

# Kurdor

# The Newcomer

The art of a dystopian utopia

## First Chapter

by

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Book for Adults Read by Kids  
Kurdor Scope

## Available on Amazon

### DEDICATION

This book is for all the dreamers of a utopian society...  
we live in fading hope.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my family and friends for their help and support in writing my first novel. One of many, I hope! Big small, round square tiny and all filled with love – Kurdor Scopes for everyone!

Cover art by Radu Muresan -Love your Kurdor :-)

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## CHAPTER ONE THE NEWCOMER

Like most Sundays - a newcomer is due to arrive on Kurdor. This Sunday is the turn of my Aunt Sarah and Uncle John. They recently placed an order on the Family App. A few weeks later, they received a reply - to expect a new arrival, a baby, at the customary twelve o'clock.

“Hurry up, or we’ll be late,” Mum calls.

“I’m coming!” I call back from the landing and head downstairs.

“Have you got your present?”

“Oh, sorry, I left it in my room.”

“Go get it and be quick about it. The pod car is due anytime now.”

“Aren’t we cycling or getting the bus?” I ask.

“No, Em. There are four of us, and I don’t want to be late. So, I’ve booked a pod car,” Mum says, taking her phone from her pocket, “Arthur, what time will the pod car arrive?”

“Your pod car will arrive in four minutes,” Arthur responds in his usual dulcet-toned male voice.

Arthur is the beating heart of our community. An artificial intelligence that runs and guides our society. He cares for us from newcomer to departing. He’s always there. He always has the answer.

In my bedroom, sitting on my desk is the brown teddy bear I’ve made. My Mum had given me the pattern for my eighteenth birthday. I had made the bear from soft, plush velvet. Its snout is squashed where I’ve cut the fabric too short. So, it’s not exactly to the pattern, but Dad said it gives the bear a unique character. While I may not be gifted at painting or music, at least I have the talent and enjoyment from textiles. I thought about making a baby outfit, but it wouldn't have much use with the speed at which babies grow. A teddy bear would last a lifetime. Grabbing the soft brown bear, I put it into a gift bag. Back downstairs in the living room, everyone is waiting.

Like all houses on the island of Kurdor, our home is festooned with artwork. Every square inch of the walls is covered with paintings, photographs, and copious shelves of ceramics and other knickknacks. There’s no such thing as being minimalist on Kurdor; everyone’s a hoarder. The sofa and armchairs are highly textured, with hand-stitched blankets and throws. The cushions are handmade with images of squirrels. We’ve all the time in the world on Kurdor and spend our lives being creative, sharing our talents. That’s what Kurdor means: the sheer joy of creation, be it art, craft, cooking, music, dance or even sport. A moment of shared delight - that’s Kurdor.

“Right, has everyone the presents you’ve made?” Mum asks, double-checking, yet again. We all nod. Dad has made a small wooden duck; my brother Nick has made a painting of a rabbit, and Mum has made a baby blanket. “Good, time to go, and Nick, tuck your shirt in, please.”

We’re all dressed in our best outfits, the traditional dress of Kurdor. For Nick and Dad, that means a black woollen jacket with red trim, white shirt, ruffle tie, tight black trousers and black shoes with tassels. They both cut a refined, slim, sporty figure in their outfits.

The traditional outfit for Mum and me comprises of a white blouse, a black woollen jacket with red trim, a red skirt, and red shoes with black tassels. Mum, with her elegant, slender figure and long blonde hair, looks great. For me, I don’t think red is my colour, but with all the traditions which Kurdor has many, there is little choice. Compared to Mum, I’m frumpy.

All our outfits are embroidered with the finest hand-stitched daffodils and buttercups. These flowers mark the union of my parents and are the symbol of our family.

We leave the house - the morning sun casts a long shadow over the rolling hills. The town of Kurdor is semicircular, with the hills forming the northern boundary and the town to the south. Over the hills to the north is a dense forest that we sometimes go into. I like to forage in the forest for mushrooms and raw materials for artwork or decorations. But for the most part, the forest is left to its own devices.

