

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 43

Chapter Forty-Three

Adrik

After dinner, she had asked if we could take a walk as the sun hadn't set completely yet. We walked around the property in relative silence, followed by a guard at a distance. She seemed lost in her thoughts. I was honestly impressed that she was comfortable with so much silence. I would steal glances at her regularly, watching her as she took in everything around her. The way the fading light of the day made her hair look like actual fire, with its varying shades of red and orange. The evening sun also made the brown in her eyes more prominent, making her eyes almost match her hair at the right angle.

She caught me staring at her and walked closer to me, silently grabbing my hand. We walked the rest of the way to the house in silence, hand-in-hand.

"Do you want to talk about it?" I asked once we got to the bedroom. She stopped, like she was thinking about it, but shook her head no. "You know you can say anything to me, anytime. I want to help." She gave me a small smile. She walked toward me and gave me a quick kiss.

"I just want to go to bed right now. It'll be better in the morning."

I woke up sometime later to an empty bed. I had fallen asleep with Sephie in my arms, but now she was gone. I sat up to see if the bathroom light was on, but the room was dark. The bedroom door was slightly ajar. I got out of bed to see

if she had ventured downstairs. The bedroom that she had stayed in the first night was open and I could feel the cool breeze from the balcony coming into the hallway. I quietly walked to the balcony, finding her sitting on one of the chairs. She was hugging her knees to her chest, with her head buried in her arms. I could hear her softly sobbing. My heart felt like it had just been punched at the sight of seeing her cry. I wanted to make it stop.

I said her name quietly, so I wouldn't scare her. Kneeling in front of her, I rubbed her leg lightly. "What's wrong, solnishko?"

She sucked in a breath but didn't raise her head to look at me. She stayed silent.

"Sephie. Talk to me. Please."

She raised her head enough that I could see her teary eyes. I wiped the tears from her eyes with my thumb. I looked at her, full of concern. She looked at me for so long that I thought she wasn't going to say anything.

"Everything. Everything caught up to me at once. I miss my mom. I've had to relive living with my uncle. The fucked-up events with Anthony. Being here and not being able to leave. All of it."

I found myself flinching at the last part. Did she want to leave me? Was she tired of me already? My mind was racing. How would I live without her now? It's only been a few days, but I knew for sure that I never wanted to be without her for the rest of my life.

I heard a small laugh. She reached down and touched my face. "I don't want to leave you, Adrik."

I exhaled, clearly relieved. She stretched her legs down and pulled me to her. She was upset and yet, she was once again consoling me instead. I sat up again, asking, "what can I do? I promise you'll be able to leave here after tomorrow. Anthony is supposed to be gone today, but I want to give it one more day to be safe. And then there's the matter of

your surprise at the end of the week. What about your uncle? Do you want me to have him killed? Say the word and he's a dead man."

She laughed, but I could tell she was seriously considering it. "He's probably fried so many brain cells that he doesn't even remember who I am. I don't think he's anything to worry about. I just don't like having to relive it when someone new finds out."

She leaned her head back against the chair and closed her eyes.

"Sephie, I don't know why you had to go through all of that. But it made you into the woman that I'm falling in love with today, so as weird as it sounds to say, I'm glad for it all. You've come into my life and made everything brighter. You light up the room when you walk in. You have five trained killers downstairs fighting over who gets to stay with you. You notice the slightest things about people. What they need, what they like, what they need to hear. You share your light with everyone and never ask for anything in return. You have my heart, Persephone. So as insane as I sound saying it, the road you've been forced to travel has led you here and I will spend every day of my life from this point on trying to show you how grateful I am that that road brought you to me."

She had lifted her head when I started talking and was looking at me. A few stray tears fell from her eyes. I wiped them as she wrapped her arms around my shoulders. "I don't know how I got so lucky," she whispered.

"It's me who is the lucky one here, solnishko."