

## Frozen Star 87

### Chapter 87: Beneath the Roar of the Arena

[POV Liselotte]

The blinding sunlight struck us full on as we stepped out of the dark tunnel into the vastness of the arena.

The deafening roar of the crowd engulfed us instantly, like an endless, merciless thunder.

The sound was so powerful it made the ground beneath my boots visibly tremble and shook my bones, as if I were standing in the epicenter of a storm.

Thousands of anonymous eyes fell on us all at once, and I felt the unbearable weight of every scrutinizing gaze, each one heavy with expectation and judgment.

The fine golden dust of the battlefield rose in little clouds with every step we took toward the center of the oval.

Just a few meters away, our opponents were already deployed: four burly adventurers, their skin weathered by countless days under the sun, armed to the teeth with heavy swords, long spears, and loaded crossbows.

Their armor bore dents and scars from past battles, yet still looked solid and functional—clearly forged for efficiency in real combat, not for spectacle or show.

One of them, a thick-bearded man with a fierce gaze that radiated aggression, spat contemptuously on the ground before growling with obvious mockery.

“So we’re up against little girls playing at being warriors, and a trained pet wolf. This will be quick and uncomplicated.”

The others laughed with confidence, though it sounded forced, adjusting their weapons in hand with movements meant to intimidate.

I didn’t answer their provocations.

I only gripped the familiar hilt of my sword tighter, drawing in deep, steady breaths so the overwhelming noise of the crowd would not cloud my focus.

Chloé stepped half a pace forward in a fluid motion, her fur bristling completely, her sharp fangs gleaming under the blazing light.

Leah moved strategically behind me, her fingers already sparking visibly with the promise of fire waiting to be released.

Then the bronze gong rang, a deep, resonant sound that cut through the general clamor.

The battle officially began.

The four opponents charged us immediately, with the rough coordination of those who had fought together before, but lacking refinement.

The bearded man came straight at me, raising his longsword in a descending arc that could have split anyone in two.

I met him with a firm, calculated block.

My arms trembled under the force of the impact, but I managed to deflect his blade just enough to create an opening and counter with a quick side slash, forcing him to step back in surprise.

To my left, Chloé leapt like a silver lightning bolt against the spearman trying to flank us.

Her calculated bite missed by mere inches, but her razor-sharp claws tore across his breastplate with a metallic screech, sending orange sparks flying.

The man shouted in pain and shock, retreating as he tried to keep her at bay with wide sweeps of his spear shaft.

Meanwhile, Leah held her ground and raised both hands with determination.

A controlled torrent of living fire rose behind us like a protective curtain.

“Now, Lotte!” she cried, her voice cutting sharply through the roar.

I moved aside just in time for a perfectly aimed fireball to explode against the crossbowwoman aiming at us.

The woman rolled across the dusty ground, her outer clothes catching fire as she frantically slapped at the flames.

She wasn’t completely out of the fight, but weakened and distracted enough to prevent her from readying another shot.

The crowd roared with every clash of steel, every blinding burst of fire, every feline movement from Chloé that looked like a deadly choreographed dance.

But within me, at the core of my concentration, there was only absolute silence—the rhythmic sound of my own breathing, and the frantic pounding of my heart driving adrenaline through my veins.

The bearded man lunged at me again with renewed fury, this time with a brutal shove that used his greater weight and almost sent me sprawling.

I managed to hold my guard low, though my arms burned from the accumulated strain.

“You’re strong...” I growled through clenched teeth. “But not strong enough to break us.”

I pushed forward with all the strength I could muster.

At that exact moment, Leah launched another concentrated firebolt that skimmed past my left shoulder.

The controlled explosion hit the enemy squarely, throwing him onto his back with a muffled cry drowned in the crowd’s cheers.

Chloé, seizing the distraction, sank her fangs into the exposed arm of the spearman, forcing him to his knees with a cry of agony.

Blood poured freely from the deep wound.

She released him immediately, her lupine instinct making her step back into position, her golden eyes blazing with restrained fury and unshakable determination.

Only the crossbowwoman remained standing, still staggering from her burns, and one last opponent trying to regroup after seeing his comrades fall.

I charged at him with a guttural cry rising from deep within me, our swords clashing again and again in a shower of orange and blue sparks.

He was quick, his reflexes sharp.

But he made a crucial mistake—he raised his guard too high while preparing an overhead strike.

I exploited the exposed gap in his side and struck him down with a clean, precise slash that left him gasping for air, writhing on the ground.

Leah, panting heavily from magical exertion, lifted her trembling hands one final time.

She conjured a low wall of fire that strategically surrounded the remaining crossbowwoman, forcing her to surrender verbally before she collapsed from the heat and exhaustion.

The gong rang again, its deep tone declaring the official end of the match.

The crowd erupted in cheers, louder and more deafening than before.

The collective roar rose like a giant wave crashing over me for long, endless seconds.

I stood motionless in the center of the field, my chest heaving violently, my sword still raised in a defensive stance purely out of instinct.

We had won.

We had actually done it.

I slowly turned my head and saw Leah, exhausted but smiling genuinely, sweat glistening down her forehead and cheeks.

Chloé was coated in a layer of golden dust, enemy blood splattered on her muzzle, yet she stood tall with the innate dignity of her kind, her eyes glowing like twin golden suns.

We gathered at the very center of the battlefield, forming a tight circle.

Leah hugged me suddenly, trembling with residual adrenaline.

I barely had time to drop my sword before returning the embrace with equal intensity.

Chloé circled us with a low, prolonged growl that, despite her usual stern tone, sounded oddly satisfied—almost protective.

The master of ceremonies then announced with his thunderous voice, as if competing with the crowd itself:

“The clear victors of this match—Liselotte, Leah, and the silver wolf Chloé—advance by their own right to the next round of the tournament!”

The crowd roared again in one unified voice.

And for the first time since we had stepped into the arena, I felt it was not empty noise or casual entertainment.

It was genuine recognition.

A collective cry that seemed to lift us symbolically, as if the entire world suddenly believed we could truly go further than expected.

I inhaled deeply, closing my eyes for a brief moment, letting the deafening sound wash through me as I embraced the triumph.



Yes, we had successfully overcome the first trial.

But deep in my chest, beneath the fleeting euphoria and relief, I knew with unsettling certainty—

The hardest, the truly challenging battles still lay ahead in the rounds to come.