

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 434

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Sephie

"Where are you guys? I asked Ivan once Adrik and I were amongst the living once more.

"We're all in my apartment, princess. How are you? Still tired. I can feel you're still tired," he responded.

"Yeah, I told Adrik last night I knew what a hangover was like, this was probably it. How's Viktor?"

"He's a lot better. He wants to see you. He knows he has making up to do. Are you guys up now? Want us to come up?"

"No, I want a change of scenery for once. At least until it's time for dinner. How's Stephen? He's okay to you? He feels f ucking

fantastic to me, if I'm being

honest."

I heard Ivan laughing. "He is f ucking fantastic, princess. I don't know if he's still ugh off Boss's anger or what, but he's the

happiest I've ever seen him. It's really good to see. That kid deserves it."

"Yeah, he does. Okay, be down in a minute. Now that I'm assured Stephen will be able to make me laugh, in only the way that he

can, I'm more willing to face Viktor."

"Don't worry, princess. He knows he hurt you. He'll try to make it right, but I cant say I would be disappointed if you ripped him a

new one in front of everyone for being an as shale."

I giggled. "You've been spending too much time with Stephen. Stop enabling me.

We didn't have to knock on Ivan's door. Just as I was about to, Misha opened the door, his handsome wide smile across his face.

His smile grew larger when he saw the surprise on my face.

"Something happened. We're still trying to figure out what happened, but we could feel both of you when you got off the elevator.

We all knew you were coming," he said as he closed the door behind us.

"You can feel him too?" I asked, glancing back at Adrik.

"Yeah, much like we can feel you now, but he's quieter. For me at least," Misha said.

I glanced at Andrei to see if the same was true for him. He agreed with Misha. I think because I'm like you, I've always picked up

on everyone a little more than the rest of us. It's stronger for me now, just because I think I've been noticing it longer. But it's

stronger for everyone, not just Boss."

Stephen said, "since I'm still in my pancake paradox infancy, I still can't detect the subtle nuance, but I do feel like I might've

gotten high off the supply, if you will. Like, I was seriously considering asking Misha if he wanted to go for a run this morning

because I feel f ucking fantastic. Boss, if you feel like this every day, I'm going to need some of your secrets. Do you juice Keto?

Are you doing yoga and not telling anyone else? Meditation in the mornings? Are you the real vampire among us and we just

never noticed? Blood bags or live donors? I'm gonna need specifics."

I looked at Ivan, who very clearly had a "told you" look on his face. Adrik laughed quietly as he pulled me back against him.

I grinned at Stephen, saying, "can we just all agree to always refer to everything weird that's happening to us as the pancake

paradox from now on? There will be legends created about us as a result. In the future, children will to longer be forced to learn

calculus in school. Instead, they'll learn about the pancake paradox and what happens when souls get ejected from bodies. The

red panda population will thrive. Earth will be at peace."

"What if that's the key to peace all along? Red pandas," Misha said, thoughtfully.

"Right now, red pandas are pancake-less and look at the state of the world," foldrei said,

"Don't worry. I've got a plan for mass production. We're going to be just fine Stephen said, chuckling-

Once the laughter mostly died down from our ridiculous conversation, I finally looked at Viktor. "How are you, Papa Bear? You

look better. Do you feel

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better?"

Adrik held me tighter against him. I could also feel the pull in my chest that meant he was thinking about how much he loved me.

I knew he was trying to help me deal with the situation.

"I do, sestrichka. I feel much better. I actually didn't realize how heavy everything that I was carrying around was becoming until it

was gone. I feel bad that you had to carry it around with you," he said, looking apologetic.

"Like everything. I think it was for a reason. It helped us figure out how to get whatever was following Ilya off him for good," I said.

I glanced at Ilya, asking. "you're still good? It hasn't come back?"

He smiled warmly at me. He really did seem like a very sweet boy. He was handsome, like Viktor, but with a splash of boyish

charm and innocence. While Viktor had very dark hair and darker features, Ilya's hair was more of arty blonde. His eyes were a

lighter brown than Viktor's normally dark brown. He was Viktor-lite. "It hasn't come back. I have an idea of what it was, though,"

he said.

"You do?" I asked. All the guys looked at him, now curious as well.

"Yeah. Since Vitya was sleeping, I had nothing to do so I started researching spent a little time in Japan when I was in the

military. They have demons that are specific to suicide – Shinigami. These demons follow you around and keep whispering to

you until you finally lose hope and commit suicide," Ilya said. He glanced at Viktor, almost like he was nervous, but he continued.

"It's common for them to affect entire family lines. Once they're on one member of the family, they hop to other members of the

same family

"I could believe that. Viktor's oppressive sadness was probably the warm-up. They might've tried to get to him already, but he

was too strong, so they jumped to you," I said, chewing on my lip. "Or do you think the chick you were with is what gave it to

you?" I asked Ilya.

"No idea. This is all very new to me," he said.

"It doesn't explain why Ivan couldn't see it, either," Stephen said.

Ivan had gotten up and grabbed his computer when Ilya first started talking. He was quietly reading through whatever he'd found.

He looked up at me first, then to Stephen. "Actually, it does."

"Explain please," I said. "But don't worry about the flavor of syrup for the pancakes. We'll decide that later."

