

In Midst of Spirits

Summary

Masa must venture into the Spirit World so that she can free her husband's spirit from the clutches of an evil demon lord.

Location

16th century Japan; the Spirit World takes the form of a forest filled with cherry blossoms, ginkgo trees, and clear springs shrouded with the dense mist.

Time of Day

The Spirit World has no day or night. It feels like it is perpetually an overcast day in the spring.

History

Masa Kojima buries her husband's body beneath the tree where they spent their youth. A respected samurai of the local daimyo's military elite, Sho fell in battle as befits a warrior of his rank.

Masa discovers that death has not given her husband any peace. A shogun he slew several years earlier trapped his ghost in the core of the tree. Abandoned to suffer for eternity, Sho reaches out to Masa and begs her to set him free. She takes up his sword and armor, though she is unskilled in combat, and embarks on a mission into the spirit world to confront the man who has imprisoned her husband.

Her lack of experience requires her to learn as she goes along, gleaning techniques and tricks from martial artists who died centuries before. As Masa journeys through the baffling, sometimes frightening, realm of the spirits, she battles the phantom shogun's minions. There are many powerful warriors aligned with his cause and defeating even the most minor of demons is no small challenge for Masa, who only just yesterday was little more than a housewife, but with perseverance she teaches herself to wield a sword. The larger conflict is one of her heart. Hearing her husband's voice rustling in a quince's leaves gives her a sense that his body may be gone, but his soul remains. Rescuing her husband from his fate will ultimately take him away from her forever.

Inhabitants

The Spirit World is filled with spirits of many kinds – some friendly, some hostile. There are peaceful parts of the forest, where spirits play or meditate. The evil ones reside in one area, dense with thorns and devoid of greenery. The demon lords prefer to live among the thorns and commiserate with other restless souls.

Use

The Spirit World is similar to a limbo. Some spirits wander around the woods for eternity while others seem to reach enlightenment and "move on", becoming one with eternity and the universe. Every

person who passes from life to death must pass through the Spirit World before being 'enlightened' and truly set free.

Images