The pod car is waiting outside. It’s light green with

space for all four of us and room to spare.

“Are we picking up Gran?” Nick asks.

“No, she went over yesterday and stayed the night. She wanted to help with the preparations for the newcomer ceremony,” Mum replies.

I like travelling in pod cars. I like seeing the world pass by as you sit back and enjoy the journey through the glass-domed roof. It’s a rare treat. Usually, everyone rides a bike or takes the bus. A pod car is considered a luxury or reserved for the elderly, like my Gran. It can take a long time via the bus because you never know how many stops it will make. Usually, we would ride our bikes, but today is a special day, and Mum tells us we need to be there on time. It must have cost Mum a lot of credits for this trip.

Once we’re all inside the pod car, Arthur asks, “Please confirm the destination.”

“Clover Cottage, Hill Top Close, please,” Mum orders.

“Certainly, estimated journey time - eighteen minutes,” Arthur replies.

“Good, that gets us there near eleven. At least an hour before the newcomer,” Mum sighs. “Today has to be as perfect as possible. I can’t have Sarah having one of her meltdowns. Not in front of everybody.”

“You want to bet? When has she not had a meltdown?” Dad replies.

“Oh, be quiet, will you! Let’s hope for the best,” Mum snaps, “And for pity’s sake, don’t wind her up. That goes for all of you. You hear me. Watch what you say and

don't use any of her trigger words. That goes double for you Mr.," Mum glares at Dad, and Nick and I nod.

The pod car zooms down our street without making a sound. We pass the highly decorated houses with hours of thoughtful craftsmanship. Our house has a motif based on a seagull, Dad's favourite bird. I don't have much love for seagulls. Last summer, when I was on the pier, a seagull stole my chips.

The houses we pass by are a treat for the eye, each with its own unique character. Some are crafted with wooden flowers. Some have geometric shapes, and some have images of people, which is a bit weird. Others are less imaginative, with just shades of colour, but still lovely.

"Dad, who decides how a house will be decorated? What motif - design to use?" I ask.

"As I've told you before - when you have a partner, you'll be allocated a house by Arthur. It'll be a blank canvas for you and your other half to choose how to decorate it."

Nick butts in, "I already know what I want to craft my house on, dandelions."

"That may be, son, but it'll be up to you and your partner to decide. Not just you."

"Ha!" Mum scoffs. "If only I had won the game of rock, paper, scissors, we would have had a house crafted on squirrels."

"You'll never let that go, will you? You took the bet, and the deal was that I chose the outside, and you had the inside," Dad says sharply.

The houses whizz by the domed window. We pass near the town centre, not far from the main square. It's crammed full of people at the art fair, which never really ends.

"What's happening this weekend? Is it the Festival of the Sky?" Mum asks.

"No, that was last weekend. This weekend is the Fair of the Sea," I reply, half-heartedly.

The centre of town fades behind us, and the houses become more spaced as the pod car effortlessly travels along the road. We climb Hilltop Road, the cliffs to the left and the beginning of the forest to the right. The trees have lost all but a few remaining leaves, which have turned red, orange and yellow. They're clinging on for dear life, waiting for a gust of wind to blow them away, leaving the trees bare.

"Look at that ship! It's huge," Dad says, pointing to the docks.

"Dad, are the docks run by Arthur?" Nick asks.

"I believe so, son, they're automated."

"Where do the ships come from and go to?" Nick asks.

"You should ask Arthur that question. I'd tell you, but I'll probably get it wrong,"

Nick takes out his phone, "Arthur, where do the ships come from and go to?"

"Ships come from automated places of manufacture. Resources are brought to the island, and waste is taken away or recycled."

"Arthur, can I take a trip on one of the ships?"



“No, that would not be permitted.”

“Why not?”

“To maintain Kurdor's uniqueness and avoid contamination, you are not permitted to leave the island. It is my duty to keep you safe, well, and happy.”

“That sucks!” Nick exclaims.

