

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 383

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Adrik

“Have you ever had someone feel different to you from the beginning of a conversation to the end?” I asked Vitaliy.

He nodded. “It happens more than you’d think. People make decisions in haste and their entire existence changes in the course of a few minutes. Why? Did it happen to you already?” I nodded. He cursed under his breath. “It took me years to get that detailed. It took you 24 hours of finding out

you were like me.”

I nodded toward Sephie. “I have a feeling she has something to do with it. Something changed in the course of a meeting tonight. Because I can feel what she feels, I felt the shift when she picked up on it. It made me pay closer attention. I didn’t feel anything at the beginning of the meeting, but I definitely did at the end.”

“Did you feel what he feels, *sladkaya*?” Vitaliy asked Sephie.

“No, I didn’t feel anything, but I noticed he tensed slightly when he shook his hand. He doesn’t do that. Ever,” she said. “Both Andrei and I picked up on the change in him during the meeting, but neither one of us could get a definite answer on what caused it. We’re going to see if Misha can find the answer after dinner. Andrei works best on a full stomach,” she said, winking at him. He grinned at her as he took another bite of food,

“You can do that?” Vitaliy asked Misha.

Misha just shrugged his shoulders. “We’ve never gone looking for the answer to that specific of a question before. We’ve only looked for people and then pieced together the information we can see when we find them, but when I use both Sephie and Andrei, I can hear conversations. I doubt this guy will be speaking Spanish, so we should be able to understand his conversations.”

“Who is this guy?**”

“Henry, the police commissioner. We found out from Sephie’s old neighbor that the mayor wants Henry out, but Henry is also working on a plan with the police chiefs to get the mayor out. Only, two police chiefs met with the mayor three days after they met with Henry. One is from Armando’s area, the other is from Niko’s area. We’ve been working on solid proof that the mayor is in either Sal or Ricardo’s pocket,” Ivan said.

“But we also think Henry decided that he can run the city. Sephie picked up on something the first time we met with him. He was very uncomfortable when Boss told him he was getting rid of all the bosses. She said she thought it was because he was worried Boss would become a tyrant. We think he changed his mind tonight and now he wants to be the tyrant,” Stephen said.

“We’re hoping Misha can confirm that,” I said.

Vitaliy looked stunned for a moment, then looked at Sephie. “How did you know this before?”

“I saw the subtle change in his demeanor when Adrik told him he was getting rid of the bosses. I don’t go fishing through people’s heads unless I have a reason. When I saw his demeanor change, I took a peek. He was going through possibilities of how to rein in Adrik once he was in power. It was almost comical what he was thinking about. I imagine it’s what the city would look like if Sal or Lorenzo had taken over, but not Adrik,” she said.

“Was he thinking specifically about Sal or Lorenzo? Can you remember, Seph?” Stephen asked.

She thought for a few minutes, but ultimately shook her head no. “That was during my Sleeping Beauty era. I don’t remember as much as I should,” she said. “Why? What are you thinking?”

“If that’s where his mind went when thinking about Boss having power, then that’s a good indication that he knows Sal or Lorenzo better than he knows Boss. Everyone knows the peace Boss brought to the city. The entire population is richer because of him. No offense, Vitaliy, but the city has prospered since he took over. It doesn’t make sense that Henry would be worried about Adrik being in power. He doesn’t want the city to continue to prosper? He has been making more money than he’s ever made before? That doesn’t make sense. Unless he knows Sal or Lorenzo or even one of the other bosses better than Boss and knows the kind of tyrant they actually would be,” Stephen said.

“What are your plans for this Henry?” Vitaliy asked.

“We were going to help him defeat the mayor in the next election, but that might be off the table depending on what Misha can find. He has

everything we have on Ricardo, but he can also use that to come after Boss instead, should he choose to. We have the same guy that gave us all the information on Ricardo looking for something on the mayor, we just haven’t heard back from him yet,” Ivan said.

As he said that, Viktor pulled his phone out of his pocket. He looked at it for a few seconds, obviously reading something, then said, “we did hear back from him. He’s got something, but he said it’s not enough. He said he’s looking for more and will get back to me as soon as possible.”

It was always hard to read my father, but he clearly looked proud as he listened to us tell him everything we knew. More so on how we knew it. He looked to me, after listening to everyone and said, “your mother was right. You’re going to realize everything I couldn’t and more.” He was thoughtful for a moment, then asked, “this information you have on Ricardo, what is it?”

“It frames him as being the one running the city behind the scenes. It makes him look like he’s Boss. The guy that got us the information is very thorough, just not thorough enough to find Boss. Or you,” Viktor said. “Originally, we handed it over to Henry, thinking the mayor was a stand-up guy since he’s the one that appointed Henry, but Sephie caught on that the mayor was questionable during that meeting too. Henry said he can’t prove it, but he’s been looking into the mayor for a while now. We started helping him, feeding him information that we could find, but now that’s compromised because he shared it with the police chiefs that are loyal to the mayor, apparently.”

“And what of the information on Ricardo? Did he share that too?” Vitaliy asked.

“No. Or at least he said he hasn’t. We can’t be sure,” Ivan said.

Vitaliy thought for a few minutes. He looked at Aleksei, saying “we need to meet with Battista again before he leaves.” Aleksei simply nodded, then walked away as he pulled his phone out of his pocket. Vitaliy looked back at me. “Battista likes politics. He knows the right people in da mn near every city in the world. Sephie impressed him: at the first meeting. He will gladly help you find all the information you never knew you needed on the mayor.”

“I thought you said his English was shi t?” Sephie asked.

Vitaliy grinned at her. “It is shi t, but he still speaks it when he has to. Knowing he doesn’t have to with you was incentive for him to make extra effort. He can be fickle. After your performance at lunch, he’ll bend over backwards to help you. Everything happens the way it’s supposed to, *sladkaya*. Sometimes you have to trust the process,” he said, winking at her.

“You’re like a really grumpy evil genius,” she said quietly, her eyes slightly wide in appreciation at his scheming.

Vitaliy looked at her, not knowing whether to laugh along with everyone else or be mad at her. In the end, he couldn’t contain his laughter and ended up laughing along with everyone else, as she walked to him, sliding her arm around his shoulders. I watched my father laugh harder than I’d ever seen him laugh and relish in the affection he got from her as a result of doing so.

She was still showing everyone around her the best parts of themselves.