

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 407

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Sephie

My dad laughed at Ivan. He continued, "you'll always have the deepest connection with Adrik. That's how you two are able to communicate without words now. That's going to continue to get stronger the more you practice. But you also have a deeper connection with Ivan than the rest of them. You've spent more lifetimes with Ivan than you have with the others. There's a familiarity with him that you don't have with the others. It's what helped you see through his gruff exterior when you first met him. He might've made you nervous, but some part of him felt familiar to you. It's the same for Adrik. He's felt closer to Ivan faster than the others. Because you three have spent the most time together."

Ivan chuckled. "I've never had a woman see through me as quickly as she did."

"It happens to be one of her many gifts, but it's also because her soul recognized yours. You two have a special bond, made stronger over each lifetime you spend together."

"You told me last time that my eyes are a warning system. Do you know why they swirl? Like they can't pick a color to stick to?" I asked.

My dad chuckled. "They can't pick a color because you can't pick an emotion, peanut. You've been right all along that each color coincides with an emotion. The white is the most shocking because you struggle the most with your fear, but you're slowly learning to get a handle on it, with help from all of them. The newest color is unique and a new way to confirm universal truths. It's going to come in handy in certain situations. Battista was right about your demon eyes, too. Actually, Stephen was right to name them that to begin with. Your eyes go black because your demon is stepping forward. The difference between you and others, though, is that you control your demon, not the other way around. Essentially, you've forced your demon to use its powers for good, which is somewhat hilarious to think about. You gained the demon," he said, looking down at me, like he would if he were bragging about my scholastic achievements.

"So she was being serious when she said the best way to defeat your demons was to make friends with them?" Ivan asked.

"She was serious. She didn't know she was serious, to be fair, but she was serious. Battista said he didn't understand how it worked, because he's never seen it happen. But Sephie isn't the only one that can do it. Just like she's not the only one that can walk between Heaven and Hell," he said, looking at Ivan with one eyebrow raised.

I grinned at Ivan, knowing he was putting it together in his head. I looked at my dad, knowing he would understand my question. "I was right about Adrik too, then?" He nodded his head. "You're right about pretty much everything, peanut."

"Not about Armando. He got past me," I said.

"He was a special case. His demon was running the show, but it was also smart enough to step back when Armando was around you, which is why you missed it. It's also what made Armando appear as morose as he did. He wasn't aware of things that happened when the demon was in control. That's what you pick up on when watching people, when you get bad feelings about them. It's their demons you're detecting. But sometimes if a demon is savvy enough, like in the case of Armando, they can get past you. That's also partly why he was so savage with you. Armando was scared of you, but his demon was equally as scared of you once he saw your black eyes. Now that you have Stephen, that fear is going to increase on any demon you encounter. Which is why Ivan's gift evolved to be able to see them at any point not just when they consume the person. Andrei will help with that, too, since he's the balance. He sees good, Ivan sees evil. You two will figure out whether a person is ruled by good or evil by looking at them, which will confirm what Adrik can learn by touching them. He won't always be able to touch someone, so you two are backups to that."

As he explained this to me, it suddenly hit me what needed to happen to Armando. I looked at my dad, who had an amused expression on his face. He pointed to Ivan. "Show him," he said.

"Show him what?" I asked, confused.

"Your eyes." Ivan stepped closer to see as my dad explained, "Adrik didn't want to call them purple because he didn't think she liked that, but as a man who really doesn't care about the nuances of colors, purple seems accurate to me. It means it's a universal truth."

"Andrei is going to be so happy," Ivan said..

"Shut up. That's what Adrik said too," I said, laughing.

"What were you thinking about, princess? What made that happen?" Ivan asked.

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"Stephen needs to break Armando. You have to help me convince Adrik not to kill him."

He scoffed. "That's easier said than done, but I'll help. I have to admit that I want him dead just as much as he does."

"Maybe you'll both get some consolation when I remind you that once broken, the soul and the demon are stuck together in the body until the body dies. Neither are in control. Both are in their own Hell for the duration. The soul will undergo its own torture, just as the demon will. It's not pretty, but it's not meant to be. It's meant to be a lesson that the soul never forgets ever again. Armando's soul will get a chance at clearing some of the awful karma it's collected in this lifetime if Stephen breaks him. If Adrik kills him, the soul will never have to endure that lesson and will likely make the same mistakes over and over again. You're giving his soul a second chance, yes, but you're also saving future generations from repeating things done in this lifetime that should never be repeated."

I very clearly heard Andrei's voice in my head. I looked at Ivan, then to my dad to see if either one of them heard it as well. My dad smiled at me. "You heard him?" he asked.

"Heard who?" Ivan asked.

"Andrei," I said. "I just heard his voice."

"They're worried about you because you're both still sleeping. Adrik asked Andrei to look in your head to make sure you're okay. You're both mumbling in your sleep. Side effect of talking to both of you at the same time. You can tell Adrik you're fine without leaving, peanut."

"I can?"

He laughed, but nodded his head. "Concentrate on what you can feel from him then think about pushing your words to him, the same way you push your thoughts and emotions to him. He'll hear you."

"Oh, this is gonna freak him out," I said, giggling. "Don't worry, my love. I'm fine. So is Squish." I waited to see if I could hear his answer. My dad watched, a small smile on his face. I couldn't help but giggle again. "He doesn't believe he just heard me. This is going to be fun."

"Wait 'til you figure out you can do it with Ivan too," my dad said, grinning at both of us. "Perks of your connection. You just haven't figured it out yet. Consider it my early Christmas present." Ivan's eyes got wide as he looked to me, just as I looked at him.

"We're going to be so much trouble," I said under my breath.

My dad laughed. "You two should go now. I've kept you here almost the entire day. You'll need to catch everyone else up to speed, as well. Ivan, Sephie has helped all of you realize your gifts, but Viktor is reluctant. He also knows that Sephie is helping everyone realize their gifts, so he's avoiding her."

"I knew it!" I said, slightly irritated about it.

My dad laughed. "He's scared. Rightfully so, but he's also ready. He just doesn't think he is. You and Adrik can help him the same way Sephie has helped the rest of you. I'm not completely convinced she's going to be able to help him realize his gift and I'm not just saying that because I bet on you and Adrik." He looked to me, before he said, "but I do owe you a high five for getting Stephen in before the end of the month. You really saved me on that one."

Ivan looked amused. "Clearly her sense of humor is not all she got from you, he said.

"Chip off the old block, this one," my dad said as he put his arm around my shoulders. He extended his hand to Ivan. "It feels weird to thank you for taking my job, but I know she's in very capable hands with you. I'm still around, watching, but now I'm doing even less than I was before. But thank you, for always watching over her."

"I wouldn't have it any other way," Ivan said.

My dad turned me to face him, wrapping his arms around me. "We'll see each other again soon, peanut. Lena wanted me to tell you thank you. She finally got to talk to that cranky stubborn bastard because of you," he said, laughing.

"That makes me happy. He needed that. And thank you, Dad, for always being here to provide insight," I said. I took a step back from him and everything faded to black. Ivan disappeared too and I knew I was back to my own darkness. I could feel Adrik's hand on my cheek, making my entire

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body feel warm enough again. "Mhm there's the warmth I love," I thought before opening my eyes to see him kneeling in front of me, a look of concern on his face. I assured him I was fine, apologizing for not realizing the time. "Your next meeting is waiting for you. He's irritated that you're late, for the record. Go. I'll come down after you're done with this meeting and fill you in. Especially since you're wondering how I knew that," I said, grinning

at him.