

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 123

Chapter One Hundred Twenty Three

Sephie

Ms. Jackson and Giana finally had their fill of shopping, so we headed back to the penthouse, I was exhausted at this point. I rarely took baths, but I found myself wanting to take a very long bath when we got back. We had a short distance to walk to get back to the vehicles. Andrei offered to carry me this time. I was enjoying taking in the scene ahead of us from my new, higher perspective. They were all several inches taller than me. The air felt different up here.

We were almost to the vehicles when I spotted a familiar face ahead of us. "Hey, that's Max!" I said, watching as he was standing outside a shop, on his phone. He hadn't seen us yet. I asked Ivan if I could go talk to him. He thought for a moment. "Boss wants us back." He said the word for news in Russian, with his eyebrow raised to see if I comprehended. I nodded, but still wanted to see Max. I hadn't seen him since before the ball. He saw my face and said, "Misha, stay with Sephie and Andrei. I will take them to get a vehicle and come back and get you so we can pick the other vehicle up. Boss was adamant that we return soon, so be quick," he looked to me, a stern look on his face.

"Squishy, if I had control of my legs right now, I would hug you. You're my favorite. Don't tell the others," I said, laughing. He just shook his head as he ushered Ms. Jackson and Giana toward the vehicles.

We got closer to Max, who still wasn't paying attention and hadn't seen us. I tapped Andrei's shoulder for him to set me down. I walked up to Max, before he saw me, and said, "are you going to give me a hug or are you just going to stand there and stare at your phone like a weirdo all day?"

He looked up, completely surprised to see me. "Gingersnap! I haven't seen you in literally forever! Where have you been?" He wrapped his arms around me, hugging me tightly. I felt Andrei and Misha both step closer to me when Max's arms were around me. They were good at their job, da mmit.

"That's too long of a story. I only have a few minutes before I have to go, but I saw you and wanted to say hi. I miss you, Maximus. You good? Everything good?" I asked.

"I'm good." He nodded toward Andrei and Misha. "I see your trained killers are still with you. That's good. We like that. Nothing to see here, fellas," he said as he started petting my head. I laughed, smacking his hand away.

"How's the restaurant?"

"It's good. Mostly the same. It sucks without you there, though. We got a new cook. A chick. She's actually pretty cool. She's in that shop, actually. I got bored, so I came out here. I don't get how women love to shop so much," he said, shaking his head.

"I don't either, Max. I don't either. Are you dating a coworker now? What's her name?" I asked, surprised.

"I mean, I guess so? Weird, right? She's only been there a couple weeks, but she's been cool. Granted, I've had Kim to deal with since you left, so it might be that my standards have lowered significantly." We both laughed. He continued, "but Tori is cool."

I heard Andrei curse under his breath behind me. I suddenly wanted to leave very quickly. I saw Misha move to block me, visually, from the shop we were standing in front of. I knew what he was doing and appreciated it. I felt Andrei's hand on the small of my back, ready for anything.

"Um, odd question, Max. but does Tori know you know me? Have you ever mentioned me to her?" I asked. I had no idea where that question came from, but I almost felt compelled to ask it.

"I think so? I probably told her some hilarious story about you because I have a million of those,"

"Before or after you started dating her?"

I'm not sure. Why is this important?"

"Max, you have to break up with her. I've never come between you and any girl in the past, but this one is bad news. Please trust me. She doesn't have good intentions toward you if she knows you're friends with me. If you've ever listened to anything I've ever told you, please listen to this."

Just then, Ivan pulled up to the curb. Max was still looking at me, stunned. Andrei grabbed me around the waist lifting me off the ground, not giving me a choice to stay. He climbed into the front seat, pulling me into his lap. Misha jumped in the back, next to Giana.

As soon as the doors closed, Ivan pulled away. I looked at Andrei, still somewhat shocked. Ivan knew there was something wrong, asking Andrei what happened in Russian. His cheeks were red, he was still angry at her. I looked at Ivan and said, "Tori." He cut his eyes toward me but didn't ask anything further. He would wait until we were alone to ask more questions. Instead of going to get the other vehicle, he drove back to the penthouse. "Boss has called three times in the last half hour. We need to get back."

I was starting to worry about why he wanted us back so badly. "Is everything okay? Why does he want us back so quickly?"

Ivan cut his eyes to me, a smirk on his face. He didn't need to answer. I knew the answer. He missed me.

We dropped Ms. Jackson and Giana off on the 5th floor. They both turned toward Ms. Jackson's apartment. It made me happy that they had each found a friend today.

Once the elevator doors closed, I leaned back against the wall, trying to find some relief for my hip. "FU CK I HA TE SHOPPING."

Everyone laughed. Ivan slid his arm around my shoulders. "This is why we love you, princess."

I cleared my throat, looking at Misha. "Go damn princess to you, thank you very much."

Through his laughter, Ivan asked, "what's this about Tori today?"

I looked at him, deadpan. "She's dating Max. Apparently, she got a job as a cook at the restaurant where I met you guys. I asked Max if she knew that he was friends with me. He said he probably told her some story about me but couldn't remember if it was before or after they started dating. My best guess is that it was before. Max doesn't have many rules, but not dating coworkers. was one he always followed. Always. This is Tori going after him, if they're dating. Maybe it's just a rebound for her, but I can't help but be worried she's going to try to do him dirty to get back at me."

He blew his breath out loudly while pulling on his goatee. "Yikes. Did you see her today?"

I shook my head no, but looked to Misha. "Did you see her in the shop?"

He nodded. "She didn't see us while we were talking to Max. She might've seen us leaving, but that's it."

The doors pinged. I groaned as I stood up to walk out of the elevator. I didn't get more than one step and Ivan had scooped me up, carrying me to Adrik's office. "Come on, you go damn princess, your go damn prince awaits."