

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 17

Chapter Seventeen

Adrik

While Persephone was having a private conversation with her neighbor, I decided to light a cigarette. Inhaling deeply, my mind racing in circles, wondering why we couldn't get reliable information on Anthony's whereabouts. There was no way that asshat of a child could get the loyalty of this much of the city. He had to have help, which meant I had dissenters in my ranks. Even more than the situation with Anthony, that bothered me.

When I took over the business from my father, I tried to be fair and reasonable in every one of my decisions. My father was known for being ruthless, and maybe greedier than he should've been. No one ever called him on it on account of his reputation. I wanted to take the business in a different direction, where we weren't constantly at war with the people of the city, or the police. It was exhausting. Too many good people died because of my father's rule. I was tired of death on a daily basis.

Gradually, I mended the relationships with the people of the city. We started giving back to the people, supporting their causes, giving money for little leagues, building parks. With a little time, the people of the city lost their fear of my organization. They started coming to us for business deals, for help with matters that the city wouldn't help with. My empire has grown exponentially as a result, but the people of the city are safe. They're protected. Gone are the days when kids couldn't play outside for fear of stray bullets.

I was proud of what I had done. The police worked with us, instead of against us. Sure, they required their cut of the illegal side of the business, but that's to be expected. They knew what we were doing in the dark, but because we had helped build the city up so much, they said nothing about it. This was how you conducted business successfully.

Now, clearly, I had at least one boss, likely more, that had openly declared war on me. What was his end game? It can't be all to do with Sephie. I would still end his life for harming her, but there had to be more to his play. What was he after? Power?

Territory? Did he know that I found out about his recent venture into human trafficking?

That was a lucrative business, but one that I absolutely would not allow. It was disgusting. More so than the drugs and the gambling. I forbid it and every other boss in the city knew it. I'll give Anthony credit, he had serious cojones for going against my direct order. It would not serve him well in the end, but he had chutzpah.

As I took another drag from my cigarette, my phone rang. Looking at it, I recognized the number and answered right away. It was my spy that I kept at the private airport just outside the city. I wanted to know where Anthony was going should he try to leave the city.

"Hey boss, so I have good news and I have bad news."

"Good news first."

"Anthony has chartered a flight for middle of the week. He's on the passenger manifest, along with his four closest associates."

"And the bad news?"

"There's no flight path logged yet. They have time to log it, granted, but I have a feeling that they're going to take off without logging it to try and give us the slip."

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My jaw clenched as I felt the temper I had inherited from my father threatening to rise up to the surface. I turned to see Sephie stepping out of Ms. Jackson's apartment. I put out what was left of my cigarette and extended my arm to her. She was the key to keeping my temper under control right now. So help me, every single time she was near me, I felt completely calm and in control. From the first moment I looked at her unabashedly staring at me in the restaurant, I felt complete calm and peace when she was near. I don't understand how, but I know I will do whatever I need to do to protect that feeling.

As soon as she sees my outstretched arm, she walks quickly to my side. She fits perfectly next to me. I've never been with a woman as tall as her and I didn't realize what I've been missing. She's still shorter than I am, but I don't have to break my back bending over to kiss her. She instantly wraps her arms around me and rests her head against my shoulder. I know I will never tire of feeling her against me. I placed a kiss on the top of her head and went back to my conversation.

"Can you stop the plane from taking off without a flight path logged?"

"Technically, no. They can log a path while they're in the air"

"I'm not asking for the legal method here."

"We can ground the plane by force, but it won't be pretty, and I can't guarantee that everyone on the plane won't be dead at the end of it."

My frustration with this situation got the best of me. I raised my voice enough to drive my point home. "I pay you for guarantees. If they're not scheduled to leave until the middle of the week then you have three days to fucking figure something out. If you don't figure out how to both keep him from leaving, as well as keep him alive in the process, then it will be your life that is lost."

I ended the call and put my phone back in my pocket. I looked down to see Sephie peeking up at me. "I'm sorry, solnishko. Business."

Her beautiful smile stretched across her face, "No need to apologize. It wasn't my life you were threatening just then."

I inhaled sharply. I thought she didn't understand Russian? She could gather I was threatening someone just from the tone of my voice? She was truly remarkable. I pulled her in front of me, taking in how stunning she was in the afternoon sunlight. "I will never tire of your beautiful smile," I said. I watched the way the sunlight brought out new shades of red and auburn. Twirling a curl between my fingers, I added "nor your amazing hair." My hands roamed over her back, wanting to feel her soft skin underneath her shirt, but not wanting to be too forward. I settled for holding her close and told her, "you look extra beautiful today."

She laughed. Her smile growing wider, "it's all the eye candy I'm surrounded by. It's beauty by default."

Whatever it was, I would gladly take it.