

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 329

Chapter Three Hundred Twenty-Nine

Adrik

The day we were all waiting for was finally here. It had been long enough that Sephie was finally getting her cast off. She'd been making steady progress with her shoulder and was able to move her arm as much as the cast would allow. Her ribs were getting better as well and only caused a dull ache most of the time. She said she felt like she was starting to be able to breathe better finally, too. We were all looking forward to this trip to the hospital for once.

"One more x-ray before the cast comes off, Sephie. I want to take another look at your lung, as well. How has your breathing been since you finished the antibiotics?" Dr. Williams asked.

"It's getting better. My ribs don't hurt as much anymore so it's easier to take deeper breaths," she said.

"Good. We should be able to get the cast off today and send you on your way," he said.

The x-ray wasn't a problem at all for her this time. She hadn't even worn the sling to the hospital. Most days, she left it off for almost the entire day. Andrei had been helping her do little exercises to help strengthen her shoulder again. Occasionally, she would wear the sling after a session with him because her shoulder would be extra sore. But she usually only wore it for a few hours and then it would come off again.

Dr. Williams walked back into the exam room with power tools. "So, the good news is that the cast can come off," he said, walking toward Sephie. Ivan instinctively took a step closer to her when he saw the electric saw in his hands. She leaned into me, her eyes wide.

"Um, what's the bad news, doc?" she asked. I could feel her starting to get nervous.

"I have to use this to take the cast off," he said, holding up the saw. She immediately looked at me, her fear evident, as Dr. Williams went about setting up the saw.

"You've never had a cast removed before, solnishko?" I asked her in Russian.

"I've never had a cast before," she replied.

"Did not expect that," Ivan said.

"It'll be okay, spider monkey. He just uses the saw to cut through the outer plaster layer. The rest will slide off your arm," Andrei said, trying to calm

her nerves.

"Keep your eyes closed, love. It'll be over quickly," I said, running my hand up and down her back to try and keep her calm. I wanted her to keep her eyes closed just in case her eyes decided to go dark, too. So far, it seemed like the doctor had missed that phenomenon and I wanted to keep it that

way.

She shut her eyes tight, hiding her face in my shoulder while she lifted her arm to give the doctor access. I glanced up at Ivan, who was trying not to laugh at her. We had all assumed she'd broken bones before, especially given her history. It was completely unexpected that she would be terrified to get the cast off, but I could easily feel her terror growing as the doctor started to saw the cast off. It looked like Ivan cold too, as he clearly bristled once the saw turned on. His face went deadly serious as he watched the doctor like a hawk.

Thankfully, it was over after just a few minutes and the doctor pulled the last of the cast off her arm gently. She sighed, but didn't move her face from my shoulder immediately. I could still feel her fear, but it was slowly lessening. I grabbed her left hand for the first time in weeks, my thumb tracing circles on the back of her hand. That was finally enough to get her to look up. Her fear disappeared quickly and I felt her warmth spread over my entire body as she felt her hand in mine for the first time. She looked up at me, her sweet smile across her face.

Dr. Williams turned around from putting the saw aside and said, "it's going to be sore for a few days while you remember how to use it, but your bone healed quite well. Your ribs are looking better as well, but they're still going to need a little more time to heal completely, so nothing too strenuous for a couple more weeks. Your lung looks nice and clear as well, so I shouldn't need to see you again as long as that stays the same." He nodded to everyone in the room and walked toward the door.

"Thanks, doc," Ivan said. Once the doctor had left the room, he looked at Sephie, smiling. He opened his arms to her, saying, "come here, princess, I've been waiting for this." She stood up and wrapped both arms around him, laughing. "I see now why you told me so often that my one-armed hugs

socked. They really do su ck," he said, holding her tightly.

"Let us be gone

from this place," she said, stepping back from Ivan. She held her hand out to me, as I stood up.

"We should celebrate," Misha said.

