

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 13

Chapter Thirteen

Sephie

Misha ran to one of the SUV's outside to get Ivan a new shirt, since the one he was wearing was basically ruined. Viktor received a phone call, which he took in Russian. Once he ended the call, he said, "Boss is on his way here." He Hooked at me and said, "you get dressed. We're leaving once he gets here."

"We're leaving? Where are we going?"

"Somewhere safer. Explosion was too close. I don't like."

"But I can't leave. I have to take Ms. Jackson to the grocery store this afternoon. I always take her shopping on Saturdays. Without me, she has no way to get to the store, which means she has no way to eat."

Viktor frowned at this news. He pondered on a solution for a moment, but just said, "get dressed anyway. We will work it out."

I left my first aid kit on the cabinet and went to my bedroom for a quick shower before Adrik got there. I put slightly more effort into my appearance than what he saw the night before, but it still didn't amount to much. No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't get the hang of makeup. I had people tell me when I was younger that I needed to wear makeup to cover up my freckles. I didn't like the way it felt though. I always felt like my face was being slowly smothered when I wore it. So, I opted for mascara and the slightest bit of eye makeup. That's as fancy as I got.

Throwing on a pair of black skinny jeans and a white blouse with a camisole underneath, I looked at my somewhat out of control hair. It was still wet from the shower, but I could tell it was going to be one of those days where it did whatever it wanted instead of what I wanted. I shrugged my shoulders, knowing this was not a fight I was going to win easily. I scrunched some product into my curls to help tame the frizz and called it a day. At least having my hair down would help cover my purple neck.

When I came out of my room, only Andrei and Viktor were in my apartment.

"Where did Misha and Ivan go?"

"Outside. Keep an eye on the perimeter," Andrei said. "We noticed strange cars and people going into bottom apartment."

"The one across from Ms. Jackson?" He nodded. "That's Chen. He sells drugs. Those are just his customers. Chen gets a fresh batch on Friday, so his customers come on Saturdays."

Andrei and Viktor both looked unhappy at this news. Andrei looked at me and said, "we're definitely leaving. Why didn't you tell us this sooner?"

"I can't leave without making sure Ms. Jackson is taken care of for the week. Mr. Turner is at work and Chen isn't reliable, obviously. And I didn't think it was important. Chen's apartment is quiet, except on the weekends. He's always very respectful to everyone. I don't even think he lives here most of the week. He just uses the apartment to sell out

of."

Andrei and Viktor exchanged a look. Viktor spoke, "I don't like this, sestrichka."

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A knock on the door interrupted our conversation. Viktor went to the door, gun in hand, while Andrei stood in front of me, protectively.

"Boss," Viktor said as he opened the door. Adrik walked into the apartment, his eyes searching until they landed on me. He stopped in his tracks and just stared for a moment before he walked to me. He put his arm around my waist, pulled me close and kissed my cheek. I leaned into his embrace, filling my lungs with his intoxicating cologne.

"How did you sleep, solnishko?"

"Very well, thank you."

He put his hand under my chin, inspecting my bruise. "Still too dark. Did you put more arnica on this morning?"

I nodded my head, suddenly feeling shy that Andrei, Viktor, and now Stephen were also in the room.

"Good girl," he said as he kissed my forehead. "Now, tell me. What is this about taking your neighbor to the store?"

"I take Ms. Jackson, downstairs, to the store every Saturday. She doesn't have a car and I don't think she could drive if she did have a car. I take her to the store and any other errands she needs every week."

His eyes brightened when he looked at me, as he pulled me just a little closer to him. He kept his arm around me as he turned his head to Viktor and said, "we are going to the store before we leave, then."

"Yes, sir."

Adrik looked at me and asked, "is she ready to go? Do we need to give her time?"

"I haven't talked to her yet today, but my guess is she's ready to go. She usually has to wait for me to wake up. I can call her."

Adrik nodded his head and told Viktor to let Ivan and Misha know. He noticed the first aid kit on the counter and his brow furrowed. He looked at it, then to me, concern on his face. "What is this for? Are you hurt again?" he asked,

holding me at arm's length to check me over.

I laughed. "No, for once, it wasn't me. I stitched Ivan up. I'm guessing he got hit with debris in that explosion and had a pretty good gash. He's going to have a kickass scar from it,"

He smiled at me and pulled me to him. I wrapped my arms around him, happy to be in his arms. "Thank you, malishka."

"You all are in this mess because of me. It's the least I could do."

He sighed and said, "not exactly. Anthony was already on my shit list before he laid his hands on you. You just sped up the process."

I hugged him tighter, not wanting to think about any of it. He responded by wrapping his arms tighter around me. I heard Viktor make a call to Ivan to let them know the change in the plan. I stepped back from Adrik and said, "I'll call Ms. Jackson and see if she's ready to go now."

I told Ms. Jackson we would have chaperones on our weekly trip to the store when I called to see if she was ready to

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"Oh, child. Not those strapping young men that have been watching over you?"

I couldn't help but laugh. "Yes, Ms. Jackson. Those strapping young men will accompany us to the store. Did you need to go anywhere else this week? Are your prescriptions good?"

"Can they take me across town to Edith Riley's place? Maybe escort me through the old folk's home like they're my playthings?"

"Ms. Jackson! Don't you think you'd get more mileage out of them if they took you to Bingo?"

She giggled into the phone. "Sephie, you are a genius."

I chuckled. "We'll be down in a few minutes to fetch you for this adventure we're about to have."

"Lord, this is going to be the best shopping trip of my life. No offense, Sephie. You're precious. But you ain't 6'5 of chiseled muscle precious."

"No offense taken, Ms. Jackson. See you in a few."

was still laughing to myself and shaking my head when I walked back to the kitchen. Adrik was in my small living room, carefully studying each one of the handful of pictures I had on display. They were the only memories I had of happier times. When my mom was still alive. Before my life took a dark turn.

Adrik saw me walk into the kitchen and stood up straight, that smirk on his face that I was growing accustomed to.

"What put such a beautiful smile on your face, solnishko?"

"Ms. Jackson requested your bodyguards escort her to Bingo so she could show them off to her friends. Think they'd be down? I feel like Ivan is going to jump at this chance," I said as I cleaned up the first aid kit on the counter and put everything back in its place.

He walked to the kitchen to stand beside me, his face scrunched in thought. "You know, I could order him to do it."

"Oh, that's just plain mean. I love it." I said, smiling broadly up at him.

"I love your smile," he said, twirling a curl around his finger as he scanned my face. That twinkle was back in his deep blue eyes. I felt myself blush and looked down at what I was doing. I felt his arm around my shoulders. He leaned down and kissed my cheek. "You don't have to hide from me," he said quietly as he handed me the roll of bandage

tape.

I peeked up at him underneath my lashes, his gaze intently on me, as always. "It's just..." I stammered, not really knowing what to say. I opened my mouth to speak but ended up shutting it again.

He reached for my chin and lifted my face, so I was looking at him. He smiled sweetly at me and leaned down to press his lips to mine. Just as our lips met, we heard the door opening. I stepped back, not sure I wanted anyone to catch us kissing just yet. He laughed at my nervousness and grabbed my hands, wrapping them around his waist. I hid my face in his chest, inhaling his scent.