

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 118

Chapter One Hundred Eighteen

Adrik

I was lost in my own thoughts about whether Sephie was awake yet when I heard Viktor clear his throat. I looked toward him, immediately catching her eye. My breath caught when I saw her. She had a white, long-sleeved blouse on. Her wounds were much better, but still visible, so she preferred long-sleeves when she was around anyone else but us. She paired that with a pair of black jeans. I was still in awe of how she could make a pair of jeans look so sexy so consistently. She wasn't one to put a ton of effort into her appearance and yet she was still the most beautiful woman in the room. I could tell that she'd showered and applied the smallest bit of makeup that she would wear. She still made my heart threaten to stop when I saw her.

I motioned for her to come to me. She glanced around at everyone else, nervously. She hesitated to come to me. I looked at her more sternly and motioned again for her to come to me. Viktor gently pushed her toward me. He knew I had made sure there was a chair for her, in case she decided to join the meeting.

I wanted to get up and show her how much I missed her at this moment, but that might be too much of a distraction. Most of the men weren't even paying attention and hadn't noticed her walk in and sit down next to me. I put my arm across her lap, happy to be touching her once again.

"Why would you be worried about that? They have a built-in customer base if they lease space in this building. They don't even need to do outside advertising. They can sustain their business strictly on the people in the building. That's a restaurant's wet dream." I tried to not laugh too loudly at what she just blurted out. "Oh sh it. I just said that out loud, didn't I?"

She was so adorable that I almost couldn't take it. I loved it when she said what was on her mind. She always had very valid points. Everyone else in the meeting was shocked at her presence, more than they were at what she said. While these guys were all seasoned businessmen, they've said much worse in meetings before.

I was going to have to convince her to come to all my meetings, if for no other reason than her comic relief, as well as her superb observation skills.

After talking with Stephen extensively about what happened when she smelled Vanessa's perfume in the elevator, he decided that there was some unconscious connection between both events that her subconscious had picked up on, but she wasn't necessarily aware of in her conscious mind. He tried to walk her through the day of the attack on her and Misha, asking her to think about every detail she could remember including sounds and smells that she might not have noticed the first time around. Not exactly a hypnosis but trying to pull more detailed memories out of her.

She did well until she got to the moment that the guy hit her and took her to the ground. We could all see her body start to shake as she relived that moment. It was clearly still traumatic for her, so Stephen stopped. He glanced to me and nodded his head toward her. I immediately went to her, wrapping my arms around her, pulling her into my lap. She sighed and relaxed as soon as she felt my arms around her. She opened her eyes, looking at me. I saw fear in her eyes. She had done such a good job of hiding it from me when it happened that I thought she was handling it well. I felt a pain in my chest thinking of how I'd let her down.

I kissed her forehead, holding her closer to me. She was still shaking, but it wasn't as bad as I'd felt it before. She inhaled. "I'm sorry. I didn't know this was going to happen."

"Shhh. Don't ever be sorry for this. Ever," I said, looking her in the eyes.

"This is your body's way of processing the trauma, Sephie. Do you know what rabbits do when they get away from a predator?"

Stephen asked. She shook her head no. "They go to their den and do this very thing. They shake to process the trauma of narrowly escaping death. They let it happen, then pop up like nothing happened. If you don't let this happen, then you'll remain stuck in the moment of the trauma, if you will. Your body knows what it's doing. You're smart for not fighting it. You processed the night of the ball more than you ever did with the attack on you and Misha, but I doubt you're done completely with either."

"So, I have more of this to look forward to in my future?" she asked him.

"Don't shoot the messenger, but yeah. More than likely," he said. He looked at her with a look of sympathy on his face.

"Awesome," she said. She tried to put on a brave face, but I could still see the fear behind her smile when she looked at me.

"I'll be right here with you, solnishko." I tightened my arms around her as she rested her head against my chest.

"Maybe next time if you're here with me, we won't have to stop." She looked up at me, like she was asking me if I would be willing to.

I couldn't help but smile at her. "Of course, my love. Like I would turn down an opportunity to have you in my arms."

She smiled at me, the fear dissolving for a moment.

"Let's give it a few days and then we can try it again. There's a connection between everything, we just have to find it," Stephen said. He looked to Misha. "Did you notice any strong smells the day you two were attacked?"

Misha thought for a moment. "No, I was focused on what I was feeling and the number of people that were suddenly around us. I don't remember anything else."

"Did you smell her perfume when she was here?" I asked. He shook his head no. "Go to the closet in the bedroom. There's a trash bag all the way at the back. It has the clothes we had on that day. You'll be able to smell it on the clothes. Just leave the bag where it is and close it back tight so Sephie can't smell it. I forgot to grab it this morning to throw it out. Guess that's a good thing."

Sephie looked at me, surprised. "I was only kidding when I said we needed to burn those clothes."

"You're not the only one that hates that smell, solnishko." I kissed her forehead.

Misha returned, a look of nausea on his face. "God, I forgot how much I hated that smell."

"More importantly, does it bring anything up for you?" Stephen asked.