

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 382

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Sephie

"We have it on very good authority that two of your police chiefs are loyal to the mayor," Adrik said. We both saw Henry's face fall.

"Do you know which ones?" he asked.

Adrik nodded his head. Ivan got up and put two files down on Adrik's desk in front of Henry. "They both met with the mayor. After you met with all of them to discuss taking down the mayor. We only have confirmation on these two, but I wouldn't trust any of them at this point," Adrik said. Henry looked stunned. "How much have you told them about the mayor? Or about Ricardo?"

"Nothing about Ricardo. I'm sitting on that one. I've been after that guy so long that I don't want to risk messing it up. But they have everything I have on the mayor so far," Henry said.

Adrik looked to Viktor, saying in Russian, "we definitely need to hurry that journalist up."

Viktor responded, still in Russian, saying, "I contacted him earlier. I'll check when this is over to see if he responded."

Adrik nodded, then looked back to Henry. "We're working to gather more information on the mayor, but it takes time. Until we get more on him, be very careful what you tell the other police chiefs."

"Agreed. Let me know when you get something definitive on the mayor. Until then, I don't think we should do this again," Henry said. He suddenly looked worried, like he was nervous. I glanced to Andrei, who caught it as well. We both focused back on Henry, trying to figure out the reason for his

nervousness.

"We have other places we can meet the next time, if you're nervous about coming here," Adrik said. He had also picked up on his nervousness.

They conversed for a short time more, while I quietly studied Henry. The first time we'd met with him, I got the feeling that he was a good man, trying to do the right thing. This time, something had changed about him and I wasn't sure what it was, but I wasn't sure I liked it.

Henry stood up to leave, once again shaking Adrik's hand. When he did, I saw Adrik stiffen ever so slightly. That's new. I glanced to Andrei, who clearly had seen something as well. Stephen's phone beeped as Viktor was walking Henry back to the elevator. "Dinner's here. Be right back," he said, jogging out of the office to catch the elevator.

Once we heard the doors close, I walked to Adrik. "What happened when you shook his hand before he left?"

"Did you feel it?" he asked.

I shook my head no. "I didn't feel anything, but I saw you tense. It's different. You don't do that."

Ivan chuckled. "Vitaliy is also a Game Master, it seems," he said.

I remembered. Adrik was like Vitaliy. "That escalated quickly," I said, raising my eyebrow at him.

"Did you feel it when he first came into the office?" Ivan asked.

Andrei spoke up, "something changed while he was in here. He made some decision while he was here and something changed. I couldn't figure out what it was, though."

"It's something to do with power. He wants it. He doesn't like it that Adrik has it. But we should wait for Stephen. Somehow I think he's going to have Insight into this," I said.

It didn't take long and Viktor and Stephen returned. We were all waiting for them at the elevator, so we could go to the penthouse, where we knew we could speak freely. When the doors opened and we were all standing there, Viktor and Stephen both looked surprised.

"You guys that hungry?" Stephen asked.

I laughed. "No, we just need to be in the penthouse to finish the discussion we started. And we needed your insight and Viktor's sleuthing skills. We were saving time."

"I just really feel like Vlad is going to make you his Director of Operations. Logistics, efficiency, systems, you've got it all handled. His army is going to run like a well-oiled machine because of you," Stephen said.

"Damn it, I was really hoping for Supreme Leader, but Director of Operations does have a nice ring to it. I'm not opposed to working my way up through his organization."

"Okay, somebody catch us up," Stephen said as we started dinner.

"Boss felt something different when he shook Henry's hand at the end. He didn't feel it when he walked in. Andrei said something changed while Henry was in the office, like he made a decision while he was in there and things are different now," Ivan said.

"I couldn't get as many details as I wanted from him, but I think we can fill in more in a bit with Misha. What I did get, however, was that it was related to power. Henry wants it. He doesn't like that Adrik already has it." I looked to Adrik. "Do you remember when we first met with him – how uncomfortable he got when you first told him you were getting rid of the other bosses?"

He nodded his head. "You made the comment he thought that was too much power for one man. He was worried I was going to become a tyrant."

I started to speak, but Ivan said, "he wants to be the tyrant."

"He got it in his head last time that he could replace the mayor and he would run the city. When Boss knew more than him this time, it pissed him off. I bet he made a decision to come after Boss now. I don't think he's stupid enough to try it right away, but if we keep the plan of trying to get him into the mayor's seat, he'll do it then," Stephen said.

Adrik looked to Misha. "Do you think you can find out? We've never tried to find a specific answer before."

"I'd be happy to try. Sephie and Andrei help make things clearer. It's different almost every time it happens," Misha said.

I looked at Andrei. "I could clearly see your thoughts the last time we did it. Did it happen for you too?"

"You could? What was I thinking about?" Andrei asked.

I started laughing and almost couldn't stop myself. It took me a few minutes to answer. I couldn't believe I'd forgotten about this. "We were looking for Martin, so you were thinking about him. And a cheeseburger. Not necessarily in that order, either," I said, still trying to contain my laughter.

"That seems completely accurate," Andrei said.

"He wasn't holding back. He was just focusing on cheeseburgers instead, Misha said, laughing. "That's why it wasn't as clear with just him."

"To be fair, I spend a lot of time thinking about cheeseburgers, too," Viktor said, his deep belly laugh filling the penthouse.

"I mean, who doesn't love a good cheeseburger?" Andrei said. His cheeks were flushed, but he was laughing just as much as everyone else.

"New rule: we can only look for people after Andrei's belly is full. For best results," Adrik said, which caused another round of laughter from everyone.

Vitaliy and Aleksel walked into the penthouse as we were still laughing about Andrei's random thoughts. Vitaliy was surprised to see us all laughing so heartily. "You guys must've gotten very good news today," he said, a small smile on his face as he watched us all try to gain control of ourselves.

"The opposite, really. But one of Sephie's many gifts is giving us a reason to laugh for a few minutes. It's always perfect timing and it's always much needed, Adrik said, his wide smile stretching across his face as he looked at me. I felt the pull in my chest that meant he was thinking about how much he loved me. I answered by sending my warmth back to him, loving the wink he gave me when he felt it