

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 311

Chapter Three Hundred Eleven

Sephie

The journalist laughed. "Valid point. I knew you'd be trustworthy. You're the only one, other than me, that's searched for the information on these two men in years. I met with one other guy years ago, but I never heard from him again. This was before I'd discovered who Ricardo really was, even. This is dangerous. They're dangerous men, dealing in a very dangerous world. There are countless stories about the savagery of Lorenzo overseas. Ricardo keeps a lower profile, but he can't be much better. He's been deep in business with Lorenzo for at least three decades."

"I would venture to guess they're cut from the same cloth," Chen said, thoughtfully. He picked up the stack of papers. "Is this everything? Do you have more? Henry is a good man, he'll want everything. He'll also want to know how the hell I got myself into this. I'm gonna have to listen to a lecture from my father," he said, shaking his head.

The journalist laughed again. "I'd appreciate you keeping me anonymous for now."

"Consider it done. I'll get this to Henry right away," Chen said. The journalist stood up, offering his hand to Chen, who also stood at the same time. They parted ways without another word.

We had one of the security guys from the building, who was a normal human size, pick Chen up down the block in a

should the journalist be watching him. He did. He walked a short distance from the café and waited until he saw Chen get in the taxi, then continued on to his apartment.

"You're a natural at this, Chen," I said once we were all back at the building. I gave him a quick high-five.

"The fact that I had a sniper over my shoulder made it surprisingly easy to talk to a stranger. Can I borrow him for my next blind date?" he asked.

"I'm not entirely sure you're grasping the concept of dating," I said, squinting my eyes at him.

"Presumptuous coming from someone who's out of the dating pool. It's anarchy out there, my girl," he said, laughing.

"The French isn't working the way it used to?" Misha asked.

Chen laughed loudly. "She told you about that, huh?"

"They've heard every conversation we've ever had, Chen," I said. I watched as the lightbulb came on in his head.

"That's how they always know when someone shows up at the apartment. Oh my God, I can't believe I didn't put that one together before right now," he said.

"See? You're not just a pretty face," I said, laughing.

Adrik, who had been laughing at our conversation, extended his hand to Chen. "Thank you for doing this, Chen. Can you come by the office again this week? I have a couple of projects I'm in need of a contractor for. Sephie tells me you have your license."

Chen's eyes were the size of saucers as he shook Adrik's hand. "Yes, sir. Let me know when to be here. I have a small crew, but we do excellent work."

"Til take a look at my schedule and have Viktor call you to set it up." Adrik said as we all got on the elevator to go back upstairs. We stopped at the lobby to let Chen off, then continued to the penthouse.

Adrik caught me smiling at him on the way up. He raised his eyebrow at me, saying, "he strikes me as the type to try to refuse money for what he just did for us. Instead of having that awkward conversation, he can do some work on one of my projects and I'll pay him handsomely for it. He won't argue then, because his crew is also involved." I felt the warmth slowly spread over my body as I looked at him. I didn't say anything. I just stood on my toes and pressed my lips to his.

Once we were in the penthouse, Ivan and Viktor started to look over everything the journalist had given to Chen. They were quiet for a few minutes. Viktor finally looked up. "I'll give this guy credit, he does have good instincts. From someone on the outside, it would look like Ricardo is toward the top of the business. He just doesn't know there's

another level above him."

Ivan looked at Adrik. "What are your plans for Ricardo?"

"I haven't decided, honestly. He's never moved against me directly, so I'm struggling with justifying killing him outright. However, I'm not going to just leave him alone and hope for the best," he said.

"Let's say we did take this to Henry. It's coming up an election year, right? Politicians love to appear tough on crime. We hand them Ricardo, gift-wrapped, they get to pat themselves on the backs and tell everyone how good of a job they're doing, while no one is paying attention to us," Ivan said.

"They get the doctor and Ricardo all in the same year. That's gotta be worth at least two terms for the mayor and the commissioner," Stephen said.

"I really feel like we're single-handedly bringing the city together here, boys," I said.

Adrik

I woke up the next morning before Sephie, which was becoming the norm. I wrapped my arm around her tighter so she wouldn't move too fast, kissing her neck gently. She moaned quietly as she started to wake up. I felt her move her good arm on top of mine that was holding her. "What does it say about me that I'm kind of loving you holding me down all the time now?" she said, still fighting to wake up. She coughed quietly, holding her ribs.

"I'll keep that in mind, love," I said as I wrapped both arms tighter around her, pulling her back to me as close as possible. She surprised me by rolling onto her back without too much effort. She laughed quietly at the look of

surprise on my face, only to cough once more. This was a new development that I was beginning to worry about.

"I like to see you," she said, smiling her sweet smile.

"You're making progress. I think the doctor will be pleased this afternoon," I said, leaning down to kiss her.

"I'd like it to go faster," she said. "There are still things I can't do that I would very much like to do." She cut her eyes over at me, chewing on her bottom lip. "And by that I mean you. I'd very much like to do you."

I caught myself just staring at her in wonderment. She always managed to make me laugh, no matter the situation,

and she always managed to make me love her even more, no matter what she did. "It's only been two weeks, love. Let's not talk about how they've been the longest two weeks of my life," I said, grinning at her.

"You and me both," she said. "It would be so much easier if it weren't for my ribs. Those things are a major setback."

"It seems like the pain is less the past couple of days though?" I was still able to feel her pain clearly. While it was still very much present, it was more in the background the last couple of days.

She nodded her head. "You've helped." Her sweet smile once again threatening to stop my heart, as she reached over with her good hand to place her palm against my cheek. I'd been trying to take her pain and turn it into something more pleasurable for her more often. She was starting to get cranky, and rightfully so, because her body hurt so much. The acupuncture helped tremendously, but she was still getting frustrated that she was constantly in pain. Her brain wouldn't give her a break from it. It's exhausting to be in constant pain. She was starting to sleep even more than usual, to the point that she was only awake for a couple of hours each day. Even that made her cranky because she felt useless. Her appetite was completely gone, like it was after the attack on her and Misha, which meant she was losing weight again. Even with daily acupuncture, she was a mess.

The words of the acupuncturist were always in my head. "She needs you. She needs Ivan. And she needs the other four waiting outside." I readily admit it took me too long to figure out what to do, but it seemed like the last few days had finally given her some slight relief. She was showing signs of feeling more herself again, but she still had a long way to

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"It took me too long to figure out what to do, but I'm glad it seems like it's helping," I said.

"It's helping. That's the important part."