

Frozen Star 111

Chapter 111: Wings Over the Ice

[POV Liselotte]

Morning in Veltram came far too soon for my liking.

The sound of distant bells marking the hour seemed to drag me out of a sleep that had brought no rest at all.

My body felt unusually heavy, my muscles stiff, and there was a constant weight in my chest that I couldn't shake off.

I had barely managed to sleep a few hours after the shock of the previous night.

The vivid reflection of the dream still clung to my mind like frost that refused to melt away.

I could still feel, almost physically, the lingering echo of the blow I had received in that dream world.

It was as if the piercing cold of that place had seeped into me upon waking, leaving a frozen shadow within my body that wouldn't fade with the morning warmth.

Leah was, as always, the first to move.

Her routine was as methodical and orderly as ever, yet her eyes lingered on me more than once while she prepared the packs and carefully checked the protective seals on the wagon.

“Did you sleep at all?” she finally asked, without preamble.

I nodded faintly, trying to sound convincing despite the exhaustion dragging me down.

“Enough,” I lied with a tired smile that failed to hide the truth.

Chloé, who was yawning widely beside the dying fire, didn’t seem to believe me in the slightest.

“Your face says something very different,” she remarked dryly, stretching with feline grace as she smoothed down her silver fur.

“It was just a particularly long night,” I muttered, deliberately avoiding her piercing gaze.

They didn’t press further, but the silence that followed weighed heavier than usual between us.

We left the city shortly after dawn.

The air was pure and biting, and the sky bore a grayish-blue hue that promised a coming storm in the days ahead.

The road we took westward skirted the edge of the great frozen lake before winding through gentle hills blanketed in untouched snow.

In the distance, the towering mountains marking the borderlands of Whirikai rose like ancient walls—immense, silver, and silent beneath the pale winter sun.

Seeing them again after so many years stirred a knot of emotion in my chest.

Those familiar peaks were the first tangible sign that our long journey was nearing its end—yet they also heralded that something immense and significant awaited on the horizon.

Leah guided the wagon with calm concentration, while Chloé trotted nimbly alongside through the deep snow, leaving tracks that the wind soon erased.

I sat in contemplative silence, watching the white landscape drift by as my mind wandered between the present reality and the lingering fragments of that dream I still could not fully understand.

Hours later, when the sun began to tilt visibly toward the west, we decided to stop by a sharp curve in the road to rest the weary horses.

The air around us had changed subtly.

There was a faint hum in the atmosphere—a barely perceptible vibration that raised goosebumps on my arms even before I consciously understood why.

Chloé lifted her head at once, her pointed ears standing rigid, her fur visibly bristling.

“Did you hear that?” she asked mentally, with unusual urgency.

Leah frowned in concern, staring intently at the gray sky.

“Yes,” she murmured, raising a hand in a warning gesture. Her gaze hardened instantly.

“We’re not alone out here.”

The sound became clearer and sharper.

A high-pitched screech—unmistakably inhuman—echoed through the tranquil air.

And then we saw them.

They emerged from the dark northern clouds, low and heavy with threat.

Winged creatures—massive and grotesque—of sleek, dark hide that reflected the faint light.

Their membranous wings opened with a dry, rhythmic snap, and their small, ember-red eyes burned in the gloom.

They were a grotesque blend between giant bats and ancient carrion beasts.

Each spanned at least two meters from wingtip to wingtip, flying in tight, disciplined formation—as if driven by a shared, intelligent will.

“Frostbats,” Leah said tensely, raising her staff in swift, practiced motions.

“I thought they only lived in the deepest rifts of the frozen north.”

“Well, looks like they’ve changed their minds recently,” Chloé shot back, her sharp fangs fully bared in a defensive snarl.

The shrill cries multiplied around us.

Within seconds, the entire flock descended upon us in a deadly dive.

“Take cover, now!” I shouted, leaping from the wagon just as one of the largest creatures tore through the protective canvas with its claws, leaving a trail of frozen vapor that chilled the air solid.

Leah reacted instantly, precise as ever.

