

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 97

## Chapter Ninety-Seven

Sephie

Adrik looked skeptical. I looked at Ivan and said, “show him the scar you healed this way. He doesn’t believe you.” Ivan lifted his shirt, showing Adrik the long scar across his ribs.

“I refused to go to a doctor and get stitches. I used honey and packed it, same way as I showed you.”

Adrik looked from Ivan, then to me, then back to Ivan. “How long until we know it’s working?” He was visibly tense.

Ivan thought for a minute. “I don’t know exactly. I couldn’t feel this one, so I don’t know if it helped with the pain or not, but you should see it physically start to look better after the first bandage change in a couple of days.”

Adrik nodded, then looked to me. “If it doesn’t look better when we take that bandage off, I’m calling a doctor. I’m serious this time, Sephie. I need you better,” he said, his voice angrier than he probably meant it to be.

“Like I don’t? Like I want to be in pain for various reasons for an entire month? Like I want to worry about my hip just falling off from infection? Like I want to worry about not saying anything because I don’t want to worry you with more sh it?” He looked somewhat stunned. Ivan smirked at me, nodding discreetly as he turned to leave as quickly as possible. Cow ard.

Adrik sat down next to me on the bed. He started to speak, then changed his mind. He leaned forward, his elbows resting on his knees. He stared at the carpet for a few minutes but said nothing. I sat and watched him trying to find the right words. I wasn’t angry, but I also wasn’t going to take his anger at my aversion to doctors. I had my reasons.

He sat up, turning to look at me. His blue eyes were questioning, searching mine trying to find the answer to his silent question. I sighed. “I have a good reason for hating doctors. Can you please just trust me on that one and let me make my own decisions about my body?”

He opened his mouth to speak, then shut it, then thought for a minute more. Finally, he said, “Sephie, I never meant to...”

I cut him off. “I know you didn’t. I know you want me better just as much as I want to be better.” I sighed. “The last month has been a lot. I have a lot going on in my head. Some days I feel like I’m barely keeping it together. The doctor thing will be the proverbial straw that breaks this gazelle’s back if you force it.”

His face softened as he reached up to trace the features of my face with his finger. “Okay. How do I make you better without making it worse?”

“Stop threatening to call a doctor, for one. Let’s try Ivan’s idea. If it doesn’t get better, I promise I will tell you. You just have so much on your mind already that I don’t want to bother you.”

He exhaled. His blue eyes scanned my face, a small smile on his lips. “You still don’t get it. Nothing else matters. You’re the most important thing to me. If you’re not better, I don’t care about any of the rest of it. That’s why I’m so frustrated and why I came across as angry with you. I’m racking my brain trying to come up with ways to fix you and the only solid solution I can think of, you refuse. I don’t know how else to help and quite frankly, it’s a blow to my ego.”

It was my turn to be stunned. He traced his finger lightly over my face once again, the small smile still present. “You’re always taking care of everyone else. Even today. I’m sure you managed to help Ivan with his demons. It doesn’t take that long to find a jar of honey. All while you’re trying to hide the pain you’re in because you don’t want to worry me. I want so desperately to help you, even if it’s only a fraction of the help you give so freely to everyone else. You deserve to be taken care of, Sephie.”

I dropped my gaze, hearing my uncle’s voice in my head. It was a distant whisper now, but it was still there, almost like an echo. Telling me I wasn’t deserving of anything, that no one would ever love me. I shut my eyes, not wanting to hear his voice, not wanting to think about any of this. I felt Adrik’s lips on my forehead. “He’s wrong, you know. Everything he said to you, everything he tried to beat into you. All of it. It’s all wrong. You, above everyone I’ve ever known, are the most deserving of love. The most deserving to be taken care of.” My breath hitched as I tried to choke back a sob. I felt the tears falling on my cheeks, despite my best efforts to keep them contained.

“Sephie, look at me.” I inhaled but didn’t open my eyes right away. I was trying to gain control before opening my eyes. He waited patiently. When I did open my eyes, his deep blue eyes were looking at me as sincerely as I’d ever seen them. He reached up with his thumb and wiped the tears from my eyes. “You’re worthy of everything I can give you and so much more. I love you more than life itself and I will spend the rest of this life and all of the next proving to you that I will always be with you when you’re walking through the shadows of your past.”

I searched his eyes, always looking, always doubting. Never finding the change I was expecting. He held my gaze, letting me search. I was starting to think he kind of liked it. There was an openness to him now that wasn’t there before, like he knew what I was doing and was inviting me in. I chewed on my bottom lip. “How did you know?”

“How did I know what?”

“What my uncle used to say to me.”

“When you were passed out on the plane. You were talking in your sleep. We heard you struggling against what he had constantly told you. It was... haunting.”

My eyes went wide in shock. I had no idea. And they all heard it. “Sephie, you think that people will think less of you because of what you went through, when the reality is that we all admire your strength and wish we had even an ounce of it. What you went through then and what you’ve been through just since I met you, would have broken many people. Completely broken them. But you keep going, you keep smiling, you keep bringing joy to everyone’s life while doing dumb shit like not telling me that you’re in pain because you don’t want to bother me.” He smirked at me. I couldn’t help but smile. “You are the most amazing woman I’ve ever known and I will keep trying to prove that to you, as long as it takes.”

I moved closer to him, resting my head on his shoulder. His arm slid around my waist, holding me close. I closed my eyes, lost in my thoughts, still unsure how I got so lucky to have this man love me so completely