“Language, Nick!” Mum snaps.

“Sorry, Mum,” Nick says sheepishly, crossing his arms.

Arthur's right, of course. The journey takes precisely eighteen minutes.

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“We're here!” Mum shrieks. The pod car pulls up in front of a house overlooking the cliff top. It's decorated with handcrafted wooden shamrocks painted in all kinds of colours. It looks a bit of a mess, but it perfectly reflects my Aunt. I'm jealous of the view, but I'm not envious of the hill they have to climb to get back from town. Even with E-bikes, it's a slog.

“You're here!” Aunt Sarah yells, running down the steps to greet us, giving my Mum a big hug. For some reason, Aunt Sarah has dyed her hair blue - probably to hide the grey. We all know better not to mention her hair - it's one of her triggers. Mum has offered to do her hair numerous times, but Aunt Sarah always refuses.

“Hello, Sis. Are you all set for the newcomer?” Mum says with a broad smile.

“Yeah, we're ready! If we've forgotten anything, there is no time to worry about it now. That's what John says anyway - I have to remember that... Hi, Em, Nick, how

are you doing?" Aunt Sarah gushes.

"Good, thanks. I'm so happy for you. Here's the present I made. Sorry, its nose is squashed," I say, handing the gift bag to Aunt Sarah.

Aunt Sarah takes out the teddy bear from the gift bag, "Kurdor, Em, much appreciated," she says, with a hug, "It's been a long time coming, but we're ready to start a family. I'm so excited! I could wet myself. Your Gran's in the kitchen. She's been baking cakes and cookies since dawn. Em, I'm sure she could do with a hand. Nick, you should go to the garden. The other kids are playing football or something like that. I'm never one for sports, so I've no idea, but it involves a ball and lots of shouting," Aunt Sarah says.

"Thanks, Aunt Sarah, I'll go and join in," Nick darts off to the rear garden.

"Helen, Si, come with me. I want to show you the baby's room. I hope you'll be impressed. John and I have spent ages deciding on a theme."

They all go inside, leaving me behind. I'm upset that Aunt Sarah hasn't invited me to see the baby's room but has asked me to help with the cooking. Then again maybe Mum and Aunt Sarah want to have a moment to themselves. Still, it miffs me somewhat.

Inside the house - it's a typical Kurdorian home, full of art and trinkets. The living room is packed with friends and our extended family. I avoid making small talk and scoot through the living room as quickly as I can. I follow my nose to the kitchen with the welcoming aroma of freshly baked bread, cakes, and other treats. There's Gran

beavering away on her own, icing some gingerbread men. On the kitchen counter is one of her famous sponge cakes with delicate depictions of flowers in food colouring.

“Hey, Gran, is there anything I can help with?”

Gran puts down the frosting bag and hugs me, trying not to get her food-splatted apron on my clothes.

“Lovely to see you, my dear.”

I love spending time with my Gran. She’s one of the oldest people on the island, with grey dreadlocked hair and wrinkles. You can immediately tell that she’s lived a long and happy life.

“I would say you could have helped make the stuffed peppers, but I couldn’t get hold of any, more’s the pity. If you could get the cookies out of the oven when the bell goes, that would be helpful. I’m struggling with my hip,” Gran says as she picks up the icing bag and continues to the next gingerbread man.

“Has Arthur looked at your hip?”

Gran looks up from her frosting, “Yes dear, Arthur took me for a scan the other day. He told me it’s getting worse and needs replacing. He’s booked me in for an operation a week on Tuesday.”

“Is it painful?”

“Not exactly dear. It just twinges from time to time. Bending down is becoming a bit of a struggle.”

“I’m glad that Arthur’s taking care of you.”

“Of course, he is - What else would you expect him to do? He’s even sent a droid to help me in the house. It’s nice to have some company since your Grandad

departed, even if it's just Arthur."

"Gran?"

"Yes, dear."

"I have a question. Do you think the newcomer baby will be black like me and you or white like Mum and Nick?"

