

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 172

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Two

Sephie

He thought for a moment. “A guy named Brian Tucker, if I’m not mistaken. Why? What’s wrong?” he asked.

Adrik looked at him seriously, saying, “Sal’s plan. It’s worse than we originally thought. He got to your water guy and he’s going to try to put the brawn into your water supply. He knew he wouldn’t be able to get to your dealers without you finding out, but he got to Brian somehow.”

“He’s going to do what??” Armando asked, running his hand through his hair.

Ivan said, “this is the chaos they’re trying to create to give cover for Anthony and Lorenzo to come back to the city. In every other area of the city, he’s going through the dealers, replacing their normal supply with his new formulation of brawn. He couldn’t do that in your area of the city, without you finding out, so he went through Brian. How well do you know Brian?”

“Not that well, honestly. I hardly have reason to speak to him. I know I have a file on him at my house. I keep a file on all the city’s employees in my area at the house. I’m not sure I have it with me, though.” He looked to Giana like he was silently asking if she knew whether they had the information with them or not. She looked at him, then at all of us, somewhat bewildered.

Ivan, noticing her fear, did what he does best, saying, “that information is important. We need it as soon as possible.” He said it with an edge to his voice that was clearly meant to intimidate Giana.

She looked like she didn’t know what to say for a moment, but then she looked at Armando and squared her shoulders. “I’ll go check my computer. If we have it, it’s there. I’ll be right back,” she said as she quickly left the penthouse.

I caught Ivan’s eye, raising my eyebrow at him, knowing she had just passed that test. He just smirked at me, winking. Mike, who I was discovering was quite observant of me, noticed our exchange. He gave me a curious look, but said nothing.

“Did Andy have an idea of when they’re going to make this happen?” Armando asked. “If we don’t have the info with us, we can go to the house tonight to get it.”

Viktor shook his head. “No, he’s been kept mostly in the dark on what’s happening because Sal was already suspicious. He happened on the warehouse where they’re making the brawn somewhat by accident. He started asking questions after, to try and get as much information as possible and that’s when Sal really got suspicious of him. That’s when he called us. I’m not sure how much Sal thinks he knows, but he knows Andy knows enough to screw up his plans.”

We were all silent for a moment. “What happens if we can’t find Brian?” I asked no one in particular. They all thought about the question, but nobody could come up with an answer. We sat in silence for a few more minutes, which was impressive given that Armando was with us. “Why not expose Sal’s plan to the people of the city? Not just the people in Mando’s area, but the entire city. Let them know what’s coming, so they can be prepared. Chaos isn’t as chaotic when it’s expected,” I said, thinking out loud. “Like Trino said, the popular vote goes a long way. If you can expose Sal and the other bosses for what they’re trying to unleash, then the people can help us. It’s not as much of an insurmountable situation when we have the entire city against the few people that are with Sal.”

“Goddammit I love your brain,” Ivan said. “That could work. Hold a press conference outlining all of Sal’s plans, asking the community’s help in trying to find him. Same for Anthony and Lorenzo, if they’ve come back. Hell, same for the other bosses too. Might as well round them all up at once and be done with it.”

“I agree with rounding them all up at once, but I’m not sure I want the entire city to know I’m rounding them up, because I’m going to put a bullet in each of their heads,” Adrik said. I could see the anger oozing out of him at this point. He stood up, to take his plate to the sink and remained standing. I got up as well and walked to him, tucking myself in his side, knowing I could keep him calm. He immediately started to run his hand lightly up and down my back.

“Okay, so don’t reveal who’s behind the plan, but you can still reveal the plan, right? Like warn everyone?” I asked, looking up at him.

He took a deep breath, pulling me into him. I rested my head on his shoulder, trying to at least help to keep him calm so he could think clearly. “I think that’s a good last resort plan of action. I would still prefer to take care of this while the public is still as blissfully unaware as possible. I’ve worked hard to keep the dealings of my organization out of the public eye. I would like to keep it that way, if possible.”

Giana walked back into the kitchen. She still looked frightened, but she had a few printed pages with her. She handed them to Armando, who immediately began reading them. “This is all I have on Brian Tucker in my computer. I haven’t seen the file you have at your house, so I don’t know if that’s everything you have on him or not.”

Armando flipped through the few pages quickly. He looked to Mike as he said, “this isn’t nearly everything. It’s just the most basic information on him. I have much more on him at the house. We’re going to need to go get it.”

Mike nodded, but then suggested that Armando stay at the penthouse and send them instead. “They’re likely watching the building now, after we grabbed Andy. They might take advantage of you leaving tonight.”

“I appreciate the thought, but no one else can get into my safe at my house. It requires my fingerprint as well as my retinal scan,” Armando said.

“Holy Mission Impossible, Batman,” I said, which caused everyone to stop for a moment and laugh. I couldn’t help but enjoy the moment’s break as well. I felt Adrik pull me in front of him, holding me close to him. “I fucking love you,” he said quietly, as he pressed his lips to mine.

Once the moment was over, Adrik, looking serious again, said to Armando, “go get that file. I’m going to call Trino. If they’ve been working on the dealers, he should’ve known. Many of those dealers belong to him, so either they know which dealers are his, or they aren’t working on as big of a scale as we’re thinking.”

Team America, Armando, and Giana promptly left the penthouse. The guys started to help me collect the dishes from around the kitchen. “We should get an actual table at some point. Especially if Team America is going to come over regularly,” I said, thinking out loud.

Misha, his wide smile across his face, said, “you’re becoming very domestic, gazelle. Are you nesting? Isn’t that what pregnant women do?”

I tried to give him my best smile, saying, “that is what pregnant women do, but I will never be a pregnant woman, so there’s that.” I felt Adrik’s arms around me, pulling me to him. Misha knew immediately that he had unknowingly said something he shouldn’t have. His smile faded quickly, looking nothing but apologetic. I said to Adrik as he held me tightly, “it’s okay. I’m okay. They’re going to find out eventually.”

Before I could tell them the story, Ivan said, “the reason Sephie hates doctors as much as me is that we both had things done to us against our will by doctors.”

“Sephie, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to…” Misha said, trying to smooth things over.

I genuinely smiled at him. “It’s okay, my adorable Russian guardian. I can’t be mad at you for something you didn’t know. Mark it down as another reason I’m not completely normal, I guess.”

Viktor looked at me. I could see the tears in his eyes, as he said, “I hate to be relieved about this, Sephie, but I am. My wife was pregnant when she was killed because of me. Ever since you came into our lives, I’ve been terrified of letting that happen again.