

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 269

## Chapter Two Hundred Sixty-Nine

Adrik

The next morning, the guys were back in the penthouse early. We had agreed the night before that we didn't trust anyone else, so all conversations between us were to be had in Russian and in the penthouse when possible. Sephie struggled to wake up this morning. She was so exhausted last night that she was sound asleep almost immediately after laying across my chest. I can't take the blame for her tiredness this morning. Whatever happened between her and Misha completely zapped her energy. Not to mention dealing with the stress of everything Dario told us.

When I came out of the bedroom without her, the guys were noticeably concerned. I smiled at their concern for her. "She's awake. She's still getting ready. She was exhausted last night and struggled to wake up this morning," I said.

"Same," Misha said as he walked to the coffee maker. "I'm starting to understand why you both needed extra coffee the day after whatever happened between you two that zapped you both. I feel like I could sleep for three days right now,"

"It only lasted a day for me. Hopefully, you'll be the same," I said, laughing at his exhausted expression. He looked like he could barely keep his eyes open.

Viktor pulled his phone from his pocket, typed a short message, then put his phone back in his pocket. "Breakfast will be here shortly," he said. "Although I can tell you right now that I'm not going to enjoy it as much." We all laughed at his crankiness over not getting Sephie's cooking.

Sephie walked into the kitchen just as Misha was pouring her a cup of coffee. "Perfect timing, gazelle. You're going to need this," he said as he handed her the coffee mug. "I might've made it a little strong. Apologies if it's too strong."

"Are you as exhausted as you look and I feel, my adorable Russian guardian?" she asked. He nodded. "What the f\*\*k happened yesterday," she whispered as she sipped the coffee.

"I can't answer that yet, but I did get more recordings from Keith last night. Armando is back from his house as of late last night. Keith sent over what he had from this weekend. He said Armando met with Ricardo, but didn't close the door this time. Keith thinks Armando wasn't aware that he was there. After what Dario told us, I'm not sure I believe the bumbling idiot persona of Armando anymore, so it might've been intentional. It's possible he's caught on to Keith recording his meetings somehow and now he's feeding us false information, but we won't know until we get them translated," Stephen said.

Sephie sighed. "I'll get started after I finish breakfast," she said.

"Breakfast is on its way, spider monkey. Viktor already took care of it. You need a break this morning, Game Master," Andrei said, grinning at her.

She looked at Viktor, her sweet smile that made him melt on her face. "Papa Bear, you're my favorite. Don't tell the others."

Sephie listened to everything Keith had sent over from Armando's meetings over the weekend after breakfast. She had a serious look on her face listening to one of the recordings. She kept replaying it over and over again like she was trying to hear something else on the recording. Stephen had given her headphones again to help her hear more clearly. She finally looked at Stephen, then looked to Viktor. "There's not much that's useful from Armando's meetings, but in this one recording, I can hear Giana talking in the background for just a minute, like she's walking by on the phone or something. It sounds like she asks when she can go back to Italy, then it sounds like she says it wasn't her fault. She must walk too far away because I lose her voice for a few minutes, but she comes back through. She's still talking, but it's too jumbled for me to be able to hear what she says clearly when she comes back through."

"There's a way to separate the voices on the recording," Viktor said, "I'll be right back," he said, walking quickly toward the

door.

"What about his meeting with Ricardo this time?" Stephen asked.

"Um, let's see. They talked about Ricardo needing to see a doctor for his knee. They talked about the weather, then they talked about how nice it would be to go to a tropical island because it's getting colder here, then they talked about Ricardo needing to pick up his clothes from the cleaners. Oh, f\*\*k me they're talking in code aren't they?" she said, putting her hand on her forehead as she realized what she'd been listening to.

We couldn't help but chuckle at her. She really was tired. Normally she was very quick to catch on to such things. "It's likely it was code, solnishko. Can you tell me exactly what they said?" I asked.

"I'm gonna need more coffee," she said as she put the earphones back in and started the recording again. She started writing the conversation out right away.

Viktor came back with his computer to try and separate Giana's voice from the others on the recording. She handed Stephen his phone back once she was done, then handed me the translation from the meeting with Ricardo. Ivan got up to move closer to me so he could read the translation as well. Andrei got up and made Sephie another cup of coffee while everyone was busy.

It didn't take Viktor and Stephen long to get Giana's voice separated from the others, so we could hear her more clearly. Sephie went to listen to what she previously couldn't understand. "I was right on the first two. She asks when she can go back to Italy, then says it wasn't her fault. She sounds angry on the last part. She says, "I'm not a child. You're lucky I'm still here. The longer you leave me here, the more likely I'm going to disappear."

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"If she's been a plant all along, she might be tired of the game. Armando has been using her, he may or may not have gotten her hooked on coke, and we all hate her now, so maybe her plan to rob him is really her plan to get away from Armando and her family," Stephen said.

I looked to Misha, to see if he had any thoughts on potential outcomes, but he was still so tired that there was little to no chance he'd be able to see anything. Sephie saw me look toward Misha, then saw the look on his face and giggled. "I don't think it will work on her. Not with the level of hatred Misha has for her. That's going to cloud the outcome," she said, smiling at him.

"She deserves whatever she gets," Misha said flatly.

Ivan, who had been looking over Sephie's translation from Armando and Ricardo's conversation, said, "I think Stephen was right. The persona of Armando as a bumbling idiot is exactly the opposite of how he really is. He fooled all of us. Unless they've changed their codes, they're talking about a hit on Trino, although I can't tell who ordered the hit from what they said. They're just discussing it."

"Shit," Sephie said. "Could they be referring to what happened last night? When did Keith record this one?" she asked Stephen.

He checked his phone. "It was before they got to Trino, so that adds up. They wouldn't have known it was unsuccessful at this point," he said.

I felt my own anger rising to the surface, but I immediately felt Sephie's almost overtaking mine. I glanced to her, worried she was about to lose control, but once again, she looked completely calm. She looked to me, her eyes completely dark. "I know," she said, indicating that she was in control and was aware her eyes were likely dark. "I'm still not over Dario's comment about Sal and Armando fighting over me before you came back. I need a minute to be angry about that complete and utter bullshit, as well as being wrong about Armando."

I couldn't help but laugh at her response. The guys did too. Stephen looked at her, completely straight-faced and said, "maybe your milkshake really does bring all the boys to the yard, Seph."

That was all it took to make her laugh and I felt her anger subside. When she looked at me again, her eyes were back to their normal three colors. I was becoming more and more impressed with her level of control of her anger. Her eyes only changed

colors when she was a raging inferno internally, but from the outside, she looked completely calm and in control. I could only

tell she was angry because I could feel it, not because she looked it. Other than her dark eyes. My Game Master was showing me how to increase my own anger to sane levels while remaining in control of it. I felt her cool hand on my face, breaking me free from my thoughts. She searched my eyes for a moment, finding the answer to her silent question of what had me distracted. She just grinned at me, standing on her toes to kiss me. God, I love her.