

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

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Adrik

“We’re still working on the plan, to be completely honest. We have people watching Ricardo in Italy. We’ve also gotten word that Niko and Vito are planning on coming back to the city. Since they’ve all been gone, the underbosses have stopped enforcing taxes. The people pushed back enough and the underbosses heard what happened to Lorenzo, Massimo, and Anthony. We think the cash flow is drying up, which is why they’re planning on coming back to the city,” I said.

“And what will happen when they come back? If you grab them, then it might mean you ruin your chance at getting Ricardo,” Trino said. His eyebrows were furrowed. He was thinking deeply on this matter.

“That’s also what we think, which is why we haven’t made a solid plan yet. We’ve been keeping tabs on Martin, but I think you know more about him than we do. Whatever we decide, it all needs to happen quickly. Martin can’t get word that Ricardo has been taken care of and vice versa,” I said.

We ordered dinner and kept talking for several more hours. To her credit, Emilia actually had a few good ideas along the way. She didn’t seem intimidated by the subject of the conversation and the longer she spent with us, the more relaxed she became. Even after finding out everything about us. Trino noticed. It was evident he fell a little more in love with her throughout the evening.

“Watching Trine and Emilia makes me feel like I need to apologize to everyone. We really are disgusting,” I told everyone silently.

Sephie laughed, making the others look at her. She took a page from Misha’s book and said, “remember when Trino used to beg me to come to Colombia to help him find a girlfriend? Turns out he needed to come here instead. Trino smiled broadly at her.

“Nice save, princess.”

After a few more minutes, the conversation turned back to the matter at hand. Stephen, who had been quiet for most of the evening, asked, “what are you thinking about the Mexicans once Martin is taken care of? Is that going to be enough to make them stop? There’s still the potential for war with them, I think.”

“Once I’m back in power, they’ll heel if they know what’s good for them. The messages I sent when I took over are still fresh for most of them. They’re only doing this now because they have the backing of Sal and the other bosses. That’s the only reason they’re bold enough to move against me. They know Jefe supports me, so they know if they want to keep their lives, they’ll do the same,” Trino said.

Stephen seemed satisfied with his answer, but both Sephie and I knew he was still mulling over something in his head. Misha, too. There was more to that question, but since he didn’t continue the conversation, I let it drop as well.

“What about Dario? What happened to him?” Trino asked.

“He’s still here. I’ve kept him well hidden. When I agreed to let him go, it was before most of this had happened. Sephie and Misha were the only ones that had any extra knowledge about people. We’re going to talk to him again to make sure we didn’t miss anything. As long as he checks out, he can still go free at the end of this,” I said.

“You think he was lying?” Trino asked.

“Not necessarily. But I want to make sure we didn’t miss anything. Now that we know what we’re dealing with on a larger scale, the likelihood that he was lying is much higher. Demons are tricky. That’s why it took us so long to pick up on Armando. His demon was savvy enough that it knew to step back anytime he was around Sephie,” I said.

“That’s why Armando appeared to be a moron, for the record. He had no recollection of anything that happened when his demon was running the

show,” Ivan said.

Trino inhaled deeply. “That makes so much more sense. I was really wondering how someone as wealthy as him could be that fucking stupid. Does Giana know about all this? I wonder if she ever saw the differences in him.”

“If she did, we don’t know about it. He got her hooked on coke, so it’s possible she was just high as fuck for most of the time while she was with him,” Sephie said.

Emilia turned to look at Trino, surprise evident on her face. She said something to Trino in Spanish; her tone was deadly. He raised his eyebrows, trying not to laugh at her as the rest of his group snickered.

“She just told him she’d kill him if he ever did that to her, Sephie told us. “I picked up a few words and pieced it together. I have to say, I like her.”

Trino responded in Spanish, pulling her closer to him. He was clearly trying to reassure her that he would never do such a thing. Trino enjoyed partying, but he was never known to partake in his own product. The most I’d ever seen him do was have drinks while he was at a club. I had a feeling even that would calm down if he stayed serious about Emilia.

“Disgusting,” Ivan said, laughing in his head.

“In the most adorable way possible.” Sephie added. “Is it wrong that I find her threatening his life really endearing?”

The rest of us couldn’t help but laugh quietly. The others were beginning to suspect that there was some kind of communication they were missing out on. We might’ve left that part out when we told Trino everything. It was the only detail we kept back.

We were still deep in discussion, even as it was approaching midnight. I was thankful for the extra sleep Sephie and I had gotten over the weekend. It was coming in handy now.

“Gus, Oscar, what are the people in the city saying now? Do you know?” Sephie asked.

“They’re happy the bosses are gone, from what we can tell,” Gus said, looking to Oscar to see if he agreed.

Oscar nodded in agreement. “It got dicey with a few of the underbosses right after Sal left with the other two bosses. I’m sure that’s also a reason they stopped collecting taxes. One of them almost died because the people in that part of town came together and ambushed him and his guys. They’re much happier now that things are quiet.”

“They know Jefe was the reason that the brawn operation got shut down and they know he’s the reason the other bosses have run. They fully support him, from everything we’ve heard,” Gus said.

“We’re close to handing over the doctor that created brawn to the police. The DA came across some evidence that clearly shows Sal paid him to create brawn in the first place. He thinks he can prosecute him. There are a few other things that need to happen at the same time, but it will all benefit the people and make them happy with the mayor,” I said.

“It’s important to keep the people happy. I relied heavily on them when I took over. I have a feeling I’ll rely heavily on them when I go back to take care of Martin.” Trino said.

“You’ll have our help as well,” I said. Trino sighed. It was obvious the betrayal by Martin was still weighing heavily on him.

“Don’t worry. Trino. It’s all going to work out eventually. It’s just going to be messy first,” Sephie said, grinning at him.