

Frozen Star 129

Chapter 129: The King's Announcement and the Oracle

[POV Liselotte]

Night had completely wrapped the landscape by the time we left the training field.

The icy, transparent air was so still that every step on the fresh snow echoed like a shared secret.

In the distance, the lights of Whirikai twinkled like tiny earthly stars, offering a distant warmth amid the white vastness.

Leah walked beside me, her hands buried in the pockets of her coat, her loose hair swaying with the rhythm of the night breeze.

Chloé followed us with silent steps, leaving a neat trail of pawprints on the snowy layer.

At that late hour, the streets were nearly deserted.

Only the distant sound of a tavern and the murmur of a vendor packing up his goods broke the silence.

It was an uncommon calm — almost too perfect to be real.

Until a man's voice suddenly cut through the stillness.

"Did you hear about it?" someone asked from the corner, speaking between muffled laughter. "The king announced it this morning during the council session."

Leah and I stopped at the same time, instinctively.

Two young men stood there, dressed in the fine clothes of the lesser nobility — probably sons of palace officials. Their voices carried clearly through the frost-covered walls.

"What exactly did he announce?" asked the other, his tone filled with evident skepticism.

"That in one year, a royal summoning ritual will be held. Something that hasn't been performed in over three centuries." His voice dropped almost to a whisper, as if just uttering those words sent chills down his spine. "They say a northern oracle had a vision — a true prophecy."

My heart seemed to stop for an instant.

Leah looked at me immediately. Her face had visibly paled.

"What kind of prophecy?" she whispered, even though she knew perfectly well the young men couldn't hear us.

The first one kept talking, unaware of our presence in the shadows.

"The oracle declared that in a year and a half, the world will completely change.

That something — something beyond human comprehension — will awaken.

A calamity, a dark force... no one knows the details. But the message was clear: only the help of beings from another world can face what's coming."

A brief silence followed, broken only by the whistle of the night wind.

"Beings from another world?" repeated the second, incredulous. "Like in the old legends? Summoning heroes from other realms?"

"Exactly that." The first one laughed, but there was no joy in it. "And instead of dismissing it as madness, the king ordered preparations to begin. Altars, mages, studies on ancient dimensional-connection rituals.

They say the Royal Council approved the project just a few hours ago."

The other remained silent for a long moment.

"Then it's true what's been circulating in the northern reports — that there are strange movements at the continental borders.

That even demonic activity has increased."

The first man lowered his voice even more.

"Yes. Apparently, the border attacks aren't isolated raids. They're deliberate tests. Something — or someone — is probing our defenses."

Leah took a step forward almost unconsciously. Her breathing grew uneven.

"That," she whispered shakily, "can't be a coincidence."

I watched her in silence. Her eyes were fixed on the young nobles, but her thoughts seemed far away.

"Do you think it's connected to what we saw during our journey?" I asked quietly.

Leah didn't answer right away.

Her expression was a complex mix of awe, fear, and dawning realization.

"If the demons are moving again, and the oracle foresaw something capable of destroying the balance..." Her voice trembled slightly. "Then yes.

It could be related.

And if the kingdom is planning a summoning ritual, it means the threat is tangible.

So real that the king is willing to break ancient laws to prevent it."

Chloé lifted her head, her amber eyes glowing intensely.

"Summoning beings from other planes is no small matter," she communicated mentally. "The balance between dimensions is extremely fragile. If they force it, the consequences could be worse than the original threat."

Leah nodded, her brow deeply furrowed.

"I know. But if the king approved it, it means the oracle saw something impossible to ignore."

The young nobles continued walking down the street, unaware of the heavy weight their words had left behind.

Their laughter faded into the distance — but their conversation lingered in the cold air between us.

The summoning ritual.

One year.

An ancient prophecy.

It all sounded like an echo from forgotten ages — as if destiny were tracing the first lines of something immeasurably greater.

We continued walking in silence. The stillness grew dense and heavy, broken only by the steady crunch of snow underfoot.

Finally, Leah murmured, almost to herself:

"It's been centuries since anyone attempted to summon from other worlds. The last record dates back to the Founders' Era." Her voice sounded almost reverent. "Those heroes who, according to legend, came from another land to seal the power of primordial darkness."

"I thought those were just myths," I admitted.

"So did I," she said quietly. "But if the oracle has spoken — and the king has answered — then those legends might be about to repeat themselves."

The wind blew harder.

I could feel the cold piercing my chest — not from the temperature, but from the weight of those words.

"And if the ritual fails?" I asked in a trembling voice.

Leah looked at me with an expression that would stay in my memory forever.

"Then, Lotte... not just the kingdom. The entire known world will collapse."

When we finally arrived home, the fire was still burning in the hearth.

Claire was fast asleep on the couch, and my mother had left warm tea waiting for us on the table.

But that domestic warmth couldn't dispel the crushing weight we carried.

Leah sat before the dancing flames, her gaze lost in their hypnotic motion.

"One year," she said at last.

"Just one year until the world changes forever."

I nodded silently, unable to find the right words.

And as the fire crackled softly, I felt something unseen moving beyond the known horizon.

An ancient promise — or perhaps a final warning.

The northern wind blew with renewed strength, as if it carried the indelible echo of that prophecy.

"In a year and a half, the world will turn upside down."

The phrase hung in the still air, heavy with meanings we were only beginning to glimpse.