

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 225

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Five

Sephie

Ivan sighed. "It's different each time, princess. Some I still regret. The first ones," he said, knowing I would know what he was talking about.

"Why those? Those are the ones I would think you felt the least regret about, Squish. They clearly had it coming," I said.

He thought for a minute. "Yes and no. I still think a few of them were mostly innocent. They were just in the way."

I could tell that Misha and Stephen were curious about what we were talking about, but trying to be respectful of Ivan's privacy. Andrei just kept a tight hold on me. Stephen looked at me, his usual serious look on his face. "It might be disturbingly easy for me, since I'm usually nowhere near my targets. I think about that sometimes and worry that I might be a serial killer."

Misha caught my eye, trying not to laugh. I looked at Stephen, "Yoden, if I'm being honest here, we've all wondered about that as well." I tried not to laugh, but I couldn't contain it when he started laughing as well.

"I mean, I am like the textbook personality for it. Quiet, keeps to myself, never had many friends..

"Until now," Misha said. Stephen looked at Misha, clearly surprised, Ivan and Andrei both nodded in agreement. I watched as Stephen's cheeks flushed.

"You're part of the family, man. You know that, right?" Andrei said.

Stephen was speechless for a moment. "I mean, I guess so," he said, still clearly surprised.

"You just never believed it until it was said out loud?" I asked.

He looked at me, smiling. "Clearly not."

"Then I'll say it again, so you get it through that giant brain. You're family," Ivan said. Ivan and Stephen were similar in their delivery methods. While Ivan was heavy on the intimidation factor when needed, Stephen could say virtually anything with a straight face. Ivan went easy on the intimidation in this case, but his tone was very serious. He wanted to make sure Stephen believed him.

I got up and moved next to Stephen. I knew he wasn't as affectionate as the other guys, so I just hooked my arm through his. We could clearly see him actively working to keep his emotions in check. I just said quietly to him, "life wouldn't be the same without you in it." He looked over at me, with tears in his eyes. He wrapped his arm around my shoulders and pulled me closer.

I stayed next to Stephen for a few minutes, but then jumped up and ran back to Andrei. "You're colder than Misha!" I said as I curled up next to Andrei again. They all laughed at me, while Andrei moved so I could lean back against his chest, helping me warm up again. "Plot twist, Stephen's not a serial killer. He's a vampire."

"Wouldn't those things essentially be the same though?" Misha asked. This sparked an entire debate on whether vampires could be considered serial killers. We were still heavily debating the topic when Adrik and Viktor walked in.

"You guys are very serious about whatever you're talking about," Viktor said.

Stephen, as only he could, said, "oh, we're discussing whether or not I'm a vampire and then whether or not that also makes me a serial killer."

The looks on Viktor and Adrik's faces were enough to make us all erupt into a fit of laughter. Adrik looked at me, amused. "How do I already know that you're behind this conversation?"

Andrei wrapped his arm around me like he was protecting me. "In her defense, it started as a very serious conversation about how to cope after killing someone. We just got distracted. It's not her fault," he said like he was the older brother taking the heat for his favorite little sister.

Adrik sat on the other end of the couch from me and Andrei. His face showed clear amusement at Andrei's defense of me, as well as his protective arm around me. I could tell he wanted me to come to him, but I also wanted to be bratty to see how long I could make him wait, so I stayed next to Andrei. He was warm enough. I could manage for a little longer.

Five minutes. I lasted five whole minutes before I had to move to Adrik.

Adrik

It was still early Monday morning when I woke. Sephie had moved off my chest, for once, and was curled up next to me under the covers. She so rarely needed the covers when she was on my chest, but it was getting colder outside. She woke me up when she moved. I was so used to having her laying across me while I slept that not having her there felt weird. I rolled over and pulled her back against me. She was still sleeping, but she hugged my arms tightly.

My mind was replaying the whole weekend. I was grateful for Misha's order to come here. It was exactly what all of us needed. We had a chance to relax over the weekend, but Sephie actually opened up and talked to all of us throughout the weekend. About everything. Past and present. And in turn, the guys opened up.

We were close before Sephie came into our lives, but it usually took one of us almost dying before we had a serious conversation with each other. I don't know why we couldn't just talk to each other without the threat of imminent death, but we didn't. We waited. We held it in. I was probably more guilty than the rest of them at holding things in. I'm the boss. Never weak.

As is her way. Sephie shined a light on all our darkest places, showing us that what we'd been protecting from the world for fear of being seen as weak wasn't a weakness at all. It made us stronger. Sometimes seeing your own traits in someone else makes you realize that what you've been silently dealing with for years has made you infinitely stronger. Sephie has done that for all of us, but I think most of all, me

As I watch her step into her true potential, her true power, I can see the same traits in her that I've had for years. She has a mind for my businesses. All of my businesses. Whether legal or not. One of the reasons my father stepped aside and put me in charge when I was still barely 20 years old was because of my business sense. He saw that I was smart enough and mature enough to handle the business side, even though I was still young. I doubled many of his businesses in the first few years and started a few of my own that ultimately became highly successful. It's what's allowed him to still live like a king since he put

me in charge.

The other bosses have all hesitated to put their sons in charge, despite being many years older than my father. With good reason, for most of them. Their sons are id iots. Or in Salvadori's case, they're just plain evil. While everyone needed to have a capacity for evil to make it in the underworld, Anthony took that to the extreme. He made me look forward to his death.

That bothers me now that Sephie is in my life. My bloodlust was never something that I thought much about before her. It was needed. It was necessary. People needed to fear me, especially when I first took over. My bloodlust made that possible. But since Sephie had come into my life, that part of me has taken a back seat. I worried that she would look at me differently once she saw the full extent of that side of me. I worried that it would be too much for her.

Like she was reading my mind, Sephie rolled over to face me. She was still asleep, but she successfully broke me from my worried thoughts. I smiled to myself, watching her sleep. I ran my hand over her back and through her hair, causing her to bury her face in my chest.

I felt the pull in my chest as I thought about just how much I loved her. Every little thing about her made me love her more. Talking about the possibility of Stephen being a vampire and whether that also made him a serial killer in the middle of a thunderstorm made me love her more. The way she tried to stay next to Andre to make me think she was somewhat angry with me for blaming her for the silly conversation made me love her more. The fact that she couldn't last longer than five minutes reminded me that she's the only one for me.

Sephie moved her arm around my waist, pulling me closer to her in her sleep. I still don't understand how she can read my mind, even when she's sleeping, but I love it about her. She knows what I need before I do when she's not even conscious. It makes me try harder to figure out what she needs. I ran my hand down her back to her thigh, pulling her leg over mine so she would be even closer. She inhaled deeply, making her cooing noises. Knowing she was peacefully sleeping after the week she'd just had was one of the best feelings I'd ever experienced. I would give my entire empire, everything I had, to make sure she was safe and happy and knew she was loved. Nothing was worth it without her.