She raised her staff and muttered a quick, powerful incantation.

A towering wall of living fire erupted before the wagon, forcing several beasts to beat their wings furiously and retreat with furious shrieks.

But not all of them stopped.

Two smaller frostbats dove straight toward me.

I dodged purely by instinct.

The first crashed violently into the snow, while the second swept past my shoulder, tearing a piece of my coat with its claws.

I felt the unnatural cold of its breath brush against my exposed skin.

Something deep inside me awakened at once.

The air around me dropped sharply in temperature within seconds.

The white vapor of my breath grew thicker, denser, and a powerful icy current burst from my hands before I could even think to summon it.

I extended my arms with determination, channeling the stored mana in one fluid, natural motion.

My initial intent had been to form the small ice spears I had used in earlier fights.

But this time, something crucial was completely different.

The ground beneath my feet trembled—faintly, but unmistakably.

Instead of multiple shards, a single enormous spear began forming before me, suspended in midair.

It was colossal—nearly three meters long—and its flawless surface glowed with an intense, pure blue radiance so vibrant it almost hurt to look at.

The air pulsed tangibly, and the surrounding snow froze solid in intricate frost patterns that spread outward like living roots through the ground.

“What’s happening...?” I whispered under my breath, unable to believe what I was seeing.

The colossal spear floated weightlessly, slowly rotating on its axis with lethal grace.

Its razor-sharp tip gleamed with a living, pulsing energy—as though the ice itself were alive, breathing, aware.

I could feel it—connected directly to my chest, to my inner power, to the very rhythm of the ancient crystal beating inside me.

The largest and fiercest frostbat let out a piercing shriek and dove toward us with blinding speed.

I didn't think twice.

I thrust my right hand forward and, with a near-instinctive impulse rising from the depths of my being, released the spear toward my target.

The icy projectile tore through the air with a freezing roar that sliced the atmosphere apart.

The pressure wave it generated struck my face like a physical force.

The spear hit the beast squarely, and the resulting explosion was deafening—

a thunderclap of ice and frost that engulfed everything around it in a blinding white flash.

When the light finally faded, the monstrous creature was gone.

Nothing remained but a scattering of tiny crystal fragments drifting down like iridescent snowflakes.

I stood utterly still, arm still outstretched.

My breath trembled uncontrollably in my chest.

The overwhelming silence that followed was absolute.

Leah was the first to move again.

She slowly lowered her staff, her eyes fixed on the now-clear sky where the creature had been moments ago.

“Lotte, that was simply...” she began, but the words failed her.

Chloé trotted carefully toward me, her golden eyes shining with barely contained awe.

“‘Impressive’ would be a good place to start,” she said mentally.

“I’ve never seen you channel mana with that kind of force before. It wasn’t just raw power—it was pure precision and perfect control.”

I kept staring at the place of impact, unable to fully process it.

The air around me was still noticeably frozen, and I could still feel the echo of that power resonating in my hands—a living vibration that refused to fade.

“I didn’t do it consciously,” I murmured weakly, more to myself than to them.

“It just... happened, as if someone else was guiding my actions.”

Leah stepped closer and laid a steady hand on my trembling shoulder.

Her expression was a complex blend of genuine awe and unmistakable pride.

“Then perhaps it’s time you do start doing it consciously,” she said softly.

“That extraordinary power is yours, Lotte—and it’s just shown you that in the clearest way possible.”

I didn’t answer right away.

I just kept staring at the frozen remnants still hanging in the air, faintly gleaming beneath the gray northern sun.

The perfect spear—so deadly, so beautiful—had vanished into thin air, yet its energy still lingered within me.

It was the first time I'd truly felt that my power wasn't just a heavy burden or an uncontrollable instinct.

For the first time in my life, it had flowed from me as though the ice itself were guiding me with ancient wisdom.

And as Leah and Chloé watched in silent admiration, a cold certainty crystallized within my heart.

That ancient force awakening so fiercely inside me no longer slept in the depths.

It had fully awakened.

And it would never again do so quietly.