

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 453

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Adrik

Once Viktor was done with Sephie, she came back to me while he moved on to help Misha and Andrei. Her heart stopping smile was once again across her face, making the room a little brighter and the rest of us lighter for seeing it.

She looked at me, squinting her eyes as she tucked herself into my side. She glanced over at Ivan as well, analyzing him for a moment.

“Why are you two pi*sed off?” she asked both of us.

“Viktor’s reluctance to help you,” Ivan said.

“We’re going to make sure that he lets Stephen help him before he leaves tonight, He’s going to have to get over his aversion to us sooner or later,” I said.

“Or it’s not going to be pretty, is it?” she asked.

“Not one bit,” Ivan said.

Sephie was quiet for a moment. She caught Stephen’s eye, motioning him over to us while Viktor was working on the Wonder Twins.

“I have an idea,” she said to us, then she said the same thing out loud to Stephen. She let us watch as she put our conversation into pictures, sending it to Stephen as she held his hand. He understood immediately.

“I just need to touch him to do it,” Stephen said quietly: “I do think he’s scared of you three especially, so maybe let me try to talk him into it. We all noticed his reluctance to help you. It wasn’t just you three.”

As Viktor finished with Misha and Andrei, they both looked much lighter, just as Sephie did. Everything was returning to normal after our afternoon with Battista. Everyone was back to calm as well. The only emotion we could feel other than the peaceful calm was from me and Ivan and our irritation with Viktor.

Stephen looked at Viktor, asking, “are you ready for your turn now, Viktor?” Viktor hesitated, which made both Ivan and I struggle to restrain ourselves.

“You two either look at the floor or keep your eyes closed. That’s not going to help him,” Sephie told us, very firmly. “I can feel your frustration. I understand it, but it’s not helping right now.”

We both exhaled, trying to keep ourselves calm. Andrei and Misha picked up on something going on, feeling our frustration through Sephie. They both joined in with Stephen, trying to help convince Viktor.

“Viktor, you know you’ve been uncomfortable around Sephie since her eyes started going dark. Don’t think we all haven’t noticed you avoiding her,”

Andrei said.

“We also know it’s not her that makes you uncomfortable. Why wouldn’t you want help to feel comfortable around her again?” Misha asked.

“You let Kostya help you with your overwhelming sadness, but this fear that you have because of your time in Syria is going to become just as overwhelming to you if you don’t address it. Trust me, man. I know what it’s like to live with more trauma than you can carry. The slightest thing becomes completely overwhelming. Let me help you feel better,” Stephen said. As he was talking, he was slowly taking steps toward Viktor. As he said the last sentence, he casually reached out and touched Viktor’s arm. It was all he needed to start the process.

“That little s*it,” Sephie said to me and Ivan. She was clearly impressed that he’d managed to sneak it in.

Ivan was laughing in his head. “I should’ve known he’d do this. Stephen’s stealth is unparalleled. Can’t believe I doubted him.”

Andrei caught Sephie’s eye from across the room. He was clearly enjoying the fact that Stephen had managed to sneak it in as well. The two of them

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had a silent conversation. Afterward, she shared it with us.

“Bubba says he’s glad Stephen did this. He didn’t think Viktor was going to let him. He might’ve snooped while Viktor was helping Misha earlier. He said the aversion to us was even bigger than any of us knew. I’m wondering if this is going to p*ss him off now,” Sephie said. She glanced up at me, revealing her swirling eyes. The white was clearly mixed in with the other colors. She was starting to worry.

When Stephen was done, Viktor looked better for a moment. Before the anger came out. “WHAT THE F*CK, MAN! You don’t do that to someone unless they’re willing,” he all but screamed at Stephen.

It immediately sent me and Ivan into offense mode. We both took steps toward Viktor, My anger was quickly rising. I’m sure Ivan’s was too. Sephie caught both of us before we could move any closer to Viktor. One hand on my chest, one hand on Ivan’s chest.

“WAIT. Before you two do something that will damage this relationship further than it already is,” she said. We could hear the urgency in her voice. We could also feel her starting to panic, which didn’t help either of us calm down. She looked up at both of us, her eyes were black, but we could see the white swirling behind it.

We could also clearly see the tears threatening to fall.

I backed off. Ivan did too, once he saw me move back slightly. Sephie turned toward Viktor, but she was looking at the floor for a moment. I knew she was trying to get her eyes to change back. When she looked up at him, we were all hit with a wave of her sadness. This was tearing her up inside.

“Viktor, would you have let Stephen help you if he didn’t sneak up on you?” she asked. He didn’t answer her at first. He looked like he was too angry to answer her. “You don’t have to answer. I know you weren’t going to.” She paused for a moment, trying to keep herself together, but we could all feel the turmoil she was in. She was finally letting herself really feel the pain of him avoiding her, the pain of him rejecting us, his discomfort being around us. “You’re allowed to feel however you want to feel about us now that you know everything, Viktor. I won’t stop you, I won’t even judge you. I understand it’s a lot to deal with. What hurts me, though, is that you would rather hold on to the pain you’ve been carrying around for years than to get help with it so you can feel good again. You’re choosing pain over us. And it’s not even that I’m hurt that you would choose pain over me, because I’ve been in your life for a very short amount of time. But the fact that you would choose pain over these five men who’ve been through so much with you is a little much for me to bear.”

She didn’t wait for him to respond to her. She turned and walked back to the bedroom, closing the door behind her. We could all feel her fall apart as soon as she was alone. I knew Viktor wasn’t as connected to her as the rest of us, but I found myself wishing he was at this moment so he could feel the pain she was in over this.

“Go to her. We’ll sort this out,” Ivan said. “Do whatever you need to do to make her happy again. I don’t know how long I can stand her feeling like this without killing him.”

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