

Onori The Creature



By
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The water near the shore was warmer than their home. Onori didn't like the warm water, but the hunting here was good. Onori was a Quoren, a creature of the deep. The pearl white rows of razor-sharp teeth tore through the fish's flesh as he ate. The single eye in the center of his face darted back and forth as he watched Junzo, his daughter, swim around after the fish. She curled her tentacles close to her body, thrusting down propelling forward. She grabbed at the fish with her two clawed hands, but the slippery fish got away. Tentacles extended down from his waist propelling him forward through the water closer to Junzo.

Onori smiled. "You are doing good little one."

"Did you see daddy!" Junzo said swimming up to him. "I almost had him."

"Yes, you were very close. I think you will catch your first fish today," Onori said.

Junzo smiled wide. "I'm gonna tell mom."

Onori heart swelled as he watched her dart back into the deeper waters where Agre, his mate, waited. He held the image in his head, wanting this moment to never end.

A dark shadow passed above him, forcing his thoughts back to the present. *What is that?* Onori thought. *There are no large predators here.*

An object that resembled stalks of plants tied together in a crisscross formation drifted down towards him, rocks tied to the edges.

“Danger!” Onori said darting towards deeper water.

A scream from ahead had him rushing all the faster. Junzo and Agre were tangled in one of the plant traps. Onori gripped the trap, tearing at it with his scaly claws. He reached up with his tentacles, pulling Agre, then Junzo out of the trap. A small spear pierced through his shoulder between the plates of his exoskeleton from behind. He saw two strange creatures in the water. From the waist up they appeared similar, but with large spherical heads. Below the waist, he could only see two tentacles coming out. One of the creatures held something that was attached to the spear, it reminded him of a long strand of weed or grass.

“Go! Swim away and don’t look back,” Onori yelled. “I will find you later.”

Agre grabbed Junzo before jetting through the water, away from the dangerous creatures.

Onori growled as he charged the creatures. He swam past the first, slashing at it with his claws across the chest. He reached the second creature and bit down on its neck, tearing out a chunk.

The creature held its claws up to the wound, trying to stop the blood flow. Onori changed direction, heading back to the first creature when he heard a splash from above. Three more of the creatures jumped into the water from the large shadowy object above.

Another spear tore through Onori's flesh, this one going through the same shoulder. His vision started to blur, and he felt very sleepy. He tried to swim away but his body felt numb and wouldn't obey him. He felt something grab his shoulder as the darkness took him.

Muffled sounds greeted him as Onori awoke. He tried to open his eye, but the light was brighter than any he had seen before. He blinked several times, forcing himself to adjust to the light. He was in a small room; strange creatures were moving around. He tried to move forward, but bumped into something solid that he couldn't see. Onori opened his mouth, letting out a small pulse of sound. The echoes showed him he was in a small square space; invisible barriers were on all sides of him.

The creatures outside the barrier looked like the ones that attacked him, but their heads were smaller. Several of the creatures were huddled together at the

far side of the room. He could see another cube in the room, this one holding Junzo. She was curled up on the bottom of the cube, seemingly asleep.

"Release us!" Onori shouted as he pounded on the barrier.

The creatures noticed him, moving closer to his prison. He noticed they weren't in the water, but outside of it moving around on their two strange tentacle-like appendages. As the huddled creatures began to move closer, he noticed they had been huddled around another creature lying in the center of the room, Agre. She was lying on a piece of flat stone, her eye open wide.

"No!" Onori said beating his claws on the barrier.
"Agre no! I'll kill all of you!"

One of the creatures held its claw against the barrier. A sharp pain exploded in the back of his head spreading to his whole body. The pain slowly subsided only to renew again. Wounds opened on his skin as it darkened and burned. He didn't know how much time had passed, only that he could see the faces of his tormentors just before the darkness took him.

Onori awoke again in the same room, but Agre and Junzo were not there. He looked down at his hands then body to find there were no wounds or burn marks.

"Did I imagine it?" he asked himself.

