



**OROKTIV'S  
DREAM**

*a short story by*

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**Note from the author:**

Hey there, I'm Jordan! You may or may not know me, but I am an aspiring author trying to get my book, with working title *Project Fire*, published! I've created short stories like these in the meantime for people like you to enjoy. I'm so glad that you've taken valuable time from your day to read my work, and I'd like to personally thank you for doing so. It means so much to me. I sincerely hope that this story will transport your imagination to Oroktiv's world.

With love,

Jordan T. Hariel

## **OROKTIV'S DREAM**

Fourteen year-old Oroktiv plopped down on the stone dike under the broad arms of a dedöl tree--a favorite spot of his. He was a tall, thin boy, just beginning to gain some brawn, with long dark hair and deep brown eyes; and he was a slave.

He exhaled with frustration. It had not been a good day, and it certainly was not becoming a great night either. Bantish, his master, had tasked him with some especially difficult work that day: moving the huge bales of horse fodder, plowing the remainder of the vast garden, and the list goes on from there. When Oroktiv was a boy he rather fancied the idea of growing up, but now that it was upon him he decided he positively hated it. It only connoted more work, and more scrutiny from his dreadful master. His parents were afraid of him too, for they also were slaves of Bantish; and their fear led them to speak rather harshly to him that evening.

As his family gathered around the dinner table that night, Oroktiv said, "I should one day like to be Mura's servant."

Mura. It was a sweet name to whoever's ears it fell upon. He made everything that was. At least, he made everything that they knew; and that was Nera. I could not describe it as a galaxy, but more of a system composed of several planets of varied size. They were Calos, Mernis, Solel, Häno (Mura dwelt there), Fosat, Yalu, and Oroktiv's home planet Layot. Also there is the Unknown Planet in the far reaches of it, and it was like a blemish amongst the beautiful medley of unique planets; and therein live the most wretched creatures Nera could scrounge up. Otherwise it is a marvelous place; and the face of Mura was ten times more marvelous than it was. He was exceedingly compassionate, and the duties of his servants were easy; and he did not treat them with contempt, either. To him, they were equal with him, though by all means they were not. Oroktiv had

heard and read these things, and secretly desired to one day dwell in his palace. That night, he decided to voice his wishes.

His mother, Pemplora, clad in a long white dress with flamboyant feathers arrayed on her shoulders, gave a nervous laugh. "Dear, why would you ever say such a thing?"

"Because being a slave to Bantish is absolutely dreadful. I hear that the servants of Mura--"

"Now, now, hold your tongue, Oroktiv," his father, Reshil, interrupted. "Do not speak of Bantish in such a way." He waved his hand around their humble dining room, which essentially was a white wall, a wood floor, and a oval-shaped table in the middle of the floor. "He has given us all this."

"But the servants of Mura dwell in a palace!"

Pemplora shushed him. "Keep your voice down!"

His father shifted and cleared his throat. He tapped his finger on the table. "*This* is as good as a palace to me, and you should be content with it."

"It's not that I'm discontent, Father, it is only that I should love to see Mura for myself, and to serve in his house. I have heard that he is the friendliest man you will ever meet. He really cares for his own."

"Bantish takes good care of us," Reshil answered.

Oroktiv had heard that statement too many times for his liking, and became suddenly indignant. "Does he? I've been whipped and beaten three times this year and it's only the second month! He calls me the vilest names and gives me dreadful amounts of work. His animals eat the finest of the garden and what do we get? Meat scraps. Leftovers. Afterthoughts. That's all we are to him. Afterthoughts."

His father did not take well to his abrupt burst of anger, and leapt up. He stared at Oroktiv with sharp, green eyes. "This is our lot,

son, and it will always be. My father was a slave and his father was a slave. You are a slave and your children will be slaves. We will never be free. It's our curse. Do you understand?"

Oroktiv grit his teeth and nodded. "Very well." He took his napkin from his lap and threw it on the table. As he rose to leave, Reshil nearly grabbed him, but Pemplora restrained her husband. Oroktiv stormed out the door, down a long, rugged path, until he came upon that pleasant area where the stone dike was shielded from the heavens by the spreading arms of the dedöl tree. He retreated there often, sometimes when he was not supposed to (ergo his beatings he had received that year). It was a good place to escape the brutal rays of the Belun Moput, the sun of Nera, on a summer day. That night, it provided a nice retreat from his parents.

