

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 439

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Sephie

I fell asleep quickly that night, across Adol's chest. I found myself in my dadless I fully expected saw my dad appear before me, but it never did Instead, it just continued to get brighter. I glanced around, trying to first

"Holy sh it. Creepier than anything else I've ever seen here," I said He giggled Sh it. Da mmit! Apparently, I'm incapable of not cursing in front of you Tell si

When I fun

fade and the path to the house where i always

ept there was nothing around ine. The light

to was a small boy in front of me.

chich made me realize that Ed post cursed in front of a child "Cap parent I'm very sorry?" I said.

He giggled again, walking closer to me. "Do you know who I am he asked.

I studied him for a few moments. There was a familiarity to him, but I knew hit me. "Kastva? Lasked.

never seen him before. I chewed on my bottom lip, then it suddenly

His boyish grin spread across his face. He nodded. "This is the form that Viklikes best, so I use it the most. I wasn't sure how much you'd looked in his head. I didn't want to confuse you."

"I haven't looked in his head at all, Kostya. I don't do that. Why does nobody elieve me about that?"

He giggled again. "Because we would all take advantage of being able to read people's thoughts, so we can't possibly fathom that you wouldn't want

to."

"It's not all burritos and sunshine, kid. There's lots of things I wish I'd never en," I said. I looked at him, curious. "Why are you here?"

"You feel a difference with Viktor that you don't with the rest of them," he sa. He waited for me to agree with his statement before he continued. "The others are like you, Adrik, and Ivan now. They'll eventually be able to wk between Heaven and Hell. They'll learn how to make their demons

work for them."

He didn't need to finish and I knew. "Viktor wants no part of that," I said.

Kostya smiled. "Your dad said you were smart. You're right. He had a choice and he chose to stay away from Hell. As such, his connection to you will never be as strong as the others. Same for them. They'll never be as connected to him as they are to each other."

"Does it mean he really wants to leave?" I asked.

"No, he told you he was all in and he is. But the demons scare him. Viktor's sol isn't as old as yours, you have to remember. It doesn't have as much experience." He paused, taking a deep breath. "It's also why you're irritated sand can't figure out why. It's not you, it's your demon that's irritated."

1 laughed. "My demon's feelings are hurt? Why do I find that endearing?"

"Your demon hasn't always been a demon, Sephie. It started out as a soul, just like you. Because you've made friends with it and you're using it for good, you're helping it repair the damage done by the evil it gave in to. You're giving it a better existence than it could ever have if it continued to give in to evil. It's hurt. It feels like Viktor is rejecting it. Your connection is onger with Adrik and Ivan because of your demons. Your connection with Misha, Andrei, and Stephen is becoming stronger because they want to p their own demons. Viktor asked for his demon to be taken away. Your demons all know this, without you knowing this."

"Is he still scared of me?"

"He can separate the two. He's not scared of you, but the demons still unnerve him. They always have, it you remember. He's always had the hardest time with your eyes changing, even before you knew it was your demon stepping forward," he said.

"How do I help him not be scared?"

"It will take time. I've been helping him as much as I can. You were right. I he been coming to him every night, trying to help him accept everything. There's a small part of him that doesn't trust your demons still."

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I thought for a minute. "Does it have to do with his time in the Syrian prison?

He giggled again. "He said you were smart. He didn't say you were this smart

does. The man who would torture Viktor was completely consumed by a demon. Viktor saw glimpses. When your eyes change, he can't help but remember that time. He knows it's not the same, but he still struggles to

remember that," he said.

"How do I help him get over that?"

"You can't," he said and I immediately felt my hopes come crashing down. "Bet Stephen can. Adrik told him that he was going to level up soon. That's true. Stephen will be able to take Misha's hatred for Giana and get rid of it. Hell also be able to take everything Viktor still carries from his time in prison and get rid of it."

"How? Doesn't he need to give it back to the people that gave it to Misha and Viktor?"

"Not once he levels up. He spent so much time trying to find ways to transmite the pain from his childhood that he's going to be able to do it for other people. He knows the struggle of not being able to get rid of something that feels like it's killing you slowly. He's going to be able to help others with that. That's partly why he's so happy now. He knows, without knowing, that he helped you to feel better and it's made him ecstatic."

I felt the tears welling up in my eyes as I thought about everything Stephen had gone through. For him to still want to help people after all that said everything anyone would need to know about what kind of person he is. I loved him a little more for it.

"How do we get over feeling irritated around Viktor?" I asked.

Once again, his boyish giggle filled the space. "You need to love your demon n little extra until they're convinced Viktor isn't rejecting them."

"Okay, I understand why you laughed at that. This is not a conversation I ever thought I'd be having. Will Viktor feel left out, though? Because his connection isn't as strong as the others?"

"I don't think so. I think he prefers it. It's less he has to think about or feel. He has so much on his mind already that even just the little bit he's gotten from you feels very overwhelming to him."

"Can I make it less for just him? I don't want to overwhelm him. He doesn't hood another reason to avoid me," I said.

Kostya surprised me by walking to me, grabbing my hand. "He still loves you, Sephie. He loves you very much. It's going to take his soul longer to get to the point the rest of you are at. That's all it is. You can stop worrying about him leaving." I tried to blink back the tears, but I couldn't keep them in. Kostya grabbed my other hand. As he did, everything got brighter for a moment and suddenly I felt better. Lighter.

"You just fixed me, didn't you?"

He nodded, smiling sweetly up at me. "You had to endure abandonment to get you here, but you don't ever have to worry about that again." He raised my left hand, looking at my ring. "You still don't know the significance of this, but they will always be with you and they will always protect you."

"Let me guess, you're not allowed to tell me either, are you?"

"Not that one, Sephie. You have to figure it out for yourself. But I'm sure you can connect the dots. You always do," he said, winking at me.

I knelt down, so I was eye-level with him. "In another life, Viktor is very proud of the man you're going to grow up to be," I said. His face lit up as his smile beamed at me. It was the last thing I saw as everything faded back to black and I could once again only see my body. I could feel Adrik's hand lightly running up and down my back as he talked softly to me, trying to wake me up. He felt me stir and pulled me closer.

"Good morning, solnishko. Were you dreaming? You were all over the place for a few minutes there," he said as I picked my head up to test my chin

on his chest.

I smiled at him. "Kostya," I said, laughing at his shocked expression.

"What? How?"

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"Same as my dad and your mom. Just a different location. Not gonna lie, it was creepy as f uck to turn around and see a little kid in front of me. Was not expecting that," I said.

Adrik's eyes went wide. "Kids are scary. I completely agree. What did he need to tell you?

"I know why Viktor feels different to us now."