Several of the creatures were gathered around his prison, speaking while pointing at him. One of the creatures held a glowing stone up to the barrier.

"Hello creature," a voice said that seemed to echo throughout the cube. "Can you understand me?"

"Of course I can understand you, now release me!" Onori shouted. "What have you done with Agre and Junzo?"

"I do not know who that is," the voice said. "We are here to help you."

"If you want to help, release me!" Onori said.

"I am afraid I can't do that creature," the voice said.

"My name is Onori, not creature."

"Interesting," the voice said. "You may call me One."

"Why have you trapped me?" Onori asked.

"To help you," One said. "There are dangerous enemies that are threatening your people, and we want to help you get strong enough to fight them."

"Lies!" Onori said.

"So, you don't want our help? You want your people to die?" One asked.

"Of course not," Onori scoffed.

"Then let us help you," One said. "Once we are done, we will reunite you with your family and people."

"You will release me?" Onori asked.

"Yes. But first we must make you stronger, strong enough to defeat your enemies," One said.

"What are you?" Onori asked.

"My people are called human," One said with a smile. "What are your people called?"

"We are Quoren," Onori said looking around the room. He saw no passages out of the small room. *Even if I do escape the cube, I would probably die before I found water,* Onori thought.

"Very well," Onori said. "Make me stronger."

"Excellent. We will start soon, but for now rest," One said.

Time passed in a blur for Onori. He wasn't sure how long he had been in the small prison, but knew it had to have been several cycles. The creatures had put foul tasting things in the water that made him feel

strange. They also held glowing rocks up to the barrier that made him glow and his body fill with pain. The creature called One was always present but was never the one doing things to him. As the cycles passed, he saw his body start to change. First his exoskeleton fell off and his scales began to grow smooth as they changed from dark blue to an ashen color. His tentacles grew together forming one large tentacle, then split into two tentacles, similar to the creatures outside the cube.

The fin that ran from the top of his head down to his lower back fell off, and his gills started to grow smaller until they disappeared altogether. The water from the cube was removed, and Onori discovered he could breathe air now.

"What have you done?" Onori asked. "I am a monster!"

"We have poured all our knowledge and strongest magic into you. Our bodies could not survive this transformation but yours can. I assure you this is only temporary," One said from the other side of the barrier. "Once the threat is gone, we will return you to your normal self and send you back to your people."

"How much longer will this take?" Onori asked. "We have been doing this for dozens of cycles."

“We are starting the last part tomorrow,” One said. “Then we will show you your enemy, and why this is so important.”

For the first time they opened the cube, and he got to see his abductors face to face. One was a strange creature, similar to the humans that captured him in the water. They had two arms, but their claws were short and stubby. The two tentacles it moved around on were called legs and could only bend in the middle and near the end, like his had become. They had a small mouth with two eyes and something triangular that protruded from the center of their face. Their hair came in different lengths and colors, like his people, but the hair itself was thin not thick.

The humans had different skin, some with thin skin like he now had, others had exoskeletons that were silver and bulky. Onori was brought to a large room that had human shaped objects scattered throughout. They resembled humans but were made of some type of dried kelp or seaweed.

“We have given you great power and would like you to test it on these,” One said pointing to one of the creature shaped objects. “To use your great power, you only have to imagine what you want to happen. For example. Imagine this straw person moving in this direction on its own.”

"I don't understand," Onori said.

"Imagine pushing this object in that direction without touching it," One said. "Close your eye, imagine it, then make it happen."

Onori did as instructed but nothing happened. He forced himself to relax, his mind drifting to being reunited with Junzo and Agre. A smile crept across his face as he opened his eye, trying again. This time the object moved in the direction he wanted but moved so fast and hard that it exploded along the way.

Onori gasped. "I am sorry, I didn't mean..."

One was laughing. "That was amazing! Simply amazing! Do it again, but with this one."

Onori felt a surge of happiness. *I will be home soon*, he thought as he made the second one explode like the first. He destroyed three more objects before One stopped him.