Gran puts down the icing bag and looks me straight in the eye. "My love, it really doesn't matter what colour they are, as long as they are happy and healthy."

"You're right, Gran. It doesn't matter. But it's interesting - why are there black and white people?"

"It's just how Arthur brings them to us. As you said, it makes life interesting, doesn't it? Wouldn't it be boring if we were all the same?"

"True, very true," I say, I'll ask Arthur this question, but not in front of Gran. I don't want to be rude. And why just black and white people? Why aren't there green, blue and red people? I go off in a daydream.

"I'm glad you have a curious mind. It's nice to see," Gran smiles and continues with her icing. The bell sounds on the oven. I open the door to a delightful odour of caramel cookies. I take each cookie off the baking tray and place them on the cooling rack. Gran and I hum a traditional Kurdorian tune as we work.

Not long after, Aunt Sarah comes into the kitchen. "Oh, they look nice," she says as she looks at the cookies. "Just to let you know, there's ten minutes to go. You should make your way to the garden. We've set out the landing pad at the top of the lawn. Em, can you take the newcomer cake and a knife to the table at the top of the

lawn, please.”

Not waiting for a reply, she leaves the kitchen and heads to the living room to chivvy everyone along. I’m a little annoyed with Aunt Sarah barking orders at me. Help with the cooking, Em. Take the cake to the table, Em. I’m sure she doesn’t mean to pick on me, but I do feel a bit left out of the fun.

Gran picks up on my reaction, “She’s being a bit bossy today, isn’t she.”

“Just a bit,” I reply with a half-smile, and we laugh.

“We best make a move,” Gran says as she wipes her hands on her apron. She removes the apron and hangs it on the hook near the door. Gran’s traditional costume is embellished with small red bows pinned all over her jacket. I pick up the cake and head to the patio door, following Gran. Gran isn’t walking very well. She struggles with the length of the garden. Her hip must be worse than what she told me. I’m glad that Arthur is keeping a close eye on her.

Family and friends assemble at the top of the garden on this winter’s day. It’s cold outside, but fortunately, my outfit is as good as a sweater. I set the cake and knife down on the table. The cake will be cut while we sing the newcomer song and the parents reveal the name.

The landing pad is set out on the lawn. It’s made of a patchwork quilt about three meters square, comprising a sea blue background with circles of red forming a target. It’s been patched so many times it’s difficult to know what’s original and what’s patched. No one knows exactly how old it is. It’s been used for as long as anyone

can remember.

“It’s twelve o’clock, any time now,” Aunt Sarah yells as she paces up and down the lawn. The crowd of family and friends go quiet, listening intently for the sound of the Stork.

“Can you hear anything?” I whisper to Nick, who’s standing beside me.

“No, all I can hear are the waves crashing against the shore.”

“I didn’t think that Storks make much sound, if any,” I say.

“I think you’re right, Sis.”

Ten minutes later, we’re still waiting for the Stork to arrive. “Look, there it is!” Aunt Sarah exclaims, pointing to the north and jumping on the spot, trying her best not to run towards it.

“You’re right, it’s coming!” Uncle John shouts.

The Stork comes closer and closer, elegantly flapping its robotic wings with the bundle of joy packed in the pod it’s carrying. Gracefully, it comes to land, setting down its precious cargo on the quilt without making a sound. As soon as the newcomer pod touches the ground, the Stork releases its grip from its mouth and flaps its wings. The Stork takes to the sky once more, making a graceful turn and heads back north.

Everyone erupts into applause as the newcomer is finally here. Aunt Sarah and Uncle John quickly make their way to the pod to find their new baby. Aunt Sarah presses the button on the pod's side to remove the protective covering, and... nothing!

“What, I don’t understand. Where’s our baby?” Aunt Sarah rummages through the pod, lifting out the blanket. “There’s nothing here except this blanket. Where’s our baby!?” Aunt Sarah yells and puts her hand to her mouth.

