

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 386

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Adrik

Once Sephie and I were alone that night, I asked her what had happened with Stephen, both while they had disappeared during the afternoon and what happened when he looked like he was struggling earlier.

She exhaled loudly. “Ugh. So, I want to kill his sisters now. I got him to open up a little bit this afternoon. We were making Viktor’s favorite cookies by the way. He gets very grumpy when I haven’t cooked in a few days and it shows,” she said, laughing quietly.

“Why do you want to kill his sisters? I didn’t even know he had sisters. He never talks about them,” I said.

“For good reason. His sisters were always mean to him growing up. Much more than normal sibling bickering mean. He told me that’s why it took him so long to warm up to me. He was waiting for me to turn mean too,” she said. She’d taken her contacts out already and I watched her eyes change to the amber brown that meant she was sad. She climbed on top of me, straddling my lap. “There’s more to the story, but I wasn’t going to make him tell me. He really struggled even just with that. That’s what happened in the kitchen earlier. When Misha questioned him, it made him insecure. Stephen doesn’t like me in his head, but I asked him if I could look tonight. I told him I knew he’d made the connection already, but he was frozen by his insecurities. I was right. It was easy to find, but he was over-analyzing because he was worried he was wrong.”

She chewed on her bottom lip, her eyes still golden amber. I could feel how upset she was, but it was different. She was upset for him. She looked at me, her fingers tracing lightly over my facial hair. “I told him this afternoon that he should always trust his first instinct. He’s so smart, but he doesn’t believe how smart he is. He’s so freaking hilarious too, I love him a little more each time he makes a joke about Vlad in front of Vitaliy,” she said, leaning her head on my shoulder in a fit of giggles. I laughed with her. It was quickly becoming one of my favorite things as well. My father was convinced that Vlad was a living person at this point. I certainly wasn’t going to tell him any different.

While we were still laughing, my phone beeped on the nightstand. Sephie sat up so I could check it. It was a message from Viktor.

Tell Sephie thank you and I love her. She knows why.

I showed her the message. “The cookies?” I asked.

She nodded. “He told me his wife used to make these cookies for him when they first got married. He said he couldn’t get enough of them. I almost didn’t try to make them, because they’re not going to be the same. She was the secret ingredient. But he’s been so grumpy since I haven’t cooked the past few days that I decided to give it a try. It gave me a reason to kidnap Stephen, so I think it worked out. I think those two are slower about figuring out how they’re special because I don’t spend as much time with them.”

“You can kidnap whoever you like, solnishko. They all know what to do. One of the other ones will step in to take care of things,” I said, twirling one of her curls around my finger.

“I might start stealing Stephen a little more often. Viktor is going to be more difficult. I need your help with him. He enjoys his job too much. He’s very good at it, don’t get me wrong, but he doesn’t like to leave his regular duties.”

“He would if it meant spending time with you. They would all much rather spend time with you than anything else they have to do.”

“Viktor always grabs one of the other guys when I try to steal him, though. He was also the most unnerved about my eyes changing. I might scare him now,” she said.

I laughed. “You don’t scare him, love. You don’t scare any of them. Viktor loves you just as much as the rest of them.”

She squinted her eyes at me like she didn’t believe me, but she didn’t argue further.

“What about Andrei? You said earlier that he had levels you didn’t even know about? What happened?” I asked.

She husked at me, wide-eyed. “That kid can see auras and he never told anyone.”

I laughed at her response. “Explain.”

“He didn’t call it an aura. He said there’s a glow to certain people. He sees it on the acupuncturist. I didn’t tell you, but she works with my dad. And probably your mom, now that I think about it. She told me. Andrei and I were talking about my reaction to their shock at seeing my eyes when we woke up today. He said I was the reason he can do what he can do now and that’s when I told him he was the youngest and that nobody expected him to figure it out in this lifetime. He asked me how I knew. I didn’t say anything about the acupuncturist and he said it was her. He can see a different “glow” about her than the rest of us.” She moved to get off my lap, stretching her back and lying down next to me. “Of course, I was curious to know if he saw it on anyone else. He said he sees it now on Ivan, since the first kidnapping attempt when he almost died. He didn’t notice it on him before that happened, but that makes sense. He also sees it on you and me. But he doesn’t see it all the time on us, where he does on the acupuncturist. He said he doesn’t walk around looking at glowing people all day, either. It must only come up sometimes for him, but he said he’s seen it since he was a kid.”

I thought for a minute. “What if it’s the opposite of what Ivan can see? Ivan sees the evil, Andrei sees the good. That might be why it’s not around us all the time. We’re both, but the acupuncturist is only good.”

“That would make sense. I want to talk to him about it more. It’s best to ease into those conversations with him right now. He’s still a little overwhelmed with everything. He’s handling it well, but it’s a lot for him,” she said.

“It really cuts into his cheeseburger thoughts,” I said. Sephie’s laughter was music to my ears, effectively making me forget the stress of the day.