

Frozen Star 102

Chapter 102: Symphony of Steel and Frost

[POV Liselotte]

The first chord struck the air like thunder born of metal. The Steel Minstrels advanced with an almost inhuman precision. Their movements were accompanied by a war melody that was not just sound — it was magic in its purest, most tangible form. The sound waves vibrated through the very ground, lifting dust and making every grain of sand dance to the rhythm of their relentless symphony.

“Now!” shouted Leah. She cast a ring of fire that sliced through the air with a blazing roar. The runic hammer of the leading warrior struck the ground with a deafening crash. The flame split into two perfect halves — as if it had collided with an invisible wall. The resulting shockwave hurled Chloé to the side with brutal force. She rolled across the sand several meters before getting back up with a low, threatening growl.

“The frequency of the impact disperses magic!” cried Leah, shielding her face from the scorching wind.
“They have a sound barrier!”

“Then we’ll break their rhythm,” I answered firmly.

I lunged forward without hesitation. The ground froze instantly beneath my steps. Ice burst into glittering shards that scattered like splinters. My boots slid across the frozen surface with surgical precision. My sword gleamed with the reflection of dawn, as if it were an extension of my arm.

The hammer warrior saw me coming. He spun his weapon with brutal force, making the air around him vibrate. The sound was so intense I felt my chest compress. The wave of force hit me before the hammer could even graze me.

I clenched my teeth and used the blow's momentum to spin gracefully. My sword struck the runic metal of his weapon. The sound that followed was not a simple metallic clang — it was a pure, sustained note, an echo that reverberated through the arena and vanished into the stands.

And in that precise instant, I understood it completely.

Every movement he made. Every strike. Every step. It was all part of a living, conscious melody.

“Leah, adjust the rhythm! Aim for the silences between their notes!”

She didn't need any further explanation. She understood my plan immediately.

Raising both hands in a firm gesture, she generated a circle of vibrant fire around her. Energy condensed rapidly, swirling into blazing spirals that pulsed in rhythm — the counter-rhythm of our enemies. The air grew dense and heavy, charged with two opposing melodies of magic struggling to overpower one another.

Chloé then darted toward the group's blind spot — a silver flash between fire and frost. She leapt onto the group's archer with feline agility, just as he prepared a sonic arrow charged with energy. Her sharp claws clashed against the metallic bow with a shrill screech, snapping the string with a sharp, discordant crack.

The resulting sound was like a brutal dissonance in the midst of a perfect symphony — a broken note in a flawless composition. The Minstrels' perfect rhythm faltered for the first time since the battle began. A fracture appeared in their harmony.

"Now, Leah!" I shouted with all my strength.

She unleashed a massive blaze that spread like a fan of orange light. The heat clashed head-on with the freezing air I had summoned, creating a sudden explosion of white vapor. A wall of boiling mist engulfed the arena, obscuring vision for a few seconds.

The Minstrels tried to maintain their harmony blindly, but their notes began to collapse. The chords turned chaotic and disordered, filled with imperfections imperceptible to the average ear — but not to the magic sustaining them. The discord was evident in the flow of energy.

I took advantage of that moment of confusion and charged again. Ice burst from beneath my feet like an extension of my will, spreading toward them swiftly. It fractured into uneven, treacherous patterns, breaking their synchrony as they stumbled and lost balance.

The leader lifted his hammer in frustration and struck the ground with all his strength. A deep, powerful note shook the earth beneath us. The ice cracked under the vibration. The sound was so strong I felt blood ringing in my ears — a sharp, persistent buzz echoing in my head.

Chloé roared from the right with ferocity. She lunged at the archer who was struggling to rise. Her fangs gleamed in the reflected firelight. With one precise leap, she tore the enchanted lute from the woman's hands and snapped it in two with a sharp, final crack. The instrument was useless.

The mage wielding the sonic spear extended his weapon urgently, playing a rapid sequence of short, cutting notes. Each vibration sliced the air like an invisible blade. Leah countered with a concentrated torrent of fire, but the sound waves dispersed the flames in harmless circular patterns.