Uncle John kneels beside Aunt Sarah and rubs her back. Everyone’s silent, watching the scene unfold waiting for Aunt Sarah to have a meltdown. Uncle John gets his phone out, fumbling as he does so.

“Arthur, where’s our baby?” he asks sternly.

“There has been an unforeseen problem. My apologies,” Arthur replies.

“Arthur, what does that mean?” he asks.

“There has been an unforeseen problem,” Arthur says again.

Aunt Sarah and Uncle John clutch the blanket in front of their nearest family and friends. I’m so sorry for them. No one knows what to say or do. Aunt Sarah can no longer keep her tears back. She begins to sob while holding on to Uncle John. Uncle John isn’t moving; he’s like a statue.

“What should we do?” I ask Mum.

“I don’t know Em. As far as I know, this has never happened before,” she replies.

Mum gets out her phone and asks - “Arthur, what’s the problem that caused my sister’s baby not to arrive?”

“There has been an unforeseen problem that I am working to resolve,” Arthur responds.

“Well, that isn’t very informative, is it?” Mum snaps.

I turn to Gran, “Have you ever heard of this happening before?”

“No dear, never. Arthur has never let us down like this.” Gran makes her way over to Uncle John and Aunt Sarah. They stand up, and Gran gives them both a hug.

“It’ll be alright. I’m sure Arthur will fix the problem. I’m sure it’s only a glitch,” Gran says.

Dad and Nick look around nervously. Neither of them like stressful situations - this obviously makes them uneasy, not knowing what to do with themselves.

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The day continues with multiple ways of asking Arthur what’s gone wrong. No new responses come, and Arthur’s stock response that there has been an unforeseen problem becomes very tiresome.

"What were you going to call your baby?" I ask Aunt Sarah without thinking, preparing myself for a meltdown.

“William Rebecca,” Aunt Sarah begins to cry again. I hate my question about baby names. I’m never very good at saying the right thing at the right time, especially when it comes to Aunt Sarah. I should have kept my mouth shut like I normally do.

Aunt Sarah wipes her tears away and asks her phone yet again, “Arthur, what was the problem with my baby!?”

“There has been an unforeseen problem that I am working to resolve,” Arthur replies.

“That’s no bloody good is it? You stupid sodding robot!”

“There has been an unforeseen problem.”

“Come on, Sarah, I’m sure Arthur will sort it out,” Gran says.



“How are you so sure Mum? I’ve waited my whole life for a partner, and a family... and... and...” Aunt Sarah begins to sob once more, at least she’s not getting angry.

“There, there, I’m sure things will work out. Just give it time,” Gran says, hugging Aunt Sarah.

“Oh, Mum, I feel like I’ve failed - yet again!”

“You haven’t failed. It’s not your fault,” Gran says.

“But I am Mum, I’m such a failure!”

“Who says that? No one thinks you’re a failure. It’s all in your head,” Gran says.

I edge myself away from Aunt Sarah and Gran. I don’t want to intrude on their little chat. Aunt Sarah always judges herself so harshly, and because of that, she’s her worst critic.

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By late afternoon, all of the guests have left, not wanting to intrude on the grief of the parents-to-be. Only our immediate family remain. Mum decides that she’ll stay with them that night, along with Gran. Nick, Dad and I travel back home via the bus. Even though it’ll be a long trip, there’s not much else we can do. Poor Aunt Sarah.

[FULL BOOK AVAILABLE ON AMAZON](#)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

P.J. Mackintosh is a self-taught author who has spent much of his career at the cutting edge of environmental sciences. Most of his work involves projecting the near future based on current political, scientific, and environmental trends. [www.pjmackintosh.com](http://www.pjmackintosh.com)

Under the name, Peter James Knight - P.J. Mackintosh has also developed the project 'Coventry Rebuilt', which aims to recreate the city of Coventry in a highly detailed computer model before the bombing of the city in the Second World War. [www.coventryrebuilt.com](http://www.coventryrebuilt.com)

We are all but dots upon a page – a drop becomes an ocean and an ocean becomes a drop – feel the ripples of existence as that is all we've got.