

## King of the Underworld Chapter 491 - 500

### Chapter 491

Sephie

We continued our discussion over dinner, but it finally changed to somewhat lighter subjects. Andrei finally asked Stephen, “so how much are you still hanging out with Keith?”

Stephen seemed surprised by the question. “Not that much, honestly. I’m always with you guys now. I kind of don’t have time. Why?”

“He still very much pines for you,” I said, smiling at him. “We noticed it when we were checking everyone out last night.”

“Oh,” he said, almost shyly.

“I don’t want to embarrass you about it. We just thought you should know that he’s still carrying that torch for you,” I said.

“You’ve changed since you discovered your gift, Stephen. You have a quiet confidence you that’s very noticeable now. I’m sure he finds that attractive,” Adrik said.

“I do?” he asked.

“You do.” Adrik said.

“You’ve always been hilarious, but you kept it hidden away. You’re letting everyone see it, as well as your intelligence now. It’s no surprise he’s still wildly attracted to you,” I said.

“Wildly attracted’ is putting it mildly,” Andrei said, smirking at Stephen.

“Huh. I had not noticed,” he said.

“How could you? You’re always with us. Getting c|\*ck-blocked,” Ivan said, laughing. I used another round of laughter from everyone.

I snapped my fingers, pointing at Ivan. "I told you I was holding you guys back from getting laid!" They could all feel my amusement at the situation, so none of them took me seriously. It did remind me, however, to ask Viktor about Ilya. "Have you talked to Ilya? Did he call Jessica after the fundraiser?" I asked him. His deep laugh filled the kitchen. "He did. They've already gone on at least one date

"You guys are going to have to cycle through to Vitaliy's team if you ever want to get hid," I said. "We'll come up with an exchange program. It'll work out smashingly well."

Once the laughter died down, Stephen said, "Seph, you're not keeping us from anything. Stop thinking that. We choose to hang out up here over doing other stuff."

"You keep saying that. I still don't entirely believe it, but I love you for saying it anyway," I said.

"I mean, our dinner conversations alone are more interesting than anyone else I've ever dated," Stephen said.

"Now I know you're lying. You can't tell me we have better dinner conversations than Vlad, I mean, the ambience of his dinners alone wins everything. Who doesn't want impaled boyars around the feast table?" I said.

Stephen laughed loudly. "I rest my case," he said.

Viktor chuckled. "Vitaliy asked Ilya about Vlad."

-Shut up."

"He did. Ilya said he'd never met him, but he knew he was a friend of Stephen's," Viktor said, causing all of us to laugh even harder.

"Did he believe him?" Ivan asked.

"Ilya thinks he was mostly satisfied with the answer, but just the fact that he asked him about Vlad means he's curious about this

weird character we keep referencing.” Viktor said.

“We should just pay someone to pretend to be Vlad. Make him into a real person for Vitaliy,” Misha said.

“Give him a pet red panda while we’re at it,” Adrik said.

“You have the money. You can make this dream a reality.” I said.

As everyone sat around the kitchen, laughing uncontrollably at the absurdity we’d created for ourselves, I couldn’t help but love every single one of them a little bit more. They were so much fun. The joy that they brought me on a daily basis was something I never would’ve thought possible when I first met them all.

“I love you all so much right now,” I said, wiping the tears from my eyes from laughing so hard.

Stephen got up and walked to me, sliding his arm around my shoulders. “See why I want to hang out with you guys and not anyone else now?” he said, kissing the top of my head. I grabbed his arm, keeping him with me for a few moments.

As we calmed down, the conversation turned back to more serious matters.

“We heard from the mayor about Dr. Moretti. Eric is ready to charge him for creating brawn. He won’t be charged for any of his back-room procedures as of now, because no one can remember him, but Eric feels certain that he can make the charges stick for the brawn and he’ll go away for a very long time,” Viktor said.

I felt Stephen’s anger slowly rising as the doctor’s name was mentioned. His hold on my shoulders tightened slightly as well.

“Surely there’s a way to make him pay for all those procedures he did, too?” he said, almost through gritted teeth.

“Because nobody but Sephie can remember him, there’s no proof. I’m not making her testify against him, either,” Adrik said.

Stephen's anger continued to rise, at the injustice of it all. I knew what was about to happen, but Stephen was so outwardly calm that no one else had caught on just yet. "What does Eric think the sentence will be if he's found guilty for the brawn?" asked.

"15 to 25, I think he said?" Viktor said.

That was the push Stephen needed to lose control of his anger. He stepped back from me, putting his hands in his pockets. He knew he was losing control and was trying his best to not let it happen. As soon as he stepped back from me, everyone else figured out what was happening. They all went on high alert, but stayed where they were.

I turned to Stephen, telling him to let go. "You're going to have to go completely nuclear for it to happen, Stephen. I can show you how to control it, but I have a feeling you won't need me," I said.

We watched as his breathing rate increased slightly; his cheeks flushed. He had been looking at the floor, but he looked up at me as I was talking to him. His eyes were normally hazel, but right now, they were almost black. I could feel his anger, but I could feel him trying to contain it. Knowing how independent he liked to be, I waited to see if he could master it on his own before helping him.

It took him a few more moments, but he eventually began to calm himself down and his eyes returned to their normal hazel color.

Adrik had been watching him the entire time, studying him as well as his demon. "Your demon is colder than normal, top. Just like you. Even though your anger burns just as hot as ours, it comes from ice," Adrik said.

Ivan chuckled. "That makes no sense and yet, it makes perfect sense."

"I think it needs to be that way. Stephen is the closest to you when it comes to sending people to Hell, if you will. He just sends

them to their own darkness instead. He needs to be able to withstand the cold that comes with that,” I said, looking at Ark. “I do, however, think everyone needs contacts now, though,” I said as I got up to give Stephen a hug. His vampiric vice-grip held me tightly. I could feel he was happy about this finally happening to him. I could also feel he was proud of himself for doing it on his own.

“I’m proud of you, too. I knew you could figure it out without me,” I said silently to him. Since I was already touching him, he got the message right away. He didn’t say a word, he just held me tighter for a moment longer.

Adrik

Watching Stephen finally connect with his demon was somewhat different for me. As Teore time lapsed, the differences in everyone's demons were becoming clearer to me. Everyone shared certain attributes with their demons. Misha's liked the \*ukery.

Stephen's was cold, calculated. Ivan's was deadly and just barely contained chaos. I suspected Andrei's would be calm but lethal, just like how Sephie had described his anger.

It was easier to tell the difference between Sephie and her demon. Her demon was just as opinionated as she was, but

thankfully, they agreed on almost everything. While I was somewhat curious to see what that disagreement would look like, I was sure it was easier for her demon to just go along with Sephie's opinion.

Mine was proving to be quite helpful. He's what figured out Stephen was starting to sense other demons, much like I could. I

think Stephen was right; we all felt something off about Sal, which is why we needed to talk to Dario. When I asked Stephen about his new level and he confirmed it, my demon was extremely proud of himself. It was hard not to laugh at his exuberance.

Little guy is really taking to this since his powers for good thing....

"Misha, you said there are multiple ways that everything plays out. What were they? Sephie asked.

"One scenario, they come here. The other scenario, we take the fight to them.

I don't know specifics about either. I was just shown both scenarios, but Dario helps us in both," he said.

"I think we need to have another conversation with Battista, as well as explore both those scenarios. I wouldn't mind taking the

fight to them if it means sparing the city. There's going to be some bloodshed here. I don't think all of the underbosses are going to go along with the change in management, but I'd like to keep it to a minimum," I said.

Misha was checking through scenarios again. He said, "we're going to have to go to Matin. That's the only option for him."

"Not surprising." I said.

"How do you think Battista is finding out about the deals that Ricardo and Martin me? He must not know about Sal's deal yet," Andrei asked.

"I was wondering that, too. I'd be curious to know how he found out about the others" Stephen said.

"I'll find out where he is tomorrow and schedule a meeting for the next time he's in town if he's not already," Viktor said.