"I can't get close!" shouted Leah in frustration. "His magic cuts the air pressure — it scatters any direct attack!"

"Then... we'll do it my way," I said, feeling the icy mana overflow through my veins.

The entire world seemed to slow around me. The deafening noise, the crackling fire, the audience's screams — all faded into the distance. Only the frozen pulse of my power remained, beating fiercely in my chest.

I closed my eyes and focused every fragment of mana into my sword. The temperature dropped sharply, vapor turning to frost in an instant. The ground beneath my feet cracked under the weight of the winter awakening within me.

When I opened my eyes, the blade of my sword shone with a light of its own — like a mirror of frozen glass reflecting the sand and sky.

"Rhythm broken."

With a single fluid motion, I released a surge of power that was not just ice — it was silence. Absolute, devouring silence. It swallowed all sound in its path. The Minstrels' notes drowned into nothingness. The perfect chord disintegrated without a trace.

The spear mage screamed something we couldn't hear. His lips moved in the soundless void. The sonic magic was completely nullified. The battlefield was left in an unnatural silence.

"Leah, now's the moment."

Leah didn't hesitate for even a heartbeat. She stepped forward with determination, fire in her hands and pure fury in her eyes. A burning circle expanded beneath her feet like a rising sun. From its center, a column of pure flame ascended with a roar that returned sound to the world all at once.

The flames surged like a molten tide, engulfing the Minstrels just as the ice closed in on them from the opposite side. Fire and frost collided with a thunderous crash that shook the coliseum stands. The nearest spectators covered their ears.

The crowd screamed in a mix of terror and awe. The sky itself seemed to tremble with the force of the impact.

When the thick smoke began to clear, the scene slowly revealed itself. The Minstrels were kneeling on the ground, defeated and exhausted. Their weapons smoked faintly. The runes on the hammer flickered weakly. The ground beneath them was covered in a strange layer of fractured frost and dying red embers.

I remained standing amid the chaos, panting heavily. My sword still shone with a faint, icy glow. Leah, utterly drained, was on her knees from exhaustion, sweat dripping from her forehead in heavy drops. Chloé, covered in dust and dried blood, limped slowly toward us with a wide, satisfied grin on her muzzle.

“Does that... mean we won?” asked Leah, half incredulous, her voice a hoarse whisper.

I lifted my gaze toward the master of ceremonies, who had stood motionless throughout the entire battle. His cloak billowed elegantly under the lingering cold wind. For a moment, he seemed unable to believe his eyes. Then, he slowly raised his hand with ceremonial grace.

“The battle is over,” his voice thundered over the silent crowd. “The victors of the Grand Final of the Golden Lion Tournament are... the Silver Pack.”

The roar of the crowd engulfed us like a physical wave — thousands of voices shouting our names in unison. The vibration ran through my chest and settled deep in my bones.

I couldn't help but smile with relief and joy. A bubbling laugh escaped my lips.

Leah collapsed beside me in the sand, laughing through tears of emotion. “We did it... Lotte, we actually did it!”

Chloé flopped down in front of us with a heavy thud, exhaling as if shedding the weight of the world. “About time... I thought we'd come out of this deaf forever.”

I dropped beside them, utterly spent, still holding my sword in my right hand. It felt like part of my own body. The frost covering the arena began to melt slowly, leaving behind a silvery sheen glistening under the growing light of dawn.

The sun now rose fully over the horizon, gilding the edges of the scattered clouds and painting the sky in hues of orange and pink.

In that perfect instant — with the crowd chanting our names, the warmth of the newborn day on our weary skin — I understood that this roar of many voices, of dawn, of fire and ice entwined, was not just the end of a battle.

It was the sound of the beginning of something far greater, far deeper — the echo of a destiny just awakening within me. A new path unfolding before us, filled with promises and dangers yet unknown.

But we would face it together. As always.