

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 349

Sephte

He had reason to worry. Trying to control my eyes from changing color at a whim was proving to be more difficult than I thought. Luckily, my future husband happened to be very wealthy and could get things made in a very short amount of time. In the few days it took to get Giana's new ID and passport sorted out, he had someone make me a custom pair of contacts that matched my normal eyes. They were almost an exact match to my normal eye color. The guy had made the contacts from a picture of my eyes. I was still getting used to wearing them, but at least I didn't need to worry about anyone seeing anything I didn't want them to see. Ivan was still the only one that knew about it aside from Adrik.

I smiled at Adrik. "I'll be fine. You guys aren't going to listen anyway. You'll be able to see if I need you," I said in Russian, looking from him to the guys, who were clearly not happy with being ordered to stay. Adrik's father or not, they didn't like the idea of me being apart from them in new surroundings. Vitaliy laughed, which caught everyone by surprise. He turned away from everyone, shaking his head, leaving them all in stunned silence.

Once we were far enough away from everyone that he couldn't be heard, he took a deep breath. He placed his hand over mine, which was still holding his arm lightly. "His mother knew you would be coming. I wish she could've met you," he said. I glanced at him. He was deep in thought, but his face softened at the mention of Adrik's mother. I knew she had died when Adrik was very young. He could barely remember her. His father never had another wife, nor did he father any other children after she passed away. He would have girlfriends here and there, but Adrik said he was never very serious about any of them. His father wouldn't speak too much about his mother, so Adrik felt like she was almost a stranger to him. He could barely remember what she looked like. He said when he was younger, he would ask some of his father's men questions about his mother. He got the sense that they all thought fondly of her. Once he got older, he stopped thinking about her.

I got the very clear sense that he felt about her the way Adrik felt about me. I said quietly, "you'll see her again, you know. And you'll fall over again." He walked quietly for a few steps, then I heard him sniffle.

Tin love all

"You're not like normal women. I can feel it. You're different than everyone else except Adrik. He's special too."

Normally, I would've kept my mouth shut about the guys, but something compelled me to tell him everything. I looked into his eyes and I knew he'd been waiting to hear everything I was going to tell him. "You're right about both of us, but not about everyone else. We're not the only ones who are special," I said.

He laughed again, patting my hand. "You've just made his mother a very happy woman. She told me Adrik would find people that were special like him and he would realize all the dreams I had when I ruled the city. And more."

"You should've listened to her," I said, grinning up at him. It made him laugh again.

He looked down at me thoughtfully. "She was very much like you. Most people are scared of me. I like it that way. She never was, though. She saw through it right away. Just as you have. Even Adrik struggles with seeing through it. He thinks I'm a cold man. He's right, but it prevents him from seeing the love I have for him. That's my one regret. I wanted to be softer to him, but I never figured out how."

"He knows on some level that you love him. He also understands that you needed to make him tough in order to survive this world. He respects you. You might make him nervous, which is somewhat hilarious for me since he never gets nervous about anything, but he respects you. I know him well enough to know that not many people get his respect."

He chuckled as we continued walking. "How long did it take him to tell you his name?" he asked. He looked down at me when he asked the question. He was clearly curious.

"Um, I think like twenty minutes, tops, from the first time I saw him. Maybe less," I said, smiling at the memory.

"You are a special, special girl," he said wistfully. We walked in silence for a while longer while he quietly thought as he kept my arm intertwined with his, his opposite hand on top of mine. I knew he was thinking of Adrik's mother, I just wasn't sure I should bring it up. I guess we'll see how much he

likes direct women...

"You were angry after your wife died, weren't you?" I asked.

"Very much so. I still am some days," he said.

"She helped you control your anger, didn't she?"

He looked down at me, a small smile on his face once again. "Like no one has ever been able to before or since," he said.

"You and your son are not as dissimilar as you think, Vitaliy," I said. "You just take different approaches." He looked slightly confused. "Your anger is chaotic, especially after your wife died. You lost your ability to contain it. It made you a very effective leader, but it also increased the chaos more than was needed at times. Adrik is the same, but he saw the collateral damage of your anger so he fights against that. His anger is more calculated, but when unleashed, it's just as destructive. I'm guessing it's a trait he got from you. I'm also guessing you saw it in him when he was young, which is why you trained him to be your personal assassin from a young age."

"I fear sometimes that my anger became his anger. He never knew the reason for my anger. He barely remembers his mother." I could feel the sadness he had when thinking of how much different Adrik would be had his mother not died.

"I don't think you should feel sad about him not knowing his mother. Well, it is sad, but it also made him into the man I love today. Our lives, they've been connected from the beginning. Everything that happened, got us to right here where we are today. For that, I'm incredibly grateful. You should be too. Your son is an incredible man, a fierce leader, and has a heart bigger than anyone I know. He's an amazing man. Whether you feel responsible for that or not, you still had a very big hand in it."

Vitaliy had stopped walking and was surveying the green fields ahead of us. I glanced behind us to see the guys within sight of us. He didn't take his eyes from the scenery around us, he just asked, "they're behind us, aren't they?" He did have a small grin on his face.

"It's my fault. They're very protective of me. They only agreed to let me leave alone because it's you. They get nervous in new situations," I said.

He waved his hand in front of him. "Ah, they're very good at their jobs. I don't fault them for it. I just enjoy giving them shit whenever I can." He looked at me with a devious grin on his face. "They should be protective of you, dear. This world," he said, taking a deep breath, "is dangerous. The likelihood that you'll be used to get to Adrik is very high."

I couldn't help but laugh. "I know, Vitaliy. Trust me, I know. They've been training me until recently when I got hurt and had to stop until I finish healing. I know exactly the world I'm walking into. Ask the guys later how many times I've kicked their asses."

"I'm very much looking forward to that conversation."

"You can ask Trino, too. He saw me and Misha sparring once. He still hasn't recovered," I said, laughing.

Vitaliy looked at me like a man who was remembering things he hadn't let himself think of in years. "Come, we should go back. You've given an old man a treat. I won't keep you any longer," he said, patting my hand. "I want to hear stories about you from my son now." He looked down at me, winking.

"I'm a stone-cold weirdo, Vitaliy. Don't let him tell you any different," I said as we turned back toward the house. Even from this distance, I could see the relief on the guys' faces as we turned to go back. As we got closer, I made Vitaliy laugh loudly at something absurd that came out of my mouth. Even Aleksei was surprised when we walked back to them.

Vitaliy walked us back to Adrik. He took my hand from his arm, thanking me once more for being kind to an old man. He placed my hand in Adrik's, saying, "you and I have much to discuss, son."