Misha quickly looked for Battista. "No need. He's still here. I think he likes being close to the action," he said. He was obviously having fun with using his demon to look for anything and everything. I might've just created a monster.

Viktor laughed. "You're handy to have around now, kid. You make my job much faster

It did make me happy to see Viktor so relaxed with all of us once again. Since Stephen had helped him deal with his time in

Syria, he was finally himself again. He scarcely had any fear toward our demons, which helped the rest of us be more

comfortable around him. It was clear that he was happy with the choice he'd made and as long as that stayed true, I would be happy for him.

After everyone had gone back to their apartments for the evening, Sephie and I were two teenagers, unable to keep our hands

off each other. The door to the penthouse had hardly closed and she literally jumped in my arms, wrapping herself around me as she giggled. I set her on the counter, pulling her clothes off as she feverishly worked to get mine off as well.

“I’ve been waiting for this all day long,” she said breathlessly. My lips barely gave her the chance to say anything. My arms were holding her as close to me as possible. It felt like my need for her was growing the longer we were together. Instead of falling into comfortable routines, getting somewhat bored with each other, we were still at the dating stage where we couldn’t get enough of each other. I could feel her need matched mine, She’d spent much of the evening pushing her warmth to me anytime she caught me looking at her. She caught me looking quite a few times....

“What is wrong with us,” I said, smiling against her lips.

She pressed her forehead to mine, looking at me with her deep blue eyes. “I’m not sure, but I hope this one never stops,” she said, her gorgeous smile threatening to stop my heart.

I put my hands on either side of her face, my thumbs rubbing her cheeks gently, and pressed my lips to hers. I felt her completely melt in my arms as I kissed her sweetly. There was still something so sweet and innocent about her loving me as gently as so much in her own way, she was still challenging my levels of control as feeling her melt just made me want to completely devour her each time.

She wrapped her arms around my neck, moaning quietly. Her hips pressed into mine as she wrapped her legs tighter around me. I enjoyed teasing her maybe more than I should, so I made her wait before I slid inside her. I loved it when she reached the point of demanding me to f\*ck her.



I kissed my way down her neck, softly biting all her favorite spots. I could feel everything I was doing to her, which only served to turn me on even more which made it more difficult to control myself. It made it that much sweeter when I finally gave in. I could hear her soft moans turning more into whimpers as she was getting more ingtient. She changed tactics, trying to turn me on so much I wouldn't be able to deny her any longer. She grabbed one of my hands, guiding it between her legs. She knew as soon as I felt how wet she was, I wouldn't be able to hold back much. longer. I chuckled, loving the effect I was having on her. She looked at me, her eyes swirling between blue and green. "I both love you and hate you so much right now," she said as she worked her hips against my hand. I finally gave her some relief, sliding two fingers inside her. She moaned, closing her s. I could feel the warmth from her spread through my body. I exhaled loudly, knowing I was losing my own battle with my control. "Please," she whispered in my ear. That was all it took for me to officially lose the battle. I slid inside her slowly as I watched her reaction to me. She moaned loudly, getting lost in the feeling every single time. Her body was nothing but pleasure, which meant my body was nothing but pleasure as she shared everything with me. We were both immediately consumed with the feeling of each other. I adored watching her eyes swirl through every color as her body surrendered to me. Maintaining eye contact with her had been quite intense for me, as well as her, in the beginning, but now we both loved it. My soul was hers anyway. There wasn't piece of it that she hadn't already seen. She moaned loudly as I pushed even farther into her. Her hips met mine with each theist, amplifying the pleasure we were both

feeling. She was beginning to get over her shyness at the guards outside the door being able to hear her, so she wasn't folding back as much as she used to. It was still music to my ears every time I heard her moan.

Sophie leaned back on her arms, giving me a full view of her breasts as they bounced with each thrust. She leaned her head back, nearing the point of orgasm. Just as she was about to crash over the edge, she picked her head up and looked me in the eyes once more. Her eyes never failed to impress me, but this time, instead of swirling, they had landed on red.

It was enough to drive both me and my demon insane. I saw the look of lust on her face; I knew my eyes had turned black. Hers stayed red, however. I increased the intensity, thrusting into her harder each time. She exploded into an orgasm, every inch of her body tingling. Her loud moans were surely being heard by the guards outside.

Her arms finally gave way and she leaned all the way back on the counter, keeping her legs wrapped tightly around my waist. It was enough of a change that I hit new spots inside her, causing another new wave of pleasure to course through her. I kept a tight hold of her hips, pulling her back to me each time I thrust into her.. trying to keep her orgasm going as long as possible.

She pushed everything she was feeling to me, making it next to impossible to last very much longer. My body was exploding in pleasure, along with her. Every inch of my body felt like it was on fire, in the best way possible. I finally couldn't take anymore and found my release just as she was coming down from another orgasm. She sat up, wrapping her arms around me.

Her lips found mine as we both worked to catch our breath. She kissed me just as sweetly as I had kissed her at the beginning of

this. It was exactly what I needed. I opened my eyes to see her eyes had landed on deep blue once again. She smiled when she saw my look of satisfaction.

We stood there, still completely tangled and connected in the kitchen, in silence for a few moments. I was completely lost in how much I loved her. How everything in my life was better because she was in it. How the world looked even brighter with her by my side. I loved her completely.

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 493

493

Adrik

I enlisted Andrei's help the next day. I wanted to keep Sephie distracted, but I also wanted her to have time alone with Andrei.

We'd talked about it before falling asleep the night before and she had a feeling that Andrei would connect with his demon faster if he did it in private.

"I know he's nervous about losing control in front of everyone, so I think if I can get him on his own and somewhat control the conditions, if you will, it'll happen faster, she had said the night before.

It worked out perfectly, as I wanted her to not be around while I talked to everyone else about what to do with the families of the bosses. Dario's statement about Sal's kids had brought up an issue I hadn't thought about in a while: what to do with their families.

"I mean, I hate to just say let's get rid of all of them, but that would definitely be the easiest route," Ivan said once they were all in my office, while Sephie and Andrei were upstairs.

"Are they all still in the city?" Stephen asked.

"They all live here, but they're in and out. Sal's kids, anyway. Massimo's kids are elsewhere. Same for Armando's kids. They all moved away from the city," Viktor said.

"If they're in the city, it'll be easy to find them and approve them, if you will," Misha said. "But I think we might be able to do the same for all of them, as long as I know what they look like. We should be able to find out if they're following in dearest Dad's footsteps."

Ivan was quietly contemplating everything. He and I had already discussed this when we were talking to Dario the evening before. Neither one of us liked the idea of leaving their families alive to move against us in the future. There is an alternative he said, looking at me. "Once they find out what really happens to Sal, they might never make a move against you. Or make a deal like Sal did. They might take care of themselves for us."

"I don't know how much of a chance I want to take. I would like to be done with this once Sal and Ricardo are taken care of. I prefer peace to war," I said. "Get rid of entire families and nobody is willing to move against me for a very long time."

"You're not wrong there," Ivan said. We all turned to Misha, wanting to see if he could confirm one scenario over the other one.

His eyes went just as black as Sephie's did as he used his demon's power to help him run through scenarios. His eyebrows furrowed in frustration. He tried a second time, but eventually his eyes switched back to normal.

He looked at me, "I can't see anything on either of those scenarios. Like literally nothing. It's all fuzzy. I think I might need Sephie on that one. Maybe Andrei too."

"Has that ever happened before?" Stephen asked.

Misha shook his head no. "No, even before Sephie started helping me, I could always find an answer. It might've just been a snapshot, but it was always something. This time, I can't see anything. It's all blurry."

"You're thinking that means something?" I asked Stephen.

"Yeah. I just don't know what," he said.

I sighed. It was never easy. I looked to Viktor. "When can Battista meet again?"

“He’s got time tomorrow. So do you,” he said. “He even said he’d come here, to make it easier.”

“That’s new, but I’ll take it,” I said.

As we finished our conversation, Ivan looked to Stephen with his sly grin on his face. “How many times did you make your eyes go black after we all left the penthouse last night?”

