

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 245

## Chapter Two Hundred Forty-Five

Adrik

My business associates began leaving the conference room, leaving just a few, along with Armando. Sephie noticed Armando having an impassioned conversation with another associate, in Italian. I glanced at her and she immediately made herself look busy to get closer to them. I watched her get closer so she could hear, but she stayed out of sight of even Armando. The man he was talking to was more of an associate of Armando's than mine. This was the first project I'd worked with him on, so I didn't know him as well as the other men in the meeting. Armando trusted him though, so I allowed him to be brought on as an investor. He was a very wealthy man. Armando said his family had done business with him here as well as Italy.

It sounded like they were arguing, but Italians were a passionate lot, so what sounded like arguing might've just been normal, everyday conversation. It was the same for Russians. What sounded like us threatening your life was most likely completely benign. Sephie continued to listen to their conversation until they were finished. She had gathered up some papers and walked away from them, so as not to arouse suspicion when Armando and the other man left the conference room.

She walked back to me. She looked slightly tense. I went to ask her what was said and she simply shook her head. "Not here," she said in Russian. It must've been a serious conversation, then. That didn't make me happy. She must've felt my anger, because she placed her hand on my chest. "Not yet, either. It might be nothing." She smiled sweetly at me, then turned to walk toward Viktor, motioning for me to follow her.

"Viktor, can you make sure the guys come to the office once everyone is gone? And can you also make sure Armando stays away for a bit?" she asked him sweetly, still speaking Russian. I always had the impression that she thought of Viktor like a father. figure. He was the oldest of our little family, as he was a few years older than I was. She would tell the other guys what to do. She would even tell me what to do sometimes, but she always asked Viktor like she would a parental figure. It was always sweet to witness. He never denied her. None of us did. But you could see his heart melt every single time she went to him with a request.

"Of course, sestrichka. I'll have Chris and Keith distract him," Viktor responded.

"You're my favorite, Papa Bear," she said, grinning at him.

It took a few minutes for everyone to finish their conversations and leave the conference room. It took longer for them to leave the building, which meant Sephie and I had a few minutes alone in my office. While I had my own thoughts about how we could spend that time, I somehow managed to control myself.

As we waited for the guys to show up, I asked her about the conversation between Armando and his associate. She knew I didn't like surprises, so she told me what she'd overheard, taking her normal spot on the edge of my desk.

"I never caught the other man's name, but he was asking Armando about the Mexicans. He made it sound like Anthony and Lorenzo had reached a new deal with them. They still think they can bypass Trino, clearly. He also sounded like he was trying to talk Armando into switching sides, basically. That's what they were arguing about when we first heard them. Armando resisted at first, but by the end of the conversation, I couldn't tell if he was just agreeing with the guy to shut him up or if he was actually considering it. I couldn't see his face. I need to see a face to be able to get more information, but it's Armando, so I want to give him the benefit of the doubt. He doesn't like any kind of confrontation, so it's possible he was pretending to consider it just to be done with the conversation," she said. As she was talking, she had taken her heels off and stood to place them on the floor by my desk. When she stood up from bending over, I grabbed her and kissed her passionately. I felt her knees go weak, so I pulled her tighter against me, holding her up. I was almost desperate for her. My tongue forcing its way into her mouth, not giving her a chance to resist. She was momentarily surprised, but then I felt her match my passion. She knew that she could quiet my demons like no other and she was always willing to do so. My lungs finally began to protest the lack of oxygen and I had to stop.

As I caught my breath, I leaned my forehead against hers. "I need help controlling the chaos," I said.

She put one hand on my cheek, her eyes searching mine. "I think I can help. I have an idea," she said. The guys walked in, preventing her from saying more. They all had serious looks on their faces. Sephie rarely asked for all of them at once, so they knew this was important. They walked in and all took a seat. She kissed me gently once more, then walked to the door and closed it. The guys knew it was definitely serious then.

"That's not good," Misha said.

"It's potentially very bad, yes. Or it might be nothing. We don't know yet," she said as she walked back to me.

"Sephie overheard Armando talking to one of his associates after the meeting. They were speaking Italian, thinking that no one could overhear them, but Sephie got close enough to hear their conversation," I said.

"I couldn't see Armando's face though, and that's a big missing piece of whether this is potentially very bad or not bad at all,"

she said.

"What were they discussing?" Ivan asked. He was tense, just as they all were. Armando was already on thin ice with the guys because of Giana.

"I heard them talking about the Mexicans," she said. A couple of them cursed under their breath. "It sounded like Anthony and Lorenzo have struck a deal with the Mexicans, still trying to bypass Trino. I don't know the Mexicans, but they don't seem terribly smart. The other man, I don't know his name, was basically trying to convince Armando to switch sides. At first, he resisted, but by the end of the conversation, it sounded more like Mando was considering it." More cursing from the guys. "Before you get all murderly, this is where not being able to see his face comes in. We know Mando hates confrontation, so it's possible he was just pretending to agree with the guy to end the conversation. I want to give him the benefit of the doubt here, but I don't know," she said, crossing her arms.

"Are we going to wait to see if Armando comes to you with this one?" Viktor asked.

"I do want to see if he comes clean, but I'm not willing to give him very long to do it," I said. I pulled my phone from my pocket. "I think Trino needs to hear about this." I put my phone on speaker and leaned against my desk. Sephie moved next to me, doing the same.

"Jefe, que pasa?" Trino answered on the first ring.