

Frozen Star 156

Chapter 156: The Hidden Form in the Shadows

[POV Liselotte]

The blast of energy was going to reach us.

I saw it coming, I felt it coming, I even heard the air tearing itself apart around the attack.

There were no barriers.

No ice.

No magic left.

Only Leah, breathing weakly behind me... and the certainty that this would be the end.

But just as the light of the attack was only a few meters away from us, something impossible happened.

The energy stopped.

It didn't hit anything visible.

It didn't divert.

It simply froze in place, as if it had collided with a membrane I couldn't see but was undeniably there.

The explosion remained still.

Suspended.

Like a wave of white fire trapped in a photograph, unable to move forward or back.

Leah gasped.

"W-what is this...?"

I couldn't move either.

Because not only was the attack frozen—the entire elemental was immobilized.

It contorted, yes. Its body trembled with unstable magic. But it neither advanced nor retreated. Every movement stuck mid-air as if absorbed by something unseen.

And then I saw it.

Shadows.

Shadows that didn't belong to any light, to any object, to anything in the real world.

Shadows stretching from the ground, from the walls, from the ceiling... wrapping around every limb of the elemental like thick tendrils, merging with its crystalline magical body.

The shadows anchored it.

Held it down.

And at the end of those shadows... was her.

"...Chloe."

My voice came out in a barely audible whisper.

The white wolf stood a few meters from the elemental, her blue eyes glowing with a calm that violently contrasted the storm of magic surrounding us. She had no wounds. She didn't look tired. She wasn't panting. She just looked at us gently, as if she wasn't facing a creature capable of destroying the entire town with a single blow.

"Lotte?" Leah murmured. "Is that... Chloe?"

I nodded. I couldn't speak.

Too relieved.

Too stunned.

Then Chloe spoke.

Her voice was soft, like the wind that accompanies falling snow.

"Do not fear. As long as I am here, that being will not touch you."

The elemental roared like a trapped beast. The shadows restraining it quivered, tightening with force. It tried to free its arms, but every movement was swallowed by the darkness as if sinking into a bottomless swamp.

Chloe stepped forward.

“Now... leave it to me.”

And she jumped.

It made no sense.

Chloe was still several meters away from the elemental, her white body moving in a fluid, elegant arc.

But the instant she opened her jaws as if to bite... the shadow trailing behind her stretched, expanded faster than sight, faster than a blink.

The shadow turned into a wolf.

A massive wolf.

Much larger than Chloe.

Much larger than anything natural.

A wolf made entirely of shadow, with eyes glowing like embers deep within a cave.

“Leah... you see that, right?” I asked, my voice trembling.

“Yes...” she whispered without blinking. “That... that isn’t normal magic.”

The shadow wolf materialized behind the elemental, opened its dark jaws, and bit into one of its crystalline arms.

The crack was brutal.

Fractures spread like glowing spiderwebs...

And the arm shattered.

It broke into a thousand shimmering fragments that scattered like stardust.

The elemental's roar shook the entire chamber.

"Impossible..." I murmured. "The core gave it more power than ever. How...?"

"Chloe isn't what we thought, Lotte."

Leah's voice was filled with awe and fear.

"That's... an ancient art. Pure shadow magic. It shouldn't exist."

The elemental counterattacked.

Its cracks glowed with white light, gathering energy before unleashing it violently at Chloe.

I screamed.

“CHLOE!”

But before the attack reached her, something dark rose from the floor beneath her.

A black, dense shadow—shaped like a cloak.

It wrapped around her completely.

And when she emerged...

She wasn't a white wolf.

She was a woman.

A young woman with pale skin and long white hair flowing down to her waist.

Her eyes were still blue, but they glowed with a deeper, almost supernatural shine.

From her hips, a fluffy white tail swayed.

And atop her head, two wolf ears twitched, reacting to the slightest sound.

Her body was partially covered by the shadow that had wrapped her, like a living second skin responding to her thoughts.

Leah lost her voice.

“Lotte...” she breathed. “I-is she... human?”

“I don’t know...” I answered, still trying to form words. “I’ve never... never seen her like this.”

Chloe—or the woman who was Chloe—extended her hand forward. Shadows coiled around her arm, forming a dark spear that launched toward the elemental, piercing deeply into its torso.

The elemental screamed.

It writhed, trying to break free, but every movement only strengthened the shadows restraining it.

Chloe advanced with utter calm.

Her movements were graceful, almost like a dance.

A gesture of her right hand formed a wall of shadows to block another explosive attack.

A twist of her wrist turned another shadow into a scythe that sliced through part of the creature's crystal torso.

A leap sent her above the enemy, striking down with a dark projectile that left deep fractures.

Leah whispered:

"That style... it isn't human. Not even from this continent."

"That's Chloe..." I said, a mix of awe and relief swelling in my chest. "But... has she always been able to do this?"

The next attack from the elemental was brutal: a massive wave of white energy that could have flattened an entire building.

But Chloe did not back down.

A shadow rose behind her—a gigantic shield shaped like a wing.

The energy crashed against it.

The wing trembled.

It hissed.

It warped.

But it held.

And while still in the air... Chloe lowered her hand.

The wing shattered into thousands of dark fragments that turned into small projectiles.

All of them shot toward the elemental.

Dark explosions erupted around the creature.

Each one created more cracks.

More damage.

More instability.

Leah gasped.

“She’s... destroying it.”

“Yes...” I murmured. “But not enough.”

Because although the elemental was nearly defeated, it still wouldn’t fall.

Its core remained intact.

Broken, yes.

Fractured, yes.

But alive.

Too alive.

Chloe knew.

I saw her turn to me.

Her expression was completely serene, even in the middle of the chaos.

Her blue gaze locked onto mine.

And her voice—the human voice she now had—came out firm.

“Lotte. Now I need your help.”

I swallowed hard.

“M-my... help?”

“Yes.”

The shadow cloak around her vibrated as if reacting to her determination.

“I can break everything else... but only you can freeze its core. I need you to do it. I need you to freeze it completely.”

The elemental roared behind her, trembling with volatile magic.

Chloe continued, her gaze never leaving mine.

“If you freeze its core, even for a moment, I’ll do the rest. Together, we can end this.”

Leah looked at me, struggling to breathe.

“Lotte... if you don’t do it now... we won’t get another chance.”

My heart pounded like a drum.

My hands trembled.

My entire body was at its limit.

No magic.

No strength.

Nothing left.

But Chloe trusted me.

And she always... always had.

I inhaled deeply.

Felt the cold inside my chest.

My magic responded to my call.

Small.

Faint.

Almost gone.

But alive.

“...Alright.”

I stood slowly, my legs burning.

“I’ll freeze it.”

Chloe smiled softly.

“Then get ready. I’ll open the path.”

Shadows swirled around her.

The elemental screamed, shaking the air.

Chloe turned toward it.

“Let’s finish this.”

And she leapt forward, wrapped in living shadows.

I moved behind her.

The end was about to begin.