

## Frozen Star 101

### Chapter 101: The Roar of Dawn

[POV Liselotte]

Dawn arrived wrapped in a golden glow that bathed the city of Kreston. The first rays of sunlight filtered through the dissipating clouds of the previous night. That early light reflected off the white walls of the coliseum, creating blinding flashes. From the window of our room, I could see the streets below, already filled with people. Caravans, merchants, and adventurers arrived from the farthest corners of the continent. They all shared a single purpose. To witness the final of the Golden Lion Tournament.

The very air was infused with a vibrant nervousness. It was an almost tangible energy. It was as if the whole city held its collective breath. As if every inhabitant knew that this day would be marked in history.

I sat up slowly in bed. The sharp pain I had felt the night before was now a distant memory. The medicine given to us by the guild healers was truly miraculous. A mixture of dragon herbs and purified mana. It was capable of repairing even the invisible cracks of the soul. I could still feel its effect bubbling beneath my skin. It was a calm warmth that countered the natural cold that always accompanied me.

Leah was standing by the window. She adjusted the straps of her combat outfit with precise movements. Her inner fire seemed more intense than ever. I could feel it even from the other side of the room. It was like a furnace ready to burst. Chloé, on the other hand, was lying beside the door. She meticulously cleaned her claws with feline calm. I knew well that this calmness was pure façade. Inside her burned the same anticipation that burned within us.

“How do you feel?” Leah asked without turning. Even though she didn’t look at me, her voice betrayed a persistent concern.

“Like I was run over by a train... but alive,” I replied with a tired smile. “And that’s more than I could have asked for yesterday.”

Chloé lifted her head. Her tail struck the stone floor once, firmly. “Alive and ready to do it again, I hope.”

“Depends on how much the Steel Minstrels hate me,” I muttered. I stood carefully and adjusted the grip on my sword. The metal shone with a bluish hue. It seemed eager too for the coming battle.

Leah turned completely toward us. Her expression was a mix of serenity and strategy. “I’ve studied them. Their style is very different from the White Veil’s. They don’t use curses or corrupt magic. They rely on physical strength and musical synchronization.”

“Musical,” Chloé repeated incredulously. “We’re going to fight bards?”

“Bards with enchanted hammers and sonic spears,” Leah clarified with a smile. “Their magic is channeled through sound. The more harmonized they are, the more power they generate. If you break their rhythm, they lose strength.”

I nodded slowly. The pieces began to fit together in my mind. “Then the key will be to break their beat. Force mistakes.”

Leah smiled, satisfied. “Exactly. If you can freeze the ground at unpredictable intervals, I can use my bursts to disrupt their synchronization. And Chloé...”

The wolf stretched her neck gracefully. Her golden eyes gleamed. "I'll handle their flutists. I'll make them lose their breath."

We all laughed. It was a light sound in the silent room. For a moment, the immense weight of the tournament vanished. We were just a team. A small group that had survived too much. We were about to face one last trial together.

The tunnel leading to the arena was brighter than ever. Magical torches floated on both sides of the passageway. They burned with a pure white fire that did not flicker. As we advanced, the sounds of the coliseum grew clearer and more overwhelming. The deafening roar of the crowd. The war drums marking the pulse of the event. The vibrant murmur of thousands of voices united in anticipation.

The arena, seen from the entrance, was an imposing spectacle. The floor had been completely restored by the guild mages. No traces of ice or fire from our previous battles remained. Only a surface of clear, polished stone. It was marked with magical circles that shimmered faintly under the sunlight.

The master of ceremonies awaited us in the center. His crimson robe fluttered under the gentle morning breeze. His voice, amplified by echo crystals, resounded with a solemnity that imposed itself even over the thunder of the crowd.

"Ladies and gentlemen of Kreston! Today we witness the final confrontation of the Golden Lion Tournament! Two teams! Two opposing forces! The harmony of steel and the roar of the pack!"

The crowd roared with excitement. The stands seemed to vibrate with collective energy. From the opposite end of the arena, the Steel Minstrels made their entrance. There were four members. A warrior in silver armor with a rune hammer glowing with energy. A red-haired archer who carried a modified lute with metallic strings. A mage with a crystal sound spear that emitted a faint hum. And a

tall woman—clearly their leader—dressed in a dark blue cloak with a stringed instrument on her back. It looked like a hybrid between a sword and a harp.

Each step they took made the air vibrate with a harmonic pulse. It wasn't a simple illusion or suggestion. Their magic literally resonated with the rhythm of their movements. They moved as a single entity.

Leah narrowed her eyes. She analyzed every detail. "You can feel the tempo. They're synchronized even in their walk."

"Perfect," I said. A cold determination took hold of me. "Then let's break it."

We positioned ourselves before them in formation. I at the front, sword ready. Chloé at the left flank, low to the ground like a coiled spring. Leah behind, her hands already glowing with concentrated fire that flashed between her fingers.

The master of ceremonies raised his hands to the sky. A sudden silence fell over the coliseum. It was absolute. Even the wind seemed to stop out of respect.

"Finalists! You have come this far overcoming impossible challenges! You have shown courage, ingenuity, and power beyond all expectation! But today... one of your names will be etched in the history of Kreston!"

He turned slowly to both sides of the arena. His gaze encompassed each of us.

“To my left, the invincible Steel Minstrels!”

A wave of cheers and applause swept through the stands. The minstrels’ magical instruments responded with a bright, perfect chord. It made the air vibrate with an almost physical force.

“And to my right... the indomitable Silver Pack!”

The roar of the crowd doubled in intensity. A sea of voices shouted our names with fervor. I heard the echo of “Lotte! Lotte!” blending with the magical hum of the arena. It sounded like a wave coming from every direction.

The master slowly lowered his arm. His gaze was grave.

“For honor, glory, and destiny... Let the final begin!”

The gong resounded with an almost divine force. It was a sound that pierced bone and soul.

The vibration ran through the ground beneath our feet. The air exploded in a wave of pure energy. The Steel Minstrels raised their weapons in unison. A perfect chord of magical sound filled the entire coliseum. The ground began to tremble with the rhythm of their music. It was as if the very earth were responding to their call.

“They’re coming!” shouted Leah. She ignited her fire in a bright aura that surrounded her.

I took a deep breath. I felt the ancient cold run through my arms. Power flowing beneath my skin like an icy river. Chlo  stepped forward. Her fur stood completely on end. Her fangs gleamed under the morning sun.

And when the first chords resounded with divine strength, the three of us moved as one. Like a single being with three bodies.

The final had begun.

And with it, the roar of dawn that would decide our destiny.