

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 444

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Sephie

“What? How?” Stephen asked when I told him

I laughed. han said, “I asked the same

get to help Viktor with hi

“Are we going to get the guy that tortured him?”

“No. Adrik told you that you were going to level up. He wasn’t lying.” I said. arm across his shoulders. “You spent so much of your life trying to figure out other people do it. You can break a person, but you can also help people

miled at his olivious confusion. I walked to Stephen’s side, sliding my

Transmute your pain that now you’re going to be able to help things that are slowly killing them.”

Stephen was quiet for a few moments. He looked at Adrik and very seriously, “this was not the level up I was expecting, but I’ll take it. Demon crushing is still on the table. Just putting that out there.”

“That’s the reason you’ve been so happy after breaking Armando, Stephen. Well thought it was because you got high off Boss’s supply, if you will. But you’ve been happy because you know you helped Sephie feel better,” Ivanaid.

“Ivan’s right. He also said last night that this whole time we’ve all thought you were a serial killer, but it turns out you’re a saint.

Honestly, I could not agree more,” Adrik said.

I had tears in my eyes. I wasn’t expecting them to tell him what they said, but was happy they did. I could see the emotions flash across his face as he took in everything they’d just said. He looked up at me, still somewhat beddered. “It’s true?” he asked quietly.

“It’s true. You took all the bad and turned it into something good. You should be able to do it on a smaller scale soon, too. You have arguably the most ba da ss gift out of all of us and somehow you keep making it better. I don’t know if the world can handle demon crushing,” I said.

I watched as his smile stretched across his face, making his entire demeanor bghter. We could all see how much stronger his light was. His entire childhood, he’d had to endure his sisters telling him he was anything but good and having to endure their horrific torture regularly. Now, we were telling him that not only was he ultimately saving souls, but also helping others deal with their trauma in ways that they wouldn’t be able to otherwise. He stood up, pulling me into his vampiric vice-grip of a hug.

As his grip on me loosened, he turned toward Misha. “Guess we’re going to have that conversation about what to do with your hatred toward Giana after all,” he said.

I laughed. Adrik looked at Misha, smiling. “I still can’t believe you got so angry with her. I didn’t know you had it in you,” he said.

“Honestly? I didn’t either. I don’t quite understand why what she did made me so angry, but it did,” Misha said. He thought for a moment, then looked back up at all of us. “Yeah, still does.”

“Usually when you have that strong of a reaction toward someone, it’s because they’re showing you something you don’t like about yourself. It’s the same reason Viktor is uncomfortable around our demons. He’s not comfortable around his own and ours serve as a reminder of that. It’s why he asked for his to be removed. Same thing for you, my adorable Russian guardian. There’s some part of the way Giana acted that you see in yourself and you don’t like it,” I said. “Let Stephen help you with it, but don’t stop trying to figure out why it made you angry to begin with so you can learn from it.. Stephen is not here to be your trash compactor,” I said, trying to look at him sternly.

Misha flashed his handsome smile at me. “I would never take advantage of such an opportunity,” he said, innocently. He managed to get the entire sentence out before he laughed, then added, “yeah, that’s a total lie. You’re going to have to set firm boundaries with me, Stephen.”

“Noted,” Stephen said, laughing with him.

Adrik looked between Andrei and Misha. He asked, “are you two able to communicate with each other now?” They both looked at each other, like they’d been caught doing something they shouldn’t have been doing. It made drik laugh. “You’re not in trouble for it. I’ve just noticed a few silent conversations where you seem like you make a decision without saying anything. I’m curious,” he said.

“I don’t think it works the same as you and Sephie or you and Ivan. It’s more like snapshots we can send each other. It just started,” Andrei said. He looked at me, silently asking if he could tell everyone that he and I figured out a way to communicate with each other. I smiled at him, nodding my head. “It’s similar to how Sephie and I communicate. We show each other what we want the other one to see when we look in each other’s heads. It’s

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kind of the same with Misha, but since he doesn’t really look in my head, I have to send it to him differently.”

“I know you and Sephie figured out a way to communicate. I caught your signals to each other,” Adrik said, winking at me. “But since you two are the same, it makes sense. I’m impressed that you figured out a way to communicate with Misha.”

Andrei looked slightly relieved, his handsome smile stretching across his face. Misha added, “it’s getting easier the more we practice at it. I haven’t figured out yet how it would work with Stephen, but there’s gotta be a way with him, too. Everything got stronger when Stephen broke Armando.”

“Have you started to feel Ivan the same way you felt Adrik after that happened?” I asked.

“Not as much. Boss is stronger. Not as strong as you, but he’s a close second now. Maybe it has to do with anger. Maybe Ivan needs to go nuclear and then it’ll be stronger for him, too,” Misha said.

“Or maybe we feel Boss more strongly because your connection to him is strenger and it comes through from you, spider monkey,” Andrei said.

“Both theories make sense, honestly. I have no idea what it actually is. I like it though,” I said, grinning at all of them.

“Do you think Viktor is going to feel left out that he doesn’t have as strong of connection to the rest of us?” Misha asked.

I sighed. “Kostya told me he prefers it that way and I have to agree with him Viktor has so much on his mind at any given point that having to deal with the hot mess that is me feels very overwhelming to him. Kostya even said that the little bit he has felt from me has almost been too much for him.” I stopped what I was doing, looking at Adrik first, then at the other four. I think it’s harder to take because everything is so strong between us and we all enjoy it. We just want Viktor to be a part of that.”

Adrik walked up behind me, wrapping his arms around my waist. “Viktor is a big boy. He made his choice and we need to respect that. Kostya told Sephie that he’s still all in, so until he does something to make me question that, I’m operating as if he’s all in. He has a very specific gift. If he doesn’t want to be a part of the rest of it, then he doesn’t need to be. I think between the rest of us, we can make any situation work.”

“If his connection to Sephie isn’t as strong, he might not be of any help in other situations anyway,” Ivan said. “That might be by design, now that I think about it.”

I chewed on my bottom lip, trying to find more answers when I didn’t really know the questions. “I feel like I want to protect Viktor from everything weird happening now. Like now I’m not sure he can handle it,” I said.

“I think that will get better once I figure out how to help him with his trauma. When you have unresolved trauma, any little thing suddenly becomes a very big thing. If he’s still struggling that much with his time in prison, then he’s not able to handle anything else. He got rid of the grief, which clouded everything, but it also uncovered other stuff he hasn’t dealt with,” Stephen said.

I smiled at Stephen. “You’re so wise, Stephen. I’m glad you finally decided to show everyone.”