

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 44

Chapter Forty-Four

Adrik

When I woke up this time, Sephie was still sleeping soundly in my arms. She would usually wake up once she felt me start to stir, but I was able to get out of bed without her waking up. She must be exhausted after last night and everything coming at her at once. I felt guilty for not being able to take care of her better. She'd been through hell and hadn't taken the time to process it all. I changed as quietly as I could and went downstairs to breakfast. Everyone was very concerned that Sephie wasn't with me. I told them that she had slept poorly and was still asleep.

"Is she having nightmares again?" Misha asked. "I shouldn't have watched a scary movie with her yesterday. This is all my fault." "Net. No nightmares, at least not that I know of last night. She's been through quite a lot in the last few days. It caught up to her," I said, taking a sip of coffee.

"What can we do?" Viktor asked.

Ivan added, "does she want to leave? Is that it? She's tired of all of us now."

"She does want to leave, but not because she's tired of all of us," I said. Ivan visibly relaxed when I said she wasn't tired of us.

"Ivan and Viktor, I want you two to oversee her surprise. I want to have it done by Thursday morning, if possible. I've asked her to give me through tomorrow. I want to make sure that little piece of shit gets on the airplane today and leaves this city. Then maybe I can relax."

Viktor and Ivan nodded as they finished breakfast. My phone buzzed in my pocket. I looked at the number, but it was

not a number I knew. I looked at the text:

Bracelet is compromised. Do not give to her. We need to meet. Regular spot, 10 pm? -A

Salvadori's guard. I knew there was something off about that gift. I felt my anger rise as I cursed loudly. I had forgotten about the bracelet, to be honest. Before leaving my office, I threw it in the safe, not giving it another thought.

"Boss? Everything okay?" Misha asked.

"Andy, Salvadori's guard," I said, holding up my phone. "He said the bracelet Salvadori gave me for Sephie is compromised. I haven't given it to her. It's too ostentatious for her anyway. But the fact that he would try to get to me through her means his time is growing short."

I heard a couple of them curse. Ivan smacked the counter. "He's working with Anthony. I would bet he knows everything Anthony has been doing. He's probably been benefitting from it, too. They're both cut from the same cloth."

"Agreed. However, we can use this to our advantage. We'll check the bracelet later. We can use it to feed them false info, if nothing else," I said. "It's been in the safe since Sunday night, so he hasn't gotten anything from it. We can change that. Andy also wants to meet tonight. He must have more info."

"Regular spot?" Viktor asked.

I nodded my head. I confirmed the meeting with Andy that night. I also sent a text to my spy at the airport, asking for confirmation that he was able to get a camera inside Anthony's plane. I wanted to make sure it was him on that plane. I also had them put a tracker on the plane, so we could make sure it made it to Sicily.

Tracker and camera both in place. Plane is scheduled to leave at noon. Will notify when it's in the air.

At least that detail was going to plan. Now I had to plan what to do about Salvadori, but I would wait to hear what else Andy had for me tonight before making any definite plans.

When I was done with my workout, I walked quietly back in my bedroom. Sephie was still sound asleep on the bed. I grabbed clothes and went across the hall to shower so I wouldn't wake her up. When I was ready to leave, I left her a note on the bedside table and kissed her forehead gently. I was secretly hoping she would wake up so I could spend a few minutes with her before I left for the day, as I wouldn't be back until late. She didn't move as I kissed her forehead.

Sleep well, my love.

I needed Viktor and Ivan, which meant neither of them could stay with Sephie. Since Misha and Andrei had both already gotten the chance to stay with her, that left Stephen as the only fair choice. Stephen had been with me the shortest amount of time of all of them. I trusted him, but I didn't trust him as much as the other four guys. I didn't feel completely comfortable leaving him with Sephie. Not yet.

I pulled him aside. "I need you at the airport. You're the best shot of everyone here. I want you on a roof. If that fucker tries to send the plane off without him on it, shoot him."

"Yes, sir." I can't be sure, but he looked a little relieved to not be on babysitter duty. I wasn't sure if that was because he was awkward around women or something else. He immediately left for the airport.

That left the choice between Misha and Andrei. Of course, they argued. This time, however, they decided by paper, rock,

scissors. I was happy to see my men making such important decisions based on a children's game.

Andrei won, best 3 out of 5. They would've kept going, had I not pushed Misha toward the door.

I looked at Andrei. "She's a little fragile. Be gentle with her."

He nodded once. "She'll be fine, boss. I'll do my best to cheer her up. See you tonight."

The day went fast, as I had endless meetings that consumed the entire day. Viktor and Ivan were successful at getting Ms. Jackson and Mr. Turner all set up in their new apartments that day. They just had a few items at their old apartment to get the next day. This meant I would be able to bring Sephie with me on Thursday to show her the surprise. I was looking forward to seeing her reaction. I caught myself thinking about how much making her happy was making me happy. I had never really bothered to care about anyone else's happiness before. Definitely not any woman I had been in a relationship with. They were more like an afterthought. I would regularly forget their names when I was younger. That's how little they mattered to me. I wasn't sure I could breathe without Sephie in my life. I had known her for such a short time, but I couldn't imagine being without her.

I was counting the minutes until I could get home to her. It was getting late. I only had my meeting with Andy left and I could see her.

Andy always met me across town from where Salvadori lived. He didn't want to take a chance on anyone recognizing him. There

was a small park in that part of town. He would take a stroll and sit on the same park bench, waiting for me to arrive.

Just as expected, he was waiting for me. I sat next to him, looking out at the river that ran next to this area of the park.

"Sir," he said as I sat down.

I nodded. "What do you have for me?"

"That bracelet, sir. It belonged to Anthony. He had it custom-made for one of his girlfriends. He thought she was cheating on him, so he gave that to her so he could track where she went and listen to what she would say. It was Anthony's idea to give it to you for Sephie. Salvadori wasn't going to do it at first. I'm not sure what changed he's been taking another guard with him when he meets with Anthony. They're planning something, sir. His brother in Sicily has been waiting for a chance to come back to the states and feels like Anthony is his chance back. They want to take over, from what I can gather. I think they have Salvadori convinced they can do it. He's become greedy in his old

age."

"I see," I said. It did not surprise me that Lorenzo was trying to come back, nor that he would use Anthony and Salvadori to do it.

"To your knowledge, are any of the other bosses involved?"

"No, sir. He tried to recruit Niko, but I'm not sure of Niko's reaction."

"Thank you, Andy. Anything else?"

"No, sir."

"Are you okay still at Salvadori's? He doesn't suspect?"

"He might be getting suspicious. I think this needs to be the last meeting for a while, sir. My apologies."

"No need, Andy. You know where to find me. If it goes south, we will get you out."

"Thank you, sir."

I got up and walked away. "Viktor, schedule a meeting with Niko tomorrow," I said as I climbed in the vehicle.

"Yes, sir. To the house, sir?"

"I think we should go back to the penthouse first. I want to take the helicopter instead of drive."

"I'll have the pilot waiting when we get there."

"Thank you, Viktor."

My mind replayed my conversation with Andy on the drive back to the penthouse. It angered me that Salvadori was actively trying to turn the other bosses against me. He was quickly becoming a cancer that needed to be cut out. But he could prove useful to me for a little while longer. This wasn't the first time I'd dealt with unruly bosses. It was more of an annoyance than anything. I'd been so much more generous than my father ever was, I had a feeling they all

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thought of me as soft. Good. Let them think that. I could be just as ruthless as my father in matters of business. But I now had the one thing my father never did.

Sephie. I would destroy the world to protect her