

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 422

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Adrik

I looked at Sephie's amber eyes as she stood in front of me. She'd just heard the last bit of the conversation between Ivan and Viktor, as well as me and Ivan. I knew she felt Viktor's sadness. It was very different than anything ever felt from her. I didn't realize he was struggling with it as much as he clearly has been for the last few years. Even Sephie was struggling to get a handle on it.

"I didn't realize he was struggling this much with everything," she said quietly

"None of us did. I think we know now why he always kept so busy. I can feel his sadness through you. I can also feel that you're struggling to deal with it, the same as him," I said, pulling her closer to me.

She rested her head on my chest. "Yeah, this is a lot." She folded her arms up in front of her, pressing her body even closer to mine. "I feel really

cold."

"Come. We'll go upstairs and get one of my sweatshirts for you and I'll make you something warm to drink."

"Your meetings are done for the day?" she asked, following me out of my office. I nodded, my heart threatening to stop at the smile that stretched across her face. "Good."

We met Stephen in the elevator. "We're going upstairs. She's cold," I said, as Sophie went back to the same position she was just in before we left my

office.

He chuckled. "Seems like as good of an excuse as any to leave the office."

"Where are the Wonder Twins?" I asked. Sephie giggled against my chest. She still found it funny that I used her nickname for Misha and Andrei.

"They're on a quick errand, but they should be back shortly," Stephen said. He cut his eyes at Sephie, who wasn't looking at him, then looked at me. with a small smile. I knew they were planning something, I just wasn't sure what yet. "I'll tell them to come upstairs when they get back," he said. pulling out his phone..

We had just walked out from grabbing one of my sweatshirts for her when Andrei and Misha walked in. They were each carrying a box, each had giant grins on their faces.

"Spider monkey, we got you something," Andrei said as he walked to the kitch. He set the box down on the counter, then slid it over toward her. Her face brightened for the first time since we'd overheard Viktor talking to Ivan. The heavy sadness that was attached to her lifted for a moment. She opened the box and her heart-stopping smile stretched across her face. "I don't know the first thing about baking, but we found a baker that makes lemon sugar cookies," he said.

"We also got a box of orange, since you and Boss are basically the same person now. We figured you'd want to experiment and see if lemon is still your favorite, now that you know orange is his," Misha said as he set his box on the counter, sliding it toward me.

"You guys are the best," she said, as she went to Andrei, then to Misha.

As she looked up at Misha after hugging him, he was clearly confused. "Gaze you feel happy right now. Why are your eyes amber?"

"They're still amber?" I asked, walking toward her to see.

"Why are you sad, Seph?" Stephen asked.

"It's not hers, is it?" Andrei asked.

She looked at him, a small smile on her face. "Bubba's right."

"How did you know?" Misha asked Andrei.

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"It feels different." Andrei said. Stephen got quiet, like he was trying to see if he could feel a difference. He looked at Andrei, then to me. "It's colder. No wonder you needed a sweatshirt," Stephen said.

"That's why Adrik and Andrei picked up on it so quickly. They're always warm. They noticed the difference. You and Misha tend to be cooler so it wasn't so obvious," she said. Misha had been doing his own checking as they talked. He finally felt the difference as well.

"Yeah, I don't know if I would've noticed that if I hadn't been looking for it. Misha said. "Where's it coming from if it's not you?"

"Viktor," I said. I looked at Sephie, having a silent conversation about whether we should tell them about our newest trick. She smiled at me, leaving the decision completely up to me.

"Your connection to him is already that strong?" Misha asked.

"It's a little more complicated than that," I said.

"It has something to do with you being able to talk to Ivan without words, deesn't it?" Stephen asked.

I was surprised, just as Sephie was. "You know?" she asked.

He nodded. "He came up with answers that he couldn't have known without talking to you. He also has a special connection to Sephie that the rest of

us don't have, so it makes sense he'd be able to do so, just like Boss can. The three of you share a few special things."

"Really? You can talk to him the same way you can talk to Sephie?" Misha asal.

I nodded. "It only just started happening, but yeah. I went to check on Viktor arlier and we overheard a conversation between him and Ivan. That's when her eyes changed. She can feel his sadness."

"What else can you do? Stephen said there were a few things," Misha asked.

Sephie couldn't keep her grin from her face. "I think you should show them. They're going to find out eventually."

I chuckled, closing my eyes. When I opened them, I looked at Sephie first. Her eyes switched to black immediately when she saw mine, which confirmed that mine were also black.

"HOLY SH IT! You can do it now too??" both Misha and Andrei said.

"So can Ivan," Stephen said. "Are you guys considering adding adult diapers to your wardrobe right about now? Because I did, when they first showed

me."

"Solid life choice," Andrei said, still completely astonished.

"But how? Do your eyes change the same way hers do now, too?" Misha asked

"I think that's going to remain true for her only. But the reason hers turn black is because her demon is stepping forward when it happens. Same for me and Ivan," I said.

"But I don't feel nauseous when it happens. I've never felt nauseous when her eyes have gone black. It usually makes me happy because I know there's about to be some f u ckery afoot," Misha said, grinning at Sephie.

"You wouldn't feel nauseous with us, my adorable Russian guardian," she said, Miding her arm around his waist. "Our demons work for us."

Misha's eyes went wide as he looked between me and Sephie. "You just unlocked a new life goal for me," he said quietly.

"Me too," Andrei said.

As always, Stephen offered the comic relief in the most serious way possible Tokay, so we all agree to learn how to do this now. Vlad is going to be ecstatic when he hears about this, but we're going to need to step up the training. Mehmed's Janissaries are no joke and when they see our black eyes,

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they're going to be scared, which will make them fight harder. We might need to increase the number of impalings happening, just to keep the fear working for us, rather than against us."

Sephie laughed, walking to Stephen. "I love you, Yoden. Please never stop being you."

"Can't stop, won't stop," he said, hugging her tightly, an uncharacteristic smile across his face.

"Who wants cookies?" she asked. She had a wide smile on her face, but I could still feel the heavy sadness from earlier surrounding her. It was starting

to worry me that she couldn't get rid of it, even though she was doing what she does best and smiling through it.