

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 458

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Sephie

The fundraiser was at Battista's hotel. He was once again back in the city, so he was also going to be in attendance. Vitaliy had somehow managed to allow himself to be talked into coming as well. It made me feel slightly more comfortable knowing his guys would be there as well. I was trying to stay calm, but it was proving difficult.

I once again enlisted the help of Ms. Jackson for my hair and makeup. She enjoyed it so much that she asked me to please go to more formal functions so she could do it more often.

"I didn't realize how much I missed this part of being a spy, child," she said as she was working on my hair.

"You enjoy all this work?" I asked.

"It's not work if you enjoy it, now is it?" she said, smiling at me. "Part of being a spy is pretending you're someone else. Looking the part is most of that. It became a bit of a game, I guess. A dangerous game, but a game nonetheless."

She told more stories about her time as a spy as she put the finishing touches on me. Just as she had helped me get into the dress and put my shoes on, there was a knock on her door. "That'll be the guys. Probably all of them again because they couldn't decide who should come get me," I said to her. I knew it was all of them, but I needed it to sound like I guessed.

"Oh my. It's been too long since I've laid my eyes on this many handsome men in tuxedos," she said as she opened her door.

I laughed. "This is really why you want me to go to more formal functions. So you can see them all dressed up."

She turned to look at me. "Do not ruin my dreams," she said very seriously.

"We're still waiting on an invite to Bingo, Ms. Jackson," Ivan said, winking at her.

Ms. Jackson blushed as I walked toward the door. "Thank you, Ms. Jackson, for once again making me look marvelous," I said, leaning down to give her a hug.

"Child, if you haven't figured out by now that I'm just highlighting your best traits, then I don't know how to help you understand," she said, smiling at me. "Now, get out of here so I can watch these fine gentlemen walk down the hallway."

We all laughed as I slid my arm through Ivan's as we walked to the elevator. Once the doors closed behind us, Misha said, "I'm beginning to think she only thinks of me as a piece of meat." He paused, then added, "I'm strangely fine with that."

Vitaliy had come to the penthouse and was waiting with Adrik for us to come upstairs. They were all standing near the door when we walked in. They all stopped and turned to us as we walked in. My eyes landed on Adrik immediately and I tried to focus on him, leaving everyone else out of the picture.

He'd already seen the dress, but seeing it in person made it better for him. I'd left my contacts out specifically so I could show him that the dress matched my eyes when they turned blue for him. As I got closer and he could see my eyes were blue, it was obvious that he'd made the connection.

He wrapped his arms around my waist, his desire very evident. "I thought the last dress was perfect, but this one might be even better. I loved the black, but this one might be my favorite. It's a perfect match," he said quietly, his lips next to my ear.

"That might've been the selling point," I said. He brushed his facial hair lightly against my cheek, sending goosebumps over my body. "I need to put my contacts in and then we can leave," I said as I kissed his cheek. I had already forgotten that I had lipstick on so I had to wipe the smudge off his cheek before going to put my contacts in.

When I came back, Vitaliy caught me before I made it back to Adrik. "Sladkaya, I've been telling my son that you're absolutely perfect for him for a while now, but you keep finding new ways to confirm that. You're absolutely stunning, Sephie." He surprised me by pulling out a silver necklace from his pocket. "This was Lena's. It was her favorite. She asked me to give it to you," he said quietly. He didn't give me time to object, he simply moved behind me so that he could put it on. It was a simple diamond pendant that rested perfectly in that spot where my collarbones met. "She had a timeless classic style, much like you, sladkaya. She was not one for ostentatious jewelry, but she loved this necklace. She wants you to have it now."

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"You did not get the memo that you're not supposed to make me cry when I'm wearing makeup, Vitaliy," I said as I hugged him.

"But thank you. I love it. I love you. And I love her. Not in any specific order." He laughed, hugging me tightly.

Adrik walked over to see. When I showed him what Vitaliy had given me, he looked surprised. "I remember that necklace," he said. "I used to stare at it. The way the light caught the diamond used to fascinate me when I was little."

"Your mother rarely took it off. She told me that she wanted Sephie to have it now," Vitaliy said quietly.

Adrik smiled. "It's perfect."

The guys kept themselves tightly packed around me and Adrik as we walked to the front door of the hotel. They could all feel my nervousness at having people looking at me. As long as Adrik's arm was around me, I managed to stay calm. He had promised several times on the way there that he would not leave my side the entire evening.

"We don't have to stay long. Once I have a chance to talk to the mayor and everyone can see him and the DA, we can leave. I would much rather spend the evening getting you out of that dress anyway," he told me on the way to the hotel.

"I fully support this," I said, pushing my warmth to him before we got out of the vehicles.

Once we walked inside, I tried to keep my nervousness to a minimum. I failed miserably. But luckily, the guys were all there to offer support, as well as hide me as much as possible.

"People always stare at beautiful women, gazelle," Misha reminded me as we walked into the ballroom. Thankfully, it was a different ballroom from last time so it didn't immediately bring back horrible memories of that night.

"Misha's right. You're also probably the youngest woman here. All the other women are going to look at you because they're old. And jealous," Andrei said.

I laughed at that. "Bubba, you're not allowed to hang around Misha as much. He's a bad influence on you."

"Am I a bad influence or has he finally learned to speak the truth?" Misha asked, cutting his eyes over at me.

Adrik laughed quietly. "I think you're both right. Sephie is gorgeous. Other women are not."

"The mayor is here," Ivan said, pointing to the side of the ballroom where a small group of people were standing and talking. "I haven't seen the DA yet. Or Henry."

As the guys were searching the ballroom to try and find the DA and Henry, Dr. Williams caught sight of us. He smiled as he walked over to us, focusing on me. "Sephie, it's good to see you again. You look much better than the last time I saw you," he said, quickly letting his eyes scan up and down my body.

"I mean, less colorful. That's for sure. But it's undecided as to whether that's better or not. It's so...boring," I said, retuning his smile.

He laughed. "I take it you've healed well? Everything is still good?" he asked.

"It is, Doc. You do good work," I said.

He looked at Adrik. "It's good to see you here as well. You're almost singlehandedly responsible for most of the hospital's budget. We should be giving you an award or something," he said to Adrik. I felt him squeeze me just a little tighter.

"Not necessary. I prefer to remain as anonymous as possible anyway," Adrik said. "It's plenty worth it after you saved Ivan and then Sephie."

"Well, just know it's much appreciated," Dr. Williams said. He excused himself to go talk to someone else, leaving us alone once more.

I looked at Adrik, smiling. "You're so popular," I said, placing my hand against his cheek.

"You're so beautiful," he said, pressing his lips to mine. He pressed his forehead to mine for a moment, his arm still securely around my waist. I knew

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