

Frozen Star 125

Chapter 125: Between Ice and Fire

[POV Liselotte]

The dawn arrived with a clear sky and a cutting wind that made the frost shimmer over the snowy field behind the house. The air was so cold that every breath came out as a white cloud, as if winter itself were silently watching what we were about to do.

My father had drawn a circle in the snow with a wooden stick.

"No lethal attacks, no interference," he said firmly. "Just practice. But give it your all, understood?"

I nodded, tightening the strap of my sword. Leah, standing across from me, removed her gloves to feel the mana flow more precisely through her hands. Her deep blue eyes shone with focus. Chloé watched from the edge of the forest, with Claire sitting on her back, both of them alert and eager.

The wind stilled.

Silence stretched between us.

And then my father raised his hand.

" Begin."

The air shattered with a burst of movement.

I lunged forward, the blade of my sword glinting under the sunlight. Ice began to form beneath my feet, letting me glide as if the snow itself were a frozen river. In the blink of an eye, I was before Leah.

She didn't retreat.

She lifted one hand, and a wall of fire burst up between us.

The heat was so intense that the ice beneath my boots melted instantly.

" Tsk! " I hissed, spinning around. A surge of frost burst from my sword, spreading like a fan that smothered part of the flames.

Steam filled the air—dense, blinding.

I couldn't see her, but I could feel her mana moving, dancing all around me.

" You're rushing in," her calm voice said from somewhere within the haze.

I turned toward the sound, channeling energy into my blade. A layer of pure ice coated the edge, catching the light.

When the steam faded, I saw Leah standing atop a glowing magic circle. A dozen orbs of energy floated around her, each rotating slowly.

" Multiple casting?" I murmured, both surprised and impressed.

" I learned it from Kaelen," she replied with a faint smile. " He told me the best defense is keeping your enemy far away."

" Then I'll just have to close the distance."

I launched forward again, forming pillars of ice that erupted from the ground, pushing me upward like fleeting steps.

The orbs reacted instantly. Beams of light and fire cut through the air. I raised a barrier of frost, but the impact forced me back several meters.

Leah never stopped moving.

Her control was fluid, precise. Every spell was a dance, each gesture tracing glowing runes that shaped the flow of wind and heat.

"Your magic is elegant," I said between breaths.

"And yours is raw strength," she answered without losing focus. "But strength is useless if it can't reach its target."

Her taunt stung—and I charged again.

This time, I didn't go straight for her.

I spread my mana across the ground, forming a thin layer of ice beneath my boots.

Leah raised an eyebrow, surprised.

"Clever."

I seized the moment.

I sprinted toward her, ready to strike the ground and unleash a burst of frost that would throw her off balance. But before I reached her, an invisible blast of wind slammed into my chest.

" Ugh! " I fell into the snow, my sword slipping from my grasp.

Leah lowered her right hand, her eyes glowing faintly gold.

" Wind magic," she said. " I picked up some elemental control during my travels."

I struggled to rise, the air burning in my lungs.

Then I smiled.

" Then I won't make it easy for you."

I channeled mana.

The ice responded immediately. Tiny crystals rose from the ground, spiraling around me. Each one reflected a glimmer of light, like countless tiny mirrors.

I extended my hand, and my sword floated up, wrapped in a cold blue glow.

"Frozen Flow Technique," I whispered. "Frost Mantle."

The entire field froze over.

The snowflakes suspended in the air stopped moving, trapped in time.

Mana pulsed around me like a heartbeat.

Leah frowned, clearly impressed.

"That energy... is that your ice core?"

"Yes. And now it's my turn."

I dashed forward. Each step left a blue trail that sealed behind me, disrupting the wind Leah tried to summon.

She reacted quickly, raising shimmering barriers to shield herself.

When my blade struck one of them, the sound echoed like glass shattering.

The air quaked.

The ice exploded into a thousand shards swirling around us.

For a moment, I couldn't tell whether I was gaining ground or losing it.

My breathing grew uneven—the power was draining fast.

And just then, Leah raised both hands toward the sky.

The magic circle beneath her expanded, covering the entire field.

"Elemental Containment Orb," she said clearly.

An invisible dome surrounded me, and before I could react, I felt the pressure.

The air inside grew dense, alive—every particle of magic in the space turned against me.

I tried to break through.

The ice cracked, but the barrier held.

Leah took a step forward, breathing heavily.

Sweat glistened on her forehead, but her eyes didn't waver.

"I'm sorry, Lotte," she said softly. "I'm not holding back... not this time."

The energy inside the dome burst in a blinding flash.

The impact threw me into the snow. The cold stole the breath from my lungs.

When I opened my eyes, the barrier was gone. Leah stood before me, hair tousled from the magic, her breath trembling in the frozen air.

" End of match," my father called from the distance.

Silence followed.

Only the sound of melting ice under the pale sun broke the stillness.

Leah looked down and walked toward me.

" Are you alright?"

I sat up, still dizzy but smiling.

" Yeah. You just... taught me something valuable."

" What's that?"

" That my range is still too short. I need an attack that doesn't rely on getting close. Something that can reach you... without losing control."

Leah nodded slowly.

" You have the power, Lotte. You just need to learn how to extend it."

My father smiled from the edge of the field.

" That was a real battle. No arrogance, no anger. Just two adventurers learning from each other. That's how legends are forged."

Claire clapped excitedly while Chloé let out a long yawn.

" If you keep training like this," Chloe said telepathically, " you'll leave everyone speechless at the trial."

We all laughed.

The cold didn't matter.

The exhaustion didn't either.

Because in that frozen field, under the pale sunlight, I felt something awaken within me—

A spark of power I still didn't know how to wield, but one that was undeniably mine.

The ice beneath my hands cracked softly.

And for the first time, it didn't sound fragile.

It sounded like a promise.