"Excellent my friend," One said. "We don't want you to hurt yourself on the first day, so let us return to your room so you can rest. Tomorrow we will practice again. Then... then it is on to the real enemy."

Onori followed One back to his cube, exhaustion setting in. He fell to sleep quickly, dreaming of being reunited with his family and people.

Onori awoke to the sound of shouting. Loud sounds echoed through the rooms. One burst into the room, red liquid running down the side of his head. He ran to the cube, holding his glowing stone up to the barrier.

"They are here, we must stop them," One said.

"Who?" Onori said.

"The Nasir. The enemy I told you about. They must have found out that we were helping you." One said.

Images of his family flooded Onori's mind, giving his focus. "Where are they?"

"Follow me," One said peeking out the doorway.

They ran down the hallway, taking several turns along the way. They stopped at the edge of a room larger than any he had seen. The ceiling was more than ten times his height and transparent. Plants filled the room, including tall trees, saturating the room with a flowery fragrance. Close to them, Onori saw several of the humans fighting another group of creatures a short distance away. Lighting arched out, chunks of ice flew, and fire blazed around the room. Onori didn't know what to make of it. He had seen magical powers before from some of his people, but it was nothing like this.

The approaching enemy looked very similar to the humans. They had two legs they walked on and two arms. They also had two eyes in their heads with small mouths. These Nasir appeared to be slightly smaller than the humans and with longer ears.

Crouched next to the Nasir were humans with metal rings around their neck. One of the Nasir reached over touching the human. A strange glow surrounded the human as it grew thinner, its skin changing from a tan color to ashen. The human fell back, barely able to move. The Nasir stood up, the glow now surrounded him, pointed his finger at the humans close by as it said something too quietly for Onori to hear. A lightning bolt arched out striking two humans through the chest, they fell to the ground shaking and convulsing.

The Nasir noticed Onori, he pointed his finger towards him. Onori acted first. He moved his arm up, palms facing up, forcing the ground to rise between them to absorb the lightning. Onori dashed forward, thrusting his arm straight out. The Nasir flew backwards, slamming into the one behind. Two more popped up from behind barricades, but Onori was still the quicker. He brought his arms out wide, then brought them together, his palms clapping when they met in the middle.

The two Nasir flew towards the center, crushing the two that were already there with the sound of snapping and crunching bones. Onori brought his arms down slamming all four into the ground. Cheers sounded as Onori sprinted through the battlefield, killing over a dozen Nasir. Pride swelled within Onori as he continued his charge.

"I'm going to do it!" Onori said. "I will see my..."

Onori slipped as he reached a large patch of ice on the ground. A gust of wind crashed into him, throwing him against the far wall. He looked up just in time to see lightning arc through the air, passing through his chest. Onori's body shook and convulsed as his heart raced from the residual energy.

A lone Nasir strode forward towards him, a look of pure hatred in his eyes. He reached his hand toward a nearby tree which began to glow. The tree turned from green to brown, wilting in seconds, the glow transferring to the Nasir.

So, they drain life to fuel their magic, Onori thought. These Nasir are horrid creatures indeed.

Onori dove to the side as a stream of fire shot out of the Nasir's hand. He ran behind a stone bench, the fire blackening it. Onori pushed at the stone bench, flinging it towards the Nasir. The fire changed to a

wave of light, severing the bench in two, the pieces landing next to his opponent.

If he can do it, so can I. Onori thought facing off against him. As the Nasir raised his arm, Onori mirrored the move. Lightning arced out of the Nasir's hand, only to be absorbed by Onori. A look of confusion crossed his face before Onori shot the bolt back out and into his opponent's face. The elf screamed as he staggered back, but the quoren wasn't done. He reached out with his senses, trying to feel the Nasir. At first there was nothing, then his senses awoke like a tidal wave. He could feel everyone in the area. The elves, the humans and... something else. Something familiar.

He focused first on the elf. He could feel the magic and life force within him. Onori extended his arm drawing them to him. The elf screamed, his skin drew tight, changing from white to dark grey. The elf's body hit the ground lifeless. He could feel the other Nasir turning to run, their fear was palpable.

