

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 456

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Sephle

Adrik decided to go to Viktor's apartment and talk to him while we all waited upstairs. Next to Ivan, Viktor was the closest to Adrik. We all knew Viktor did better with difficult situations away from everyone, so Adrik thought it might go better if it was just him. None of us could argue with that line of thinking, so we waited.

"If nothing else, maybe he'll give him a few more days off. I think forcing him to slow down will help him deal. Apparently, I'm not the only thing he's been avoiding." I said as Adrik left the apartment.

"None of us understand why he's been avoiding you, spider monkey," Andrei said. "We've all noticed it for months now, but none of us understand it. Even knowing that you're the one that's helped us all figure everything out. It still doesn't make sense."

I caught myself thinking back to my earlier worry about keeping them from living their own lives. "You're worried about something else beside Viktor, aren't you, princess?" Ivan asked me. He could tell by my expression that the answer was yes.

"Wanna talk about it now or later?"

"Later."

He simply nodded his head and let the subject drop, helping to steer the conversation to other subjects. He looked at Andrei, asking, "have you tried communicating with Boss the same way you do Sephie?"

Andrei looked shocked at the implication, which made everyone laugh. "I think Ivan means that since he and I can communicate so easily, it should also be fairly easy for you to do so as well," I said.

"Oh. No, I haven't tried. I haven't even thought about it, if I'm being honest. But now that you say that out loud, I would think there should be a way. right? I'm still trying to figure out how to make it work with Stephen. It seems like there still has to be contact with him to get anything through," Andrei said.

"How do you make it work with Misha?" I asked him.

"It's kind of changed now. When we first started doing it, I could like project images into his head. He can ask me whatever or tell me whatever and I'll get it easily, but I had to respond to him in images at first. Now it's getting easier the more we do it. I can respond to him with words now and he gets it," Andrei said.

As Andrei was explaining how he communicated with Misha, I tried to push a memory of us running at the house, just to see if he could see it. Misha's grin stretched across his face as he'd seen it. Once I knew he'd seen it, I could hear him tell me "I miss it too" as a response. He quickly followed it with, "try words, too. I think Andrei unlocked it for me, so you should have an easier time."

"I've been thinking that you should order Adrik to the house again. I think we all need it again already," I said to Misha.

"I fully support this plan," he said, grinning at me. The other three had figured out that he and I just discovered we could communicate.

I looked at Andrei, then to Ivan. "It should work on you two, too. I mean, I would think so, since Ivan can talk to both me and Adrik. If Andrei's like me, then it should work, right?" I asked.

I could see Andrei trying to push his thoughts to Ivan. Ivan's sly grin spread slowly across his face as he heard Andrei in his head. Once they had a conversation, we all looked at Stephen. "Now we just have to figure out how to start with you and then you'll be able to do it too."

We were still experimenting with Stephen when Adrik came back to the penthouse. So far, we still needed to be able to touch Stephen for him to get the message, but he was able to do it with everyone and do so quickly. One touch and whatever information he needed was downloaded to him instantly. We were laughing because I'd come up with a really long explanation for some incredibly ridiculous thing, just to have as much material as possible. He touched my hand and got it all instantly like I'd said it to him out loud.

"Do I even want to know what you guys are doing?" Adrik asked as he walked back into the kitchen. He looked highly amused to see us all laughing.

"We're trying to figure out how to communicate with Stephen. So far, we have to be touching him to get the information to him, but I just went on this really long rant over nothing and he got it instantly when he touched my hand," I said, still laughing. "And we also figured out how to talk to

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Misha and Andrei. Ivan can do it now too, which means so can you."

Adrik looked surprised, but impressed. We quickly explained how to do it with both Andrei and then Misha. It worked right away for both of them. Even they were surprised it worked so quickly with Adrik. He tried our system with Stephen as well, getting immediate results.

"I think the more we practice at this, the easier it will become all around," Ivan said. His mood turned somewhat serious as he asked what the rest of us didn't want to ask, "How did it go?"

Adrik sighed. "I think Sephie is right. I think he's done everything backward from us, which is why we're having a harder time with it. He knows he's been an a*shole. He just doesn't know how to stop it yet. The time in Syria did a number on him. We all know that, but we all thought he was handling it. In reality, he just shoved it to the back of his mind and never thought about it again. When we first met Sephie, she was a welcome distraction from it. But then she started helping everyone else deal with their own trauma, plus revealing everything she's been through. It was so fresh for him that he didn't want to go through it all again. So he started avoiding. Everything."

"What about Stephen helping him tonight, though? Did that do anything for him?" I asked.

"I think so. He's finally feeling everything that's he's been locking away. I suspect he's feeling like you did when Stephen helped you. It was like wa crashing into all of us as everything opened back up for you. But once we felt the emotion, it was gone right away. I don't think it's leaving as quickly with Viktor as it did with you, but at least it's moving now," he said.

"Does that mean Stephen needs to do it again?" Misha asked.

We all turned to Stephen, not sure of the answer. He looked somewhat surprised. "Bold of you all to assume I'd have that answer," he said. "But I can give my best guess. It was much easier with Seph, Andrei, and Misha today because the blocks were fresh. Meaning they were weak. The longer you try and bottle up something, the stronger the block gets. Viktor's been holding all of that in for quite a while, so the block is strong. I might've only cracked it, so to speak. Things are moving, but he might also be able to repair the dam, if you will. We should be able to tell in the next few days if it stuck or not. I'm not above sneaking it in on him again if that's what it takes."

"You don't need him mad at you like that again, though. That's not fair to you," I said.

"Eh, he never stays mad for very long. I don't think he was even mad at me. He was just mad at knowing now he's gotta feel it," Stephen said.

"That's exactly why he's mad. He told me so," Adrik said.

"So what did you tell him?" Ivan asked.

"I gave him a couple more days to get a handle on everything. I don't like being without him, but we can manage. He wants to deal with everything on his own, so he's got the chance to do so. I told him not to waste the opportunity," Adrik said.

I found myself feeling slightly relieved that I'd get another break from him, but I was also upset that I would feel that way about Viktor.

"Don't worry, spider monkey. We'll get this figured out and things will go back to normal," Andrei said, in an effort to comfort me.

I looked at him, loving him for being so thoughtful. "Normal is relative anyway, Bubba."

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