Stephen laughed. “At least 20. I stood in front of the mirror and watched it for like half an hour. I couldn’t help myself. It’s so disturbing and fascinating at the same time.” Stephen looked at me, adding, “I understand completely why you wanted to keep Sephie’s eyes changing from us initially. It’s such a unique phenomenon. I would’ve wanted to keep a lid on that as long as possible, too.”

“I put in an order for contacts for you three. Andrei’s going to need them soon, too, Ian said, chuckling

“That’s partly why he’s upstairs with Sephie. She thinks she can get him to connect with his demon if it’s just the two of them,” I said.

“Anybody felt his anger yet?” Misha asked. We all shook our heads no. I’d felt nothing from either of them so far.

“He’s worried about losing complete control,” I said. “He’s probably going to fight getting angry enough for it to work.”

“Or she surprises all of us with a new ingenious way to get him to connect without bi getting angry. That wouldn’t surprise me, either,” Ivan said.

Viktor stood up. While he was definitely more comfortable around all of us, the demores still made him a little nervous from time to time. It didn’t surprise me that he used work to get out of this conversation. “I’m going to start looking for all the loss progeny,” he said, smirking as he left the office.

Once he had left, Stephen said, “he’s better than he’s ever been, but the demons still make him a little nervous. He still needs time to get completely comfortable. He’s also basically surrounded by them now. Especially if Andrei figures it out this afternoon.”

“It’s understandable. He’s handling it better than I thought he would,” I said. As we were talking, we all felt a wave of anger from Sephie. It was very strong and very clear. We all looked at each other, smiling, knowing what was happening upstairs.

“This is almost the same level she had to get to when yours first changed,” Ivan said. Apparently, Andrei had reason to be worried he’d be able to contain it.”

“Our little Andrei is growing up,” Misha said, laughing.

“You can easily tell the difference between our demons now, can’t you?” Stephen asked me.

“Yeah. I would think you’ll be able to do the same soon, too. If you can sense other demons, it would make sense you’d be able to differentiate between ours,” I said. “But don’t hold me to that. I think at this point, nobody is quite sure of just what we’re capable of. Your latest level-up was never mentioned before. You might’ve surprised everyone with it.”

“I’m still working toward crushing demons at some point, not gonna lie,” he said, completely straight-faced.

“I think it’s time we have a conversation about just why you’re looking forward to seeing Vlad again. Feels like you have ulterior motives sometimes, Stephen,” Ivan said, running his hand over his goatee thoughtfully.

It caught Stephen off-guard, making him laugh loudly. “We buried that hatchet hundreds of years ago. Don’t worry,” he said, still laughing.





Sephie

I knew Adrik wanted to keep me busy. I knew he was trying to decide what to do with the families of all the bosses and I loved him for trying to protect me from that. It did, however, give me a chance to have Andrei to myself. I'd been thinking about how to help him connect with his demon and I was pretty sure I'd come up with a solution for it..

He was nervous that he'd be able to control his anger once he finally let it take over. Andrei was so calm and controlled all the time that he'd only rarely seen the extent of his anger himself. He was so in control of his anger that he always knew the exact amount to let out to get the job done. No more, no less. The idea of having to let it all out at once worried him.

"Bubba, I've been thinking." I said as I was making him help me in the kitchen. I'd told him I was going to make him shortbread that afternoon. At least he had something to look forward to after he discovered my secret plan. Poor kid was a pawn from all directions today.

"Still about red pandas or have you moved on to the quandary of why lions are called the king of the jungle when they live on the savanna and nowhere near a jungle?" he asked.

My mouth fell open. That answer was completely unexpected from Andrei. I just started laughing and couldn't stop for a few minutes. "I love you so much right now, Bubba," I said. He was laughing with me, enjoying a chance to be just the two of us. Out of all of them, Andrei appreciated one-on-one time the most. He loved that I got closer to him first in the

beginning. He loved that he got put on heater duty whee Adrik wasn't around. He just liked having a few things that no one else did. It was a confidence boost for him. He was so handsome and so capable, but he still 't see it in himself all the time. He still hadn't figured out that even if we did the same things as the other guys, it was still different because it was him. He was the secret ingredient. They all were. Every experience was different when viewed through their eyes and experienced with them.

"Okay, spider monkey, what have you been thinking about? Besides endangered wild, I mean," he said, still trying to control his laughter.

"I've been thinking about how to get you to connect with your demon. I think it'll be asier for you if it's just the two of us," I said.

He cut his eyes over to me. "Boss isn't the only one that requested me to babysit today

I laughed. "No, he's not. I know why he wants to keep me occupied and I love him for trying to protect me from it. I requested extra time with you when I had the idea of how to get you to connect with your demon."

"I feel like I should be objecting more to being just a pawn, but I can't say I dislike he said, thoughtfully. I giggled.

"Okay, tell me your idea."

"You're worried about losing complete control, right?" He nodded his head in agreement. "What if you take a page from Viktor's book and do it backward?"

"Explain."

"What if I show you first how to control it, instead of waiting for it to happen and then showing you how to control it.

I've felt your anger before. I know how controlled you keep it on your own, but I also know you know the exact point you can push it to before you feel that control start to falter. What if I go nuclear first, then show you how it's done?"

He thought for a few moments. "That could work. Boss knows you're doing this, right?)

"No one will come running up here unless it's absolutely necessary. I talked to him last night about it. Honestly, I think you're going to do fine. I think it's more your confidence in your abilities than it is anything else. You're always the last one to believe you can do it. You're so good at instilling confidence in everyone else. That's what makes you such a great trainer. You just suck at listening to your own advice."

He chuckled, but looked at the floor. I didn't need to search to know why he felt that way. "You know your little brother isn't better looking than you, right? I mean, he's not ugly, but he's in no way better than you are in any category. You should stop comparing yourself to him. Can he kill someone with just his thumbs?"

He laughed. "No, definitely not."

"Alright then. What good is he to anyone? S\*it hits the fan and he knows what angles are the best ones to get his reaction shot? How is that in any way a useful skill to have?" He smiled at me. His wide, genuine smile that let me know I'd just said the thing he's been needing to hear for years. I kept going. I can't help myself. "You've probably had to hear how handsome he is for years. I mean, he's pretty. He might be prettier than I am, now that I think about it. The thing about relying on your looks is that your looks don't last. What's he got to fall back on when he starts to age? A \*hitty

personality that he's developed because he's used to getting everything he wants because of his pretty face." I walked to Andrei, who was standing cross the kitchen from me. I slid my arm around his waist, leaning my head on his shoulder. "Some of us are meant to shine very brightly for a very short time. He's one of those. His light is going to go out sooner rather than later. Some of us though, have lights that might not be as bright, but are so strong that they will shine for millennia to come because of the marks we've left on the world. Your light is changing the world so completely that generations from now will benefit. His is making it pretty for a few more years. Which would you rather have?"

He'd put his massive arm around my shoulders as I was talking. He squeezed me closer to him, kissing the top of my head. "I still don't know how you always know what to say, but please never stop. You didn't even need to look in my head to know all that."

I just held my pinky up to him. He chuckled, grabbing it quickly.

He sighed. "Alright, let's try your idea. Now that we won the bet pool with Stephen, siess it's time I got my act together."

"Okay, so I think all I need to do is go nuclear and you'll be able to see how I control. It's easiest to think of your anger like a living thing. I like to think of mine as fire, because it's always felt hot to me. Fire was the natural choice.

Sometimes it's spoke, sometimes fire. Depends on the levels needed. But when you think about it like a real thing, then you can picture it, which helps you control it. Make sense?" said, moving to face him.

"It does make sense. Hit me," he said.

I couldn't help but grin at him as I let my anger levels rise to insanely high levels. I could still feel Adrik now, even with my anger levels this high. I felt his moment of happiness once he felt my anger, knowing he knew what was happening and was it as ready for it as I was. I saw Andrei's moment of surprise when he felt my anger go off the charts. They'd only felt it this high a few times, so it was still surprising to them when it happened.

I could feel Andrei looking in my head, watching how I controlled it. He was as good of a student as he was a teacher.

