

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 229

Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Nine

Adrik

We wrapped up the meeting with Gus, Smith, DJ, and Chen. They gave us all the information we had on the brawn operations they'd found, as well as the surveillance they'd already put in place. Gus and DJ were smart men. They would prove to be useful. Chen, too.

Smith left the meeting first, which was advantageous. Stephen had a team grab him a couple blocks from the apartment building and take him to a safe house. He would stay there, under constant guard until this was all over. I agreed with Sephie that we wouldn't be able to trust him. Before Sephie, I would've just killed him and called it a day. She was right though, it likely wasn't his fault he was caught up in everything if he'd been forced to deal. Now, he would sit this one out and get a second chance once it was over. Or he would get shot if he was dumb enough to try and escape.

Before we left the apartment, I informed the other three what we had decided on Smith. I needed them to trust me, so I made extra effort to be honest with them. It's what had made my relationship so strong with Trino in the beginning. I was as transparent as possible with him and he'd stayed loyal to me, even through the other bosses' attempts to undermine me.

"Smith will no longer be a part of this," I said. Chen's jaw dropped. He looked to Sephie immediately, shocked.

"Please tell me you knew him before too and he wasn't to be trusted either," Chen said.

She laughed quietly. "No, Chen. He's being held until this is over. I don't trust him, but if he's being forced to deal by Massimo, it's not necessarily his fault. He'll go free once this is all over with.

Chen audibly exhaled. Gus laughed at Chen, shaking his head. "You would never last in Colombia, man."

"Which is exactly why I do not live in Colombia," Chen said.

Gus looked to me, a serious look on his face. "I appreciate your discretion, sir. I've had a hard time trusting him since this started. He commands a certain respect from a small group of dealers, but I think it's because they're afraid of him. The rest of us want to be here. I never got the same feeling from him. I think it's better if he's not running anything through this."

"The dealers are very loyal to Gus, sir," DJ said. "He's well-known in his area of the city, too. He's got a good rep with the people."

"I would expect nothing less from one of Trino's guys," I said. Gus simply nodded to me. "I'll be frank with you all. This is likely going to get messy. Very messy. But once the other bosses are taken care of, I'm going to need people I can trust throughout the city. I'm very generous to people who are loyal to me." They all nodded in understanding. "We're going to check on everything you've given us tonight, to see what plans we can come up with. We'll be in touch soon after. If anything changes on your end, let us know. Chen knows how to get in touch with me."

They all shook my hand once more, then took their leave. Once we were alone in the apartment, I looked at Sephie to make sure she didn't have more insight.

"I think those three are going to prove to be very valuable throughout this, as well as after everything calms down. I get the same feeling from them that I did about Trino. Good guys, trying to make good come from not so good activities. It would not surprise me one bit if Gus and DJ had their own businesses they were using the dealing to fund, just like Chen is," she said.

"Does anyone else find it weird that this whole time we've been told it was the bosses that stopped the first wave of brawn years ago, but it was really the dealers?" Andrei asked as we were walking to the elevators in the parking garage.

"I've been wondering about that this whole time. Maybe they were trying to keep me from finding out that Sal is the one that

had it created. The story the whole time has been that the dealers were the ones making it and selling it." I said

"Maybe it was to protect the doctor that made it, so Sal could keep using him," Ivan said.

We heard Stephen's SUV pull into the garage as we waited for the elevator, so we all stood waiting for him to catch up to us outside the elevator. As he walked toward us, Sephie met him halfway. I knew she was still struggling with what had happened earlier that night. Once again something from her past resurfaced, forcing her to face it

He set his bag down on the concrete, opening his arms to her as she got closer to him. She ran the last few steps to him, her arms wrapping around his neck. He held onto her tightly. Everyone still had their earpieces in, so we could hear their

conversation.

"Thank you, Stephen. You're my favorite vampire," she said as he held her.

"Seph, you don't have to be scared of your past anymore. Those people they can't hurt you ever again. We'll make sure of that. You survived it once completely on your own, but you have us now. We will never let another bad thing happen to you," he said.

She was quiet for a moment. I'm positive she was fighting back tears. Finally, she sighed, saying, "squishiest vampire ever." We heard him laugh as he picked her up and hugged her tighter for a moment.

It made me happy to see them so close. It was a long time coming. I had my doubts in the beginning of whether Stephen would ever warm up to her, but it was evident that he loved her just as much as the other guys. Almost as much as me

It was quite late when we finally made it to the penthouse by ourselves. Sephie was sitting on the counter in the bathroom, brushing her teeth. She had taken my shirt almost immediately when we got to the bedroom. I had to admit to loving it when she demanded I hand over my shirt when we were finally alone. As much as I hated putting clothes on her instead of taking them off, I did enjoy taking my shirt off and putting it on her for the night.

"So, you know how you said you could feel my anger without having to look at me now?" I said. She looked at me curiously as she jumped down to rinse her mouth out. "I could feel your anger tonight when Smith got a little too short with me. I knew you were seething before you stepped beside me."

Her eyes went wide. "Was it like a living thing that you could feel around you?"

I thought for a moment. "That's a good way to put it. I didn't have a chance to glance at anyone else, but I'm sure it was visible on your face that you were pissed. Except I didn't see you or the guys. I was looking at Smith when I felt it. And then there's the matter of your eyes," I said, smirking at her.

"What are you talking about?" she asked, pulling me into the bedroom.

"It happened that day with Mike. It's the only other time I've seen it and I, uh, found myself completely turned on by it," I said, climbing into bed so she could lay across my chest. She climbed on top of me instead, her legs straddling me.

"Well now you have to tell me more," she said, a mischievous grin on her face.

I sat up more so I could look at her. "Your eyes go dark, solnishko. Like the green and blue rings disappear and the brown gets dark. Really dark that day with Mike. Not quite as dark tonight, but it was a noticeable change."

She thought for a moment, as her fingers lightly traced over my chest. "I remember you looking at me and being confused at what I saw." She laughed quietly. "I had forgotten about it until now."

"Yeah, uh, super hot," I said. I could feel my cheeks flushing. I wasn't sure she would want to hear how turned on I was in that moment. "I was glad I only caught a glance of it tonight. I didn't need to deal with that on top of everything else."

She put her hands on either side of my face, her gorgeous smile across her face. "I'll try to remember not to look at you the next time I get angry in front of other people," she said, giggling. She leaned down to kiss me, still laughing.

"You laugh, but I'm seriously considering pissing you off when we're alone just to see what happens," I said. She laughed harder, hiding her face against my shoulder. Her laughter was infectious. I found myself laughing along with her, but I was serious. I really had weighed my options on pissing her off just to see if I could make her eyes go dark again.

She wrapped her arms around my neck, pressing her body against mine. She was still laughing, which I loved. "I just love you so much, Adrik," she said, trying to contain her fits of laughter. I held her close, enjoying the pull in my chest that happened so frequently now when I thought about how much I loved her.