

《Spirit King》

Chapter 2 - Cruel World

"Silence!" An ancient sounding voice was emitted from a floating translucent white orb. The orb was the size of a beach ball and every time it made a sound, it would light up like a light bulb. The orb floated in mid-air on top of a tall stage, making the many people standing in front of and below it stare at it in awe, confusion and a mix of other emotions.

These were the people who had just been summoned and Niko was one of them. He stood there looking at the orb with a strange look on his face. Many questions popped into his mind about everything that was occurring.

There were many different kinds of people surrounding him. From the homeless to millionaires, teenagers and elderly people, as well as people from many different countries. What was most interesting was the fact that many people were summoned while in a very inconvenient situation. Some were in the middle of intimate actions while others were taking a shower, therefore, there were a few naked people here and there. Something else that he had noticed was that there were nowhere near one hundred thousand people around him, making him wonder where the other people went.

The surrounding environment was also full of vegetation as if they had been summoned to a prehistoric forest where the world never came into contact with humans. Other than the metal dull looking stage that the Orb was on, everything else was green and a variety of bright colors.

"Where is this place... Wait!" Niko paused. His eyes opened wide as his became moist. My body... It's healthy! How can this be!" His mind ran rampant as he had witnessed a miracle.

He had been tormented by the strange disease ever since he was a child. Because of this, his body was always weak and extremely delicate. Even though it was still delicate, it was no longer weak and instead full of energy. As Niko was in the middle of feeling his body, the orb spoke once more.

"Welcome, human group number twelve! Welcome to the preparation world..." The

orb spoke making the faces of many people twist in confusion, fear, and anger. "Preparation for what? You might be asking yourselves, well... In one day, the thousand of you will be sent to a different world, where you will be forced to evolve and survive. Life for you humans has been extremely relaxing the past few decades. Your kind has made many species go extinct and you have shown how heartless and powerful you can be in your own world. However, things have been changing. The world you will be sent to will be extreme-" The orb was forced to come to a complete pause as it was interrupted by someone in the crowd.

"Cut the shit, you bastard! What is this? Some kind of sick joke? A movie? I was in the middle of business! Something that you idiots can't even dream of! Bring me back or you will hear from my lawyers!" A tall blonde man spoke with anger and arrogance. His handsome face looked spotless even though he was extremely angry at this exact moment. He wore a full black suit with a red tie, as well as a case on his right hand.

"Yeah! Take us back, you devil! God will never forgive you!!" Yelled a lady as she kneeled down and prayed.

"Come on! Moron!" A man in the far back shouted loudly.

Hearing the handsome blonde man, many people gained the courage and agreed with his request and began to shout at the orb.

The orb didn't respond for a brief moment and then said indifferently, "I will not repeat myself again. Silence."

Seeing this Niko shook his head. He had encountered many of these delusional rich people in his life. These people always believed the world revolved around them, however, when you had money it did to a certain extent.

"Silence? Do you know who I am!?! I could buy you! I'll have the lawyers make sure you-" As the man was about to go on another rant something happened that made the faces of everyone around pale and their hearts shake.

"Boing!"

Many people began to panic and move away, while others fainted. Afraid of the same outcome, many just barely forced themselves to remain silent.

Silence filled the world. Sounds of nature echoed throughout the forest. Not a single word was murmured from the people as fear had overtaken their body.

Niko was in complete shock just like everyone else. He placed his hand on his mouth. He felt dizzy and wanted to puke. His face was ashen and his body shook uncontrollably. For someone to kill like it's nothing was extremely frightening. This was a completely new experience for him. This was just too gory. He had read many books and watched many movies, however, it didn't even come close to the real thing. He would always tell himself if he was in those movies he would handle it easily, however, right now he was trying his hardest not to puke. He just stared in shock at the orb. The orb meant business.

"Did Anita experience the same thing?" Niko's mind began to process everything as he started to feel worried. His sister was very hot-blooded and expressive, which could be a problem, however, she wasn't stupid, therefore he began to calm himself down.

By putting two and two together, he had already come to the conclusion that his sister was summoned to this place three years ago, which allows him to take a step forward in finding her.

Breaking the silence, the white orb spoke as if killing someone was nothing, "Now... Where were we? Right! The world you will be sent to will be extremely dangerous and the creatures there will not be as weak as the one back in on your planet, therefore, approach it with caution. Around you, is the forest of the preparation world, and it's endless. This forest possesses many hidden treasures as well as hidden dangers. The courageous will be awarded while those who are afraid will be left behind."

