

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 428

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Sephte

It was three more days before anyone saw Viktor again. After the second day Ian and I started to get worried about him, so we decided to go check. The guys knew that Viktor was at least in his apartment this time. They could see the light under the door at night, Adrik sent Andrei and Misha with us as well.

"I think he's fine now," I said, teasing Adrik about being overprotective of me. Viktor liked him. It shouldn't be an issue this time."

"I don't care. You're still not allowed to touch him and you're taking all three of them," he said, very firmly. "Or else you wait until my meetings are done and Ivan and I will go with you. But you're still not allowed to touch him. He had the slightest hint of a smile creeping up one side of his mouth as he laid down his ground rules.

"You're very cranky," I said, walking to him. Ivan was waiting just outside the door, along with the Wonder Twins. "It makes me want to fuck it out of you," I thought as I made my eyes go black. His immediately changed to black in response and I was hit with his intense desire for me.

"You do not play fair, solnishko," he responded. He groaned quietly as he pulled me to him, kissing me deeply. I heard the elevator doors signal the arrival of his next meeting. I pulled back so I could look at his eyes. They were still black. I quickly thought about how much I loved him, trying to make mine change to blue. For the first time, I saw his change from black to normal blue. The black slowly faded into the background as the blue mixed in and slowly took over once more. He raised his eyebrow, noticing my look of wonderment.

"I just saw yours change for the first time. Now I understand why you like watch it so much," I told him. He pressed his lips gently to mine as Stephen walked in with his next meeting.

He said, in Russian, "I love you, solnishko. Come back when you're done."

"How could I refuse?" I responded, in Russian. I walked out of his office, grabbing Stephen's arm on the way out.

"You guys look like you're about to get into trouble," he said, still speaking Russian. Everyone preferred Russian during the day in the office. It kept everyone else from looking too closely at me. They knew they wouldn't be able to understand anything they were saying, so they largely ignored the guys. People still stared a little too much for my liking whenever I was with them, but I was trying to get over my aversion to the attention.

The guys, in their usual protective way, did what they do best and kept me as out of sight as possible from everyone else.

"We're going to check on Viktor," I said. "He wouldn't let me go with just Ivan. I'm also not allowed to touch Ilya." I pointed to Ivan, then Andrei, and finally Misha. "So, it's on you three to make sure I don't touch him. I make no promises. I'll be able to control myself."

Stephen laughed quietly, but he agreed with Adrik. "Until we know for sure what really happened, I think that's sage advice, Seph. I don't think you should touch him either."

Ivan's giant arms wrapped around me, trapping my arms to my sides. "Okay, ncess. We've got it covered. Let's go." He started walking us toward the elevator, making me laugh.

I knocked quietly on Viktor's door. Ilya opened the door soon after, surprised to see us all standing there. He looked even better than the last time I'd seen him. The first time I saw him, he looked much older than his actual age this time, he looked younger. Much healthier and much more vibrant. He smiled warmly when he saw us and immediately stepped back from the door, motioning us inside.

"Viktor's still sleeping, but please come in," he said.

"Has he been asleep this whole time?" I asked.

Ilya nodded. "I was out for two days straight. I kind of expect Viktor to sleep longer. He's been carrying around so much grief for so many years that I think it might take him longer. We've been trying to get him to move past this for so many years and he wouldn't do it." He looked straight at me. "We didn't know we just needed to give him orders," he said, smiling.

"I did not give him orders," I said, crossing my arms across my chest.

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"No, that tracks, gazelle. I believe you gave him orders," Misha said, grinding

I glared at Misha for a moment, before turning back to Ilya. "How you? You look much better than the last time I saw you"

"I feel much better. You were right when you told Vitya that it would've killed. I came here to say goodbye," he said. As soon as he said the words,

sat a low level for now I could feel his anger, but I immediately felt Ivan's bubble go up around

"You take my hearing away when you put your bubble up, so you have to let me hear this way," I told Ivan. He nodded discreetly, but kept his focus on

Ilya

everything you felt. That's what happened when I shook your hand. I quite a lot. Maybe more than most. Between the grief and "Ilya, I saw everything she did to you, everything she said to you, and I also don't know how much Viktor has told you about me, about us, but I can hang

ling what you've been carrying around, it almost broke me. I don't overwheleling sadness that your brother has been carrying around and then

said, I would still see Ilya clearly, but I could only hear what Ivan heard while his bubble was up around me. What you were dealing with would've broken anyone," bubble was up around me. Ilya was struggling with his memories. I put my hands in my pockets because the urge to comfort him was growing stronger. I glanced to Andrei, tapping my temple, then cutting my eyes toward Ilya. He understood immediately.

"You have to stop blaming yourself, man. What you were dealing with wasn't just any chick," Andrei said after a quick snoop in Ilya's head. "The more you keep blaming yourself, the more you think about how bad you got, the easier it will be for all that to come back to you. You'll end up like Viktor. You'll carry that pain around for so long that you don't know how to live with it," he said.

"I can't say we've all been there, but we all do things we regret at some point. Learn from it. Never let it happen again. And count yourself lucky you got away from this one. I didn't see everything Sephie saw, but I saw what you looked like before Viktor fixed you. You got a second chance, man. Don't waste it," Misha said.

Ilya was chewing on his thumb nail as we talked, looking at the floor. He was quiet for a few minutes, then he looked up at all of us. A small smile crept across his face. "I can see why Vitya is so fond of all of you. I think he talks about you guys more than he talks about me and Sasha. You've all been very good for him."

On the elevator back to Adrik's office, I asked Ivan if he felt anything before he put his bubble up.

"You didn't?" he asked me..

"No. I assume there was more darkness, but he said quite possibly the saddest sentence ever spoken and I immediately felt your bubble, but nothing else. I'm either assuming that he's got nerves of steel now or neither of our eyes went black during that conversation, too. He never reacted if they did," I said.

"Ivan cuts you off from us, too," Misha said. "I could feel you when we first go there, but then nothing until we left. I didn't realize it was him until just now."

"Same for me," Andrei said.

I looked to Ivan. "I wonder if you can adjust it next time?"

He thought for a minute. "I'm sure there's a way. I just have to figure it out."

"But we do know it worked. I didn't feel anything overwhelming from Ilya this time. I could tell he was still struggling when he'd think about it, but I felt nothing. Overall, I think he's much better than the last time I saw him," said.

Before the doors to the elevator opened, Andrei stood in front of me as Misha picked me up so I could hitch a ride. "I did notice you had to put your hands in your pockets, gazelle. I was ready to smack your hand away, just in case," he said, laughing.

"You have no idea how difficult that was for me," I said, dramatically.

