

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 312

## Chapter Three Hundred Twelve

Adrik

The guys were waiting on us when we walked into the kitchen. They'd been stressed because Sephie had seemingly taken a turn for the worse over the last week, on top of everything else. She never took it out on any of us, but it still affected everyone to see her so cranky. And they were starting to miss her because she basically did nothing but sleep.

"Good morning, princess," Ivan said as she walked into the kitchen. She was in front of me, so I couldn't see her face, but I knew by the look on Ivan's face that she was smiling at him.

"Super Squish," she said as she walked to him. She looked around, noticing Stephen wasn't in the kitchen. "He's downstairs getting breakfast. He'll be right back," Ivan said before she could even ask. They'd banned her from trying to cook until she had the use of both arms. That was one reason why we think she took a turn for the worse. She was trying to do too much and suffered because of it. She wasn't happy with the ban, but she finally relented. After every single one of us scolded her for arguing with us.

"How did you sleep, gazelle?" Misha asked as she made the rounds in the kitchen.

"Like I was dead," she said, laughing. Andrei handed her a cup of coffee, saying, "this will help bring you back to life."

Stephen walked back into the penthouse, clearly happy that she was awake. "How's your appetite this morning, Seph?" he asked. "I got you French toast this time. Maybe a sugar high is what you need," he said, grinning at her.

"That'll keep me awake for 10 extra minutes today," she said sarcastically. She still hugged him and thanked him for remembering she loved French toast.

She picked at her breakfast, eating some of it, which was progress from the previous few days. She saved the rest of it for later, in case she got hungry again. Really, she was saving it for one of the guys. They would always eat her leftovers at some point.

"When do you meet with the police commissioner?" she asked, chasing around a bite of toast on her plate but not actually eating it.

"Tomorrow. I was waiting to see what Sal did before I met with him. He knows, loosely, what's happening, but I need to fill him in on everything," I said.

"Who had Sal running on the whiteboard and who had him staying?" she asked, smiling.

Sal had stayed in his house for days after Trino delivered Anthony and Lorenzo to him. Trino had his guys watching Sal the whole time. They could see him inside the house. Like Stephen said, if it wasn't Sal, it would've been @artbreaking. He was definitely in mourning. We were waiting to see what he was going to do next. Trino had offered to take care of Sal. "I'm still pissed he would try to go around me and make a deal with the Mexicans. I'll be happy to take care of him for you," he said.

"Be my guest, Trino," I had told him. One less thing I would have to worry about. We had guys watching Niko and Vito as well. Both paid visits to Sal while he was shut in his house. Both were shown Trino's special delivery. Both were now afraid for their

own lives.

The people in those three areas of the city were still unhappy and threatening to revolt against the bosses. Even with being terrified for their own lives, they were still trying to collect the new taxes they'd imposed on their people. Massimo's underbosses were still trying to collect taxes in his area. The only quiet areas belonged to Dario and Armando.

Trino was proving to be invaluable to me during this entire situation. I had not expected him to come through the way he was. During one of the short windows when she was awake, I'd talked to Sephie about it.

"I'm not that surprised that he's proving to be as helpful as he is," she said. I looked at her skeptically. "He knows you trust actions more than words. Because he's very similar to you. You're going to need to return the favor when it comes to the Mexicans when this is over with in the city."

I could feel her worry starting to build, but she was trying to smile through it. "You shouldn't worry, love. Trino took care of them by himself last time. If we help him, it will be even faster," I said.

She tried to take as deep a breath as she could. "I know. I still worry. I can't help it." I could feel her frustration as I pulled her as close to me as possible. We were both missing the ability for me to hold her tightly

That afternoon, Sephie had her two-week check-up with Dr. Williams. He wanted to take another x-ray of her lung, just to make sure everything was still functioning properly. We all went to the hospital with her.

"How's your breathing?" he asked.

"Still not what I'd like it to be, but it's okay," she said.

"Is it mostly your ribs? Are you feeling like you're not getting enough air?"

