

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 26

## Chapter Twenty-Six

Sophie

After breakfast, we were all standing in the kitchen. I asked Ivan how his stitches were holding up. “Let me check it. You might need a bandage change,” I said, trying to peek down the back of his shirt. He didn’t hesitate this time to take his shirt off for me. I peeled back part of his bandage, to look at how it was healing. It still looked red and angry, but no signs of infection.

Adrik walked over to inspect the stitches while I had the bandage pulled back. “You did this?” he asked, looking surprised.

I nodded my head, as I put the bandage back in place. Pressing the adhesive to his skin once more.

“Where did you learn how to do that?” Adrik asked, still surprised.

“Ms. Jackson. She used to be a nurse.” I lifted the sleeve of my shirt to reveal a small scar on my upper arm. “I can be clumsy, and I h\*te doctors, so she stitches me up when needed. She taught me how to do it.”

Adrik ran his thumb over the scar on my arm. He leaned closer and kissed my forehead. I knew he was wondering about the scars on my back as well, but I didn’t want to talk about those in front of everyone. “I definitely owe my thanks to Ms. Jackson,” he said.

“There’s still the matter of Bingo to be discussed,” I said laughing.

Ivan, as he was putting his shirt back on, turned and asked, “Bingo?”

Viktor, the only one in the know on the matter of Bingo night, just started laughing. “Don’t worry, Ivan. You’re going to love it.”

I tried not to laugh but couldn’t help myself. Ivan looked so confused. “Ms. Jackson requested that you all accompany her to her friend’s place so she could ‘show you off,’” I said, adding air quotes for effect. “But I suggested Bingo, as more of her friends would be there.”

“What is Bingo?” Misha asked.

“It’s a game that old people play. It’s an easy game to play. You’ll catch on quick, don’t worry,” I said, grinning.

They all looked toward Adrik. I knew they would all do it if he said the word.

“It’s on the table. But we need to find Anthony first,” Adrik said, matter-of-factly.

There was an audible exhale in the room. I laughed at how the thought of Bingo with old ladies gave trained killers anxiety.

Adrik and I walked around the property after breakfast. It was much more expansive than I thought. There was a running trail that took you through the woods, opening to a meadow and a lake toward the back of the property. He had guards, with dogs patrolling the grounds. We also had our own guard with a dog following us as we walked the property. They stayed far enough away that they couldn’t hear our conversation but kept us within sight the entire time.

As we came into the meadow, overlooking the lake, Adrik turned to me and said, “this is another favorite place of mine.”

I took in the view. The meadow was full of wildflowers, covering the area in a blanket of colors. The trail wound around the meadow to the lake. It split off, so you could either go all the way around the lake or take the shorter route around the meadow.

We had stopped for a moment, to look at the lake. Adrik picked up a rock and skipped it across the water.

I knew I needed to address what happened that morning. To explain my scars. I always hated this part of getting to know someone new. Having to explain what happened and then waiting to see if they started to look at me differently. Most people did. I’d only found a few who didn’t look at me like damaged goods after finding out about my past. Max was one of those that didn’t look at me differently.

I had agreed to go workout with him at the gym one day after work. I had bent over to pick up a dumbbell and my shirt rode up my back, revealing part of my scars. He saw them but didn’t ask right away. He waited a few days and then asked where they came from. When I told him the story, he just hugged me. No words, no “I’m so sorry that happened.” No “I can’t believe that happened to you.” He just hugged me and then finally said, “I’m glad you got away.”

I was waiting for our relationship to change. Waiting for him to start avoiding me, or to look at me differently, but he never did. If anything, it made our relationship stronger. He started confiding in me more and asking my opinion on his dating life. He was probably the first man that didn’t run for the hills at the first chance.