

THE RISE OF A FROZEN STAR

Chapter 16: Voices of the Soul

[POV Liselotte]

The light of dawn filtered through the leaves, tinting the forest with a golden, warm glow, but deep within my soul, the darkness of the past days still weighed heavy.

And yet, with Chloé by my side, everything seemed less terrifying. We walked in silence, her silver figure leading the way. I didn't know exactly where she was taking me, but I trusted her.

The forest seemed to bow in her presence. The creatures that had stalked me for weeks now scurried away at the mere sense of her presence. The trees creaked under the wind, but not menacingly—instead, as if whispering ancient songs to accompany our march.

After what felt like an hour of walking, we reached a large rock formation at the base of a hill. From the outside, it looked like nothing more than a crack between stones, but Chloé entered without hesitation, and I followed.

Inside, darkness wrapped around us like a thick cloak. I had to feel my way forward with one hand while gripping the hilt of my sword with the other.

But Chloé, with her confident stride, seemed to know every stone of the place. A few steps ahead, the cave suddenly opened into a wide space, with a small opening in the ceiling through which timid moonbeams entered.

Water dripped down the walls, and a strange natural warmth filled the air. It wasn't just a shelter. It was a home hidden in the heart of the forest.

Chloé sat down with the elegance of a queen without a throne. I knelt in front of her, removing my worn-out backpack with the little food I had left.

"Thank you" I said at last. "For bringing me here, Chloé."

Her eyes sparkled. There were no words, but there was understanding. An ancient, unbreakable bond.

I lit a small fire with the dry branches I'd gathered before setting out. The flames crackled, filling the cave with a dance of warm shadows. I sat before Chloé, gently stroking her fur. She lowered her head, accepting my touch. I felt at peace.

After a few minutes, I began to speak.

"You know... I have memories of another world. One where wolves don't have eyes that understand who you are without words. One where cities reach the sky and days pass as if they carried no weight. My name was Edward. And I died...'

I told my story. The life I had, the fire, Chloé's cry—yes, another Chloé—before the flames consumed everything. The reincarnation, childhood with Claire, the inn, training with Dad, the despair of being unable to use magic... up to the night when the teleportation spell separated me from everything I knew.

When I finished, silence settled between us. Chloé kept watching me, as if my soul had spoken instead of my lips.

And then, something happened that I didn't expect.

[POV Chloé]

She spoke with an open heart, and I listened with my soul. Not with words, but with what we are: creatures woven from instinct and pain.

I too had a story.

I approached, lay beside her, and closed my eyes. And there, in the shared darkness, I let my memory speak for me.

I remembered the first time I opened my eyes in this world—it was damp, dark, warm. The warmth of my mother, the breath of my siblings. Every day was a lesson: how to stalk, how to run, how to survive.

I remembered the full moon over the frozen lake, when I outran all my siblings and the alpha acknowledged me as a hunter.

I also remembered the first time I saw humans. Not in this world... but in the other.

I was just a pup then. Scared, weak, lost among roaring streets and blinding lights. I had run between cars, hungry and filthy, not knowing what kindness was... until a hand reached out to me.

That hand was his.

Edward.

He pulled me off the street when everyone else walked by. When the world only saw a nuisance, he looked at me like something precious. He hugged me... even as I trembled and growled. He gave me food, a name... a home.

“Chloé,” he called me. And from that day, that name became my world.

I lived by his side. Slept beside his bed, listened to his voice while he read, followed him on his silent walks. I was happy. Because we didn't need words. We had each other.

Until the fire changed everything.

I remember the heat. The smoke. The sound of cracking wood and his scream... calling me. He tried to get me out. But the structure collapsed. The last thing I saw was his face lit by the flames, screaming my name as I barked, powerless.

Then... darkness.

And then, I woke up here. In this forest, in another body, in another world.

But his voice remained alive in my heart. His love. His gentleness.

For years I wandered, not understanding why I had been reborn. Until I saw your eyes.

And I knew.

I recognized you.

Not by your face. Nor your voice. But by your soul.

The same soul that once saved me from dying alone on an empty street.

The same soul that once called me “Chloé.”

[POV Liselotte]

Chloé lay beside me, her body warm and protective. And even though she hadn't said a single word, I felt her story as if she had whispered it into my ear.

Not in phrases. But through her presence. Through her silence. Through her loyalty.

A whirlwind of memories struck me. The park. The first time I saw that little dog almost get run over by a car.

“Chloé”... I called her. And she answered with a gaze I never forgot.

She was my friend, my family, my companion. She understood me better than anyone.

And when the fire separated us... it was as if a part of me died with her.

And now... here she was.

Not as a pet. Not as a shadow of the past.

But as an equal.

A warrior who had protected me. Who had guided me. Who had never forgotten me.

Emotion overcame me. My lips trembled.

"You... remember too... don't you?"

Chloé lifted her head and looked at me. Her eyes sparkled with that same warmth I remembered. I didn't need an answer. Because I already had it.

I curled up against her side, while the firelight flickered across the damp rock of the cave.

And for the first time since I woke up in this new world, I felt like I was home again.

Because despite everything... we had found each other once more.