

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 182

Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Two

Sephie

We spent more time in Adrik's office that afternoon. They made plans for taking me to talk to Chen that evening. I wasn't sure he was still in the same apartment, but I knew he used to be there late afternoon to start dividing up his latest shipment to sell over the weekend. He had streamlined his process and he had very regular customers. He was always sold out by Sunday, and we generally wouldn't see him again until the following Friday. Every now and then, he would stick around for a day or two, but it was rare. You could just about set a clock to Chen's movements on the weekend.

Ivan and Viktor got into an argument over whether Ivan should stay at the building or go with us. Viktor said he should stay, Ivan said there was no way he wasn't going. They both had valid arguments, but neither was going to budge. Andrei was somewhat nervously watching the argument, as Viktor could also make him stay behind as he wasn't technically completely healed yet either, although he was much closer than Ivan.

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I caught Andrei's worried eye, winking at him. "Viktor?" I said as sweetly as I possibly could, to help diffuse their growing anger with each other. Both he and Ivan turned to look at me. "Why don't you let Ivan and Andrei drive. They can do that much, at least, right?"

Viktor thought for a moment, then relented. "Fine. They drive, but nothing more. I won't risk it."

I looked to Misha, who was also watching this entire exchange with an amused look on his face, for confirmation that it would be fine. He nodded his head. I walked to Viktor, reaching up and hugging his neck. I said quietly, so only he could hear me, "thank you, Papa Bear, for always worrying about me." He kissed the top of my head, holding me closer for a moment.

The plan was Stephen would leave first, with two other guys and set up across the street from my old apartment building. They could cover all the possible ways to the apartment building from above. It seemed a little overkill for a conversation with my old neighbor, but after Massimo's attempt to grab me, I was happy to be over-prepared. Andrei and Ivan would drive. Misha and Viktor would stay with me at all times. There were also three other guys that normally stayed at the building, but that Viktor trusted, who were going with us, just in case. They reasoned it would be harder to separate us with three vehicles, rather than just two.

I did try to argue that someone should stay behind with Adrik, but I got shut down very quickly. Apparently, Team America was running backup for his security since Armando was also at the building. Adrik and Armando were planning to meet while we were gone anyway, so Team America would be with him.

Adrik pulled me close. I could see the worry in his eyes. "I'll find out everything I can. As quickly as I can, so I don't give you a heart attack," I said, smiling up at him. He was in his usual battle with the curls around my face.

"Stay with Viktor and Misha, please. If anything feels off, you leave right away," he said. I nodded my head. He leaned down and pressed his lips to mine. He surprised me by wrapping one arm tighter around my waist, the other hand ran through my hair to the back of my neck as he deepened the kiss. My knees went weak, but he had such a tight hold on me that I didn't move. Just as I felt myself starting to lose control, he stopped, kissing my forehead. He pressed his forehead to mine for a moment, as he caught his breath. "I love you, solnishko."

I looked up at him, kissing him once more. "I love you the most. Plus infinity. Plus one," I said, grinning at him. He laughed as he loosened his grip on me.

Ivan walked up with my jacket in hand. "Come on, princess. He'll never let you leave if we don't go now."

I took my jacket from him, laughing. As I turned to leave, Adrik pulled me back to him for one more kiss. I laughed against his lips. "I'll hurry back. I promise."

We pulled into the parking lot of my old apartment building. It looked so run down now that I hadn't seen it everyday for the last few months. It made me realize just how much my life had changed since I'd met Adrik.

Chen's car was in the parking lot. I pointed it out to Ivan and Misha. "That's Chen's car. He should be here." There was one other car in the parking lot, but someone was walking toward it as we pulled in.

I walked to Chen's apartment, followed closely by Viktor and Misha. I knocked three times, waited, then knocked twice more.

Chen opened the door, completely surprised to see me standing there. Or maybe he was more surprised by Viktor and Misha standing behind me. Either way, he was surprised.

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"Sephie! What's the word, my girl?" he asked, raising his hand for me to grab it. When I did, he pulled me in for a hug, causing Viktor and Misha to take a step closer to me. I laughed to myself. They hate it when I hug people they don't know. "Where you been, girl? I haven't seen you in forever. I stopped by the restaurant a few weeks ago. Max said you haven't worked there for a minute."

"Yeah, it's kind of a long story. How was Max? He looked well?" I asked, suddenly curious about how he was doing.

"Yeah, he's good, but I think his girlfriend might be driving him insane. She's a cook there. You know Max. He flirts with all the girls. That's how he makes his money, you know? If I had a face as pretty as his, I'd be working it all day long too," he said, smiling. His smile faded and he added, "she don't like that. Yo, she's got jealousy issues or something. She came out the back like 20 times while I was there to check and make sure he wasn't flirting with anyone. He said he's going to go into debt soon. because his tips have basically fallen off. He was talking to me about dealing because he needs the money."

I suddenly felt terrible. I hated it for Max. Misha noticed my mood shift and said, "serves him right," as he coughed, trying to cover up what he said. I glanced over my shoulder at him. He just shrugged his shoulders.

"Chen, I'm actually here to see if you've heard anything about your supply being replaced with brawn?"

His face fell. "Are you fucking serious, Sephie? I don't fucking touch that stuff. Why would I want to kill my client base? That's a terrible business decision."