"Vinny's for lunch? Stephen asked as we were leaving the hospital. We still attracted attention walking through the hospital, despite Sephie not looking like she'd just survived death. The guys knew she was still sensitive about it and didn't particularly care for the unwanted attention. They just silently moved in closer around us so it was harder for anyone to see her. I'm sure the Russian didn't help people to not stare, either.

"Can we actually go there?" Sephie asked.

Viktor looked at her, smiling the sweet smile that was reserved only for her. "Of course, sestrichka. We can go wherever you like," he said. Her smile that made the world a brighter place stretched across her face.

"I haven't been anywhere in so long. This is going to be awesome," she said."

I caught Misha's eye when she mentioned not being able to go anywhere. I knew he was about to order me to go to the house. "After lunch, we should go to the house for the rest of the week," I said, grinning at Misha, who looked surprised that I had caught on. And maybe slightly disappointed that he wouldn't be able to give me an order this time.

"Really?" she asked as she climbed into the backseat. She rarely needed help with anything anymore. While I was happy that it meant she felt better, I was finding myself a little disappointed that she didn't need my help so much. I'd become accustomed to helping her and I found myself really loving that she let me.

"Really," I said, sliding into the backseat beside her. I reached over and pulled her tight against me. She was practically in my lap, enjoying the fact that there was no cast in the way anymore.

"Best day ever," she said, using both arms to pull my arms around her once again.

Unbeknownst to Sephie, when I had the guys pick up warmer clothes for her, I had them get double of everything. Since we had to cut the sleeve off most of her shirts, she was going to need new ones once the cast came off. The complete shirts were sent to the house, waiting for her cast to come off. She was still wearing my sweatshirt, but she was missing a sleeve underneath.

When we got to the house, I pulled her with me to the bedroom. Once we were alone, I pulled my sweatshirt off her. "I like where this is going," she said, grinning at me. Her lung was getting better, but I had decided to let her tell me when she was ready. I'd scared her once and I was not planning on scaring her again. I pulled her one-sleeved shirt off and walked to the closet to get her a new one.

"Where did that come from?" she asked when she saw the new shirt in my hand.

"I had them get extras. I knew we'd have to cut the sleeve off of some of them, but I also knew you'd need complete shirts once the cast came off," I said.

"You think of everything," she said quietly. She took the shirt from me and put it on. "Look, I can dress myself!" she said laughing. She noticed the disappointment I was feeling at her not needing my help as much. She pulled me to her, her eyes searching mine to find the reason for my shifting mood. Her sweet smile on her face, she said, "I will always need you." She wrapped both arms around my neck, then said, "I want to try something."

"Want to try what?" I asked, pulling her tight against me. It felt so nice to be able to feel her body against mine once again. "As long as it doesn't involve you any farther away than this, I'm in," I said, smirking at her.

"It does not," she said, standing on her toes to kiss me. The kiss started gently, almost timidly. I knew she was testing her lung capacity, so I let her dictate how deeply she kissed me. She pressed her body into mine, tightening her hold on my neck, as she increased the passion in her kiss. Her tongue exploring, making it more difficult for me to control myself. I could hear her breathing, but she didn't stop. I ran my hands over her back, down to her ass. Like she read my mind, she jumped and wrapped her legs around my waist.

She was making it incredibly difficult to control myself. I leaned my head back, stopping the kiss. I wanted to see how well she was breathing. She was out of breath, but she said, "I'm okay." I looked at her skeptically. She laughed at me, squeezing me with her legs. "It's better this time," she said. "T out of breath, but it feels like I can catch my breath easier."

I put my hand on the back of her neck, pulling her to me once more, I kissed her passionately, but quickly. "I think we should still take it slow. As much as I hate to say those words out loud..." I said.

She laughed, unwrapping her legs from my waist. "I don't disagree. But at least now I know I won't hyperventilate when you kiss me like that. I've missed that," she said. She turned so her back was to me. She pulled my arms around her waist, leaning back against me. "I can't wait to go to bed tonight. I can finally lay across your chest again," she said. It was such an innocent thing to say, but I felt my breath hitch at the thought of it. God,

I've missed her.