

THE RISE OF A FROZEN STAR

Chapter 6: One Sword is Enough

[Liselotte's POV]

Three months have passed since that day at the temple.

Since I heard the words that stole what I believed was my destiny:

"Your heart is not purifying the mana."

I still remember it clearly, the magic orb that didn't respond, the examiner's awkward silence, and the looks from the other children, a mix of curiosity and pity.

I had mana, plenty of it, in fact more than any other child they had ever evaluated. Even more than the legendary heroes, they said. But without the

heart's flow to purify it... it was useless. All that power trapped inside me, with no way out.

Like having sealed wings.

I was on the verge of an emotional collapse that night.

I locked myself in my room, not knowing whether to cry, scream, or just disappear.

But Dad came. He didn't say anything at first.

He just sat beside me, his presence steady like a rock. Then he spoke, with that deep voice that always made me feel safe.

"Then fight, Liselotte."

He didn't ask if I wanted to. He didn't try to comfort me with empty words.

He offered a path. And that, in that moment, was enough to make me stand.

Since then, my days have started before dawn.

The first day was the hardest. My hands didn't know how to hold a sword, my body though stronger than it looked wasn't used to moving with such precision.

I fell. I scraped my knees. My muscles ached in ways I didn't know were possible.

But I didn't stop.

Dad's training is demanding. Every day feels like a war. He makes me repeat the same moves for hours until every mistake vanishes. Every time I fail, he corrects me without hesitation.

There is no comfort. Only improvement.

Sometimes, when Mom serves breakfast after training, she watches me in silence. Her eyes show a mix of pride and worry. She doesn't want me to get hurt. But she knows I need this.

Mom and Dad run an inn. It's not rich or fancy, but it's a warm home. Travelers love it.

Dad used to be an adventurer, one of the best in his group "Shadow Fang." Sometimes his old companions come to visit. And when they do, they teach me a few things too.

At first, they laughed. A ten-year-old girl training as a warrior. What kind of joke was that? But when they saw my effort, my determination... they stopped laughing.

One day, Gared, the group's swordsman gave me a training sword forged just for me.

"It's heavier than what you're used to," he said "but with your will, you'll make it a part of you."

And I did.

Over these three months, my arms have grown stronger, my movements sharper.

I stopped being a girl wielding a sword, and became a swordswoman in training.

Today, everything changed.

Dad woke me up earlier than usual. The sky was still full of stars.

"Come to the field" he simply said.

I followed without question. When we arrived, Gared was waiting for me. He always watched me, but rarely spoke. Today he carried his real sword. Not wood. Steel.

"You're not training today" Dad said "Today, you fight."

My breath caught. A real battle?

"Don't hold back" Gared said "I'll treat you like an opponent."

I wasn't afraid, just excited.

We prepared. The field was silent, covered in morning dew.

We took our positions. My fingers closed around my sword's hilt. It was the same as always, but today... it felt different.

The battle began with a roar of wind.

Gared moved like a shadow. Fast, lethal. His first strike almost disarmed me.

I barely blocked it. The impact rattled me to the bone.

But I stood my ground.

Every blow he struck was a lesson. Every dodge a life-or-death decision.

My mind emptied. Only the rhythm of combat remained. The sound of clashing steel.

After several exchanges, I knew I couldn't last much longer.

But I saw an opening. A slight shift in his balance. I lunged.

My sword struck his arm.

He stopped. Looked at me with respect.

"Clean hit" he said.

I fell to my knees, exhausted, gasping for breath. Sweat blurred my vision. But inside me... something was shining.

Dad knelt beside me. Placed a hand on my head.

"One sword is enough, Lotte. It always has been. You just have to keep sharpening it."

I cried.

But not from pain.

From pride.