He ran his fingers through his long brown hair. He hated it when people told him he could not do things. As a child, he was a gangly figure. The other slave children used to ridicule him, saying that he would end up in the kitchen with the women instead of in the fields with the men because of his thin figure. Recently, however, he had begun to build some strength; and, additionally, he retained his height. The voices of his mockers ceased. He had proven doubters wrong before. Maybe he could do it again--but how? It *was* a rather impossible thing, to serve in Mura's palace.

Just then he spotted his sister, Shëscuruu, coming down the path. She was a somewhat portly, rosy-cheeked figure of sixteen, enjoying food quite a bit; perhaps, at times, more than she ought. Nonetheless, she was an exceedingly kind girl, someone in whom Oroktiv often confided. Bantish favored her, for she was trustworthy and did precisely as she was told, and occasionally a little more. She approached her only sibling, sat, and straightened her frilly blue dress.

She turned and gazed at him with her sparkly green eyes.

"You have a pleasant spot here, Oroktiv. I have heard you speak much of it, but have never been here myself."

Oroktiv nodded, but did not lift his head.

"Oroktiv, you know that Mother and Father love you."

"Then why must they stomp on my dreams?"

"Come now, they have no intent on stomping on anything. You know Mother and Father. They fear Bantish, as we all do."

"You've no reason to. He *loves* you."

Shëscurre's voice dropped to a whisper. "That is not true. You know well that he has affection for no one. He only rewards some slaves in hope that the others may follow their example."

Oroktiv rolled his eyes. "Whatever you need to say."

She shifted, and pushed her long, dark hair out of her eyes.

"Don't speak to me like that, Oroktiv. I love you, and I am sure you at least understand that. Mother and Father fear him, that is my point. Talk of running away is dangerous. You have heard the stories of those who have attempted to escape."

"But if Mura decrees it, it is so!"

"You are right. But you have wished the impossible, Oroktiv. Only hunel-chandi, the highest people, serve in the palace of Mura. The demlur-chandi, like you and me, have not set foot upon Hänä in five millennia. I ask you as your sister who holds you dearly in my heart: why might he do it now? The bridge to Hänä is destroyed, at any rate. There is no way to the dwelling of Mura."

Oroktiv breathed deeply and turned his gaze to the night sky, ablaze with countless stars and illuminated with the reflections of the Nerish Stones strewn across the system, appearing like a rainbow in the night. "When I look to the heavens, and I see all the stars and all

the planets, I think about what a small and insignificant thing I am,” and he laughed with purest delight, “and yet Mura made me. He made also the trees, the flowers, the rivers, the lakes, and all that live within them; yet, he knows who I am. To me, that is impossible, my dear sister. Every impossible thing is equally impossible. So if he has done one impossible thing, surely everything else is possible.”

She grinned widely. “You speak as one much wiser and elder than yourself. I believe it may be so. We shall see all things in the timing of Mura.”

“Indeed.”

They embraced, rose, and walked together back to the house. Shëscurre was always supportive and encouraging to her brother, but deep down in her heart she hoped that such a thing would never happen. For him to leave would devastate her. She did not mention her feelings though, or even hint at them. She did not want to push him away.

That night, long after all the candles in the house had been snuffed and all was silent in the slave-village, Oroktiv was awakened by a sharp chill blowing through his open window--except, he did not remember it being open when he lay down. He gingerly got up and shut it, making certain that it actually closed this time. Though he was suspicious, he climbed in bed, and fell quickly back to sleep, for his eyes were heavy. Nonetheless, a chill again roused him, and this time dawn was nigh. He stumbled out of bed, and was simultaneously surprised and frightened to find an imposing man standing in the corner of his room. He was hooded and cloaked, and spoke in a whisper.

“Were you not prepared for my coming?” he said.

“Wh-who are y-you?” Oroktiv stuttered.

"You know who I am, and you know what I have come for," he answered. "But you were not ready for me. When I woke you with the breath of the wind, you continued to sleep. You did not seek me."

"Mura!" cried Oroktiv, dumbfounded.

"And when I woke you the second time you were surprised to find me here."

"I-I was afraid, and did not look for you. I did not know-I thought it was, maybe, a mischief-maker. I did not expect you to come *tonight*."

"That is how I come, dear Oroktiv!" Mura thundered, his voice sounding like a wave of the ocean crashing violently into the sand. "Like a thief. You know not when I come, or when I go. You must always be vigilant. Did you think I was deaf, so as not to hear your heart's desire?"

"Ah!" Oroktiv exclaimed. "Forgive me, lord!"