Onori could also sense the fear inside the humans, it was alongside the relief they were feeling. Onori ignored it all as he walked to one of the walls in the room, placing his palm against it.

"You did wonderful my friend," One said running up to him.

"Shh," Onori said concentrating. "Something is still wrong."

One looked around. "Where?"

"Here," Onori said forcing the stone wall apart.

Inside was a dark room, several figures mounted to the wall. He walked in, willing the light inside to grow brighter.

"No, no, no, you can't go in there!" One said grabbing his arm.

Onori stood in shock as his surroundings filled his senses. Dozens of quoren hung on the walls, pinned there as some kind of macabre trophies. In the center was Agre, cut open from her throat to her navel. Her tentacles pulled taut, her skin dried out and her eye was vacant. Then there was Junzo lying on a stone slab, her body still wet from one of the prison cubes nearby. From the look of her, she had only died recently.

Rage filled Onori, more than he had ever felt in his life. Pain erupted in the back of his head, trying to send him back into darkness but he pushed back. He felt a small stone inside his skull, at the back of it near the base. He willed the stone out, floating it to his hand as he glanced back at One.

"I... I'm sorry... we were too late," One stammered as he backed away from the quoren. "We only wanted to help..."

Onori grabbed the top of One's head, pulling the memory from the man. He saw the humans torturing his people, his family. They took delight in their screams, their pain. One exploded, sending a shower of gore in all directions coating the nearby humans. Several turned to run but exploded before they got more than three steps away. A single man stood there, paralyzed in fear.

"Answer truthfully," Onori said walking up to the human. "Did any of you want to save us?"

"No," the man said shaking his head. "Only to save ourselves. Please..."

The man exploded as Onori closed his fist. *My whole tribe... Agre... Ju...* Onori thought as he dropped to his knees weeping. He could feel the approach of more humans, murderous intent in their hearts. He could also feel the Nasir returning in larger numbers.

"You want death? You want destruction? Then have it! All of you!" Onori screamed, throwing his arms wide.

The quoren floated off the ground, his arms still out wide. He focused on his anger, his hatred, his loss and grief. Everything he was feeling, he pushed into a single point. The ground cracked as an enormous gravitational force grabbed everything around Onori. A small black sphere appeared before the quoren drawing

everything towards it. Trees, humans, Nasir, everything disappeared into the black sphere. The wind tore past him as bright red cracks started to form in the air. Strange creatures fell from the cracks, all falling into the small black sphere as the tears in the sky continued to grow. If Onori noticed any of it, he didn't show it. He kept screaming, pouring more and more into the sphere, willing everything to be gone, the humans, the Nasir, everything.

Beings glowing in golden radiance appeared, pushing with magical strength stronger than any Onori had felt before, but he didn't care. He didn't listen to their demands, their pleas, their cries for help as they too were sucked into the black sphere. The ground, the sky, even the stars themselves were pulled into the sphere. Finally, Onori seemed to collapse, alone in the darkness he cried. The area around him felt as empty as his heart.

As he closed his eye, all he could see in his mind were the faces of Agre and Junzo. He heard their screams, felt their pain and fear as he curled up floating in the darkness. He continued to cry as he fell asleep next to his black sphere. He hadn't noticed he destroyed the world around him, the hells below and the heavens above. Everything was absorbed into his sphere, leaving nothing but darkness behind.

Floating at the edge of Onori's reality two being watched. "This is bad Peregrine, even the gods here didn't escape his sorrow filled rage," one of the two said with a mechanical voice. "I warned you I felt something."

"I know Zedek. The hole he has created will pull other worlds into this void, even ours" Peregrine said. "Everything is out of balance. The destruction will be widespread, perhaps even all of realities."

"We must go back in time to stop this," Zedek said. "Stop them from capturing him."

Peregrine shook her head. "No, that too is dangerous. Besides, you know time doesn't work like that. Although... I have an idea. We must go to the past to set small things in motion. Those small things can become larger things with time, without interfering with time itself. Then, there might be a way to save our present and the future."