

King of the Underworld

Chapter Two

Sephie

There is a steady stream of food to the back room throughout the night and the alcohol flows freely. I've gotten four smacks to my ass in the first hour. All the boss's eldest sons are there. Lucky me.

Around 9:30, two new bodyguards, who are quite possibly the biggest men I've ever seen, walk into the restaurant as I'm waiting for Max to fill my latest alcohol order. Walking in right behind them, I see a man I don't recognize, but can't see clearly as the lights are dim in the restaurant. He steps fully inside the door, and I can clearly see his face. He's tall, surprisingly young for a Lord King Boss, dark hair, two-day old stubble that I find myself wondering what would feel like against my neck, and he turns to look my direction with the most piercing blue eyes I think I've ever seen. He catches me staring at him and a sly smirk comes across his face. Just then, Max steps up behind me and gently pushes my shoulder.

“Hey, you should go escort him to the back room. He might not know where to go. I'll have your drinks ready when you get back.”

I take a sharp breath in, broken out of my daze, and practically stumble toward the men at the front door.

“Uh...hi, I’m guessing you’re here for the meeting?”

His intense gaze leaves my face to scan down my body briefly and discreetly, as he reaches down to adjust the cuffs of his shirt. He looks up again and nods once.

Okay, man of many words. This, I can handle.

“Please, follow me.”

He nods once more, and all five men follow me to the back. There were two more bodyguards behind him that I couldn’t see until the first two units stepped further into the restaurant.

Before I open the door to the back room, I turn around to face them, asking “may I take your drink orders, gentlemen?”

One of the first bodyguards says, “yes, water for all of us, please.” His very thick, very Russian accent is very apparent.

I was surprised by his answer, so I cocked my head to the side, letting a “different” slip out before I realized I had said anything. My cheeks immediately flushed as I realized I had said the quiet part out loud.

“I’m so sorry. I mean no disrespect,” I said as I stared at the floor and stepped to the side while opening the door for them.

The first two bodyguards entered the room first, scanned the entire room, then nodded. The blue-eyed Lord King Boss stepped up closer to me while his bodyguards were scanning, that sly smirk on his face once again, and leaned in close enough that I could smell his intoxicating cologne.

“None taken,” he whispered, his Russian accent detectable as he stepped in front of his bodyguards to the welcoming greetings of the entire room.

“*What the fuck is wrong with me,*” I muttered to myself as I rushed back to the bar to get those drinks and to add five more waters to the order.

The mood in the room palpably changed after Mr. Lord King Boss joined the meeting. Everyone was very tense and very serious. What had happened while I was getting those drinks? I did a quick head count as I delivered each individual drink order. Ok, nobody died while I was away. This is a good sign.

I placed a refill of bourbon in front of one of the boss’s sons. Anthony, I think his name was. This was Anthony’s eleventh bourbon of the evening. Max knew better than to water down these drinks, so Anthony was getting the good stuff, at full strength. In layman’s terms, Anthony was drunk off his ass .

No sooner had the glass hit the table and Anthony reached back and smacked my ass with such force that I was thrown forward onto the table, giving the men across from Anthony a full view down my shirt. I caught myself on the table and pushed myself back upright, only to meet those steel blue eyes once again. Only this time he wasn’t smirking. Instead, his jaw was clenched.

I could feel my cheeks turning fully red as I apologized under my breath and quickly left the room. As soon as the door closed, I rushed through the kitchen and out the back door. Ugh, I hated the last Thursday of the month.

I walked to the dumpster and back a couple of times when I heard the kitchen door opening. One of the giant bodyguards came out first, quickly followed by the new guy. I stopped my pacing, not knowing how I was going to walk past him to get back to the restaurant.

He turned to his bodyguard, who handed him a cigarette and a lighter. Lazily putting the cigarette between his lips, he tilted his head down slightly as he cupped his hands around his face to light it. When the flame ignited, his face was illuminated, revealing that his blue eyes were focused on me. I was still frozen in the same spot, wondering how I was going to walk casually by this very powerful man back into the restaurant.

Oh, for fuck's sake, just do it. After all, you have a job to do, Sephie.

I took a deep breath and walked up to the back door. I kept my gaze down until just before I reached the two men, but quickly glanced up and gave them the best smile I could muster, before reaching for the door. Just as my hand was about to make contact with the door, he reached out and gently grabbed my wrist, causing me to look at him in fearful confusion.

He must've seen the fear in my eyes because he immediately let go and raised both of his hands.

“Hey, not gonna hurt you. I just want to ask you some questions,” he said. His blue eyes, now darker, were so intense that it felt like he might be looking into my soul.

“Um, sure. What can I help you with? Did you want to order some food? Can I get you more than water?”

He let out a small chuckle, as did his bodyguard. What was so funny about me doing my job?

“No. But thank you. You’re very good at your job, but I don’t allow my men to drink when they’re working, and I never touch alcohol.”

“Oh...okay. Um, what kind of questions?”

“How well do you know those men in the meeting?”

“Um, I mean, define well? I’m always the waitress that serves them when they have their meetings. I know the older men by name, as they’re here every time. The younger men I have a harder time remembering because they aren’t always here. The sons aren’t always here either...thankfully” I whispered, once again realizing too late that I had said it out loud instead of in my head. “I know them more by their drink and food orders than anything else. I can tell you exactly what they like and don’t like when it comes to food and alcohol, but in the interest of self-preservation, that’s all the information I divulge on those men.”

He smirked at me and asked, “are they always so rude to you?”

“The older men, never. They’re very respectful. Most of the underbosses too are very respectful unless they drink too much. I’m not sure if their bodyguards know how to speak, because now that I think about it, I’ve never heard them say a word. The sons, though? What you saw earlier is a normal occurrence.

Especially when they're all here. It's like they try to outdo each other."

He squinted his eyes slightly as he inhaled the smoke from his cigarette. Holding his breath for a second before turning his head to blow the smoke into the air, away from me, his eyes never leaving mine. Why did I feel like I could look in those eyes for hours and never get tired of it?

"Thank you, uhhh...I'm sorry. I didn't catch your name?"

"Sephie."

"Sephie? That's an unusual name."

"It's short for Persephone. Most people have a hard time pronouncing it, so I just shortened it. Also, those who know are generally nervous once they find out I'm named after the Queen of the Underworld," I said, looking down at my fidgeting hands. I really loved my name, but it did come with a weird history.

"Thank you, Persephone. You've been very insightful. I'm pleased to have met you tonight," he said as he extended his hand to me.

I hesitantly placed my hand in his. He gently turned my hand over and brought it up to his lips. When his lips connected to the back of my hand, it was like fireworks went off in my stomach.

I tried not to be obvious about the sharp inhale I took as he kissed the back of my hand, so I said, "yes, you too...mister?" as I looked at him inquisitively.

“Adrik. You can call me Adrik.”