

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 316

Chapter Three Hundred Sixteen

Sephle

Adrik asked Andrei to stay behind while everyone else went with Chen. He knew I'd want more time alone with Andrei, but I think Adrik was also curious to see what Andrei's newly discovered gift was about as well, especially given that he so easily read me that morning.

For the first time since I'd come into their lives, I saw Andrei nervous about staying behind with me. "Bubba, don't be nervous," I said, trying not to laugh at him. He was still sitting at the kitchen island, so I walked slowly to him, sliding my arm around his shoulders. He grabbed my wrist, bolding onto my arm. He gave me a sideways glance. He's definitely nervous.

Adrik might've been enjoying his nervousness. He was standing on the other side of the kitchen, arms crossed over his chest. He watched me try to calm Andrei down, finally saying, "how long have you been noticing these things?"

"Not long. Really since the night we saved Max. Tori popped into my head the day or two before that night and I couldn't get her out of my head. I've not thought about her since the day she got fired, really. I mean, we saw her that one day when Glana wanted to go shopping. Well, Misha saw her. I didn't see her. Mentions of her here and there after that, but other than that, I never thought about her. It was weird that I thought of her and couldn't get her out of my head," he said.

"Did you feel like something was wrong when you thought about her?" Adrik asked.

"Yeah. It wasn't the same as Misha's impending doom, but something didn't feel right. Same as when Sephie grabbed my hand today when I was thinking about her going to the meeting with the journalist."

What about the rest? About her lung healing and her still feeling like shi t?"

"That just popped into my head. I said it before I really thought much about it, Andrei said. He glanced at me, apologetically.

"Don't be sorry, Bubba. You're right. I do feel like shi t still," I said, smiling at him. "But that's the way it works for me. I've learned that when something pops into my head like that, it's usually because the other person is thinking it but doesn't want to say it. That's how it seems like I can read your mind all the time. It's only different with Adrik," I said.

"How is it different with him?" Andrei asked.

"With the rest of you, it's usually something you need brought to light, if you will. It's an issue that you need help dealing with. But if you're not thinking about it or struggling with it, I don't necessarily pick up on it. I might be able to if I made an effort, but I don't like to pry. With Adrik, it's everything. I just have to look at him for a few seconds and I know what he's thinking. Like when he gave Giana shi t over accusing me of being on drugs. It wasn't the same as when I see things with Misha, but I got a recap of what happened. Enough to know what went on," I said. "He's able to do it to me more now, too. It seems like the more time passes, the more connected we are."

"She's still much better at it than I am, clearly. Since I believed her when she said she was starting to feel better," Adrik said. He squinted his eyes at me like he was still somewhat irritated with me.

"It wasn't a complete lie. I do feel some better. I just still feel like shi t overall. But slightly better shi t," I said.

"Viktor said he was going to get you bone broth. That should help. Not eating isn't helping you out right now," Andrei said.

"I'll consider a feeding tube if that doesn't work. She's going to get all sharp and pointy again. I'm very delicate," Adrik said, grinning at me.

"I'm ruining all of Bubba's hard work training me. He's going to have to start completely over with me by the time I get out of this cast and my ribs heal enough that I can do anything strenuous."

"That's what I like to call 'job security,'" Andrei said.

The other guys got back a few hours later from Chen's latest meeting with the journalist. I felt Adrik hold me tighter before he lightly brushed his fingertips over my cheek to wake me up. "Wake up, solnishko. They're back and it's time for your antibiotic," he said quietly.

"Shocking. I fell asleep again," I said, sarcastically. Adrik helped me up from the couch.

"How did it go?" Adrik asked as we walked slowly to the kitchen.

"Chen really is quite good at pretending to be someone else," Stephen said. "I don't know why he thinks dating is hard."

"The thought of boobies makes most men incapable of forming complete thoughts. Women instinctively know this, so they put them on display. It's downhill from there, really," I said.

"That seems legit," Stephen said.

"The journalist didn't have much information on the mayor, but he said he was going to look into him to see what he could find. He was under the impression that the mayor was clean, but he also said he hadn't looked into him much. Since he was the one that appointed Henry, he assumed the mayor would also be upstanding." Ivan said.

"He might've been when he was first elected. Or might've been trying harder to be. If he took campaign money from one of the bosses, it would've been hard to get away from that," Adrik said.

"Would he know he took money from one of the bosses?" I asked, my half-empty glass of water in my hand. Adrik walked to me, grabbed the glass, finished it, then refilled it for me.

"It's possible he didn't know. Henry said it came from a non-existent corporation. On paper, it would've looked like a large donation from a company," Viktor said.

"That's how they get politicians in their pockets, princess," Ivan said. "They make it look legit at first, then once they've already accepted the money, they reveal where the money actually came from. They've already accepted it, so it already looks bad. Then the bosses have their guy."

"Rude," I said.

"But effective," Viktor said.

Misha and Andrei had been busy warming up bone broth while the rest of us talked. Misha ordered me to sit while Andrei put a small bowl of broth in front of me. "It might still be too hot, so be careful," he said, as he set the bowl in front of me.

I looked at it for a minute, which made Misha say, "I will airplane it. Don't tempt me."

"You're still not the boss of me," I said, picking up the spoon.

"The bigger question is which one of the bosses has the mayor in his pocket. Or if it really is Ricardo," Stephen said.

"It's interesting that Ricardo seems to have so much influence without being well-known and without being a boss himself," Andrei said. He and Misha both were basically standing over me to make sure that I ate at least part of the bowl of broth. Nothing like feeling like a child to stimulate your appetite.

"Not everyone is interested in recognition," Adrik said, a small smirk on his face. "But I find it interesting that the other bosses allowed him to have this much influence."

"Do you think it was because of his ties to Lorenzo?" I asked, diligently taking sips of the broth so the Wonder Twins wouldn't yell at me.

"Possibly. I think it's worth seeing what we can get out of Armando about it. Dario might know something as well, but I don't want to talk to him without Sephie," Adrik said. "Did the journalist give any indication of when he'd have more information?"

"He seemed to think he'd be able to find something quickly if there was something to be found, but it could've been his ego talking," Ivan said. "He's supposed to let us know when he finds something."

"We'll see what we can get out of Armando tonight. It's been a few days since I've been down there. He might miss me," Adrik said.