

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 81

Chapter Eighty-One

Adrik

Misha walked outside. His face was red and his eyes were misty, but he looked better than he had since the ball. I raised my eyebrow at him. He put his hand on my shoulder, “she’s asking for you.”

“You good, kid?” I asked.

“Yeah, Boss. Better than good. I don’t know how she does it, but she always knows exactly what to say.”

I put my hand on his shoulder with a knowing look. I walked inside to find her getting a glass of water in the kitchen. She drank half of it and handed the glass to me. I finished it and refilled it, handing it back to her. I went to grab her antibiotic and gave her one. She swallowed it easily. “What do you think about a pain pill? I can tell you’re hurting. Maybe half? It will at least help to take the edge off the pain, maybe?”

She thought for a moment. “Do you think they have just regular ibuprofen here? I know that won’t knock me out and it’ll take the pain away. That’s all I took for my back.”

I cursed under my breath. “Really? That’s all you took?”

She nodded and shrugged her shoulders. “It worked. It should work on this too.”

I called for Misha and asked him to find Isabella to ask if they had ibuprofen. It would be time for dinner soon, so she had to be around close.

He wasn’t gone long and he came back with a full bottle of ibuprofen. He handed it to me as she said, “see, Misha, this is why you’re my favorite. Don’t tell the others.” He smiled widely at her.

I opened the bottle. “How many do you want?”

She took the bottle from me and read over the label. It was all in Italian, but she found whatever answer she needed. “Four. In eight hours, four more. I call it ‘superprofen,’” she grinned, popping them in her mouth.

Ivan walked into the kitchen, looking worse than I’d ever seen him. He stopped, surprised to see Sephie awake and upright. She looked at him, her eyes wide at his state. She looked to me quickly, glancing toward the patio. I knew she wanted a moment alone with Ivan, so I turned to Misha and motioned for him to follow me to the patio.

We were on the patio longer for Ivan than Misha. Viktor and Andrei were reluctant to go to her. They still felt so awful about everything that happened that they weren’t sure how to approach her. I couldn’t blame them. I would be scared if I were them, too. Truthfully, I was still nervous for Andrei’s balls and his future ability to have children.

I was starting to worry about Ivan’s well-being when Sephie walked out to the patio, leaning on Ivan’s arm. His face was also red, his eyes misty. Two down, three to go.

Viktor was the first to make a move when he saw Sephie. He stood up and went to her. Ivan made sure she was stable on her feet and walked away. They were still far enough away that we were mostly out of ear shot. Viktor always towered over her, but he looked so defeated standing in front of her that he appeared shorter. Smaller. We were trying to give them privacy, but we couldn’t help but watch the scene unfold. We saw his shoulders crumble in a single sob

1/4

and her comparatively small arms reach up and wrap around his massive shoulders.

Ivan broke our silence. “I don’t know how she does it, but she always knows exactly what to say.”

I knew exactly how he felt.

Viktor walked back to us after a few more moments with Sephie. He looked at Andrei, who looked terrified. We heard Sephie say loud enough for everyone to hear, “Bubba if you don’t get over here right now, I’ll make doubly sure you aren’t able to have children.”

His face went white as he stood up slowly and walked toward her.

“Where’s Stephen? He might as well get this over with as well.” I asked.

“He went to try to get some sleep. None of us have been able to sleep much since we got here. He said he was going to try one more time.”

I looked back toward Andrei, who looked like he had been sent to the principal’s office. It was much the same scene as with Viktor. She said exactly what he needed to hear to save him from himself. He held onto her gently, but still like she was his anchor in the storm of his own sea of emotions.

Andrei turned back toward us, letting Sephie lean on him as they walked toward us. Her eyes found mine. That spark was back as she walked slowly toward me. I felt my heart threaten to stop as she smiled at me. She tucked herself into my arms. She still felt more fragile to me. Like she was apprehensive. I hoped it was because she was in pain and not anything else.