After a few minutes, I knew he had the basics. enough to be able to try on his own. I also figured out why he was wary of letting his anger levels get that high.

"You'll be able to still control your demon when your anger takes over, Bubba. That's what you're really scared of, isn't it?"

He nodded. "I'm worried it's going to take over."

"Don't think of it as an adversary. You were the one that caught on that mine was trying to help me. Yours is no different. If it wasn't on board with the program, we all would have caught on to that fact by now. Don't think of yours as anything other than a friend. It wants to help you just as much as mine wants to help me."

He inhaled deeply, then started to let his anger take over. Andrei was so happy and y-going all the time that his anger felt almost subdued compared to everyone else. High levels for him would barely register for someone like Ivan. Much like Stephen, Andrei's anger was calculated. It was precise. If it made an appearance, the target was dead before they

even knew Andrei was angry. He had closed his eyes to concentrate, but opened them to look at me. Instead of his cappuccino-colored eyes, they were almost black.

My smile told him he had been successful in his attempt.

Okay, maybe me jumping up and down in excitement might've been a clue too.

Adril

Sephie and Andrei stayed in the penthouse the entire afternoon. The rest of us finally joined them once we were all done for the day. The penthouse smelled of promises of gastro-intestinal bliss when we walked in. My eyes landed on Sephie immediately.

Her smile stretched wide across her face as she freed up her hands to come to me.

"I missed you," I told her as my lips found hers.

"I missed you more," she told me, deepening the kiss.

"How did it go with Andrei?" I asked her as I continued to kiss her. I could hear her giggling in her head.

"I think his level of control might be almost as good as mine," she said, her lips still on mine. 7 like this multi-tasking thing."

"Me too. Gives me reason to not stop kissing you. I fully support this," I told her, holding her tighter.

She laughed, placing both hands on either side of my face. "I love you so much," she said, her wide smile threatening to stop my heart. Even still.

I pressed my lips to hers once more before she turned around to return to dinner. I felt a moment of disappointment as she went to leave. She looked back over her shoulder, grinning at me. She caught my hand, pulling me with her. Of course, she felt it too.

"Have you found out where Battista is yet?" Sephie asked as she looked between Ivat, and Viktor.

"We're meeting him tomorrow. He's coming here, in fact," Ivan said.

"Oh. That's different," she said, looking at me, her eyebrows raised. She looked to Andrei, who also looked somewhat surprised.

"Do you think he's going to surprise us with something again?"

“That’s what I was thinking, too,” he said. He thought for a moment, then looked to Viktor. “I think we should have a tune-up before he gets here, if you can manage.”

Viktor nodded in agreement. “I can make sure everyone is protected, but I’m finding that your auras get stronger once you’ve connected to your demons. It’s pretty much exactly the opposite of what I was thinking when it first started happening. So owe everyone an apology. I was convinced it would make you all weaker, but it’s made you all stronger.”

I was surprised that he’d admitted that. We all knew. We’d all forgiven him. He was struggling with everything at the time. It was surprising that he brought it up in front of everyone.

“I know you grew up in a very traditionally religious household. It can be difficult to merge that world with the one you’re currently living in,” Ivan said.

“That’s a lot of what it was. Religion teaches you to avoid evil as completely as you can. Like somehow not even acknowledging evil exists will magically make you a better person,” Viktor said.

Sophie smiled her sweet smile at him. We all watched him melt as she smiled at him.

think that’s the trick of religion. They want to keep their customers, right? What better way than to convince them a significant portion of each individual is intently wrong and needs forgiveness? I think we know better than most that everyone has both good and evil. It comes down to the choices you make and which aspect of yourself you give attention to.”

“That’s also what helped me see the error of my ways, if you will,” Viktor said.

“Watching you help Jessica, someone you didn’t even know, made me realize that the line between good and evil is very wide and very grey. I was trying to make it much more



black and white than it actually is.”

She smiled at him again. “You realize we’re doing the same thing with our demons that you did for Kostya, right? It’s not as traumatic, of course, but by them helping us, they’re clearing their Karma.”

He looked at her, his eyes wide. Everyone’s eyes went a little wide, to be honest. None of us had thought about it that way.

“How did you figure that out, Sephi?” Stephen asked.

“Bubba and Kostya helped me. I was reminded of Kostya saying something similar when I was helping Bubba connect with his demon today. He was worried he was going to be able to control it, but Bubba was the first one to figure out that my demon was trying to save me when all that happened with Ilya. I was trying to

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convince him that his demon was no different from mine. They all want to help,” Sephie said.

“It’s true. The longer you guys are connected, the more you’ll be able to feel that your demons have their own opinions on things,” I said, I glanced at Sephie, grinning at her. “Sephie’s demon, for example, is just as opinionated as she is. On literally everything.”

They all looked at Sephie, trying to keep a straight face. “I know what you’re all thing. We agree on everything. But I promise to let you all witness it if there’s ever a time where we don’t agree.”

“That’s all we ask,” Misha said, laughing.

“How did it go this afternoon?” Ivan asked Andrei. Sephie was not lying when she said Andrei’s control might be rivalling hers. He looked at Ivan, switching his eyes to black without even blinking. It made everyone erupt into loud exclamations.

“That’s impressive, Andrei. Sephie told me your control rivalled hers. She was not lying.” I said. He was clearly proud of himself,

which made me happy to see. Confidence was always something he struggled with. He had no reason to; he was insanely talented at everything he put his mind to. Watching him grow as he trained Sephie was just as fun as watching Sephie improve under his direction. They were both bringing out the best in each other. I was grateful to witness it.

I watched Andrei, studying him now that he was connected, as he talked and laughed with everyone. “Your demon is quieter than the rest, Andrei.” Both he and Sephie looked at each other, chuckling.

“She said the same thing this afternoon. She said it felt much like my anger. Quiet, but no less deadly,” he said.

“Did you have to go nuclear? None of us felt it. We all felt Sephie, but none of us felt you,” Misha said.

Sephie grinned. “He did go nuclear. His nuclear is just so much more understated than everyone else’s that nobody felt it. You’re all used to mine yelling at you that nobody heard Andrei’s whisper. That’s how he gets you,” she said, laughing at Andrei’s cheeks turning red.

“Given that you and Sephie share so much in common with your gifts, I think it’s kind of fitting that your demon is somewhat the opposite of hers. Balance seems to be a running theme in all of this,” Stephen said.

“We could say the same for your demon and mine, Stephen,” I said. “Your gift is complimentary to mine, just as theirs are.”

He chuckled. “Honestly hadn’t thought about that, but you’re right.”

“Ivan and Misha kind of \*uck up that theory, though,” Andrei said.

“I don’t think either one of them get included in any similarities, to be honest,” Sephie said. “They’re both completely unique. Ivan has his own special assignment and Misha’s gift is so unlike anyone else’s that I think it makes him just as unique as an. They’re

similar in their differences,” she said, grinning at both of them.

“And Viktor is there for divine information and protection,” Stephen said.

“I really feel like we should start solving mysteries once this is all over. Maybe get a giant dog too. And a van,” Misha said seriously.

Author’s note: If you’ve stuck with this story for this long, I’d like to thank you again. A few of you have asked about social media.

While I generally loathe social media, <sup>+</sup> recognize it’s usefulness. I we created an Instagram account for now where you guys can reach out and ask questions about the story without giving spoilers away to other readers (which I appreciate nobody likes spoilers). You can find me @ry kane. Fll consider other social media in the future, but nobody hold their breath. Thank you all for reading and loving these characters so much!

Adrik

Viktor walked in my office, looking quite serious, even for him. “Boss, the DA just called. He’s ready to prosecute Dr. Moretti.

They went through the files we gave them from Sal in much more detail than we did. Eric can bring charges against Sal as well.”

I thought for a moment. “I’m not sure I want that happening. If Sal has made his own deal, his fate might already be sealed. I

want to talk to Battista to see what he knows about Sal’s deal first.” I inhaled, tapping my fingers on my desk as I thought about

how everything needed to happen almost simultaneously and we still didn’t have a solid plan. “Tell Eric he can have Dr. Moretti,

but I want to wait on Salf now.”

