

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 98

Chapter Ninety-Eight

Adrik

It was early afternoon. Misha had Sephie's attention, telling her some story. I stood off to the side, watching her as she listened intently to him. Ivan walked up beside me. "Everything okay now, Boss?" I knew he was referring to seeing me get angry with Sephie earlier.

I sighed. "For now, yes. I agreed to lay off the doctor threats, but I don't know what else to do if she doesn't start healing."

He crossed his sizable arms across his chest, turning to look at me in the eyes. "I'm not telling you what to do when it comes to her, Boss, but I recognize the look in her eye when it comes to the thought of doctors. She let us take her to the hospital after she was attacked because she didn't have a choice. It was basically the same when we got to the ranch up north. She was too exhausted and in shock to protest. There's something there that she doesn't want any of us to see yet that prevents her from trusting doctors. It's the same look I have."

I thought for a moment. They were very similar in their aversion to doctors. I could easily see that. I didn't know the whole story on Ivan, but I knew doctors had basically used him as a test subject when he was younger because of his inability to feel pain. I suspected it was not a happy story. I wasn't sure why Sephie had such a mistrust of doctors, but I was fearful it was also not a happy story.

I exhaled. "I know, Ivan. I know you're right. I know there's something there. I just want to help her so badly and I can't think of a way to make that happen without a doctor. I want her to be well again. I still feel terrible about everything that's happened."

"We all do, Boss. Even though she just told me earlier she was going to kick my ass if I didn't stop it, I still feel terrible about it."

I chuckled. At least she was back to acting more like herself, despite her pain. "Let's just hope your honey trick works so I don't have to call a doctor and make everything worse."

He placed his hand on my shoulder. "It will, Boss. You just have to be patient and give her time to heal herself. She's been through more than most people I know. I don't think that girl knows how to quit. Let her use that instead of forcing something on her that she doesn't want."

I ran my hand through my hair, pondering what Ivan had just said. I closed my eyes, exhaling, trying not to stress over it all. I felt Sephie's arms slide gently around my waist and her lips press gently to mine. When I opened my eyes, she was looking up at me, her sweet smile stretched across her face. "You look like you just had a very serious conversation."

I leaned down and kissed her once more. "You're rubbing off on Ivan. He's quite good at telling me what I need to hear now." I looked in the direction where Ivan had been standing, only to see that he was gone.

She grinned. "Ivan is wise beyond his years. He just doesn't want anybody to know it. He likes his peace too much."

"When we get home, you're coming to work for me."

She cocked her head to the side, thinking. "I'll consider it. Maybe if you offer to pay me in Vinny's sandwiches, I'll consider it more seriously, she laughed.

"Are you hungry again already?" I asked, pulling her closer to me.

She laughed. "No. Well, not yet. Give me twenty minutes and then ask. I am dying to get back just so I can go there. Misha promised me all the Vinny's I could eat after the ball. I'm holding him to it." She paused, then added, "someone should probably warn that poor man. He's going to be so busy..."

We were outside, with Sephie's head in my lap, her eyes closed enjoying my fingers running through her curls. I couldn't quite tell if she was asleep or still awake but it didn't really matter. I would stay like that for as long as she would let me. Armando came up and sat in one of the chairs opposite the couch we were on. He looked troubled. I looked at him, expectantly, waiting for him to speak.

"This project still troubles me. It's such a large undertaking that I don't want to fund it entirely myself. I need more investors."

Without opening her eyes, Sephie said, "why don't you crowdsource it? Let the people invest. It's for their benefit, right? Let them have a piece of it, as well. With a large chunk of the city's population behind the project, the politicians won't be able to not approve it."

I looked to Armando, a smirk on my face. Sephie never ceased to amaze me with her ideas. Armando thought for a moment, then exclaimed, "Sephie, you're a genius! This could actually work! Even better than my original plan. It will give the people even more chances to increase their own wealth, which will inevitably benefit the city too. This could put this city on the worldwide map!" he said, clapping his hands together.

