

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 60

## Chapter Sixty

Sephie

They all looked at me, then looked quickly to Adrik. He nodded and pulled me closer. “You can show them, solnishko. They won’t look at you differently either,” he whispered to me.

I slowly stood up and raised my shirt up high enough that they could see most of my scars. I heard a few of them inhale sharply. I dropped my shirt and sat down next to Adrik again. He wrapped his arm around me again, pulling me to his side.

I took a deep breath and gave them the abbreviated version. “I was sent to live with my uncle when my mom died, as he was my only family, and I was only 15. He had a drinking problem that later turned into a pill problem. He started to beat me when he started on the pills. I would leave the house for hours when I knew he was high, waiting for him to pass out. That’s how I started running. Sometimes he wouldn’t be passed out when I got back, and he would catch me and beat me. Most of the time it was just his fists and he’d kick me, but the last night he used a whip on me.”

Andrei asked, “how did you get away?”

“I had found that apartment I was in when I met you guys and I was slowly taking my stuff there, planning to just never go back one day. Ms. Jackson had befriended me in that process. Earlier that day, she had seen fresh bruises from the latest beating, and she gave me a pocketknife. It was in my pocket when he had exhausted himself from beating me with the whip. He came back to kick me, and I grabbed his foot and sliced his Achilles tendon so he couldn’t come after me. I stole his car and drove to the apartment. Ms. Jackson stitched me up and helped me out. She sold the car while I was sleeping so he couldn’t find me.” I said, smiling at the thought of her helping me.

They were silent for a minute. Ivan leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees. “So, about this bingo that she needs a date for…?”

I laughed. “That’s why she means so much to me. I owe her a lot.”

Viktor said, “she can take each of us to bingo every night of the week if she wishes.”

“Where is your uncle now? What happened to him? Can we kill him?” Misha asked.

I smiled at him, getting his wide smile and a wink in return. “I don’t know. I haven’t seen him since that night.”

“We can find him. We will gladly find him,” Stephen said. “I can pick him off from a rooftop somewhere. No one will ever know.”

I looked at him, smiling at his offer of violence on my behalf. “I think he’ll get his Karma on his own. I don’t think any of you need to step in. But I love you all for offering.” Adrik pulled me close and handed me the glass of water again.

We sat in silence for a few minutes. Adrik asked, “you said the pills your uncle took made him violent. Do you remember what it was he took?”

“I don’t know what they were called. I only saw them once or twice. They were pink and purple pills. Like the gel cap kind that you can pull apart and the powder comes out, you know?”

“Did he swallow the pills, snort it, or cook it and inject it?” Ivan asked.

I tried to remember what I’d seen my uncle do. “I’m not sure. I know he swallowed them at first, but I don’t know if he did anything different later on. He had an extremely high tolerance for alcohol, so maybe he developed a tolerance for the pills too? He would pass out for sometimes days at a time after taking them.”

They all looked at each other, like they had just gotten an integral piece of the puzzle. I looked at each of them. “Do you guys know what he was taking?”

“It’s a mixture of three drugs. Dealers started mixing drugs a few years back to try to create different highs for their customers. They call it ‘brawn,’ Viktor said. “It makes people feel stronger, but it also makes them more violent. Then their body crashes, which is why your uncle would pass out for a few days after each time. That’s probably why the guys who attacked you are still out. I’d be willing to bet they were on it.”

“The question now is who put them up to it and who gave them the brawn. Most of the city is clear of it now. There’s only a few areas where you can find dealers still willing to make it. Most of the bosses told their dealers to quit making it. Either a few of them didn’t listen or the bosses never actually told them to stop,” Ivan said.

I rested my head on Adrik’s shoulder, suddenly exhausted again. He took the now empty glass of water from me and set it on the table beside the couch. “Come, back to bed for you. We’ll talk about this more in the morning,” he said picking me up off the couch.

I didn’t argue, I just snuggled into his arms as he walked me back to the bedroom. The guys all waving bye as I disappeared down the hallway. He laid me on the bed and walked to the closet, untucking his shirt as he went. I was fighting to stay awake when he got back. “Will you stay with me?” I asked, trying to keep my eyes open.

He climbed into bed beside me, wrapping his arms around me. I sighed, contentedly. “How’s your head? Still have a headache? Do you need more painkillers?”

“No, it’s okay. It’s not bad now. I don’t want to sleep for a day and a half again.”

“I won’t argue with that,” he said holding me tighter. “I missed you.” He pulled me closer, holding me tightly. “You clearly needed to sleep though. I was worried about you.”

I rolled in his arms to face him. My hand went to his face, running my fingers lightly over his facial hair. I was still fighting to stay awake when I felt him kiss my forehead. “Sleep, my love.”