

Frozen Star 155

Chapter 155: The Roar of Unraveling

[POV Liselotte]

The silence after Marcus's death lasted only a couple of seconds.

A blink.

A breath.

A shiver in the air.

And then... the world broke.

The elemental arched backward as if struck by an invisible bolt of lightning. The light in its core—which moments ago had been partially fractured—now shone with a new, aberrant, almost sickening brilliance. Luminous cracks spread across its body, not like wounds but like living veins, beating with stolen energy.

Marcus's energy.

Leah's spell.

Both forces mixed, confused, claimed by that creature that no longer had an elemental's form... but something else.

Something new.

Something worse.

The air vibrated with a strange hum, like hundreds of overlapping voices speaking at once, none human, none intelligible. And its arm —if it could even be called that— twitched convulsively, as if the magic inside it was pressing against its limits.

Leah took a step back.

"Lotte..." she whispered, voice ragged with exhaustion.

"I know."

Because I could feel it too.

A cold that wasn't mine.

A raw magical weight without direction, without control.

Irrational.

The core glowed again... and exploded.

It didn't shatter: it burst into pure light and energy shooting in every direction like a shapeless storm. The ground shook. The wind turned into a sharp howl that sliced my skin like tiny blades.

The elemental screamed.

A sound so deep and warped it felt like it twisted inside my bones.

It no longer had a defined shape. No longer humanoid.

Its silhouette expanded, twisted, stretched more than any creature should be able to stretch. As if the magic forming it had become liquid and unstable, spilling outward.

“Back up,” Leah said.

But it was obvious I couldn’t.

Because right after, the elemental saw us.

Not with eyes.

With its core.

With that immense light contracting like a dilated pupil.

And it attacked.

The first blast of magic was so fast I didn’t see it coming —I only felt the impact. A wave of energy hurled me against a stone pillar, knocking the air out of my lungs.

A second blow made the entire chamber of the central artifact tremble, tearing down whole pieces of ceiling that crashed to the ground.

“Lotte!” Leah shouted.

I got up, staggering. My mouth tasted like metal. My hands burned.

But I raised ice.

Because it was the only thing I could do.

A shield, thin but solid.

The explosion hit it and shattered it like glass.

Shards of ice shot toward me like shrapnel. I covered myself with my arms just as the floor cracked under the elemental’s unstable steps, the creature moving as if every movement was both involuntary and inevitable.

It wasn’t attacking.

It wasn't trying to attack.

It simply... rammed through everything in its path.

Including us.

Another blast of magic.

Another direct hit.

My body was thrown across the floor and I rolled, gasping, feeling my magic thrashing inside me, slamming against the limits of my own body.

I could still use it —barely—

But I was wasting it.

And it wasn't enough to stop that thing.

“Lotte, over here!” Leah yelled from behind a rock formation she had barely managed to raise with magic. Her hands were trembling. Her breathing uneven. “Quick!”

I dragged myself to her as another blast tore through the air and exploded against a nearby wall, pulverizing it.

Leah was kneeling, pressing one hand to the ground and the other to her chest.

“Lotte...” she said with a weak smile. “I think... I’ve got nothing left.”

“Don’t talk,” I murmured, knowing it wouldn’t help.

“I can’t even move my fingers properly...”

“I’ll handle it,” I promised.

A lie.

I was at my limit too.

The elemental moved less like a creature and more like a storm with legs. Its arms stretched too far, as if made of dense liquid. Sparks of wild magic broke off from its body and crashed into the ground like tiny meteors.

Each strike left a crater.

Each roar made my bones vibrate.

“We have to contain it,” I muttered, though I knew Leah didn’t have the strength to answer.

I gritted my teeth.

And advanced.

Ice burst from my hands, spirals of frost forming in uneven currents. I tried to create a prison. Not a barrier, not a wall—

A cage.

A cage to hold a storm.

But the elemental wasn't something that could be caged.

Not even at its best.

Much less now.

With a single swing of its arm, the ice prison shattered into thousands of fragments that shot backward with such force they tore my skin as they passed.

I screamed, unable to stop it.

Covered myself.

But still felt shards bury into my shoulders, arms, legs.

Still, I kept moving.

"Stop!" I shouted, knowing it couldn't hear me, or understand, or care.

The core glowed again.

A light so bright it almost blinded me.

“Lotte!” Leah cried behind me. “Don’t go closer!”

But if I didn’t... no one else would be left to stop it.

And then the elemental attacked again.

A wave of pure energy.

At this distance, impossible to dodge.

I tried to raise shields of ice. Three, four, five.

All shattered instantly.

The explosion blasted me backward, but somehow I stayed on my feet. I didn't know how. I didn't know why. I only knew I had to.

The air was filled with dust, magic, and a high-pitched ringing that didn't seem to come from anything physical.

The elemental advanced, each step breaking the floor.

Its arms lifted, gathering more energy.

Another explosion.

A direct hit to my legs this time.

I collapsed.

My breath turned into a ragged wheeze.

"Lotte... I can't raise shields anymore."

Leah's voice was a dying whisper behind me.

I knew.

I couldn't either.

But the elemental's magic kept growing, growing, growing...

And then something changed.

The air tightened.

Not like before, with magical pressure or vibrating energy.

No.

Something deeper.

A sound from far away.

A sound that tore through the earth, the walls, my chest.

A howl.

A long, guttural, furious, promising howl.

My eyes flew open.

“...Chloe.”

Leah lifted her head, dazed.

“What was that?”

“Chloe...” I repeated, my voice trembling uncontrollably. “She’s... close.”

Another howl.

Stronger.

Clearer.

The elemental stopped for a moment.

For the first time since losing its sanity... it stopped.

Its core flickered.

It turned its trembling body slowly, as if trying to locate the sound's source.

And then it screamed.

A shrill, monstrous roar filled with pain and rage.

The ground exploded under its feet as the creature convulsed violently, as if tearing itself apart from the inside. Its magic surged wildly, creating shockwaves that shattered columns and ripped chunks of ceiling free. I dove toward Leah to shield her as debris crashed down around us.

“Lotte... we can’t stay here...” Leah whispered, though her legs no longer worked.

And I could barely move mine.

“Chloe is coming,” I said, staring at the shattered entrance of the chamber. “Just... hold on a little longer.”

But the elemental reacted again.

The stolen magic was overflowing, spilling through its cracks like liquid fire. Every movement caused a stronger explosion.

And now it was focusing on us again.

On us.

“L-Leah...”

“Lotte... run.”

“I’m not leaving you.”

“You can’t stop that!” Leah shouted with the last of her strength. “Neither of us can!”

She was right.

But still, I stood in front of her, swaying, raising my trembling arms to summon more ice.

A tiny crystal formed.

Tiny. Fragile.

It dissolved as soon as it appeared.

I had no magic left to protect her.

The elemental lifted its arm, forming a massive cluster of energy so huge it lit the entire chamber with blinding white light.

Its core blazed.

Its cracks widened.

Its movements trembled as if its entire body was about to explode.

The explosion surged toward us.

Too big.

Too fast.

Too strong.

We couldn't block it.

We couldn't run.

We couldn't do anything.

I closed my eyes.

And then the howl sounded again.

Much closer.

And the entire world seemed to stop.