Ivan had walked in, shortly after Viktor. “Giving him the doctor will buy us just a little bit of time. The information we get on

everyone else could look like it came from him, if we play it right,” he said.

“That’s what I was thinking, too. I think we can link Henry to Sal and make it look like the doctor is the one that exposed that

connection,” I said. “I’d like to meet with Eric and Doug one more time before we actually hand over the doctor. Are they still

being followed by Henry’s people?”

Ivan nodded his head. “I say that loosely. His people are not very good, but they’re still watching both Eric and Doug. There’s

several places that we can easily get you to where you can meet with them without anyone seeing.”

“Let’s see what Battista has for us, then set something up to meet with those two in person. If I hand that sack of s\*it over to

them, I want to know he’s going away for the rest of his life. I don’t want to have to find him again and tie up their loose ends.

That's just going to p\*ss me off."

Sephie walked in right as I said that last sentence. "Nobody wants that. Especially not how that you're all murderous and s\*it on a regular basis," she said, smiling widely as she walked to me. "Andrei can kill people with his thumbs, you can now kill people with one look."

I pushed my chair back, opening my arm for her. She was still grinning at me as she leaned down and kissed me sweetly. It never failed to surprise me how much her simple gestures helped me relax and melted the stress away. I pulled her into my lap wrapping my arms around her, suddenly not caring one bit about anything but her.

"I'll let Eric know. Battista should be here in a few minutes," Viktor said, looking at watch. "Stephen is already downstairs waiting for him."

"Thank you, Viktor," I said, pulling Sephie closer to me. She leaned back against me hugging my arms around her waist. "What have you gotten into this morning?" I asked, my mouth against her ear. "Not much. Just making plans for world domination with the Wonder Twins. I really feel like this plan might be the one," she said as seriously as she could manage.

Ivan chuckled. "If it's you and Misha planning it together, at least we know it'll be entertaining."

She pointed at him, saying, "right? Thank you!"

I laughed at her antics, loving the short breaks she always managed to provide to my day that made everything a little brighter.

"Do you still have a weird feeling about Battista coming today?" I asked her, brushing her hair away from her shoulder let my

fingertips brush her neck lightly, loving the sparks I could clearly feel from her as I did.

“I do. I don’t think it’s necessarily bad. I might just be nervous from the last time he requested our services,” she said.

“Did Andrei, Misha, or Stephen get anything else about it?” Ivan asked.

“No, not that I know of. The Wonder Twins are wary, much like me, but it’s nothing specific.” We all heard the elevator doors ding.

“That’s Stephen,” she said.

“You need to teach me how to do that,” Ivan said.

She giggled. “I will gladly teach you how to do that if you agree to spar with me at least once a week for the foreseeable future,”

Ivan had smiled more than I’d ever seen him smile since I met Sephie, but the smile stretched across his face when she asked

him to spar with her more was maybe the largest smile I’d ever seen on that man’s face. I could feel how happy it made him.

“Deal,” he said. I could also feel how happy it made her when he agreed.

“Not gonna lie, I love the fact that my fiancée is giddy over being trained to be a better fighter right now,” I said right before

Stephen walked into the office with Battista. Shortly after, the Wonder Twins and Viktor walked in, closing the door behind them.

The mood turned slightly more serious once Battista was in the office. Once he had greeted everyone, we got straight to business. “Battista, how did you find out about Ricardo and Martin’s deals?” I asked.

He sighed. “It’s a complicated answer, but the very basics are that we have a psychic that gets notified by whatever communicates with her when another deal is made.”

“You don’t know what communicates with her?” Sephie asked.

“No, she refuses to reveal how she gets the information,” Battista said.

“How long between when deals are made and when she finds out usually?” I asked..

“I’m not entirely sure. I don’t think I’ve ever asked that question. Why are you asking

“Because Sal made a deal. We don’t know specifics, but it wasn’t that long ago that he did it. I don’t know if he made a deal with a lower-level demon and that’s why it hasn’t come up on your radar or if it’s so new that your psychic hasn’t been alerted yet,” I said.

“Actually, I was going to bring that information to you today. I thought I was going to tell you something you didn’t know. I

should’ve known you’d all know already. How did you find out?” he asked.

“Dario said Sal told him about it after it happened, which is somewhat surprising. I don’t know how much these guys are talking about these things among each other, but it seems like something you’d keep to yourself,” I said.

Battista thought for a moment, then said, “maybe this is all coming from Ricardo. Maybe he knows he needs more help than he’s found.”

“Can your psychic find out what kind of demon Sal made his deal with?

Ricardo and Martin are going to need to be dealt with differently than everyone else, because of their deals,” I said.

“Differently how?” Battista asked. I knew he was going to want to know the details. I wasn’t sure I was ready to tell him about my level-up yet.

Thankfully, Stephen is quick on his feet. “Because the demons they made deals with are so powerful, we have to change tactics with them to be effective. It’s going to be much nicer for us to know beforehand if we need to change tactics with Sal as well.”

“We need to take precautions in order to protect ourselves. Knowing beforehand gives us the upper hand, if you will. Which is why we would appreciate notice if you ever need our services for one of your associates again. That was not a fun day for any of us,” Sephie said. Battista could tell by her tone that she was not joking around.

“My apologies, Sephie. I didn’t know the extent of his crimes beforehand. There were plenty of us that had our suspicions, but no one knew for sure until you guys exposed him,” he said.

“I understand. Just let us in on the suspicions next time,” she said. I saw Ivan wink at her, knowing she was trying not to get too irritated thinking about that day and everything she’d seen.

“You have my word that you will know what I know from now on. It never occurred to me that you guys would need to take precautions, but now that I do know, I will make sure you know everything that I do,” he said, apologetically.

I knew we greatly benefited Battista, especially in matters of business, but I also got the impression that he genuinely liked us.

He seemed to like my father as well. As much as anyone could like that man.

They’d been friends for years, but I never realized the extent of their relationship until recently. My father had been helping out behind the scenes for much longer than I was aware of. It was an intriguing side to Vitaliy that I never would’ve known about, were it not for Sephie.

“What are your plans for taking care of Ricardo and Martin?” Battista asked.

“Honestly? We don’t have any yet,” I said, chuckling at Battista’s shocked expression



King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 497

497

Adrik

We spent several hours talking things through with Battista. There were so many different players involved that it was going to be difficult to formulate a solid plan for all of them at once. We hadn't even brought Martin into the picture yet. Or the Mexican cartels.

"I have it on good authority that Niko and Vito are planning on returning to the city in the next two weeks. We don't have a specific date yet, but the money supply is drying up, so they're coming back to find out what's going on with the underbosses and their inability to collect taxes," Battista said.

Ivan was running his hand over his goatee, as he usually did when he was thinking through a problem. "What if we let them come back to the city to try and collect taxes? The people won't stand for it. What if we let the people take care of Niko and to for us?

They're a big reason that the underbosses stopped collecting taxes in the first place. Even with knowing what happened to Massimo and Lorenzo, they still likely would've kept trying to collect taxes if the people hadn't fought back."

"I happen to be very good friends with a very talented arms dealer. He can make sure the people are protected against whatever Niko and Vito decide to try," Battista said.

I felt Sephie starting to make the connections at the same time I did. "If the people of the city take care of Niko, Vito, and whatever underbosses object, then the mayor will need to appear like he's being tough on crime to keep the favor of the pete,"

she said.

“Which will be the perfect opportunity to arrest Dr. Moretti. He can be the reason we connect Sal and Henry,” I said.

“Henry connects the switch-hitting representative,” Ivan said.

“The mayor and the DA look like they’re being very tough on crime and easily get re-elected,” Stephen said.

“Not to mention the new wing on the hospital that’s happening out of all this,” Andre said.

“Okay, so that takes care of everything here quite nicely. What about Ricardo and Sa Sephie asked.

Misha’s eyes went wide. “I know why there were two scenarios for taking care of the bisses. Because we’re using both of them.

