

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 145

Chapter One Hundred Forty-Five

Adrik

I walked quickly up the steps to the front door, not sure I believed his words, but hoping that he was right. I took the steps, two at a time, and walked back to the balcony, hoping she hadn't disappeared while I was talking to Ivan. My mind was racing, my heart was racing, but most of all I just wanted to hold her. And maybe find that doctor and put a bullet in his head, but I'd save that for later. Right now, she needed me more than I needed revenge.

She was sitting in the chair, her knees pulled up to her chest, her face buried in her arms. I could hear her softly crying as I walked out onto the balcony. It was starting to get much cooler. Fall nights meant the sun set much earlier. There was barely any daylight left. I was worried about her getting cold. Without thinking, I scooped her up from the chair and went to the bed. Thankfully, she didn't protest. Or punch me.

I sat with her in my arms, her still curled up in a tight ball rocking back and forth slightly, for a few minutes, trying to find the right words to say. "Sephie, can you look at me?" She just shook her head no. At least she's responding. "Sephie, Ivan told me. I know." She froze. "Sephie, I don't even like kids. I think it's dangerous to bring children into my world. They're a vulnerability and it's also not fair to the children. I was 7 the first time someone made an attempt on my life to get to my father. No kid should have to deal with that. I decided long ago that I never wanted to bring children into my world and I haven't looked back." As I talked, I ran my hands down her arms, trying to coax her to look at me. The more I talked, the more of her eyes I started to see. I leaned over and turned the lamp on beside the bed. I knew she was going to need to search. I was just hoping it would be sooner rather than later. "Sephie, I love you. I've loved you from the moment I saw you in the restaurant. I loved you before I knew you existed. There was a part of me that longed for what we have even before I knew you were real. I was beginning to lose hope that I would ever find it. And then I met you. You've made my life infinitely better, Sephie. All our lives infinitely better. I love you. Always and forever."

She slowly raised her head to look at me. I could clearly see the doubt written all over her face, her eyes searching mine. She held my gaze, looking for what she was always worried she would find, but never did. I couldn't help but smile at her. "Sephie, you're never going to find what you're looking for. It doesn't exist." She dropped her gaze and my heart sank. I was worried I had ruined the moment, but she lifted her eyes again, stopping at my chest. She moved like she was going to touch me, but stopped herself. I could see the internal struggle she was going through clearly on her face. Her eyebrows furrowed.

"You really don't care?" she asked. She still wouldn't look me in the eye. She was still staring at my chest. Her hands started to fidget.

"Sephie, this makes you more attractive to me, if I'm being honest. We can have all the sex we want and never have to worry about any of the consequences. I assumed you were on birth control or something, which is why I've never brought this up before, because you never had a period. I should've had this talk before. You wouldn't have been terrified this whole time that I was going to leave you." I hooked her fidgeting fingers into mine. She dropped her knees, crossing them in front of her. She held my hand in both of hers, staring at it, turning it over, anything to occupy her hands. I couldn't help but smile at her because she was so focused on this making her mean less to me, when, in reality, it made her mean more to me. "Sophie, I want to marry you. When all of this is over with the bosses and things calm down, I want to make you mine. This doesn't change that. Nothing will ever change that." I reached down and lifted her chin gently so she would look at me again. Her eyes were softening, but there was still doubt there, still fearful. I leaned in and pressed my lips to hers, trying to think of any way I could to convince her to believe my words. Her hands quieted and I felt the tiniest of pulls on my hand as I kissed her. I put both of my hands on either side of her face, deepening the kiss. She let me, but didn't respond right away. I kept going anyway. Finally, I felt her hands on my shirt, gently pulling me toward her. I stopped, kissing her forehead, and looked in her eyes again. Softer. Less doubt. Less fear. "I love you, solnishko. I will always love you. will always want you with me, by my side. Always."

Her breath caught and I could see the tears forming in her eyes. In the dim light, it made the colors of her eyes dance. I smiled at her, kissing her once more. "You're still beautiful even when you cry." She reached up and lightly traced her finger over my cheek, along my jawline. She loved running her fingers through my stubble. I was happy that she wanted to. She leaned over and kissed me gently. She kept her face close to mine.

"You really don't care?" she asked again, her eyes still searching.

"I really don't care. I really do love you," I said, smiling at her. Finally. Finally, a small smile crept across her face. Her eyes were softer. The doubt and fear almost completely gone.

"I really do love you too," she said, her smile growing.

"Enough to marry me instead of Andrei?" I asked, my head cocked to the side. She grinned at me. God, I love her.

She dropped her gaze, taking my hand back in both of hers. She sighed. "Don't tell Andrei," she said as she looked back at me, "but he never had a chance."