

Frozen Star 153

Chapter 153: Frozen Fury and Truths Beneath the Ashes

[POV Liselotte]

The air was burning.

Every breath was an unbearable mix of dust, raw magic, and the scorching heat radiating from the elemental. My lungs struggled to hold firm as I raised yet another wall of ice in front of me.

The impact came a moment later.

“Tssk!”

The wall cracked under the impact of the blue flame, fissures spreading like broken veins. The shockwave pushed me back, my boots sinking into the scattered ground of what had once been the village center.

The elemental roared.

A sound without shape, without a throat, without flesh... but full of rage.

The creature was larger than before—three times larger—and its body was made of floating stone fragments intertwined with fire, lightning, and flickering arcane energy.

And... there it was.

What I had seen inside it.

The core.

A piece of the artifact we had activated.

It glowed like a broken, starving heart, pulsing between the molten rocks.

“If I destroy it...” I thought, gritting my teeth.

Maybe the monster would collapse. Maybe the breach would stop vomiting power. Maybe everything would end.

But every time I tried to get closer, a burst of fire or lightning forced me back. The elemental knew I had found its weak point. And now it was furious.

“Lotte!”

Leah’s voice reached me from the distance, cracked by exhaustion.

“Can you keep going?”

“Yes!” I shouted, though my arms were trembling. “Focus on Marcus!”

She didn’t answer.

She couldn’t.

She was too busy.

Because on the other side of the battlefield, Leah and Marcus were trading spells like poisoned arrows.

Flashes.

Explosions.

The dry crack of mana tearing the air.

I forced myself to focus again.

The elemental raised both arms—if they could be called that—and a circle of light formed beneath its floating fragments.

No.

I recognized that.

“You’re going to use another multi-discharge!” I yelled.

I ran to the side, tracing an icy arc with my hands. The ground froze under my feet and I raised a curved barrier that shielded me from the front and one side.

The attack hit a second later.

Flames.

Lightning.

Blue.

Red.

White.

An impossible mix slammed into my wall like a giant hammer.

The ice cracked so loudly I thought it would burst.

But I didn't yield.

"Come on... come on... HOLD!"

The wall held.

For now.

When the attack ended, I was gasping. I paused only a moment to catch my breath—and then I saw it: the core vibrated. A pulse that sent molten stone fragments flying outward.

The creature was entering... rage?

Or its magical equivalent?

The heat surged.

The air rippled.

And a ring of fire expanded toward me.

“No!”

I jumped back, summoning an ice column under my feet to propel me above the attack. I landed rolling, feeling the heat lick my back.

When I looked up, Marcus was laughing.

I couldn't hear him completely over the roar of battle.

But I could see it.

The laughter shook his chest as he hurled a whirlwind of dark mana at Leah.

And she...

She was holding on.

Holding on as always.

"Leah!" I shouted, not knowing if she could hear me.

Between two bursts of light, she staggered back, breathing hard. Her eyes were locked on Marcus. A look I hadn't seen on her before. Pure determination—but also... fear.

Marcus raised one hand, gathering blood-red magic.

And then he spoke.

“Do you want to know why I’m doing this, Leah?”

His voice carried clearly, as if magic had carved a direct echo toward us.

Leah clenched her teeth.

“I don’t care about your excuse!”

“Oh, you will.”

His smile twisted.

“Because the kingdom’s justice is a farce. Because the powerful can crush whoever they want without consequences.”

Leah fired a beam of light straight at his chest. Marcus deflected it with a lazy gesture.

“The Duke Albrecht Von Krannsen...”

The name hung in the air like a blade.

“...killed my wife and my son.”

My heart stopped.

The elemental’s flames dimmed for a second.

Or maybe it was just my mind trying to process it.

Marcus continued.

“And do you know why he killed them?”

His eyes widened, full of that madness we’d seen grow since we activated the artifact.

“Because I refused to cooperate with him. Because I didn’t want to help him create an artifact that would give him more power than he already had.”

Leah trembled.

I could see it even from here.

“That... that can’t...”

“IT’S TRUE!”

The scream shook even the elemental.

Marcus pointed a trembling finger at her.

“The heir of that damned duke was here, in this village, disguised as a simple guard... and I already killed him.”