Niko and Vito are coming here, which is why I could see that outcome. But we go after Ricardo and Sal and take care of them before they have a chance to return to the city.”

Ivan chuckled, pointing to Sephie. “The princess agrees,” he said. They all looked at la, smiling. She looked to me, silently asking what color her eyes had decided

“Purple,” I said, kissing her cheek.

“Oh. Well, then. Italy is once again in my future, apparently,” she said. She looked back at the rest of the guys, asking, “okay, so that takes care of them. Now, what about Martin?”

“I admittedly don’t have as much information on Martin as I do on Ricardo and Sal. What about Trino? Does he still have people that are loyal to him down there?”

Battista asked.

“He does. He’s been keeping an eye on him since he’s been here. He said Martin has dit ties with the Mexican cartels, as well as Sal and Ricardo. Because he never got Giana as payment for whatever was supposed to happen when he came for her, he’s cut

them off,” I said.

“How much does Trino know about what else is going on with all of this?”

Battista asked.

“Everything,” we all said at once. Battista was surprised by our answer.

“How did he take that?” he asked

“Quite well, actually. He’d already seen a few things. He’d seen my eyes go black, he knew I was able to somehow see things I shouldn’t be able to see. He just didn’t know it wasn’t just me until he got out of Colombia,” Seplie said.

“We’d decided already that one stipulation for his new security team was that they were going to have to be okay with everything weird that is happening, since his last security team had a very big problem with Sephie,” I said.

“We took two of Armando’s guys, the ones that helped us find Seple and Ivan when they were taken, and gave them to Trino.

They know everything now too,” Stephen said.

“How did they take it?” Battista asked.

“They’re mostly okay with it. I think more shocked than anything.” I said. I glanced at Andrei, Misha, and Stephen, before looking back at Battista. “It doesn’t hurt that we all control our demons now,” I said. I knew right away that my eyes had switched to black, without needing to see anyone else. I could feel it switch now. I could feel Sephie’s switch now. I knew if ours did, theirs would too.

Battista looked around the room, somewhat shocked to see so many pairs of black eyes staring back at him. He completely missed that Viktor’s eyes were still normal, which saved us from having that conversation with him. “When did this happen?”

Battista asked.

“Recently. It didn’t happen all at once. They’ve all figured it out in their own time,” Sephie said.

“I was impressed when I first saw it on you, Sephie. I never would’ve thought I would see it on so many others. You know this is virtually unheard of, right?” he said.

She nodded her head. “You were right in that it’s a warning to other demons, but what you don’t know is that our demons are helping us. We’re basically using their powers for good now.”

Battista looked at her for a few moments. “You’re actually using your demon’s powers?”

She nodded once more. “Each of our demons compliment us. Mine is very similar to me, for example. It’s like an added boost for our gifts, basically.”

“Completely unheard of,” he said.

“That’s because you’re looking at things in only black and white. Good and evil aren’t black and white. There’s a very large grey area that is more accurate, Sephie said. “It’s hard to imagine that a demon would want to help, but you have to remember they haven’t always been demons. They were souls like us at one time. They just made bad choices and paid more attention to the evil than good. You can’t have one over the other all the time. Even only focusing on the good will get you in trouble. You can’t ignore that evil exists and expect it not to affect you or those around you,” Sephie said.

Battista was quiet for a few moments. He finally looked at her and said, “light cannot exist without darkness, nor can darkness exist without light. The existence of one implies the existence of the other. This is something that people have known for centuries, but it has been altered and perverted by different religions to the point that people don’t understand the synergistic

relationship between the two any longer.”

Sephie

We talked with Battista for a few hours more, but we still struggled to come up with a plan for Martin. We didn't have quite as many details on him and the Mexican cartels were a definite wild card in everything. We were going to need more information on them as well before coming up with a plan on how to handle that situation.

Once Battista left, the mood in the room was noticeably lighter. Everyone seemed relieved to finally have some kind of plan. It had felt like we were stumbling around in the dark for weeks now, trying to decide what to do.

On the elevator to the penthouse, I asked, "how likely do you think it will be that Martin will get word of what's happening in the city and will run or try something else?"

"Is he smart enough to run though?" Ivan asked.

I laughed. "I think that's fair, but I'm also not totally sure what you mean. For once.)

Ivan waited until we were all inside the penthouse, in the kitchen, to explain further everyone basically working with him because they likely don't have any other choice, he's probably thinking he's untouchable already."

have a feeling that Martin thinks he's won already. With Trino gone and Stephen added, "that could work to our advantage. If we keep Trino here and stay completely away from Colombia until after Ricardo and Sal are taken care of, he's very likely to get comfortable and think he's safe down there. That's good for us."

"I think we need to talk more with Trino. We need more details about what's going on down there before we come up with a

definite plan for him,” Adrik said.

“You’re going to bring the mayor and the DA in on the plan for everyone else?” I asked Adrik.

“Yes. I would like to meet with them once more before turning Dr. Moretti over to them. I want to be sure about them before I hand him over.”

“Oh, he’s the loose end you don’t want to have to tie up for them,” I said, remembering his earlier statement about being p\*ssed off. He smirked at me, walking to me. We still couldn’t stand for there to be any unnecessary distance between us. Even my demon would calm down when he was touching me. She wasn’t rowdy when we were apart, but there was an increase in my level of anxiety until I was with him again.

“We need to meet with the leaders of the ‘resistance movement’ in the city again and let them know what’s happening. If they know it’s coming, they can be better prepared,” Ivan said.

“And apparently armed to the teeth thanks to Battista and his strange connections,” I said. “Nobody will be sad about that little detail.”

Ivan looked at Viktor and Adrik both. “I do wonder just who this arms dealer is that his friends with. My money is on Boris,” he said.

Adrik chuckled. “I almost asked if it was him when he brought it up. I think we should ask to meet him.”

“Who’s Boris?” I asked.

“He’s an old friend of Vitaliy’s. He’s been running arms around the world my entire life. War is his profit. That being said, he’s not a totally bad guy. He always makes sure to supply both sides of every conflict,” Adrik said, unable to hide his smile.

I couldn’t help but laugh too. “Grey area,” I said.

That evening. Vitaliy and all his men were coming over for dinner. When he took Aroundo's house, I made him promise that he would still come for dinner regularly while he was in the city. He made good on his promise. He would come over at least once a week to have dinner with us. Sometimes he would come with just Aleksei and other times, he would bring everyone.

Tonight was a special treat because Ilya brought Jessica with him, much to everyone's surprise.

When everyone walked in, Vitaliy caught me and pulled me slightly away from everyone. "Ilya told me everything about her. She's not as strong as the rest of you, but she's much like all of you when I touched her. She's still very much a scared little girl, however. Ilya has been good for her so far. She's been good for him, too. He seems happier. He asked if he could bring her so she could see you again. He told me she asks about you often. Forgive me for not telling you. I hope you don't mind, slatkaya, but I think it would be good for her to spend time around you," he said.

"You should know by now that I've perfected the art of feeding a small army. Even if she eats like me, there will be plenty. I'm actually really happy to see that things are working out between them," I said, watching Ilya with her over Vitaliy's shoulder. He was affectionate with her and clearly protective of her. Not that he had anything to worry about with us, but men tend to become protective of the women they're developing feelings for. Most of the time, without even realizing it's happening. It was, in fact, adorable to witness.

I hugged Vitaliy's neck, feeling him relax as he held on to me. "I've missed you, old in," I said, grabbing his hand and walking further into the kitchen.



“You feel different than the last time I saw you, slatkaya,” he said in Russian. Clearly Jessica knew some things, but not other things just yet.

“You should shake your son’s hand, Vitaliy. He’s the reason I feel different,” I said, grinning at him. His eyes went wide, but his curiosity got the better of him. He walked immediately to Adrik, who offered him his hand. He was smirking at Vitaliy, Charly already enjoying the reaction we were all expecting.

Vitaliy cursed when he took Adrik’s hand. “You... But... How?” he finally managed to get out.

