

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 376

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Adrik

I woke the next morning before Sephie. I fully expected her to stay asleep. She was so tired last night, even after she slept most of the afternoon, that she fell asleep in under two minutes. She was laying across my chest in her favorite spot, her fingers lightly playing on my chest. I ran my hand through her curls, causing her to snuggle into me more. I continued to run my hand over her body, loving the quiet moments I got with her.

“Good morning,” she said quietly, without moving.

“I didn’t expect you to wake up with me this morning. You can go back to sleep, love. I know you’re exhausted,” I said, my fingers playing with her curls.

“I feel bad sleeping when your father is here. Feels tude,” she said, finally picking her head up and looking at me.

“He won’t care, Sephie. He’s not the boss of you,” I said, grinning at her.

Her smile stretched across her face. “Somehow I don’t think he’s going to stay in the city for too long. He’s very grumpy about having to meet with people he hasn’t seen in years. I think there’s a reason he hasn’t seen them in years, but they clearly can’t take the hint.”

“He’s still considerably less grumpy than I’ve ever seen him before, since he met you,” I said.

“It’s because I know he’s a cheeseball and he’s trying to be extra nice so I don’t tell everyone else he’s a cheeseball,” she said, climbing over me to get out of bed.

“Have you called him that yet?”

“No, not yet. I haven’t found the right moment yet, but I will. I’m looking forward to it,” she said, looking back at me grinning ear-to-ear as she walked in the bathroom. “What’s your schedule like today?” she called from the bathroom.

“Light. I have a few meetings, but they should be short. Neal is the last meeting. We’re finishing up removing Armando and Ricardo from the building project. He’ll be happy to see you, if you want to stop by,” I said.

“That might work out. I forgot to tell you that Mr. Turner wants me to come see him. He whispered it to me yesterday when I hugged him. He very rarely asks me to come see him, so I know he has something he needs to tell me. He always works the early shift, so he’ll be home by early afternoon, she said, walking out of the bathroom as she was putting her hair up on top of her head. My breath caught as I watched her walking around in nothing but my shirt, her hair messy from the night before. She caught me staring at her, still in bed. She walked back to me, climbing on top of me. She hadn’t put her contacts in yet, so her eyes changed to blue right away, making me smile.

“What? You’re beautiful in the mornings,” I said as she was silently giving me a hard time for staring at her.

She gave me her heart-stopping smile as she held my face in both her hands. She leaned in and kissed me sweetly. “I love you, you know.”

The few meetings I had went by quickly. I was looking forward to the meeting with Neal at the end of the day. I was anxious to get Armando and Ricardo off the building project so it could continue to move forward. I didn’t need either one of them to make the project happen. I brought Armando on as a courtesy. At the time, I still believed he was loyal to me and was going to reward him for it. Once I found out his loyalty was in question, I had them start the process of removing him from the project.

That process was going to be finalized today. Neal was bringing the paperwork to the office for me to look over and sign. What Sephie didn’t realize yet was that I replaced Armando with her on the project. I had discussed it with Neal first, as he was a close business associate that I’d been partnering with for years. He was very happy with that idea. “She’s got more business sense in her little finger than Armando does in his entire body. I’ve never met someone so successful and yet so dumb in my entire life. I don’t understand how he’s stayed in business this long. But she’s clearly just getting started,” Neal had said when I brought it up to him. “If we bring her on for no other reason than her marketing and persuasion skills, it’ll be worth it. He laughed. “She has a unique way with words.”

Neal didn’t know why I wanted Armando and Ricardo off the project, but he also knew well enough to not ask. He did an excellent job of keeping the

legal businesses and the illegal ones separate. He’d made a significant amount of money with me over the years, so he never said a word about the darker side of my business dealings. Even still, he seemed relieved to not be working with Armando any longer.

He walked into my office promptly at 4. We ran through the paperwork, discussing a few changes. “There are no traces of Armando or Ricardo on any of the documents for this project any longer. Sephie is also now a partner on the project, as you requested. I just need her signature on the few places that are marked in red. Once that’s complete, it’ll be official. We’re breaking ground on the first of next month. We’ve still got a few contractors to find and hire, but there’s time to do so before they’re needed,” Neal said.

“I have a guy. He does great work. He’s only got a small crew though, but he’s very dependable. I’ll send you his information. You won’t be disappointed if you use him,” I said.

Neal nodded. “That’ll save me a huge amount of time trying to find someone else.”

We were discussing a few more random details on the project, when Sephie walked into the office, followed by Ivan and Andrei. Neal stood to greet her, extending his hand to her. “Sephie, it’s good to see you again. How have you been?”

“Hi, Neal. I’m good. You?” she said, taking his hand.

“I’m good. I need your signature while you’re here. Then we can get this paperwork filed and official by the end of the day today. That’ll make me very happy,” he said.

Sephie looked at me, surprised. “Um, why do you need my signature on anything?”

Neal looked to me, surprised. He wasn’t aware that I hadn’t told her yet. I smirked at him. “You’re replacing Armando and Ricardo on the building project,” I said, enjoying the look of surprise on her face.

“Um, why am I replacing them? I don’t know anything about business!”

“That’s where you’re wrong, Sephie. You know more than you give yourself credit for. You’re the reason we have all the restaurant space leased out before we’ve even broken ground on the project. I’m pretty sure if we put you in charge of the marketing for the office space and apartments, those numbers would also jump to 100%,” Neal said.

“But…” she was too stunned to be able to argue. She was cute when she was speechless. I just smiled, holding a pen up for her as Neal flipped through the paperwork finding the places she needed to sign.

“No buts. Just sign,” I said, winking at her.

She squinted her eyes at me, but walked over and took the pen from me. Neal pointed out each section she needed to sign. They were done in a matter of minutes and the paperwork was finally official. My plan to completely erase Armando from history was one step closer to completion.