Her eyes still closed, she smiled sweetly, still enjoying my fingers in her hair. Armando quickly stood, taking his phone from his pocket to make a few calls. As he walked away, I leaned down and asked quietly, "so how many sandwiches a day are you thinking you'll need?"

She giggled and opened her eyes to look at me. I would never stop wanting to see her smile or the way her eyes shined brighter as she laughed.

Armando returned after a few moments, with news from his assistant. "Boss, we have news on the lawyer. My people have been able to uncover some information that they think we'll be interested in. Since it's already getting late, I told them to go home tonight and that we would be at the office first thing in the morning to hear the details."

I felt Sephie tense. She opened her eyes. "Where's Misha?" She didn't look alarmed, per se, but she wasn't relaxed anymore.

"What's wrong, solnishko?"

"Something about the office. I don't know what. Where's Misha? I want to see if he notices it too."

I called for Misha, explaining Armando's plan to him. I didn't say anything about Sephie's reaction and she was quiet as well. Misha stood for a moment, contemplating, then all at once, his eyes got wide. "Um, Boss, I don't think that's a good plan. Something about the office."

Sephie sat up, her mind racing. "Misha did you notice anything at the meeting? Like did they leave anything? Were they ever alone in the building? Do you think they could've done something while they were at the meeting?"

He shook his head no. "We had eyes on them the entire time. I don't know what it is, Boss, but we shouldn't be at the office building tomorrow."

I looked from Misha to Sephie. If they both felt that way, I wasn't going to argue. I looked to Armando. "Have your people come here tomorrow instead. Only those that are completely necessary. Tell everyone else to stay home. Be as discreet as you can, make up whatever excuse you need to, but make sure they don't go to the office."

Armando looked shocked but nodded his head and left to make the necessary calls. I looked to Sephie, somewhat surprised at her reaction. She looked equally as surprised.

"Misha, how does your gut feeling work?" she asked.

He sat down in the chair that Armando had previously been in, thinking. "It depends, really. Sometimes it's a bad feeling, uh, like nausea. When we were attacked, it was more like a feeling of impending doom right before it happened. I was just about to stop you when they hit us. This one is different still, like I thought about going to the office and heard something tell me not to." He looked to me, his eyes wide. "I swear I'm not crazy, Boss."

I chuckled, but before I could answer, Sephie was asking more questions. "Did you hear a 'don't go' when you thought about the office?"

Misha's eyes got even wider. His mouth fell open slightly. "How did you know that?"

"Because I heard it too. That's why we called you over here. I wanted to see if you had the same feeling."

Now, my eyes were wide in shock. Sephie thought for a moment, a small smile appearing as she seemed lost in thought. I ran my hand down her back, not really wanting to interrupt, but curious as to what she was thinking. Just as she looked toward me, a bird swooped down in between the couch we were on and the chair where Misha was sitting. It flew above us, turned, and swooped in between us from the opposite direction.

She giggled. "You were right. It is magnificent," she said quietly to herself.

When she turned to look at me again, she had tears in her eyes, but she was smiling. She inhaled deeply, "you might think I'm crazy for this, but that's my dad. When I was asleep when we were up north, I was stuck in that loop at the ball until you pulled me out of it. Once I was free of that scene playing over and over, I was allowed to see my dad again. He's been watching over me my entire life. He told me that what happened was necessary for everyone, especially when it came to believing Misha's gut instincts." She leaned into me as I wrapped an arm around her. "He's the one that told me you'd been laying underneath me for 12 hours so I wouldn't get sucked back into my nightmare. He's who warned me about this." Just then, the bird flew down and landed on Sephie's knee. He looked right at Sephie for a few moments before flying off again.

I had never seen anything like it before in my life. I glanced to Misha, who was speechless. I looked down at Sephie, her eyes who was still lost in a memory, her sweet smile on her face. She turned to look at me after a moment, questioning as she searched mine. I didn't give her much time to question. I leaned down and kissed her. "You never cease to amaze me.