

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 171

Chapter One Hundred Seventy-One

Sephie

Andrei, done with the dishes, sat next to Ivan. “How did you get to be so accurate at reading people, spider monkey? Like every time you say something about someone, it’s always completely accurate and makes me feel du mb for not noticing it before.”

I smiled at him. “You shouldn’t feel du mb for not noticing these things, Bubba. I always thought I was a weirdo for doing so. You’re the normal one. Most people don’t notice these things.”

Ivan, now curious too, asked, “what were you like as a kid? Like did you drive your m om crazy just constantly diagnosing her?”

I laughed. “No. My m om is probably where I get this from. When I was little, she would teach piano lessons from the living room in our house. I was a quiet kid, so she would always keep me in the room so she could keep an eye on me while she taught. Sometimes I would play with whatever toy I had, but I would soon get bored with that, so I’d watch her interacting with her students. They would get frustrated because they couldn’t get the hang of something and she would always stop the lesson and talk to them about the rest of their life. She knew it was never about piano. It was always something else that was on their mind. Teachers are part psychologists, I think. I guess that’s why I notice the small details about people. It seems so obvious to me because I’ve been doing it for so long. As I got older, I would do my homework in the room that her students would wait in for their lesson. I started to be able to tell when something was off when they walked into the house. As they walked into the living room for their lesson, I would cough to let my m om know they needed to talk. Pretty sure most of her students just thought I was asthmatic or something. I coughed a lot,” I said, laughing.

Adrik crossed his arms across his chest. “Those students probably still have no idea how lucky they were to have your m om as a piano teacher.”

I smiled. “A few of them do. I occasionally run into her former students. They recognize my hair and ask if it’s me. The few I’ve run into told me how she changed their life for the better.”

Ivan’s phone rang in his pocket. He pulled it out, walking away from the kitchen so as not to interrupt our conversation, but we all waited to hear who it was. We were all anxious to hear from Viktor. He walked back quickly, visibly relaxed. “They got Andy and they’re at the safe house. The extra guards were already there, so they’re just finding out everything Andy knows and then they’ll be back. I told him Sephie was cooking, so he’s going to hurry now,” he said, a sly smile across his face.

We all audibly exhaled, relieved that it had went well and was over. “How long does Andy have to stay at the safe house?” I asked.

“Just for a day or two until things quiet down and we know for sure that Sal’s guys didn’t manage to follow him,” Ivan said.

“Then what? He comes here?” I asked.

Ivan nodded his head. “It’s easier to keep him safe here. He can be an asset about other aspects of Sal’s operation as well.”

“He can join Team America with Armando’s guys,” I said, laughing.

Viktor, Misha, and Stephen walked into the penthouse just as I was finishing up dinner. Mike, Chris, and Keith were behind them. Armando hadn’t come up yet, but had sent Adrik a message that he would be up shortly. Giana was asleep and he was finishing up some work he needed to get done, then he’d be up.

“Sephie, that smells like I love you,” Viktor said, his broad smile stretching across his face, as he walked into the kitchen.

“My giant Russian bear of a security master!” I said, running to him. He opened his arms to catch me as I jumped into his arms.

“I’m so happy you’re back safely,” I said to him as he put me down. “It went well?” I asked, moving immediately to Misha and wrapping my arms around his neck.

“It went well. A hiccup or two, but Keith is quick on his feet, so it’s all good,” Viktor said.

“I might be quick on my feet, but it wouldn’t have turned out so well were it not for Stephen,” Keith said. I caught Stephen’s cheeks flush slightly as I hugged him too,

Stephen, were you showing off again?” I asked, hugging him tightly.

He laughed. “Maybe just a little,” he said, putting his hands in his pockets.

“That’s my tiny cared Yoda,” I said, laughing. Keith looked at Stephen curiously, but said nothing. I caught Stephen stealing a glance at Keith, but then looking away like he was somewhat shy. I glanced to Adrik, who was also watching the exchange. He nodded discreetly, indicating he had seen it too.

While the guys shoveled the food into their mouths, we discussed what Andy had told everyone about Sal’s plans. Viktor said, “Boss, it’s like we were thinking after we got the info from the guys that attacked Misha and Sephie. But it’s even worse.” He paused to take a bite of food, so Misha picked up, saying, “Sal is planning on causing chaos in every part of the city but his own. He knows the people in his part of the city aren’t happy with him, so he’s killing two birds with one stone in this plan. He’s going to unleash chaos on the rest of the city, but keep his area safe, in an attempt to win back his people.” He paused to take another bite of food, so Stephen finished the plan, “in those parts of the city that belong to bosses that are with him, he’s only distributing the brawn to those who are already users. He’s trying to completely replace the supply of all other drugs in those parts of the city with his new formulation of brawn, so they’re getting it whether they want to or not. However, and this is truly evil, in Armando’s area of the city, he knew he couldn’t get to those dealers without Mando finding out. So, he’s bought the guy at the water district.” Adrik didn’t say a word, but he pulled his phone out and dialed Armando. “Get up here. Now.” He promptly hung up and placed his phone back in his pocket.

“Did Andy have an idea of how close Sal was to replacing the drug supply? Clearly, he’s already been successful in Vito’s area of the city, since they’re rioting. What about the other areas?” Ivan asked.

“He’s been kept out of the loop somewhat, since Sal was already beginning to suspect him, but he said he had to deliver a package to a warehouse for one of the other guys and he saw the brawn operation. It takes a specific setup to make and he remembered it from when they first started making it years ago. He said the warehouse was full of pallets. But they’re not just making it in pills. They’re shipping it out in powder form too, for those people that prefer snorting or injecting. He said he asked one of the guys at the warehouse why they had powder and the guy told him they’re packaging it to look like other drugs. The dealers are going to sell it like their normal product,” Viktor said. “Andy thinks that the rioting going on in Vito’s area right now is a bit of a test run. He hasn’t started to distribute the brawn, as far as Andy knows, yet.”

“Can you even inject that stuff and expect to live?” I asked. I knew my uncle had taken the pills, but I wasn’t sure if he had ever gotten it into his system via another route.

“It’s very dangerous when you do. You can overdose on it even when you take the pills, but it’s even easier to overdose on it when you try and inject it. He’s going to inevitably kill a lot of people with this plan,” Ivan said.

Armando walked into the penthouse, with Giana. He had a worried look on his face. Adrik skipped the pleasantries, asking right away, “who’s in charge of your water district?”