are bound to constant vigilance for their own safety. Like Christianity, Islam equips man to guard against demons and, subscribing to Islam's policy of prevention rather than cure, Dawood understands that securing justice often requires vigilance.

Holy water is a persuasive, but dated, choice. Holy salt and cloves are effective 'herbal remedies', scorching the Jinn without harming the patient, but not nearly as compelling as forcing a pen between the thumb and index finger. This simple torture finally convinced the Jinni he needed to save his own hide.

The emphasis now was on searching for the source of the enchantment. Now in no doubt as to the nature of their loved one's 'illness', the men obeyed Dawood, surrounding the girl. He whispered to himself again and, holding the girl's

forehead, sent the Jinni drifting while he summoned the witch who had placed the spell to appear. Coming round, the wife became animated, her voice and manner, even her facial expressions, changing dramatically. Everyone understood they were now conversing with the witch's spirit, outraged no doubt at finding herself pinned to the floor by a gang of angry men.

Unfortunately, the witch had successfully concealed the nature and whereabouts of her charm, ensuring her safety from Dawood's rescue operation. Aware that a lengthier interrogation would be more damaging to the victim, he had no choice but to effect only a temporary cure, allaying her symptoms by ordering the destruction of the Jinni. The punishment was to be executed by a pair of holy Jinn who had been in the room all along. It now became apparent that Dawood had not been whispering magic spells to himself but taking their counsel as they worked together in pursuit of the greater good.

Dawood could have harmed the witch but all life is considered sacred, belonging to God. The scripture used to battle black magic sternly forbids fighting fire with fire, lest the practitioner himself becomes vulnerable to its temptations.

The spell was undone eventually, when it was discovered that the black magic was being brought into the home unwittingly by the girl's husband. The

charm was being ingested by the wife through sweets he had received as a gift - from a jealous ex-lover.

Before leaving the room that night, Dawood brought the girl to her senses once again to rest and recuperate from her ordeal, at least temporarily free of the meddling Jinni. As the mist cleared from her hazy eyes, her gaze fell upon her husband, and she hugged her protector.

A word of caution

Spiritual scholars believe that man is equipped with an astral body which allows the conscious soul to function independently of the physical body. Being constructed of astral bodies themselves, Jinn have an intimate knowledge of humanity, and can take advantage of us according to their whim. Those afflicted by possession describe it as being trapped in a dark room with a fiend on the loose.

But bewilderment caused by the externalising of our inner voice is a typical symptom of multiple personality disorders, so medical professionals naturally sustain that diabolic possession is not only likely to be a delusion but that the brutality of the exorcism ritual is also a gross breach of human rights. One case involved a woman being tied to a tree and beaten for six hours.

Perhaps we should also question whether the practitioners themselves are not mentally ill. ●