

King of the Underworld

Chapter Six

Sephie

I grabbed the coffee and filled both of their cups, along with mine, to help ease the awkwardness of the moment. As I stood sipping my coffee, waiting for my soul to return to my body, and relishing the warmth on my very sore throat, I cocked my head to the side and asked, “so.... why are you two guarding me exactly? I mean, I’m not complaining, but I’m also confused as to why you’re here.”

They both exchanged a quick, uneasy glance and Viktor cleared his throat. He said, “Um, Miss Sephie, we are following orders. Boss was very clear that we were not to let you out of our sight.”

“Boss? You mean Mr. Lord King Boss Adrik?”

This time, it was Andrei that looked in surprise at Viktor. He asked Viktor a question in Russian. Viktor replied, his eyes now almost as wide as Andrei’s were. Andrei ran his hands through his dirty blonde hair, clearly surprised by whatever information he just learned. I cleared my throat to remind them that they were in my kitchen, and I was still waiting on an answer.

“Mr. Lord King Boss??” they both said in unison.

I laughed at myself for saying the quiet part out loud yet again.

“Um, yeah. I didn’t know who your boss was until last night and I didn’t know what to call him, so I came up with the title Lord King Boss. I mean, it’s authoritative. Strong. Monarchial, if you will. I feel like he should use it freely.”

They both looked at me with their mouths open, too stunned to reply.

“No? Too much? Ok, but it’s his loss,” I said, nonchalantly, as I plated their food.

As I turned to set their plates down, they were still somewhat stunned. I just started laughing at the absurdity of the whole situation, really. They both started laughing along with me, although I’m not sure they knew what to say to me in that moment.

“Oh, come on, boys. They don’t have sarcasm in Russia? It was a joke. If you boys have been assigned to me, for whatever reason, you’re going to be busy because this mouth gets me in a lot of trouble most days,” I said with my most demure smile I could muster.

They both shook their heads and laughed as they attacked their bacon and eggs like it was the first time they’d eaten in days.

We ate in silence. I only picked at my food, as it hurt to swallow too much at one time. The coffee initially felt good, but even that was beginning to burn the more I drank.

Viktor noticed my discomfort and said, “soup. Soup will make it feel better.” He pointed to his throat and then pointed to mine.

“Yeah? You say this like you have experience?”

“Da. I’ve been choked out many times.”

“Okay, so that’s terrifying and fascinating all at the same time. Is this a common problem in Russia? Like you’re just walking down the street and ‘oh fuck, I’m being choked again?’”

Both men started laughing again. Andrei stood up and grabbed both empty plates. There was not a morsel of food left on either plate. For a second, I was considering not even washing them because they already looked so clean. However, Andrei walked to the sink and began washing them himself.

“You can leave that. I’ll wash the dishes,” I said.

“No, Miss Sephie. You cook, I clean.”

“Wow. Do you want to get married?” I said as Viktor laughed at Andrei’s stunned expression. He almost dropped a plate when I asked him that question.

I just winked at him as I went to wipe off my counters.

Viktor pulled his phone from his pants pocket and walked into the living room to answer it, leaving a still stunned Andrei and I alone in the kitchen. He finished washing the dishes and was drying his hands off when he turned to me and asked, “he really told you his name last night?”

“Who did? Viktor? No, he told me this morning.”

“No, Boss.”

“Oh, Adrik? Yes, he told me his name last night when we were in the parking lot. Why?”

“No one outside of his closest bodyguards knows his name. He usually tells people his name is Ghost.”

I started to say something and then stopped, not sure how to take that news.

“Huh. I don’t know?” I said shrugging my shoulders.

Viktor hung up the phone and spoke to Andrei in Russian. It sounded very serious, but honestly, I couldn’t understand any of it. I was just leaning against the counter, hoping I’d get a translation at some point.

They had a tense exchange, but it didn’t look like I was going to get that translation, so I announced I needed to shower to get ready for work.

“No, sestrichka. No work tonight. We cleared it with your boss already. We stay here for now.”

“Okay, weird. But I’m still gonna go shower. If you need to shoot anybody, please don’t do it on the carpet. Blood stains are hard to get out of carpet. Much easier to clean up from the tile, so let’s keep the killing to the kitchen only, hmmm?” I said as I walked back to my bedroom. I could hear both of them chuckling and speaking Russian when I closed my bedroom door.

I leaned against my closed bedroom door and sighed. I was strangely totally fine with having two gigantic Russians in my

living room that had been “assigned” to me for some unknown reason. My mind wandered to Adrik. Why was it seemingly a big deal that he had told me his name last night? Why did I feel like I was missing him? Why did I long to feel his warm touch against my skin again?

You really need a social life, Sephie. You’re becoming somewhat pathetic.

I shrugged off the thoughts and made my way to the shower. A nice, hot shower sounded a little like heaven for my sore body right now. Since I apparently wasn’t going to work tonight, I took an extra-long shower and deep conditioned my long, curly hair.

When I finally came out of my room, only Viktor was in the living room.

“Where did Andrei go?”

“He went back outside to keep an eye on the building. We need to know who’s coming in and out of the building.”

“Ha! Just ask Ms. Jackson in the apartment underneath mine. She spends her days spying on everyone. She’s already written your license plate number down and is waiting until Mr. Turner, from across the hall, gets home so she can give the number to him and have him call his buddy’s son who is a policeman to run the plates.”

“No shit?”

“No shit. It’s partly why I’ve stayed in this crappy building so long. It’s not the best neighborhood, but the neighborhood watch is superb.”

Viktor just stared at me while he pulled his phone out of his pocket. He dialed a number and spoke Russian when the person answered. He then ended the call and put his phone back in his pants.

“Please tell me you didn’t just order a hit on Ms. Jackson.”

He chuckled and said, “No, no. We just need to take precautions. We technically don’t exist, but we can take precautions that will satisfy your superb neighborhood watch.”

“Cryptic. How do you not exist? Are you not standing in my living room? Am I having a psychotic break and I just made breakfast for three when it’s really just me in here? Was I really that hungry?”

Okay, that was only partly a joke. How did they not exist?

“We are real. We just don’t officially exist in anyone’s database,” he said, adding air quotes around the last word, for effect.

“Oh, right. The whole Ghost thing, right?”

“You are a very smart girl, sestrichka.”

“It’s a gift,” I said as I winked at him.