

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 begins with the protagonist, Mickey, reflecting on the series of events that led him to choose the dangerous position of an Expendable. Initially, he had been drawn to the idea of becoming "Immortal," thinking that signing up for this role would somehow offer him an escape from the suffocating confines of his life on Midgard. However, as he recalls his recruitment experience aboard the *Drakkar*, it becomes clear that he was driven more by a desperate desire for a way out than by any idealistic notion of immortality. He vividly remembers meeting Gwen Johansen, a no-nonsense recruiter who outlined the grim realities of being an Expendable. The tasks she described were life-threatening, involving dangerous work in deep space, exposure to hostile alien environments, and even medical experimentation—all with the expectation that these risks could easily lead to death. Despite the chilling nature of the job, Mickey felt cornered by the lack of options and saw this as his only chance to escape the monotony of life on Midgard.

During the recruitment session, Gwen went into further detail about the types of assignments an Expendable would face. These included high-risk tasks such as conducting repairs on the ship during interstellar travel, dealing with potentially lethal local flora and fauna, and participating in dangerous medical trials. Mickey, whose background did not include technical expertise or practical skills, understood that he would often find himself in life-threatening situations. Yet, the allure of leaving his home planet quickly overshadowed any concerns about the risks. To Mickey, this job seemed like the only viable way to escape Midgard's stagnant society, where few opportunities existed for growth, especially for someone with his academic background. The thought of exploring the unknown, even at great personal cost, was more appealing than remaining on a planet where he saw no future for himself.

As the conversation progresses, Mickey's misconceptions about the role of an Expendable start to unravel. He had initially believed that, should he face death during one of these hazardous assignments, a backup mechanism would allow him to return to life, but Gwen reveals the harsh truth: there is no such mechanism. Most Expendables face death without the hope of resurrection, a brutal reality that Mickey had not considered. To his shock, he learns that despite thousands of applicants for other positions aboard the *Drakkar*, he is the only one who has applied for the dangerous role of Expendable. This revelation hits Mickey hard, emphasizing his isolation in this decision. He is left to grapple with the uncomfortable truth that he is choosing to embrace a life where his very existence will be seen as expendable, with no promise of escape or renewal should things go wrong.

Gwen continues to challenge Mickey's motivations, asking why he believes he is suited for such a dangerous and dehumanizing position. Given that Mickey comes from a society where knowledge is easily accessible and his background is in history, Gwen questions whether he truly understands the weight of his decision. Mickey reflects on his life on Midgard and realizes that, despite his education, he had been unable to find a meaningful place in society. The lack of opportunity for growth in Midgard, particularly for those with an academic background, had left him feeling frustrated and adrift. He sees many young people, like himself, turning to risky paths simply because there are no other options available. The absence of fulfilling careers in factories, military roles, or academic positions pushed him to consider the Expendable role as a way to break free from the stifling environment of Midgard.

Mickey's decision to join the *Drakkar* mission as an Expendable is thus driven by a mixture of frustration, desperation, and the desire for change. The reality of the risks he would face begins to set in, but the yearning for escape from his stagnant life outweighs his fear of death. The chapter concludes with Mickey reflecting on the complex mix of emotions that led him to this moment. While he is aware that his choice is fraught with danger and existential uncertainty, it represents his best shot at leaving Midgard behind. In this bleak environment, Mickey understands that his survival depends not only on his physical abilities but also on how well he can navigate

the challenges of being seen as expendable. This chapter sets the stage for the protagonist's journey, exploring his internal struggles, the societal pressures he faces, and the difficult choices he must make in a world where the stakes of survival are high and personal identity is constantly at risk.