Adrik chuckled. “It’s quite a long story. I don’t want to be rude in front of our newest guest, so we’ll get into it later,” he said, still in Russian.

“Come. Let’s eat first,” I said. I might’ve snooped in her head, but I knew Jessica was starving. I gingerly grabbed her free hand that Ilya wasn’t holding and pulled her toward the food. “Your stomach is going to drown out the conversation, so let’s give it something to do,” I said, winking at her. Her cheeks went red and she looked like she wanted to hide. “Don’t worry, mine can wake the dead when I’m that hungry. Ask any of the guys. They’ve all heard it,” I said, laughing.

“Even I know about her stomach, ptichka,” Ilya said to Jessica. “Vitya told me about it many times.”

“See? It’s legendary,” I said. As Jessica got her food, I leaned closer to Ilya, telling him in Russian, “um, the fact that you call her your little bird might be the cutest thing I’ve ever seen.” His cheeks turned bright red. I just winked at him and walked back to Adrik.

I tucked myself into his side. He was smiling as he asked me, “what did you say to him to make his face turn so red?”

“He calls her ptichka. I told him it might be the cutest thing I’ve ever seen.” Adrik pulled me closer. I could feel a twinge of resentment. “Not cuter than me calling you solnishko.”

It was so hard not to laugh, but I somehow managed. He was actually jealous and maybe a little worried that Ilya’s pet name for Jessica was better than him calling me solnishko. “That’s because you calling me solnishko is not cute.” I felt the resentment quickly turning to anger, so I stepped in front of him, placing my hands on either side of his face. “It’s divinely enchanting,” I told him, loving the switch between is anger and the smile that stretched across his face. I stood on my toes and pressed my lips to his as I told him, “I would much rather be your sun. We both know not delicate enough to be a bird anyway.” I ended up finally losing the struggle to not laugh and I giggled against his lips.

“I wouldn’t have it any other way,” he told me as he wrapped his arms completely around me, holding me tightly..

After dinner, I caught Ilya and Jessica slightly away from everyone else. The rest of the guys were deep in discussion, switching between Russian and English, which meant Jessica couldn’t really understand most of what was being said. “How are you Iya?

No more issues?” I asked him in English, hoping he would understand my question.

“None. I’ve been quite good. I really like working for Vitaliy. Aleksei has helped me tremendously. I feel like I’m really catching up in my training,” he said, proud of his progress.

“Yeah? We should train together again soon. I would love to see it,” I said. I looked down at Jessica. “And how are things with you? You definitely look much better than the last time we met,” I said, smiling at her.

She grinned at me. Her grey eyes lit up as she looked up at Ilya. “Much better, I can’t thank you enough for helping me that night.

I’m very happy it happened, as I never would’ve met Ilya otherwise, but I would like to never be in that situation again

“I can’t say I blame you there. How long have you been able to see these things?” I asked her, curious about her ability to see angels.

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 499

499

Sephie

“As long as I can remember. My parents think I’m crazy. My grandmother thought I special and would argue with my parents all the time in my defense, but she died several years ago,” she said, looking down at the floor.

“You still see her though, don’t you?”

Her eyes got wide and her cute little smile stretched across her face. “I do. I see her the time. She follows me around most of the time. That night at the fundraiser was the first time I’d seen other angels in the same place at the same time usually only see one at a time. I was excited about it, but then everyone thought I was crazy.” Her bright face darkened as she thought about that night. “I’m not sure what would’ve happened if Ilya hadn’t heard the commotion from the kitchen.”

I glanced at Ilya, who was watching her. He wrapped his arm around her, pulling her closer to him. “I have a feeling Ilya had been watching you for longer than you realize.” I said, winking at him.

She looked up at me, surprised. She then looked at Ilya, who clearly had a guilty look on his face. “It’s true,” he said. “I had seen you earlier in the evening and kept an eye on you the whole night. When you didn’t come out of the kitchen, I might’ve walked over to find out what was going on. That’s when I saw what was happening and went to get help.”

“You were watching me? Really?” she asked.

“I mean, not in the stalker kinda way. I was trying to see if I could catch your eye, but you kept your head down almost the entire

time,” he said, smiling at her.

“I don’t like attention from strangers,” she said quietly, glancing down at the floor.

“I don’t either. It’s why I surround myself with giant men. They keep me hidden.” I said.

She grinned at me, her cute face once again brighter. “That’s one of my favorite thing about Ilya.” His wide smile stretched across his face at her admission. It was official. They were adorable together. It was easy to see they both cared about each other very much, even after only a short time.

I was watching them with each other for a moment when she looked at me very seriously. I chuckled. “You can ask whatever you’d like, Jessica,” I said.

“How did you know I wanted to ask you something?” she asked me, her eyes wide.

“It was written all over your face. What would you like to know?”

“You’re...different from the last time I saw you. You look different to me,” she said, shyly.

“You’re right. I am different. Can you tell me how I look different to you?” I asked.

She looked around nervously, then took a step closer to me. “You have...wings,” she said. She was so cute, it was difficult not to laugh at her. I didn’t want to tell her Andrei had already shown us what she could see the last time we saw her. “They’re different colors now.”

“What colors are they now?”

“When I saw you last time, they were only white. Now, they fade to black toward the ends,” she said. She glanced over her

shoulder, looking at Adrik. "His are almost all black now." She looked at Ivan next. "His are like yours, but they have red tips. I

don't know what it means, but every other angel I've ever seen has only had white wings. I don't know why you're all different."

"Can you see anything on those three men?" I asked her, pointing to the Wander Twar and Stephen. They were on the other side of the kitchen from Ivan and Adrik, so I don't think she was paying attention to them before.

Stae studied all three of them for a few moments "They're like you were last time I saw you, but it's harder to see. It's not as visible to me. I didn't see that last time. Are they different too?"

"Yes, they are. We're all different from the last time you saw us," I said. I couldn't help but smile at her. She was trying so hard to be brave, but it was somewhat overwhelming for her. I could feel her calm down every time Ilya touched her. It was very sweet to witness.

"What happened?" Ilya asked.

"That's a bit of a long story. I'm not sure how much we should share right now, but it's all necessary for what's coming," I said in English. I switched to Russian and added, "everyone but your brother can now make their eyes go black. I have a new col too.

I'm not sure how much she can handle right away, so let's take baby steps for now. She's a very sweet girl, but she's clearly overwhelmed."

Ilya nodded in agreement. He kept the conversation going in Russian as he added, "he is overwhelmed. She's trying to understand everything. I told her a little bit about what happened to me. She's fighting against wanting to believe it and believing her parents' assessment that she's crazy. She wants to believe everything, but she's been told she's crazy for long enough that

she won't let herself believe it."

My heart hurt hearing that she was struggling that much. I looked at him, his arm still protectively around her. "Ilya, you're good for her. She's good for you, too. I can see it clearly. Hell, even Vitaliy can see it. He told me when you guys first got here We can try and help her out as much as we can with accepting that she's different. She's even different from all of us. Keep telling her that it's okay she's different and that you believe her. It'll take time, but you can help her turn it around."

"I tell her often, but I will tell her more," he said, looking down at her smiling sweetly at her. They were all kinds of adorable. I just wanted to squeeze both of them.

She was somewhat nervous that she couldn't understand what we were saying.

"Don't worry, Jessica. We were talking about how absolutely adorable you are. I don't know how you've managed to do it, but he's already wrapped around your finger," I, smiling at her shock.

Adrik walked over, sliding his arm around my waist. Jessica looked up at Ilya, still shocked at what I'd just told her, but she kept her mouth shut now that Adrik was there. I could feel she was intimidated by him. It was a common reaction to him, even before his latest level-up. Now, it was much more pronounced. He was aware of it, but he rarely tried to make anyone feel more comfortable. With Jessica, however, he did make an attempt.

He smiled at her, saying, "you look much happier than the last time I saw you."

She smiled nervously, which made Ilya laugh quietly. "She is much happier," he said for her.

She inhaled deeply, held her breath for a moment, then said, "I want to thank you again. I didn't realize how much money you

handed me until I got home that night. I'm very grateful."