"Do not beg me for mercy, my dear servant." At this time, Mura removed his hood and revealed his face. His hair was white, whiter than wool or snow. His eyes glowed a brilliant blue, as if therein was a blazing fire. His face was radiant, though not blinding; his radiance enhanced his features and did not wash them out.

"Servant?" Oroktiv whispered, now feeling indeed insignificant and small.

"Why are you surprised?" asked Mura. The light in his eyes flared up for a moment, but not in a threatening way; it was merely as if he were trying to grab Oroktiv's attention. "You have asked, and I have done. Do you yet not believe, precious one, that I would?"

"I believe, though I doubted even when I saw with my eyes. When may I come with you?"

"Now. I shall await you in the grove to the east of here. Gather

three things to bring with you, and no more. Since you love her so, you may say goodbye to your sister before you depart; but I warn you, do not wake your parents! Though they, too, hold you dear and have the best intentions, they will restrain you for fear of their master Bantish. But I will cause Bantish to be softened toward your family, and he will not be angry with your departure. Now, gather what you wish to bring quickly." After saying this, he vanished with a flash of light.

For a few moments, Oroktiv did not move, completely dazed. Was this real? He blinked a few times. It seemed too dreamlike to be reality, yet all the same it seemed too real to be a dream. If it were a dream, at least it would make his slumber pleasant; and if it were reality, it would change his life. Either way, he wanted to see how it ended.

Oroktiv weighed in his mind what he should bring. He surveyed his room. Only three things--ah! He snatched up the worry stone his father had made for him when he first began his slave labor. He recalled the words of his father when he received it: "Son, clasp this stone when you are afraid, and remember Mura; and fear shall flee from you." He now grasped it tightly again. He was not worried for himself, but for his family. He would no longer be there to see the face of his sweet mother in the morning, or to feel the loving shoulder pat his father gave him each morning, or to embrace his dear sister. He supposed he had theretofore not contemplated what he would be leaving behind to go with Mura.

Now, he more reluctantly searched for a second thing. Oh! The little dedöl wood down-flute his mother had crafted for him a couple of years ago. Down-flutes were a common instrument in the Nerish system, getting their name from their downward curved shape as

distinct as their low, mystic sound, often used at festivals and celebrations. This one, however, was for his own enjoyment. When he got it, his mother gazed at him with her dark brown eyes, and said, "Play it: celebrate your happy moments, not your sad ones." He had learned a couple of tunes on it, but largely it went unused: a fact he wished he could change now that he had to leave behind his family with so little to remember them by. He might have played it then, but he did not want to rouse anyone. At any rate, the moment was gradually turning sour; he was beginning to question his decision to go. Was he too rash to have said that he would like to dwell in Mura's house? Perchance he had not counted the cost well.

Oroktiv now had something from his father and his mother, and he decided that it would be absolutely improper if he did not have something to remember his sister by. He looked around his room for a couple of minutes, but he stopped suddenly and went to his sister's room. She was asleep, quite to Oroktiv's surprise considering the noise Mura had made. He approached the bed and shook her. "Shëscurru, Shëscurru," he whispered.

Her eyes fluttered open. "Oroktiv? What is the matter?"

"I am leaving."

She sat up and glanced out her small round window. "So early? What work has Bantish got for you to do at this hour?"

"It's-it's not Bantish. It's Mura."

He could see her eyes widen even in the dim morning light.

"Mura?"

"He appeared to me in my bedroom. He summoned me to come to his palace on Hänä."

"Now?"

"Yes. He is waiting on me outside."

"Are you sure you weren't dreaming?"

"Yes. He has answered my plea."

She let out a short breath in shock. "Oroktiv, I am speechless."

"As am I."

A tear rolled down her plump face. She forced a weak smile.

"Well, I wish you the best." She covered her mouth with her hand and began to weep. Oroktiv was not one to cry, but now he struggled to withhold a stream of tears.

"Will I ever see you again?" she sobbed.

"I dearly hope, my sister. In any case, always I shall walk in your dreams and in the memory of your heart."

"And I in yours, dear brother." She wiped her eyes.

Oroktiv produced the souvenirs he had gathered from his room. "Mura said I could bring three things with me. Here I have the worry stone which father carved for me, and the down-flute that mother made. So I have something to remember them both by. I've yet need of something to remember you by."

Shëscurre seemed to perk up a little upon hearing this. "Ask for anything, and I shall give it to you."

