

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 298

Chapter Two Hundred Ninety-Eight

Adrik

“So, that sounded extremely painful,” Andrei said as we walked back out from the spare room.

“Only for a minute and only because my shoulder and ribs are in such a poor state at the moment,” Sephie said quietly. “It’s still not like getting stabbed.” She grinned at him, then added, “I assume. I’m happy that I can’t confirm that one.”

Andrei got up, grabbing the blanket she had been using before and wrapped it back around her. “Are you hungry again yet? It’s been at least twenty minutes,” he asked, teasing her.

“Not yet. Ask me again in ten minutes though,” she said, laughing ever so quietly.

“Despite it sounding horrifically painful, you look better,” Andrei said.

“I agree. You don’t look like you’re forcing your smile right now,” Misha said. “She should come back everyday for a while.” The acupuncturist had been scheduling her next session with Ivan, but she’d also been quietly, observing the exchange. As Ivan moved toward the door to the penthouse, she stopped by the couches.

“She needs all of you just as much as she needs me right now. The same for all of you. You need her. You’re all together for a very important reason,” she said, turning to follow Ivan out.

Stephen looked up from his computer as he heard the door close behind them. “Now I see why Ivan has been going to her for years. She’s just as dramatic as he is,” he said.

“She’s also never been wrong,” Sephie said quietly. She walked slowly to Viktor, who looked up from his computer as she got closer, his soft smile that I never saw for anyone other than Sephie on his face. “Papa Bear, would you please help me out with your superb braiding skills?”

“For you? Of course,” he said as he got up from the couch.

“Do you have more you need translated?” she asked as he started to try and tame her unruly hair.

“I do, whenever you feel up to it. The journalist responded again. I haven’t opened it yet,” he said.

“I have a couple things for you to look at, too. I tried to use a translator while you were getting stabbed, but it didn’t work very well. I still have no idea what it says,” Stephen said. “You would think that I would’ve taken the time to learn Italian in my 900 years. You would think that, but you’d be wrong.”

Sephie smiled. “Don’t be outsourcing my job, Yoden the Enabler. I can’t do anything else right now. I’ll go crazy if you take that away from me too.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it,” Stephen said, smiling at her. Viktor finished her hair and tied it, then handed her his computer so she could read the response from the journalist. She walked back to me, wanting to sit in my lap so she could lean against me again. “I’m cold again,” she said. Misha and Andrei got up to help her sit down and lean against me again. “What would I do without you guys,” she said sweetly as she started reading.

She was quiet for a few minutes, then said, “Ivan was right. He didn’t like it that I told him we already knew what he knew.” She started opening the attachments that he sent with the email. “He proved it, too.” She starting scanning the documents he sent over. Some of them we did know about. Some of them were new to us, but they all solidified the business relationship between Lorenzo and Ricardo.

“Wait, go back to that one,” I said, reading over her shoulder. She clicked back to the document, opening it again. “That’s for an apartment complex in Naples, isn’t it?” I asked her.

She read through it again. “Yes, why?”

“Armando talked to me about this project. He wanted me to go in on it with him, but I wasn’t interested at the time. It was a smaller project than I was looking for when he came to me with it,” I said.

“Looks like he replaced you then,” she said. “Ricardo and Lorenzo are both listed as owners of the project, but I haven’t seen Armando’s name.”

“What if he was trying to get you on the project so you’d be tied to Lorenzo and Ricardo?” Stephen asked. Ivan walked back into the penthouse after escorting the acupuncturist back to the lobby.

“Who did what now?” he asked, taking his place back on the couch with his computer.

“The journalist responded already. You were right. He didn’t like it that we said we knew everything he knew and he proved it. He sent over several documents, one of which is a project that Armando pitched to Adrik previously, but Adrik turned down. But Armando’s name isn’t on this project according to this guy’s records,” Sephie said.

“That’s shady,” Ivan said. “What else does that guy know about?”

“So far, just that Ricardo and Lorenzo have been in business for quite some time,” I said. “I’m starting to wonder why my father banished him instead of just having him killed.”

“It does make you wonder, as Lorenzo didn’t seem like he ever went away after he was banished,” Sephie said. “He just rebuilt his empire elsewhere. Without supervision.”

Sephie ended up sleeping on me for a few hours that afternoon. I could tell she was sleeping better here than she was at the hospital. There was a definite peaceful feeling to her when she fell asleep at the penthouse versus when she was still at the hospital. She was constantly on guard at the hospital.

We continued looking for information while she slept. So far, we’d found that Armando wasn’t at all who he’d always said he was. We’d also found proof that Ricardo and Lorenzo had been in business together for many years and had brought Armando in on quite a few deals over the years, as well as Giana’s father. Sephie replied to the journalist, telling him that we knew everything but one deal and he was going to have to do better if he wanted to impress us. I think having to type that out one-handed is what wore her out, to be honest. It was painstaking for her.

The guys started to get hungry, so Viktor ordered food before we went downstairs to have a talk with Armando. I know Sephie was curious about Dario, too, but I was planning on letting that one wait a day or two. At least until she felt a little better. I didn’t need her for Armando. I did for Dario.

Frankly, I didn’t want her to ever have to see Armando’s face again. I would make sure she never saw him in person. But I wanted to see what information I could get from him first.

When Viktor went down to grab the food, I tried to gently wake Sephie up. This time I held onto her as I woke her up so she wouldn’t try to turn toward me as she was fighting waking up. She started to stir and I felt her hand slide over my arms, finding one of my hands. “Thank you for saving me from myself,” she said, leaning her head all the way back so she could look up at me.

Andrei and Misha stood up to help her get up. “Come on, spider monkey. It’s been hours since you ate last. You were just starting to be less cranky. Let’s not mess that up,” Andrei said, offering her his arm so she could pull herself up.

As we ate, Sephie asked, “are you going to talk to Armando?” I nodded. “What about Dario?”

“He can wait a day or two until you’re feeling better. I don’t want you to ever have to see Armando again, but I need you for Dario,” I said. “You got him to talk more than he would have if you hadn’t been there. I think he feels more comfortable around you.”

“It’s because I don’t look like I want to kill him right out of the gate,” she said, grinning at me.

“Maybe, but you’ve got the demon eyes now. He had to have noticed when we talked to him last. It was obvious,” Stephen said.

“He might’ve noticed, but he probably doesn’t believe his own eyes. People will talk themselves out of quite a bit if they can’t explain it. Just ask the nurse that thinks Sephie is a witch now,” I said.

Sephie grabbed her ribs, but she let herself laugh. The guys all looked at her, waiting for an explanation. She looked at Ivan, her beautiful smile still making the room brighter. “Apparently we’re local celebrities at the hospital,” she said.

“How so?” Ivan asked, his eyebrow raised.

“One of the nurses that came in the middle of the night asked me if I was the girl that stopped the man from killing everyone in the ER. She said the entire hospital had heard about it and there’s rumors going around as to how I stopped you, but nobody can prove anything. They think the most likely explanation is that you were on some new drug that they didn’t know about yet,” she said. Ivan just chuckled and shook his head.

“What did you tell her, gazelle? It’s not like it’s easy to explain to anyone outside this room,” Misha said.