

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 85

Chapter Eighty-Five

Adrik

The only thing working in our favor right now was that they didn't know for sure I had survived their assassination attempt.

Armando's men had staged an "escape" with Sephie and now Salvadori's men were looking for her in the city. Before we left, I fortified the penthouse, making sure Ms. Jackson and Mr. Turner would be safe. I put extra guards to watch them.

We had given the diamond bracelet that Salvadori had gifted Sephie to Armando's men that had gotten their asses kicked when they tried to kidnap her. They were to take the bracelet and lead Salvadori's men on a wild goose chase, to keep them busy while we were simultaneously taking care of Anthony and Lorenzo. It would make the story of her "escape" more plausible if they had hits off that bracelet periodically. We had taken it to the ball with us. The guys would pass it to each other throughout the night, to pick up different conversations. Before I went on stage, Viktor handed it off to Armando's men so they could "record" her kidnapping. Now, they had Salvadori under the impression that she had gotten away from them and they were after her, which freed us up to take care of Anthony and Lorenzo.

This was all dependent, of course, on whether plans were still the same on their end or not. Armando had been keeping a very close eye on both Anthony and Lorenzo. He regularly spent time in Naples, so it wasn't unusual for him to be here. We hadn't spoken to him since before the ball, however. I wasn't sure how much he knew about what happened to Sephie, as he wasn't in contact with his men to protect their cover.

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As I thought about everything happening, I found myself just wanting it to be over with already. I wanted to take Sephie home. I didn't care about anything else at this point. I wanted her to be better and I wanted to spend my days trying to love her the way she deserved.

This was in stark contrast to my younger years. Before I took over for my father, he used me as an enforcer, of sorts. Once I was given a target, I wouldn't stop until I ended that person. When Viktor first started working for me, we had a few very close calls where we almost didn't make it out alive. I was young and reckless. He wasn't much older, but he'd had much more training than I had. He was more disciplined. He taught me everything he knew and saved my life in the process.

Ivan came along almost two years later, completely by chance. We had been after a former boss that had stolen from my father. He had fled to the countryside, where he controlled all the roads that led to his compound. The only way in was by air. Ivan was our helicopter pilot. His skills are what got us in and out of that situation alive. I gave him a job the same day.

Andrei came later, then Misha, and Stephen was the last one to join the group. They all had special skills to offer that made the whole stronger. They'd all been with me for years, at this point, and I trusted them with my life. I trusted their opinion and especially their instincts.

I was pulled from my thoughts as we neared the villa. We slowed and turned down the gravel drive. We were greeted by Armando's staff when we arrived. They showed us to our rooms where we could change and freshen up. Armando would meet us for dinner later. Sephie's teeth were chattering by the time we got there, so I was glad to be off the bike for the day. Although I can't say I hated having her arms around me the entire day. We would definitely need to get bikes once we got back home.

I grabbed our things from the guys and closed the door behind me. Sephie was looking around the room, her arms folded tightly across her chest, trying to stay warm. I checked the bathroom and luckily, there was a large bathtub. I turned the hot water on.

The house staff had left some waters for us, so I grabbed that and her antibiotics and superprofen.

"Here, solnishko." She took the pills and the water, swallowing them quickly. She drank half the bottle of water and handed me the rest. I finished it quickly. I pulled her to me, my hands gently tilting her shirt over her head. "Come, I ran a bath so you can warm up. You're freezing."

I unzipped her jeans and started to push them down. She flinched, so I stopped. "You better do that. I don't want to hurt you." She slowly shimmed out of her jeans, trying to avoid the bandage on her hip. "We should change that too," I said nodding to her bandage. She just nodded as she continued to discard her clothes. She was completely naked in front of me, her arms still folded across her, like she was shy. Almost like she was ashamed for me to look at her. She wouldn't look at me, choosing to look at the floor instead.

I lifted her chin, forcing her to look at me. "Even with all your wounds, you're still the most beautiful woman I've ever seen." I kissed her gently. Grabbing her hand, I walked her to the bath and helped her get in. The water was hot, so she relaxed almost immediately when she sat down. She leaned against the tub, resting her head on the side.

I stood above her for a few moments, just enjoying the look of peace on her face. Never before in my life had I gotten so much satisfaction out of making someone else happy. It's like my sole purpose in life had become to make her happy. I took a deep breath, lost in my thoughts about how different she was and how different I was with her. She didn't even open her eyes. She just asked, "are you getting in too or are you just going to stand there and stare at me the whole time?" A small smile spread across her face.

She heard my clothes hit the floor and she sat up so I could climb in the tub behind her, leaning back against me once I sat down. I wrapped my arms around her. She moaned quietly. "Now it's warm enough." She still had her eyes closed, her head leaning against my shoulder.

"How are you feeling? Are you in pain?" I asked, my hands running lightly over her arms under the water.

"It's not too bad. I can manage. I'm more sore than anything."

I took one of her arms in mine, trying to be mindful of her cuts and scrapes, and started massaging where I could. After a few minutes, I moved to the other arm. I felt her relax against me, silently enjoying my touch. I massaged every place I could on her until the water started to cool.

"I should get you out of here before you get cold again. That's not going to help your sore muscles." I made a slight move to have her sit up so I could get out. She didn't move her body, she just looked up at me, with that small smile on her face still.

"I love you, you know," she said, taking my hands and wrapping my arms around her again.

I felt a warmth over my body like I had never felt before. It was like this was the first time she had told me she loved me. Or the first time I believed her, maybe. Either way, I held her against me like I was going to lose her for a few moments. She didn't complain, she just kept her arms tight around mine. I kissed her cheek, my lips next to her ear, I said, "I love you, solnishko. More than anything."