

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 213

Chapter Two Hundred Thirteen

Adrik

She looked up at me, like she was considering whether she should tell me something. She finally shrugged her shoulders. “Pretty sure you already know I’m mostly crazy. Remember when I told you I talked to my dad in a dream when we were at the ranch house in Italy?” I nodded my head. “It happened again alter we got home from the hospital when Ivan almost died.”

“And what did he tell you this time?” I asked, now curious, I think she was worried I would think she was in sane, but her father helped save our lives when we were in Italy. I owed him.

“He told me that we’re soulmates, for one. That we’ve met each other and fallen in love again and again over lifetimes.” She peaked up at me, half afraid that I wasn’t going to believe her.

“No offense to your father, I still owe him one, but I feel like that’s obvious, Sephie,” I said, grinning at her.

Her gorgeous smile stretched across her face. “He also told me that the rest of us are linked in similar ways. Like there’s a reason we’re all together. Ivan, especially.” Her gaze dropped once more, like she wasn’t sure how much detail she should give

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“Linked how?” I asked, still battling with the curls around her face.

“Like with Misha. My dad said I’m helping him to hone his gift of being able to tell when something is or isn’t going to go right.”

“I completely believe that, especially after what happened at the ball and then Italy. I won’t make a serious decision without consulting him ever again. Although I’m still confused how he missed that day that you went to the piano gallery when they tried to grab you,” I said. My finger traced lightly down her face as she talked.

“I asked the same thing. He said no one saw it until it was almost too late. It was the first time my dad had to intervene, but then he said he really didn’t need to because Ivan had it covered.” She paused for a minute, then looked up at me. That was a very important day for Ivan. He took my dad’s job. He officially became my protector.” She said it quietly, like she was almost scared to say it out loud.

“What does that mean?” I asked, now even more curious.

“Just like you and I are connected over many lifetimes, so are Ivan and 1. My dad said we’ve spent many lifetimes together too.”

I thought for a minute. I could feel her eyes on me as I thought back to the first time I met Ivan. He saved me and Viktor and got us into and out of a very difficult situation safely. I remember feeling like I had known Ivan for much longer than a couple of days when I offered him a job. In contrast, I waited a few weeks minimum, usually a few months, to offer a job to the rest of the guys. Even with not knowing everything about Ivan’s past, I still felt closer to Ivan more quickly than the other guys.

“The same way you and I have spent lifetimes together? Because I can tell you right now, this lifetime doesn’t involve sharing.” I said. I couldn’t help but smirk at her as I sold it.

She laughed loudly. “Nooooo. No sharing. Not like that, you perv. I’m pretty sure Ivan has always been my protector In some way. My dad said he feels compelled to protect me. Ivan sald that was true. Even before he knew I was different, he felt compelled to protect me.”

I wrapped my arms around her, smiling at her laughter. I leaned down and kissed her lips gently. “Ok, no sharing. We’ve all seen how much closer you and (van have become since the kidnapping attempt. I think Andrei might even be a little Jealous of it sometimes, if I’m being honest. I meant to make her laugh, but instead she looked troubled.

“He is?” she asked.

I nodded my head. “He liked being your favorite in the beginning. You know Andrei and Misha are the sensitive ones. It was a confidence boost for Andrei when you got close to him before anyone else. Now that you’re close with all of them, he doesn’t feel as special anymore.”

“How do you know this? Has he talked to you about it?” she asked. She was clearly worried about it.

I couldn’t help but smile at her. “No, solnishko. It’s not a problem for him, either. I’ve just seen his face fall a few times when he thought you were coming to him and you went to one of the other guys instead.”

She looked lost in thought for a moment. I leaned on the counter so I could be eye level with her, forcing her to look at me. “They all love you, Sephie. But they also know there’s one of you and five of them. They’re big boys. They’ll manage.”

“But I don’t want to cause problems. I did get close to Bubba first. He’s just so easy to talk to and trying to help him get with Tori probably helped me get closer to him too. I don’t want him to be sad about me being close to Ivan though. Ivan and I are bonded over trauma. I’m not sure that’s something to be jealous of,” she said, chewing on her bottom lip.

I chuckled, which made her look at me again. “This isn’t something you should worry about, love. But it illustrates my point from earlier perfectly. You’re worried about making Andrei sad when you’ve had quite possibly the most stressful week since I’ve known you and your brain is trying to find creative ways to help you silently cope so you don’t feel like you’re burdening anyone else with your past. Andrei being a little jealous of your special relationship with Ivan should not be anywhere on your list of things to worry about right now.”

She looked down at her hands, which started to fidget again, as she continued to chew on her bottom lip. I put my hand under her chin, gently lifting it so she would look at me again. “Do you know why Ivan and I are different when we hear what’s happened to you, Sephie?” She shook her head no. “Because we know what real darkness is. We’ve been living in it for years. It doesn’t scare us like it does other people. I think that’s what you’re seeing reflected back to you on other people’s faces. They realize that you’ve survived something they couldn’t. That alone makes you stronger than most people you will meet in your life. That’s a scary realization for some people. They can’t handle knowing that you can walk among real monsters and survive.” 1 paused. “Not just survive. It’s clearly made you stronger, the same way it has for me as well as Ivan. I don’t know what happened to Ivan in his past, but I know it wasn’t good. He doesn’t know everything that happened to me in my past either, but it’s also not good. But we both recognize the look in each other. We’ve both seen it in you, as well. It’s the look you get when you’ve stared evil in the face. It’s why your past doesn’t scare us. We can recognize that you’re a survivor, just like us.”

She was looking at me, curiously, the way she would when we would tell her stories about our past. I took her arms and put them around my neck, pulling her to me so I could pick her up off the bathroom counter. I walked us back out to the couch, keeping her in my lap as I sat down. I continued my battle with the curls around her face as I continued. “I knew you were the

one for me that first night, when I told you my name.” I felt that pull in my chest toward her when her wide smile stretched across her face. “That was before I knew everything you’d been through. Every single new thing I learn about you makes me love you more and confirms what I’ve always thought about you. You’re the most extraordinary woman I’ve ever met and I’m eternally grateful that you’re in my life. Ms. Jackson was right when she said you give me something I’ve never had before, but it’s so much more than she knows. You’ve brought balance back to my world. You’ve reminded me of the good, not only in me. but in everyone you see.”

“Well, maybe not everyone everyone,” she said, grinning at me.

“Fair enough. Almost everyone you see,” I said. I brushed her hair back from her shoulders, leaving my hand on her neck, my thumb rubbing gently along her jawline. She leaned into my touch, closing her eyes for a moment. A single tear fell from her eye. I reached up and wiped it away with my thumb. She opened her eyes, looking at me. The tears that were threatening to fall were enough to make the colors of her eyes swirl in the low light

“I needed you to remind me that I’m good.” She closed her eyes again, causing more tears to fall,