His smile twisted even further.

“And when I’m done with you, I’ll finish off everyone who carries his blood.”

“Marcus...”

Leah took a step back.

“No... you can’t...”

“I CAN!”

His magic burst like a crimson whip that Leah barely blocked.

My blood froze—and not because of my powers.

That man...

He was completely broken.

And completely convinced.

“Lotte!”

Leah's voice came again, barely audible.

"Hold on... just a little longer..."

The elemental's roar pulled me back to reality.

The creature raised both arms and unleashed a storm of molten rocks. I dashed forward, conjuring an icy shield around my body as the fragments rained down like meteorites.

The ice shattered.

I jumped.

Rolled.

A bolt struck in front of me.

I raised another wall to deflect it.

The core glowed brighter.

Faster.

More unstable.

“I have to destroy it!”

I launched myself forward.

The elemental responded with a full-body spin, releasing a shockwave that tore through my barriers. I flew backward and rolled through the dust, coughing.

It hurt.

My arms, my legs, even my chest burned.

But I stood up.

I always stand up.

“I’m not letting you win!”

I ran and swept my hands through the air, forming ice spears as large as tree trunks.

“FALL!”

The spears shot toward the core, piercing several layers of burning rock.

But just before they reached the center, the elemental flashed red and absorbed the spears as if they were drops of water in an immense fire.

“No way...”

It was changing.

Learning.

Adapting to my attacks.

It had entered a state of absolute fury.

The ground beneath its feet—if they were feet—began to melt.

Another blast of blue fire rushed toward me.

“No!”

I conjured a double shield, something that was still difficult for me. Two layers of ice spun around me like a protective vortex.

The attack hit.

The world became a whirlwind of blue light, fire, and vibration.

My shield nearly broke.

But it held.

Until lightning struck from behind.

“Agh!”

The impact hurled me several meters. I hit the scorched ground and groaned as pain stabbed through my ribs. I tried to stand, but my legs trembled like they weren’t mine.

I can’t fall.

Leah is fighting alone.

Chloé isn’t here.

I can’t...

“Lott—!”

Leah’s voice was cut off by an explosion.

My vision cleared just enough to see her being thrown back by one of Marcus's attacks. He advanced with hatred in his eyes... but also tears.

"The Duke Von Krannsen destroyed my life..." Marcus said, voice shaking but full of resentment.

"And now I will destroy everything he built."

Leah brought her hands together, trembling, gathering light.

"I won't let you hurt anyone else!"

The elemental roared again.

It was gathering energy.

And then I understood.

"Leah..."

My voice was barely a whisper.

“He... he’s telling the truth.”

She turned her head for a moment.

Just a moment.

And that moment almost got her killed.

A bolt from the elemental landed between us, separating us.

“Lotte!”

“Leah!”

A wall of blue fire rose between us like a barrier.

Marcus spoke again, but his voice was no longer a scream or a laugh.

It was something broken.

“My family... my home... everything was burned on a noble’s whim. And no one—not a single mage in the kingdom—did anything about it.”

His stare hardened.

“So yes. I rebel. And I will destroy everything that duke protected.”

“But that doesn’t give you the right to kill innocents!” Leah shouted, barely holding on.

“Your pain doesn’t justify this madness!”

“It’s the only justice I have left.”

Another explosion separated their voices.

The elemental moved toward me with a roar that shook the remains of the houses around us. Its core glowed in a frantic rhythm, as if it were alive. As if it sensed my determination to destroy it.

“Alright...”

I stood slowly.

“If I can’t break you... I’ll freeze you from the inside.”

Blue fire spiraled around its body.

Lightning burst from its arms.

Pure magic crackled from its core.

I moved forward.

Every step hurt.

Every movement burned.

But I kept going.

“Because Leah needs to win... because Chloé isn’t here... because if I don’t stop this, everyone will die.”

The elemental lifted a sphere of energy mixing all its magics.

It was... enormous.

Glowing with a violence impossible to describe.

“If you throw that...” I thought.

The whole village will disappear.

But I was already running.

Cold followed my steps.

Ice covered my hands.

I shaped a spear, draining every last drop of my mana.

“You’re NOT killing anyone else!”