Oroktiv leapt up, and embraced her. She held him tight also, more tears falling from her face. "Tell me, brother. What do you want? I shall give it to you."

"This--this is what I want," he replied, and squeezed her harder. There, embraced, they wept bitterly. It was a wonder that they woke no one; but Mura, for only a moment, had deafened the ears of all nearby. When finally they did release each other, his sister bade him a final goodbye. "Farewell, my dearest little brother, and forget me not when you walk the grandeur of Mura's abode! I shall never forget you."

“How could I ever forget you, Shëscurru?” Oroktiv answered.

As Oroktiv passed over the threshold of his sister’s bedroom, his heart felt as if it were twisting inside him. Was this really what he wanted to do? To leave behind in a moment everything that he ever knew in his entire lifetime was no small feat. To be sure, everything which he had ever known was really not much; but it was not so much the items, or the quantity thereof: it was more of the memories attached to the items. He surveyed his little dining room with the quaint round table, where a few hours ago he had grown uncontrollably furious at his parents--an act he now regretted. He wished he could wake them and tell them that he really did love them, and that he knew what they had actually meant when they were harsh to him; but Mura was clear that he could not do so. He took comfort in one thing, though. He knew that the memory would never fade, yet the items would indeed deteriorate and fade. It was why he had his sister hug him as a souvenir. Hugs last forever.

At last, Oroktiv summoned the courage to shut the front door behind him. He breathed in the sharp morning air. There was a thin mist levitating over the earth, now beginning to dissipate as the Belun Moput peeked over the horizon. The dawn made a ravishing display of color in the cloudless sky. The sight of the harmony of nature soothed Oroktiv’s anxieties somewhat: at the very least, they distracted him. After taking a moment to relish the beauty of the morning, he set out the east; and it was not long before he came upon the grove.

The grove in which Mura awaited him was a private spot--a good place to go unnoticed. The slaves had realized this and had hid there for a while; but just as quickly as they realized it, Bantish did too, and had, on more than one occasion, endeavored to raze it to the ground. However, there was each time he tried a near uprising, and Bantish

each time relented. Nonetheless, it was now of no help to the slaves, for Bantish had a good idea of where they were whenever one of them went missing. Thus at that time it was largely unused by anyone, making Bantish relatively unwary of it.

When Oroktiv found Mura, he was sitting patiently in a chariot, with his eyes closed. At first glance, it appeared to be a rather shiny chariot of gold, but upon closer inspection Oroktiv discovered that it was a chariot of pure light. It shone brightly indeed, yet it was not blinding, like Mura's face. It appeared unreal to his eyes, for he had never seen anything *made* of light before, only things that *made light*. Strangely, it was tangible, quite unlike you would expect something made of light to be, but Oroktiv rationalized it by supposing it simply had to be tangible for anything to ride in it. There were six horses linked to the chariot, though, contrarily, they appeared to be regular old horses. As Oroktiv looked the mysterious chariot over, Mura suddenly opened his eyes.

"Do you believe you are dreaming?" he said in a mellow tone.

"My lord, it seems as if I am," Oroktiv replied.

Mura nodded. "Simply because you do not understand something does not mean that it is fake. Many such things you will see on HÄno, for it is much unlike your world. You must learn to believe."

"I shall," Oroktiv answered confidently.

"Then get in."

Oroktiv did so, and seated himself in the chariot. With a loud command, the horses galloped forth, eventually running so speedily that they lifted off the ground, out of Layot, and into the vastness of space. He was surprised to find that he could breathe, for he had learned in school that chandi could not do so beyond the reaches of their planets. His mind soon abandoned this thought, for he caught a

glimpse of the entirety of Nera. He could see all the planets and the stars beyond them; and he thought about how incredible it was that to his right was the creator of all of it. Yet he still doubted for a moment.

“Tell me your doubts, son,” Mura said gently.

“Well, my lord, it is only that my family has done so much for me, and I feel that I have not given them a proper thanks.”

“You shall do so, in time. But now they will withhold you. When the time comes, all shall be made proper.”

Oroktiv smiled. He needed not worry. If Mura said so, he would do it. He always did.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**



**Hey everyone! I'm Jordan Hariel. I am sixteen years old. I (obviously) love to write fantasy/sci-fi stories. The biggest inspirations for my writing would probably be C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Lewis Carroll. In the time that I'm not writing, I do robotics, watch TV, and occasionally edit a video. I also play the piano, but I'd really love to learn the cello. My dream is to one day be a published author!**