

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 144

## Chapter One Hundred Forty-Four

Adrik

I walked back in the kitchen, looking straight at Ivan. He looked at me with a knowing look. “That doesn’t look good. Come with me,” he said as he walked into the next room. “Where is she?” he asked once we were out of ear shot of everyone else.

“On the balcony.”

He nodded, walking to the front door. He walked down the front steps, into the middle of the driveway before he stopped. “Boss, I’m going to tell you what she told me this afternoon, but only because she’s going to try to sabotage your relationship if I don’t. She trusted me with this secret and it was one I intended to keep. She’s so terrified that this will make you not want her anymore, that she’s going to do everything in her power to see that through to fruition before she tells you.”

“Whatever you’re about to tell me won’t make me love her any less.”

“I told her that, but she won’t believe me. She’s probably not going to believe you at first, either.” He sighed, running his usable hand through his goatee. “Boss, she can’t have children. That’s why she hates doctors, too. She was forced to have a hysterectomy when she was 16 by a dirty doctor that her uncle paid.”

I felt a rage build inside me. “WHAT?”

“She said when her uncle used to beat her, he would kick her repeatedly in her stomach. He thought that since he hung out with whores that Sephie was just like them. He would kick her, call her names, and tell her she wasn’t going to ever bring home another mouth to feed. She hemorrhaged one night and started bleeding profusely. It was likely due to the repeated kicks to her stomach that he gave her. He took her to this doctor who did an ultrasound and found extensive scar tissue. Any reasonable human would’ve known it was from the beatings, but her uncle thought she had gotten pregnant without him knowing. He told the doctor to take her uterus. She pleaded with him not to do it and told him it was because of her uncle’s beatings, but she was 16. Her uncle had guardian rights over her still. The doctor performed the procedure against her will.”

I was so angry that I could barely see straight, but I saw the tears in Ivan’s eyes as he told me this story. Just when I thought her past couldn’t get any worse, I find this out. I didn’t even care about children. That part, the part she thought was the most important, was the least important to me.

“She’s terrified that you’re going to get rid of her because she can’t give you children. Or, and this one was really fucked up that her mind would even consider it, that you would keep her around while you had children with another woman.”

I suddenly felt like I had been punched in the gut. “How? How could she even think I would do such a disgusting thing to her?”

“It’s not her thinking that, Adrik. It’s what he beat into her. It’s his programming that she’s still struggling to get free of. We all know how much she loves you. You know how much she loves you. This isn’t her. It’s him. It’s the last hold he still has on her.”

“It’s a good thing she already killed him or I would find him and kill him myself.”

“She did what now? She killed him?” He looked Impressed, Proud, even.

was part of the nightmare loop she was stuck in when we were on the plane. She had blocked it out

hol e night. The whipping, all of it. Instead of just slicing his Achilles tendon; she

said she stood over him and watched him die. He reached for her

Into his heart. She said

could remember

that’s impressive.”

“Right? I’ve honestly never been more proud of her. That fucker got off easy, as far as I’m concerned,” I said, starting to pace back and forth. I was still trying to control my anger over the doctor forcing a procedure on her against her will. I stopped in front of him, looking at him in the eyes. “How do I make her believe that I don’t give two shits about her not being able to have children? Hell, it actually makes her more attractive to me now. All the sex I could ever want with literally none of the consequences? Who doesn’t want that? How do I fix this? She asked me to leave her alone, which is why I came back downstairs without her.”

He thought for a moment. “You pulled her out of her darkness on the plane and at the ranch house. She told me you did. She did it for me when I was in surgery and the entire night in the hospital. You can pull her out of this, but you’re fighting old

programming that has literally been beaten into her. It’s not going to go away quickly. You’re going to have to be patient and reassure her a lot, I think. It takes a lot of time and repetition to break old programming and form new. But I have no doubt you can pull her out of this. It’s part of the reason you two were meant to be, I think.”

“What if she doesn’t want to talk to me when I go back up there? She had that voice, man. You know the one.” I was suddenly worried that she would slip back to where she was at on the plane where she wouldn’t let anyone touch her. “What if she won’t let me touch her again?”

“She’s going to try to push you away, because that’s the easiest thing for her to do right now. She’s dealt with a lot. She just had more put on her yesterday. But there’s a reason this came up now. This is the final hurdle you have to get over before she can really believe you’re not going anywhere. Adrik, she’s terrified to be alone. She might be telling you to leave her alone right now, but that’s the last thing she really wants. She talked to all of us about it at the lake today. That’s why she holds onto Max. Being alone got her beat by her uncle, a forced medical procedure, and almost killed. It makes more sense why she can’t let go of him if you look at it like that. You can’t listen to her right now. It’s not Sephie talking anyway. We all know she can’t keep her hands off you.”

I was staring at the gravel on the driveway as I listened to his words. Sephie was right. Wise well beyond his years. I nodded my head. “If she refuses to talk to me, I’m sending you in with her. I know you two share something that the rest of us can’t understand. Maybe you can get through to her if I can’t.”

He chuckled. “It’s good to have a backup plan, but you won’t need it. You’ll get through to her.”