She looked up at me, “so what’s the plan now? Don’t we need to leave?”

Ivan spoke first. “It can wait until you’re ready to travel. We still have eyes on Anthony and Lorenzo. Everything is still fine until you can make the trip.”

“What does the trip consist of?” she asked.

“We had originally planned on riding bikes to Naples. Now, we’re thinking we should take a different vehicle. It’ll just slow us down,” he said.

She thought for a moment, leaning against me. “How long is the trip?”

“Bikes, we should be able to make it in 7 hours or less. Cars, 8 hours or more.”

“I can probably do that. As long as I can take the superprofen first.”

Ivan raised his eyebrows. “Superprofen?”

“She took a high dose of ibuprofen instead of a pain pill. She said that’s all she took with her back and it worked. No ill side effects either,” I said.

Ivan cursed under his breath. “Really? That’s all you took?”

She shrugged her shoulders. “I guess I’m a weirdo, but it works. Whatever lets me fucking eat again, I’ll gladly do.”

As if her stomach was waiting to be invited to the conversation, it growled loudly. Everyone laughed. Andrei ran into the kitchen and came back with a partial loaf of bread from earlier in the day.

“Here, spider monkey, this will tide you over until dinner.”

“Bubba. Let’s get married in Naples. I’m tired of waiting,” she said ripping a huge piece off the chunk of bread and shoving it into her mouth.

She handed the bread to me, knowing I was likely just as hungry as she was. She was right. Between us both, we finished it quickly.

Viktor asked, “you think you can do the car?”

She shook her head. “No, that’s not what I meant. I can do the bikes with the superprofen.” They all looked at her, surprised.

“What? This shit works.”

Laughing, I kissed her temple.

God, we all missed her.

She spent almost the entire dinner convincing the guys that she’d be able to travel the next day. They were willing to wait a couple more days until she was better.

“Once we get to Naples, what’s the plan?” she asked, in between bites of food.

“Armando is meeting us there. We’ll spend a couple days there before going on to Sicily,” Viktor said.

“See. I can rest there after the trip. It’ll be fine,” she said. “You guys all need to sleep since I’m apparently the only one that’s done that lately. We can leave like lunch time tomorrow and still get to Naples before it gets dark tomorrow.”

They thought about her suggestion for a few moments. I had to admit, it wasn’t a bad plan. I could use some extra sleep right now, as could everyone else, including her. She could time her superprofen to where she could take it before we left and then she’d be able to take it soon after we arrived in Naples. If she said she’d be up for the trip, I wasn’t going to argue with her. She was, after all, apparently difficult to kill.

Ivan looked at her, a serious expression on his face. “If it becomes too much, you tell me. We’ll stop for the night before reaching Naples.”

“I will tell you if it becomes too much. I promise,” she said.

As we were finishing dinner, Stephen appeared in the kitchen, looking just as horrible as everyone else had and not at all rested. The guys all saw him before he saw Sephie. We all quickly walked outside to give them their moment alone, without him even realizing she was up yet.

Once we were outside, Misha spoke up. “That was kinda mean, but I would’ve loved to have seen his face when he realized he was alone with her.”

It didn’t take long and we heard her yell, “it’s safe. You can come back in.”

We filed back into the kitchen. Stephen’s face was red, but he looked relieved. He looked at all of us as we walked in.

nupici Ligny-one

“You guys are as sholes. I nearly shit myself.”

We all grinned at him. Sephie said, “you’re lucky I’m slow right now or I would’ve tested that.”

Laughter erupted in the kitchen. Everyone needed that little bit of comic relief. I looked at everyone as we laughed and they continued to tease Stephen. They were all going to sleep well tonight now that they knew she was back and they were forgiven. I

felt that pull in my chest toward her as I watched her bring light back to every one of them. I hadn’t realized how much her light shone on each one of them until it was gone briefly. My breath caught as I looked to her, finding her eyes on me and her smile wide across her face.

God, we all missed her, but me most of all