

THE RISE OF A FROZEN STAR

Chapter 3: A Calm Beginning

[Third Person Pov]

In a lush, warm forest where sunlight filtered through the tall trees creating dancing patches on the ground, the sounds of nature intertwined like a living symphony. The distant songs of birds, the crunch of leaves under tiny paws, and the whisper of wind brushing the green treetops composed a melody that enveloped everything in its path.

Between bushes and twisted roots, a small figure moved with careful steps, believing herself the stealthiest hunter in the world. Her breath was held, her eyes fixed on the target: a bright purple fruit hanging from a low branch, guarded by a tiny bird with iridescent feathers.

The girl crouched slowly, reaching out with a mix of hunger and curiosity. Her fingers hovered mere inches from the prize... until a sharp voice shattered the quiet like an unexpected thunderclap.

“Sister! Lotte! Where are you?”

The shout sent the birds into flight. The tiny guardian of the fruit shrieked in alarm, grabbed the precious treat with its beak, and vanished into the branches with a furious flutter.

The girl, still with her hand outstretched, froze. She didn’t even blink. Her face, a mixture of surprise and resignation, was framed by a beam of light slipping through the leaves. She didn’t need to turn around to know whose voice it was.

With a defeated sigh, she lowered her arm and muttered softly to herself:

“Claire...”

[Liselotte’s Pov]

“Claire...”

Sadness completely overtook me.

It was a fruit sold at a high price for its delicious flavor, very popular at noble banquets.

“Haaa...” A sigh escaped from deep within me. “I’m coming, sister...”

Sometimes I remember the warmth—it had been almost ten years since then.

Not the fire that engulfed me at the end, but another kind, a gentle, tender warmth that surrounded me like a hug. I woke up without understanding where I was, trapped in a small body, unable to move or speak. I could only cry. And I did. Out of helplessness. Out of fear. For Chloé.

Then I heard her voice:

“There, there... it’s okay, Liselotte. Mama’s here.”

Liselotte.

That wasn't my name. I was Edward. Or had been.

I slowly understood: I had died. And now, I was reborn as a girl in the arms of a stranger who looked at me with love.

My first months were confusing. I knew I didn't belong in this body, but I couldn't help adapting.

My new parents, Andrea and Carl, treated me with tenderness. Carl was strong as an oak, Andrea warm as the winter sun. And three years later, my sister arrived.

When Claire was born, I saw something in her I had never felt before—a pure bond that connected us. I promised to protect her with everything I had, even if I still didn't know who I was, or who I would become, in this life.

Thanks to my past life, I learned quickly. I picked up this world's language easily, but I hid what I knew. I didn't want to stand out. Not yet.

I just observed. And remembered.

I was six years old when I saw it for the first time.

A group of my parents' friends visited our home, and one of them held a large white staff. It looked elegant, beautiful, and magnificent.

The first word that came to mind was magic.

Magic! Not as fantasy, not as stage tricks, but real magic, alive, part of everyday life in this world.

They told me that, as we grew up, at age ten everyone could be evaluated to find out what kind of magic they could use. That within each person were invisible channels called "outlets," through which mana flowed.

Mana! An invisible energy that gave form to spells, elements, and the wonders of this world.

It was incredible! My heart beat so fast just thinking about it. Could I learn magic too? Summon fire with a gesture? Move the wind with a word? Cast lightning or heal wounds?

But amid all that excitement, a shadow of doubt crossed my mind.

What if I didn't have those magical points? What if my mana was trapped? What if... I couldn't use magic at all?

Even so, the mere idea of living in a world where magic existed made me feel like, for the first time, everything was possible.

Back to the present.

I found Claire near the forest entrance, her feet buried in the grass and her eyes fixed on the woods. Her little figure trembled slightly, as if the shadows among the trees were crouching monsters. At six years old, the forest was still a place of mystery and fear.

When she saw me, her eyes lit up. She ran toward me without hesitation and threw herself into my arms with a shout:

“Lotte! Finally!”

I hugged her tightly. Her body was warm and trembling. I knew she was scared to come alone, but she still came to find me. My little sister was braver than she looked.

“What are you doing out here alone, Claire?” I asked gently, stroking her light brown hair.

“Mom told me to find you! It’s lunchtime!” she said urgently, as if time was against us.

She took my hand tightly and, without giving me time to respond, began to pull me with that endless energy only small children have.

“Come on, come on! Mom made pie!”

I stumbled keeping up with her, laughing softly with fake complaints.

“I’m coming, I’m coming! Don’t drag me like a sack of potatoes…”

Claire laughed and squeezed my hand tighter. In that moment, with sunlight filtering through the leaves and her laughter echoing among the trees, I felt an intense emotion.

A warmth with no name. Love, perhaps. Gratitude. Or the strange certainty that protecting her was one of the few things that truly gave meaning to my new life.

Today was a special day. Not just because it was my tenth birthday in this world... but because I was alive to share it with her.