

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 78

Chapter Seventy-Eight

Sephie

I was so exhausted that I fell asleep quickly, despite feeling as awful as I did. Adrik came into the room and climbed into bed behind me. He was trying to be as gentle as he could, which I appreciated. I wanted him to hold me, but I was still so mad at him that I couldn't tell him that.

I had no dreams at first, but eventually I found myself back in the ballroom. I watched Adrik fall to the ground, screaming for him. Then I would look toward Ivan, running away from me. I would scream for him, and the vision would restart.

This time, when I screamed for Adrik, I heard his voice. The scene around me faded and I was back to the abyss. The void where I could see my body, but nothing around me. I heard his voice clearly now.

"Sephie, I love you, solnishko. Please come back to me. I can't live without you."

I tried to go toward the voice. It felt warmer. It was a stark contrast to the cold of the void. The warmth was surrounding me, making me feel safe. I lost his voice though. I couldn't find it and I was back in the ballroom, screaming for him once again as I watched him go down.

"Sephie, I love you. I'm here. I'm not going anywhere. I don't care how many times I need to tell you for you to believe it again, but you're my everything."

The warmth was back with his voice. I could feel it envelope me. I looked down at my arms and legs. They were brighter. I could see them more clearly. I could see just barely in front of me.

"I've loved you since the first night I saw you, when you were standing at the bar. Your eyes were so wide when you saw Viktor and Andrei walk in. It was adorable. But then you locked eyes with me and I saw the look in your eye immediately change, giving me that spark that only I can see. Your friend Max had to push you to come show us to the meeting room. You almost tripped on your way to us. I was trying desperately to control myself as you walked closer. You were so different from any woman I'd ever seen. When you asked what you could get us to drink and Viktor told you waters for all of us, you cocked your head to the side and said "different." Then you immediately got worried you had offended me. It was all I could do not to kiss you right then. I stepped close to you, able to smell the floral scent of your shampoo. It dr ove me crazy. I sat down at the table and all I could think about was running my hands through your hair and what it would look like not in a braid."

The void no longer felt cold at all. I could see in front of me. I could see where I was going. I could get out of here.

There was a path that I followed to a vaguely familiar house. As I got closer to the house, I could hear music coming from inside. Something felt right about this. Like I knew this house, even though I didn't recognize it. I walked the path to the front door. I pushed on it, opening it slowly. The music was louder now. I knew the song. It was my mother's favorite song. Who would be playing that song?

I walked inside, trying to be quiet so I wouldn't disturb the person playing. I couldn't see them yet, but the music was getting louder with each step I took inside the house. I could almost feel my fingers wanting to play the next note before I heard it.

I peeked into the first room I came to, revealing a grand piano. A man was sitting at the piano, absorbed by the music.

He hadn't heard me come inside the house, he just continued to play my mo m's favorite song. I stood, motionless, watching him. Who was he? Why didn't I feel scared of him? How does he know that song?

When the song ended, he sat for a moment and stared at the keys. He sighed. Without turning to look at me, he said "Hello, Sephie baby. It's been a long time since you've seen me."

I looked at his back, confused. Just as I was about to speak, he turned around to face me. His face. It looked so familiar, yet not, at the same time. Like I'd looked at his picture for years and now that I was seeing him in person, it wasn't the same.

I gasped. "D-Dad...?"

He smiled, his eyes squinting like mine did when I smiled. He stood up and walked toward me, his arms wide. "Hey peanut." He wrapped his arms around me. "I've missed being able to hold you, little one. That's the one thing I miss the most. But I'm so proud of you. I've watched you grow up. I've been there the whole time and Sephie, I'm so proud of you." He hugged me tight.

"How? How are you here?"

"Eh, the logistics are a bit complicated. You can say I'm a bit of a guardian angel, if that's easier for you to understand."

I stepped back to look at him, my eyes wide. "You saw...everything?"

He chuckled. "Well, not everything everything. I know when to give you privacy. But every tough situation you've been in, I was there in case you needed me." He looked at me thoughtfully, brushing a curl from my face. "You know, you've never once needed me, Sephie."

"No, that's not true. In the...basement?" my voice cracked as I thought about that ho rrible night.

He closed his eyes, sighing. "That was the first time I thought you might need me. I was just about to step in when you saved yourself." He put his hands on both of my shoulders. "Sephie, look at me. What you did that night, it was meant to happen.

Sometimes Karma uses you to deliver justice, if you will. You were simply the one that delivered his sentence."

I su cked in a breath. "So, I did. I did ki ll him that night?"

He nodded. "Nobody found him for months. The knife was mysteriously gone." He looked at me, raising one eyebrow.

"You?"

"Okay, maybe I helped just once. But I mean, seriously. Do you know how boring it is being the guardian of such a... capable child? You gotta throw me a bone once in a while, peanut."

I smiled at him. Clearly, he was where I got my sense of humor from.

"There's my beautiful girl. You know you can light the way for ships into harbor with your smile? You almost give Adrik a heart attack every time you smile at him. I'm not even joking about that one. We've had extra angels on standby because it got close a few times."

My smile faded, thinking about Adrik.