"Both, I think? I can't take a deep breath because of my ribs, so it feels like there's not enough air all the time," she said.

"Hmmm. Let's get you x-rayed. I want to see what's going on in there."

He had to take her arm out of the sling to be able to see all of her lung. It was painful for her, but not like it was before she left the hospital. I stood to the side and tried to help her with the pain as much as I could. It worked better when I could touch her. She didn't have tears in her eyes this time when I walked back to the table she was lying on. I strapped her arm back in the sling and helped her sit up so we could put my oversize sweatshirt back on her. At least she'd been staying warmer with the clothes we got her through all this.

Dr. Williams told us to wait in the exam room while he looked at her x-rays. He had a concerned look on his face when he walked back into the room.

"Have you been feeling fatigue lately, Sephie?" he asked, sitting on a stool in front of her.

"She's done nothing but sleep the past few days. She's only been awake a few hours each day," Ivan said. "Literally everything wears her out."

"She's also lost her appetite again like she did before when she took pain meds," Misha said.

"She was starting to breathe better after the first days of being at home, but now she's struggling to breathe again like she did when she was still in the hospital," Andrei said.

Dr. Williams looked to Sephie for confirmation of what they'd all just said. She simply nodded her head in agreement. "Any sharp pains in your chest?" he asked as he put a stethoscope on and listened to her breathing.

"Just my ribs."

"What about a rapid heart rate?" She shook her head no. He wheeled himself to the cabinet on the opposite side of the room, grabbing a needle and syringe. "You've got fluid building up in your lung again. I'm thinking you're in the beginning stages of pneumonia, but I want to run a blood test to make sure it's pneumonia." He looked at me, then to each of the guys. "Have you heard her wheezing again when she breathes?"

"No wheezing. She's coughing again occasionally, though. Usually when she tries to talk too much," Andrei said.

"It's becoming more frequent," I said.

Dr. Williams took blood from Sephie's right arm, then stood up. "I'm going to put a rush on this so we'll know for sure whether this is pneumonia. I can send her home with antibiotics, but that's not going to make her stomach any happier. If the antibiotics don't begin to resolve it, she's going to need to be admitted again," he said as he stepped out of the room.

She had tears in her eyes when I looked down at her. "I don't want to go back to the hospital," she said quietly. I pulled her to me, so her head was resting on my shoulder as I wiped away the tears. She closed her eyes, leaning on me. "I'm so tired of this," she said so quietly that I almost didn't hear her.

The guys were quiet, not knowing what to say, but clearly worried about her. Sephie sat quietly beside me, with her head on my shoulder until the doctor returned. I thought she might've fallen asleep, but she heard him come in the room and lifted her head from my shoulder.

"The good news is it's pneumonia. That's also the bad news. I'm going to send you home with antibiotics for now, but I want to see you again in seven days to make sure it's not getting worse. If you start to have trouble breathing at any point, you need to come straight here. Your lung is still healing and this could cause it to collapse again." He looked at all of us, saying, "if you hear her start wheezing again, or she has any sharp pains in her chest, her pulse starts racing, she starts turning blue, or has shortness of breath, bring her here." We all nodded. "The antibiotics will be easier to handle if you can eat something when you take them. Yogurt is usually a good choice, if you can't manage anything else," he said, looking back to Sephie. She nodded her head. "On the bright side, your bones look like they're healing well. How's your shoulder feel?"

"It's not as painful when I take it out of the sling now. It still hurts, just less," she said.

"That will continue to get better. Your ribs look good, but they always take the longest to heal because they're constantly being moved." He looked at Ivan. "Seven days, bring her back. Don't miss a dose between now and then. We hopefully caught this early enough that it won't progress into something worse that means she has to come back here. Let her rest as much as she needs, but stay diligent about her antibiotic."

"We'll take care of her," Ivan said. The doctor stood up to leave the room. I helped Sephie stand up, then reached down and picked her up. I could feel her exhaustion. She didn't protest, she just wrapped her good arm around my shoulders and rested her head against my shoulder and neck as we left the hospital.