

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 255

Chapter Two Hundred Fifty-Five

Sephie

“Technically, I was the insurance scam. Lots of villages burned trying to get rid of me. I have a strong dislike of fire because of it,” Stephen said, completely straight-faced. We all laughed loudly. I started laughing even harder when I saw the look of confusion on Keith’s face. He was just staring at Stephen, his mouth open in complete shock.

“I love how you just have a ‘strong dislike’ of the thing that could kill you,” I said, still laughing.

“If you can’t find inner peace in 900 years, are you even trying?” Andrei said, which caused another round of laughter from all of us. I was laughing so hard I was crying by the time I finally gained control of myself.

“Shit, I needed that,” I said. “Okay, back to serious matters. Seriously, focus people.” I was making myself want to laugh again. I got up and handed Viktor’s computer back to him. “Can you please find out if Armando is also in financial trouble like you did Giana’s family?” I asked. I always felt compelled to be extra sweet when it came to asking Viktor for anything. I think it was the look on his face every time I did. He practically melted every time I asked him for anything. He got busy looking up information as I returned to Adrik’s lap.

“So, let’s just say, for the sake of argument, that Armando is having financial difficulty. He blows up his own office building for the insurance money. Why would he depend on us to stop everyone from showing up to that building that morning? He was the one that set that meeting at his building, with all his people there. We were the ones that stopped people from dying,” Misha said.

“Well, when you say it like that, it makes no sense,” I said.

“Unless that was also the plan all along. If he didn’t show, but everyone else did...” Ivan said, trailing off.

“Assuming he hasn’t found a way to alter his records, Armando is doing fine financially,” Viktor said.

“Does he own that office building?” I asked. “I mean, I would assume so, but let’s check just for fun.”

Viktor started a new search as we all waited for the results. I leaned my head back, looking sideways at Adrik. “He hasn’t said anything about the discussion he had yesterday after the meeting?”

“Not a word,” he said. “He has until tomorrow to come clean before I confront him about it.”

“Sestrichka, you might be a genius,” Viktor said. He stood up, bringing me his computer. “Make sure I’m reading this correctly, but I think this says the owner of Armando’s office building is Giana’s father.” I looked at the screen, reading through everything listed. “You’re right, Viktor. He wasn’t the owner. That brings us back to insurance scam.”

“So, Giana’s own father tried to kill her?” Keith asked. “That’s some family drama.”

“Eh, maybe not. He likely knew she was habitually late. It’s also possible he knew Armando is habitually early. According to Giana’s story, the building exploded sometime between 8:00-8:15 that morning. Early enough that she wouldn’t be there. Late enough that he would,” I said. “But you are correct on the family drama.”

“This likely explains why Armando hired her to begin with. He likely feels guilty about the business deal and wanted to help her out by giving her a job. You were right, Sephie. She probably wasn’t qualified in the slightest for the job but he hired her anyway, Ivan said.

*Maybe they played on that guilt to get her closer to him,” Stephen said. “She’s been a plant all along.”

“I think the more pressing issue is whether Armando is loyal or if he’s playing both sides,” Adrik said. He looked to Keith. “Can you get more recordings of his conversations, especially when he’s speaking Italian? He’s more likely to slip up in front of you because he knows you can’t understand him.”

“Absolutely. He’s planning on going back to his house in two days for the weekend again. It’s easier to record him there. He also has more meetings there than he does here,” Keith said.

“Can you get pictures of who he’s meeting with?” Stephen asked.

“Between me and Chris, we should be able to,” he said. “I can send it all to you nightly so I can delete it from my phone.”

“Keith, you stay loyal to me and you’ll have a job no matter what happens to Armando,” Adrik said. “Chris, too. I reward those who stay loyal to me. You’ve seen the alternative firsthand, so I don’t need to elaborate.”

“Yes, sir,” Keith said. He stood up to leave, understanding that he was free to do so. He shot a quick glance toward Stephen before he walked out of the office.

“What happens if Armando doesn’t come clean by tomorrow?” Misha asked.

“I haven’t decided yet. I also haven’t decided how I want to tell him about this information about Giana. I would have assumed he would know about it by now. She’s spending a hefty amount of money, with nothing to show for it,” Adrik said.

I laughed. “He’s not going to notice that. I saw his ex-girlfriend’s wardrobe. He doesn’t pay attention to the money spent by his girlfriends.”

“Maybe not in the way you’re thinking, love. But if she’s spending that much money each week, there should be new clothes showing up regularly. Or something showing up in exchange for the money. She can’t go buy clothes on top of spending that amount of money because it would be too obvious. That money has to be going somewhere,” Adrik said,

“Didn’t his first wife also have the same problem?” Viktor asked.

“Uh oh,” I said.

“Uh oh what?” they all asked at once.

“That means this is a pattern and Mando is the common denominator,” I said.

“You think he’s getting them hooked? Or they’re turning to it as an escape from him?” Ivan asked.

“That’s the million-dollar question,” I said.

“The other million-dollar question is what are we ordering for dinner? I’m starving.” Andrei asked.

I caught Andrei before they all left the penthouse after dinner was over and we’d thoroughly discussed all possibilities. “I promise to make your favorite meal tomorrow for suggesting we order takeout tonight. You saved me so much work and I love you for it, Bubba.”

He pulled me into a hug. “I know you’re tired, spider monkey. We’re all tired right now. Maybe I’ll see if Misha can order Boss back to the house this weekend. I think it does all of us good to go there now,” he said.

“Devious. I love it. I’ll allow it.” I announced as I hugged him tighter.