Adrik chuckled. "I'm glad it could help you out."

"She tried to get me to give part of it back to you. I wouldn't do it," Ilya said.

He looked down at her as her face hardened as she

looked up at him. "It was our first fight," he said, still completely amused by all of it.

I couldn't help but laugh. I knew Adrik didn't even know how much money he'd handle her. It didn't matter.

"I don't make that much in three months!" she said, still somewhat irritated that Ily wouldn't give part of it back. "I didn't know it was that much money or I wouldn't have accepted it!"

"Please, Jessica. Accept it. Keep it. Do not feel guilty for it. You needed to not have to worry about leaving that situation," Adrik said. Ilya gave her a very clear "I told you so" look.

I laughed quietly. "He looks quite intimidating, but he's one of the nicest men you'll ever meet," I said, leaning my head on Adrik's shoulder. He pulled me closer to him

"Just don't tell anyone. I don't want that getting out," he said, kissing my forehead.



## King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

### Chapter 500

500

Sephle

As the evening was winding down, Viktor caught me and Adrik to the side of everyone asking, “would you mind if I spent some extra time with Ilya once Vitaliy leaves for the evening? I haven’t seen him in a few weeks. I also haven’t gotten a chance to really meet Jessica yet.”

“Of course, Viktor. You know you’re free to do as you wish once I’m done for the day. Adrik said.

Viktor looked at me, grinning slightly. “I didn’t want you to think I was avoiding anything,” he said.

“I don’t think that, Viktor. Anymore,” I said, mirroring his grin. “I think you should spend time with Jessica. She’s pretty adorable. I also think you can be good for her, as well. I think you have an inside track to help her understand her gift. She’s sightly overwhelmed. She also knows that we’re different, but she doesn’t know why yet. I didn’t want to hit her with everything yet.”

He nodded. “I have talked to Ilya once or twice since they’ve been spending more time together. He said almost the same thing.

He thinks I can help her.”

“He takes after his older brother with his level of intelligence,” I said, winking at him.

After Viktor had walked away, I told Adrik, “even your father likes her. It was like the first thing he told me when they got here.

She’s already got Ilya wrapped around her finger.”

Adrik pulled me in front of him, wrapping his arms around my waist. “I can’t imagine what that would be like,” he said, as he pressed his lips to mine. “I would never let that happen.”

Llaughed, hugging his neck tighter. He pressed his cheek lightly to mine, rubbing his facial hair against my cheek lightly the way I loved. He whispered, "I love you, Sephie. So very much."

"I love you. And your giant heart," I said, hugging him tighter, After Vitaliy left with everyone but Ilya, he and Jessica stayed in the penthouse for aw more minutes. They eventually left with Viktor to spend some quality time together.

Andrei glanced at me after they left the penthouse. "Did you see?" he asked. "I did. I'm guessing you did as well?" I asked.

"Yup. I might've overheard you ask how you looked different. That's when I looked," said, his handsome smile stretched across his face.

"Are you two going to let the rest of us in on what the hell you're talking about?" Ivan asked.

"Jessica said I looked different to her this time. You all do too. I asked her to explain how. As she did, I snooped to see what she sees. It's pretty dang impressive, if I do say so myself." I said. I quickly shared what she could see when she looked at all us.

Before, she only saw our wings from the perspective of us being able to walk through Heaven. Our wings were white, but they had a different look from other angels she'd seen, so she knew there was something about us that wasn't like other angels. This time, she could see the black in our wings. It made me wonder if she'd soon be able to see demons the same way she sees angels or if her gift was just getting clearer for her.

"Boss and Ivan are clearly in a competition over who has the cooler wings," Misha said as he looked at what Jessica could see, I chuckled. "I'm surprised Vitaliy left without finding out why we're all different."

"I fully expect him to be back tomorrow because of that," Adrik said.

“How was Jessica? Did you tell her why we all look different now?” Stephen asked. I could feel him slightly worried about a new woman. Out of everyone, he had every reason to be. I went to him, sliding my arm around his waist and resting my head on his shoulder as he put his arm around my shoulders.

“She’s still overwhelmed with everything, so I didn’t get into specifics. I think Viktor can be good for her. Ilya is definitely good for her. She’s a very sweet girl. I think she’ll be fine with everything eventually. She’s still struggling with accepting her own gift, I didn’t want to scare her, so she just knows we’re different for now, but she doesn’t know why,” I said. Silently, I said to Stephen, “I looked in her head. She doesn’t have a mean bone in her body. I know you’re going to anyway, but you don’t need to keep your distance as you wait for her to get mean. Besides, you have me as your attack dog if she proves me wrong”

He didn’t respond, he just squeezed my shoulders a little tighter.

“I might’ve checked on Trino’s girlfriend too. I don’t know, I got nervous when Andrei said she was Mexican and her uncle was killed when Trino took over,” Misha said, looking a little sheepish.

“What did you find?” Ivan asked.

“She’s good from what I could see. Uh, we’re also going to their wedding once everything calms down. So, yeah. That’s a thing that’s happening.” Misha said.

I laughed. “Now that you know you can use your demon to help you, are you spying bit more people?”

“NO!” he said, acting indignant that I would even think that.

Ivan caught my eye. We looked at each other and then back at Misha. “Who else?” we both said at the same time.

“Okay, maybe just a couple people. I was having trouble sleeping. I was bored. It’s not regular thing,” Misha said, slightly

embarrassed.

“Who?!” we all demanded at once.

“I might’ve checked on Giana,” he said quietly.

“And?” I asked.

“She’s doing well. Her and her friend moved recently to Portugal. They’re planning on staying there through this next year, then they have plans to move again. Giana has a job, she met a guy, her friend is trying to talk her into going back to school. She’s living the most normal life ever and she seems really happy about that,” he said.

I just couldn’t help the tears that fell as I was completely overcome with relief and happiness that she was doing well. I still didn’t want to be friends with her, but that didn’t mean I didn’t want the best for her.

“Misha, I’m really glad you spied on her,” I said, wiping the tears from my eyes. “It makes me really happy to know that she’s doing okay.”

“I think we’re all relieved to know she’s okay. I don’t think any of us want to be BFFS with her, but she still didn’t deserve to be treated that way,” Ivan said.

“You took the words out of my mouth, Squish,” I said.

“Who else did you spy on?” Andrei asked. “I know that’s not the only one.” Misha laughed. “Right again,” he said in between laughs. “I might’ve also tried to first Vanessa to see what she’s up to now, that Massimo is dead.” More laughter. “I don’t know how, but I could smell her when I found her.”

We all laughed. “I hope you didn’t watch her for very long. That smell will get on you I said.

“What is our dearest Vanessa doing now?” Ivan asked.

“She’s trying to find a replacement for Massimo, but she’s not having much luck. She’s working at a club somewhere in the city.

She gets lots of male attention. Lots,” Misha said, his eyes wide.

“I don’t want to know any more. Please stop talking,” I said, making everyone laugh,

“Come here,” Adrik said silently to me. I squeezed Stephen once more, then walked across the kitchen to Adrik. He wrapped his arms around my waist, holding me tightly. “Close your eyes, Andrei,” he said before he kissed me passionately. Everyone else laughed.

“I am never going to live that one down,” Andrei said. I turned and leaned my back against Adrik’s warm chest, pulling his arms tight around me.

“I mean, it’s never gonna not be funny, Bubba,” I said, laughing.

“We still need to figure out why you got blocked that one time and couldn’t see anything.” Stephen said to Misha, somewhat cryptically.

“You got blocked, Misha? When did that happen?” I asked. I felt Adrik tense slightly and I instantly knew what he was looking for.

I squeezed his arms tighter and chuckled. “I know what you were all discussing. I love you all very much for trying to protect me from that conversation.”

Adrik leaned down and kissed my cheek, saying quietly, “Misha was looking for outcomes pertaining to the families. He could see nothing.

“Has that ever happened before, Misha?” I asked. I didn’t have a bad feeling about this but it was definitely a new occurrence that we’d never experienced before.