He looked at me, trying not to smile, and just shook his head. "From the extensive two-minute search I just completed and what

Ilya just said, these demons whisper to people, meaning they're not fully attached to the people. not sure they're trying to take

over, even. It just seems like they're very specific to suicide. So far, I'm only able to see demons when they're actively trying to

get in or when they already have gotten in. That's why I couldn't see this one." He looked at Andrei, asking, "what did it feel like

to you? Is it the first one you've felt like that?"

"It was cold, mostly, but quiet. Until Stephen spoke and then it got scared," Andrei said. "It's one of the first times that I've noticed

a demon, so I don't have a ton to compare it to. The lady that Battista brought with him she felt different. More similar to you

three."

I knew my eyes had turned black, because I could see Ivan's switch immediately. I didn't need to look to know that Adrik's had

done the same. My anger made an unexpected appearance at Andrei comparing me, in any way, that woman.

He looked at me, realizing what had happened. "I don't mean you're like her, spider monkey," he said, trying not to laugh. "She

felt hot. Same as you three. Anytime your demons come forward, it's always associated with anger. There's heat and fire there.

What was on Ilya was the opposite. Quiet, but very cold. Now put your demon eyes away before Ilya has to change his puts."

Ilya cursed under his breath. "How does that not scare the s hit out of you," He said quietly, to no one in particular.

"Oh, don't worry. As long as it wasn't you that p issed them off, you have nothing to worry about," Stephen said. "Although, now

that I think about it, I might retract my request for red to be the next color your eyes come up with m not entirely convinced I'd be

able to handle that. It's disturbing enough on Vlad."

Ilya cursed a little louder this time, looking at Viktor with wide eyes, which used all of us to laugh. Viktor said quietly, "it's a joke.

Sephie said. Stephen was a vampire because he's so much colder than the rest of us. They both ran with it. Vitaliy still hasn't

figured out we're talking about Vlad Tepes, so don't ruin it." Ilya was visibly relieved.

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"I love how we just had a serious conversation about Japanese suicide demons like it was a normal brunch discussion, but the

possibility of red eyes was a step too far," Stephen said, laughing.

"Ilya's only seen the black. He hasn't seen them change otherwise. It's a little difficult to fathom," I said, trying to stick up for Ilya

who really had no clue of the high strangeness that was our little family.

"They do other things?" Ilya asked, now curious.

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"Yeah, dude. Go over there. She'll show you," Misha said.

Ilya looked at him like he was sure it was a trap. He looked at Viktor, who laughed his deep belly laugh. "He's not trying to trap

you. Her eyes change 1 colors depending on the emotion she's feeling. Go look. It's pretty fascinating, he said.

Ilya still looked uncertain, but he got up and walked closer to me. Adrik was still behind me, but I could see Ivan. His eyes were

still black, which meant mine were too. I closed my eyes, thinking of how much I loved Adrik. When I opened my eyes, Ilya was

standing in front of me. I looked at him with my blue eyes. He looked relieved that they weren't black again.

"Blue means she's thinking about how much she loves me," Adrik said.

"You didn't even look at her. How do you know her eyes are blue right now?" ya asked.

"I can feel everything she feels," Adrik said.

"That's why he was so quick to react when I first touched you. He felt what it did to me right away. He doesn't usually try to make

people's lives flash before their eyes so quickly," I said.

"Green means she's being a sarcastic s hit," Adrik said, lovingly, I grinned at ya's surprised expression.

"You don't have to show him the other ones, gazelle," Misha said. He looked at Ilya, saying, "they turn amber when she's sad

and white when she's scared. All of us feel what she feels and those two are very strong and I'd just rather not right now."

"They turn white?" Ilya asked.

"Yeah, if you think her demon eyes are scary, then you're not ready to see that Stephen said.

Ilya looked between Adrik and Ivan. "Can your eyes also do the same, then?"

"Yeah, that reminds me. How can yours turn black but not change like hers de Viktor asked.

"Are you ready for this, Viktor? Because I'm not sure you're ready for this. But at least you're already sitting down," Stephen said.

He looked very seriously at Viktor. "They control their demons."

Viktor's brow furrowed as he tried to understand what Stephen had just told him. "Your black eyes are your demons?" he asked.

I nodded. "I told Ivan not very long after I met you all that the best way to defeat your demons was to make friends with them.

They have no power over you that way. At the time, I was just trying to help him cope. I didn't know I was being serious. I

would've told you the same thing if you hadn't spent so much time avoiding me," I said, crossing my arms across my chest. ould

feel Viktor flinch from the blow. It came out a little harsher than I was intending, but I was still very irritated with him.

"I know, sestrichka. I knew you were going to make me deal with everything and I didn't think I was ready," Viktor said.

"If it makes you feel any better, me and Sasha have been trying to get him to deal with it for years as well. He wouldn't listen to

us either," Ilya said.

"He wasn't actively avoiding you, though. He's been actively avoiding me for weeks, if not months," I said.

Viktor stood up, walking to me. "I was actively avoiding you and I am very sony, Sephie," he said, opening his arms to me. I

glared at him for a moment, not moving, but finally gave in and went to him. He wrapped his arres around me, picking me up off

the floor. He whispered so only I could hear, "I know you're not mad. I know you're hurt. I can feel you're hurt. It will never

happen again." He held me for a few minutes. I could feel his turmoil. I knew he was sorry.

I finally sighed. "I know why you did it. It doesn't mean I have to like it, but understand."

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