People began to look around at the various tall trees that surrounded them. Vegetation was all around them. The only strange thing about this place was that the sky possessed no shining star as it was just the light blue sky usually seen on Earth without clouds.

The orb continued, "Remember. The world you will be sent to will be a new world, and it will be lawless. Strength means power and if you are weak... Death is the only choice. Here in the preparation world, you all can get a head start from everyone else, so I'll say it again, explore and be awarded. Be careless and die." The orb paused for a minute letting everyone sink it in.

In the crowd, some people were seen shaking uncontrollably in fear while others held a sinister look on their faces. Niko's face showed signs of hope. Finding his sister had been the main focus of his life, for the past three years. He was sure she was one of the first humans to be summoned to this place, therefore, he was moving towards the right direction in finding her.

"Based on what the orb said, nothing is achievable without power..." Niko murmured to himself with slight worry on his mind. He had always been weak. Ever since he was a child, carrying weights and fighting was never his strong suit. His sister did the dirty

work for him as she would always take care of him. Therefore, he would need to find other ways of being strong. "But how..."

The orb interrupted Niko's thought and responded as if it had read it, "Before I let you get ready, I need to make a few things clear. For those who are incapable or inexperienced when it comes to physical combat, there is magic in this world..."

Niko's eyes shone. Hope once again filled his eyes.

The orb continued, "... If you call out 'status', inside of your mind you can see your progress and your prowess. This will be extremely important to some of you and your time here and in your new world."

Niko's eyes showed signs of doubt. "Ah! To hell with it. I was summoned to another world, surely it has to be true. Status!"

Surely enough, a screen appeared in his mind.

[Name: Niko Lazar]

Level: 1

Exp: 0%

[Status]

Constitution: 1

Agility: 1

Intelligence: 1

Mana: 1

Mana Power: 1/1

[Unique Titles]

None

[Skills]

None

"What is this..." Niko looked very surprised. It was very similar to the status screens of the games he used to play back on Earth before his body began to worsen. Niko also noticed that on the top right of his mind was a countdown, '23 hours 06 minutes and 34 seconds', which was the countdown until they were summoned to the new world. Niko then began to look around as he noticed other people who were also overtaken with shock.

A tall muscled man who was next to Niko spoke with displeasure, "Is this real? How is my strength a two? I have been lifting weights all my life dammit!" The muscled man was shaped like a bull. His bronze skin along with his strong build made him stand out from the rest.

Niko shook his head and spoke inwardly, "You are lucky you have anything over a one..."

The orb then began to speak its last words, "Everyone has the basic status, with the exception of certain individuals. However, here in the preparation world, you can become stronger before leaving to your new world. How strong you get, depends solely on you. Before I let you all go and experience this amazing world..." The orb's tone sounded as if he was speaking about something amazing, but the dark faces of the many people spoke another story.

The orb continued, "... Open your hand and extend it in front of you."

Listening to the orb, everyone began to follow the orders. Niko placed his open hand in front of him and looked around strangely. Suddenly a white light began to surround the extended hands of everyone, and as the white light began to dissipate, it left behind a small booklet. Everyone looked at this spectacle in awe.

After the booklets appeared on the hand of the people, the orb spoke its last words, "You can choose to read the booklet and understand a bit more about the world or you can begin to explore this endless forest. Remember, time will go down no matter what you do, and after the countdown reaches zero, you will be forcefully summoned to another world. This will be my last words, good luck to all of you!" The orb spoke and disappeared with a flash of white light.

Everyone stood there for a moment, then, as if they had just realized the importance of every moment, they moved. All of them at once, they ran as if they were running for their lives. The thousand people that were once together, began to scatter like ants towards all directions.

Niko stayed still processing everything that had just happened. The clumsy people would bump him out of the way but thanks to his new healthy body, he was able to balance much better. Niko needed to quickly think of a plan, however, other than

acquiring magic or something to help him survive he was unable to plan something properly. Because of the huge trees, he was unable to think of a direction that he would run towards. He was the kind of person who liked to plan before doing things, therefore this situation made him quite uncomfortable.

"I need to find my sister, therefore, I need to know more about the world I am inside of at this moment or the world I will be inside of in twenty-four hours... If I go looking for her blind I will never find her... I need to know more first!" Niko opened the small booklet on his hand and began reading it.