

Frozen Star 99

Chapter 99: Beneath the Breath of Winter

[POV Liselotte]

The world became fire.

The impact was so brutal it tore the air from my chest. The crimson and black sphere struck my icy shield at the very instant I managed to form it. The ice shattered with a sharp, tearing sound. It was as if thousands of crystals broke in unison. The fire carved its way through with voracity. It devoured the frost. It devoured the air. It devoured everything in its path.

I fell to my knees upon the burning sand.

The ground seared beneath my feet. The metal of my sword vibrated with a high, continuous lament. A burst of pure energy hurled me backward without mercy. The world became a succession of white lights and distant noise. I could barely feel my arms. The smell of burnt flesh and fabric filled my senses completely.

“Lotte!” Leah’s voice reached me distorted, as though I heard her through water. “Lotte, answer me!”

I tried to lift my head with superhuman effort. My shield had held just long enough to keep me from being consumed entirely. But the impact had pierced through all my defenses as if they were paper. My body trembled uncontrollably. The poison still coursing inside me continued draining me—slowly and cruelly—stealing my strength with every heartbeat.

Around me, the sand melted into a pool of liquid glass. The White Veil figures moved without the slightest hurry. They advanced through the steam and burning remains. They seemed untouched. Completely relentless.

One of them tilted its head slightly. Its hollow voice echoed once again inside my mind. The words came clear and cold.

“Ice cannot halt the eternal.”

Those words struck harder than any spell ever could.

I shut my eyes tightly. The crazed noise of the crowd. Leah’s desperate screams. Even the roar of the arena itself. All of it seemed to fade into a distant, insignificant murmur. Everything turned into deep silence. Only my ragged breathing remained. And the echo of something far deeper—something awakening within me.

It was an ancient murmur. A voice I knew far too well.

“Remember...”

That voice. It was the same I had heard in my most vivid dreams—the one that spoke to me in the world of eternal ice. The same that had told me of creation and of winter.

“Cold does not destroy. It preserves. It protects.”

A frozen spark ignited deep within my chest. It wasn't warmth—it was the total absence of it. A void that wrapped around everything.

I rose with a strangled groan. My body screamed to stop. Every muscle protested in pain. But my soul refused. I drove my sword into the sand with determination. The metal, blackened by the enemy's fire, began to glow again. A bright, intense blue radiance surged from its core.

The figures of the White Veil froze in place. Something in the air changed suddenly—it grew heavy. Charged.

The wind turned sharp as a blade. The steam began to crystallize before our eyes, transforming into a mist of frost that drifted slowly down. It looked like silver ashes falling from the sky. The temperature plunged. Every breath stung as it entered my lungs. Every sound was abruptly silenced. Everything became smothered by the white hush of winter.

“Lotte...” Leah murmured, eyes wide in awe. “What are you doing?”

I didn't fully hear her. Or maybe I did. But I was no longer entirely present in that moment. My mind was elsewhere—in another place, another time.

The ice spread from beneath my feet without my command. It crawled across the sand like a living, conscious river. It grew, climbed, twisted into intricate patterns. Blue runes began to appear on the ground—circles and shapes I didn't recognize with my mind, yet my body understood by instinct alone.

The White Veil finally reacted. One of them raised its hands quickly, attempting to conjure another sphere of dark energy. But the ice reached it before the spell could form.

Frost climbed its legs with shocking speed. It covered the figure completely in seconds. Its white robe stiffened beneath a translucent layer of crystal. Another tried to evade, but the air itself solidified around it, trapping it in a frozen prison that mirrored the distant flames of the coliseum.

The cold devoured everything in its path. Not just the sand—but the very magic that saturated it. Even the air seemed to freeze.

The crowd, hidden beyond the frozen haze, fell into absolute silence. Only the sound of the growing ice filled the world—a constant crackling. A song of winter.

And at that precise instant, I felt something inside me break.

A crushing pressure ran through me from head to toe. It was tearing me apart from within—the price of forcing that ancient power. My hands spasmed involuntarily. A thread of hot blood slid down my lips. Still, I clung to my focus with everything I had left. I couldn't stop. Not now.

"Leah!" I shouted, my voice hoarse—almost unrecognizable. "Now!"

She understood without hesitation. She rose, staggering. Her eyes ignited with golden fire—a fire I had never seen in her before.

“Chloé!”

The wolf roared with all her might. It was a deep, guttural sound that shook the arena to its foundations. Leah channelled her magic through that powerful roar. Her fire flared with overwhelming intensity—different from before. Purer. Whiter. More alive.

The flame coursed through the ice I had created, running along it like a golden, burning vein. When both forces met at the center of the arena, the resulting explosion was beyond description.

Fire and frost. Creation and destruction. Two opposing natures merged into a single blinding flare.

The White Veil were swallowed by the light without escape.

The impact hurled me backward uncontrollably. This time, I had no strength to stop the fall. Everything turned blurry and confused—distant screams, searing heat, the deafening roar of the coliseum. And then, there was only nothingness.

Absolute silence.

When I opened my eyes, I was lying on the cold sand. Leah was kneeling beside me, one hand on my forehead. Her face was smeared with soot and streaks of dry tears. Chloé, visibly wounded, panted nearby—her silver fur covered in frost and dark dust.

In front of us, the White Veil lay motionless. Not completely destroyed—but unmistakably defeated. Their white robes were frozen and fractured, covered in tiny crystals that reflected the light like shattered mirrors.

The announcer took several seconds to react. He seemed stunned by what he had witnessed. But when his amplified voice finally resounded through the coliseum, the roar of the crowd erupted with overwhelming force.

“Victory for the Silver Pack!”

Leah let out a broken, relieved laugh. “We did it...” she murmured weakly. “Barely... but we did it.”

I tried to respond. I wanted to say something—anything—but only managed a faint, tired smile. My hands wouldn’t stop trembling. The cold I had summoned still clung to my skin, refusing to release me. As if it were part of me now.

While the ovation swelled around us, as the coliseum’s magic barriers slowly began to close, I lifted my gaze toward the gray sky above.

For a fleeting instant, I thought I saw a silhouette of white light watching me among the low clouds. The same figure from my dreams—the woman of ice and light.

And deep within my mind, a soft, distant voice whispered with terrifying clarity.

“Winter has awakened. But the price has only just begun.”

A cold shadow settled in my heart. Victory tasted like ashes.