

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 347

Sephie

“You have been in similar situations to her, solnishko. The fear you’re feeling now is the fear you wouldn’t let yourself feel when you were in them. You’ve seen true evil like Martin before, but you couldn’t let yourself respond to it before. You can now. Everything that’s happening to Giana right now is reminding you of something in your past that you’ve survived, but you never let yourself be scared for you so you’re scared for her,” he said. “Stephen was right. It’s important that you let yourself be afraid. You’ve been keeping it locked away for too long. Just like he’s been feeding his monster, your fear has been growing, too. I can feel how out of control it is when it comes up. I know you don’t know what to do with it. Ivan can feel it too. You’re so in control of all your other emotions, but the fear takes you by surprise every single time. I think that’s why your eyes change to a completely different color when you’re afraid. You have to let yourself feel it. It’s okay to feel it. That’s the only way you can learn how to control it.”

“It feels like it’s trying to take over every time and I start to panic. For the first few months after my uncle started beating me, I remember being terrified. I panicked, I didn’t know what to do, so I did nothing. The beatings lasted forever. Because I did nothing. Eventually something snapped and I stopped feeling anything when it would happen. No fear, just pain. I learned I could live with pain, but I never learned I could live with fear. I don’t know what to do with it,” I said.

“Fear can be useful, but mostly it’s just a reminder,” he said.

“Of what?”

“That you’re alive,” he said. He chuckled when I stayed silent, not knowing what to say. “We’ll talk about it more later. They’re going to be worried about you,” he said, taking my hand and leading me out of the bathroom.

Do

we want to know what he said to her?” Ivan asked when we walked back to the kitchen..

“Martin and Anthony are very similar,” Adrik said. “He threatened to sell Giana if she disobeyed him. Did she respond?”

“Yeah, but she’s responded in Italian. It’s much shorter than her earlier texts, though. And that was the end of the conversation,” Viktor said. I walked to him, holding my hand out to read the text, but he hesitated before handing his phone to me. “You don’t have to read it, Sephie.”

“No, it’ll help me figure out her next move if I see how she responded. If she immediately cowers to him and grovels, then it’s going to make our job much harder. I’m worried she’ll think she brought it on herself and that he’s still the only one that can save her. I don’t know how much damage Armando did to her brain while she was with him. She might not be salvageable,” I said.

He handed me his phone. I read through the text, sighing. “She’s gonna be problematic.” I scrolled back through Martin’s text to her, so I could read it. to the guys. “He told her ‘you belong to me now and you will do what you’re told or I will arrange your kidnapping. Keep disrespecting me and I’ll sell you as a slave.’ I thought before that it was fishy that he wouldn’t want her to go to Italy. Now I don’t know if it’s just some weird power move on his part or if there is a contingency on him getting her or if he’s just completely lost his grip on reality.” I scrolled back down to Giana’s response. “She apologizes and says she loves him and that she’ll do what she’s told.”

“Is she just saying that to placate him, though?” Stephen asked.

“Possible,” Andrei said.

Viktor’s phone beeped, but it was a new message, not one between Giana and Martin. I handed his phone back to him. “That’s a new message, I don’t want to be nosey.”

He looked at the new message, surprised. “She’s texting someone else,” he said. He handed the phone back to me. “Whoever it is, she’s texting in Italian still.”

I looked at her newest message. “She’s telling this person that this is her new number.”

“I kind of doubt she’d be texting her family,” Stephen said. “A friend, maybe?”

The response came in. “Looks like you’re right, Yoden. This person says they haven’t talked to her in forever. Asking how she is, says they miss her, and where is she. So maybe not the closest friend?”

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Giana replied fairly quickly. “She tells this person she needs their help. She asks where this person is. Spain. Giana says she can get to Spain, but she needs help hiding from her family. She says she’s done with them and that they went back on their promise. She says she thought she’d found a way out, but it’s worse than her family. She needs to disappear.”

“I wonder what her family promised her? Had to be to get her to take the job with Armando,” Ivan said.

“This person says they can hide her, but she needs to pay her own way. Oh. Well, then. She says that won’t be a problem, she can support them both. She just needs help to hide and she needs help getting new identification cards.” I looked up at them. “So there we go. We get her new ID and send her to Spain. I bet she has access to Armando’s accounts. As long as no one else does, she should be set for a while, if she lives smartly.”

Viktor and Ivan looked at each other. “We can get her new ID in a day or two. What else does she need?”

“She’s got plenty of clothes. She’s also likely got plenty of money to buy new ones. She can leave everything here if she wants to travel light. Are you going to put her on a commercial flight or a private plane?” I asked.

“Commercial. We’ll be using the plane to get Trino,” Adrik said.

“So, ticket. New ID with a new name. Ride to the airport and she’s off to start her new life. No one will be able to find her.” Viktor’s phone beeped again. “She asks where in Spain. Okay, she’s going to Madrid. Giana says she’ll be there in a few days. So, better get started on that new passport right away, boys,” I said, handing Viktor his phone back.

“That’ll be good. One less thing to have to worry about here and I can pull the guards off her for other things. I had to put extra guys on her because of her tantrums and her tendency to sneak off,” Viktor said. He was very obviously still annoyed about it.

“I share in your annoyance, but it does not detract from how once again you guys are going the extra mile to make sure somebody we all hate is safe,” Isaid. “It’s like you guys are good or something.”

Three days later, a bag was dropped off at Giana’s apartment in the morning. In it, she found a new ID, new passport, a ticket to Madrid, a little bit of cash, and a new cell phone with a note to leave her old one as it was compromised. The new cell phone was still in the sealed box, to prove that it was, not compromised. The note also told her a taxi would be waiting for her at a specific time and wished her well.

Ivan watched on the monitors as she left the building and got into the taxi that was waiting to take her to the airport. Once she was safely in the taxi, he gave Viktor word that she was taken care of and we were free to leave for Panama. Ivan met us in the parking garage as we left for the private airport. I had to admit that I felt incredible relief to know that Giana had a chance at a fresh start. She had texted her friend a few more times over the course of the previous few days and given her friend more details. The friend seemed genuinely distraught for Giana and promised she would be safe. Her friend had said she was thinking of moving again soon and that Giana could come with her, so it would be even more difficult to find her. It appeared that Giana would get a second chance.