

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 244

Two Hundred Forty-Four

Adrik

I couldn't keep my eyes off Sephie even on the elevator down to my office. This is going to be the longest meeting ever.

"Am I expected to remember everyone's names? Because that's not a thing I do," she asked, chewing on her lip.

I laughed. "No, love. You have me. That's a thing I do. You don't need to."

She cut her eyes up at me, a mischievous look in her eye. "I knew I kept you around for a reason," she said as the doors opened. She walked off the elevator like she owned the place. I've never been more turned on in my life.

Armando was already in my office when we walked in. He had a habit of being extra early to large meetings to make sure last-minute details were taken care of. I appreciated it about him, as it meant fewer details for me to have to worry about. He looked up from the papers in his hand as Sephie walked in. "Sephie, my dear. You look beautiful as always, cara mia," he said, opening his arms for her.

She walked to him. "Mando. It's so good to see you," she said as she hugged him.

"It's been too long. I've missed you, but I'm very happy you decided to come today," he said, kissing both her cheeks. Sephie right. Giana had kept herself away from us so far. Armando had taken her to his house over the weekend again, so it had been a few days since I'd seen him, even. Things seemed calm, for the moment, so I wasn't complaining.

She stepped back, looking between both Armando and me. "What are the specifics of this meeting again?" she asked. She already knew the answer to that question. She was giving Armando a reason to talk to her. I turned so he couldn't see me and winked at her as Armando began filling in details about the meeting.

Armando was still talking 20 minutes later when Viktor stuck his head in the office. "Everyone is in the conference room," he said. He gave Sephie a high-five as she walked by. "You look like you're about to run this meeting, sestrichka," he said in Russian as we walked to the conference room.

"I am the go ddamn princess," she said, her gorgeous smile across her face as she walked into the conference room. I saw her hesitate once she glanced around the room. She turned to me, saying in Russian, "second man from the end on the other side of the table owns the restaurant I used to work at," she said. I could feel she was still calm. I think it surprised her to see him here more than anything.

I still stopped her before we walked any further. "Is that a problem? I can get rid of him if it is," I said.

She smiled shyly at me. "He's fine. He's a nice guy. I just didn't expect him to be here," she said. "But thank you for always being willing to destroy anything that might be a threat to me."

I kissed her temple as we continued to the table. "Always, my love." I kept my eye on the man she had pointed out. He was clearly surprised to see Sephie walk into the meeting. Even more surprised that she sat down next to me. I pulled her chair next to mine, stretching my arm across her lap. I nodded to Armando, who started the meeting.

We were pitching the idea of the building to several restaurant owners, hoping they would sign a contract signifying they would lease space once the building was finished. There was space for at least five restaurants, with the potential for splitting the space up into smaller restaurants if necessary. The location was in a great part of town, so it should've been an easy sell. A few of the restaurant owners were hesitant, however. The owner of the restaurant where Sephie used to work was one that was hesitant.

"What kind of guarantees do you have that the building will be full? And what kind of taxes are we going to be hit with if we

lease space in this building?" he asked. The tax question was more about which part of the city belonged to. The building was in Armando's area of the city, thankfully, so we didn't need to go into details about how that wouldn't matter very soon. Two of the other restaurant owners nodded in agreement to his question. I wasn't sure what areas of the city they were from, but I imagined they were being charged extra taxes right now.

"We already have 30% of the office space leased, as well as 50% of the apartments sold or leased. We haven't even broke ground on the project yet. The building will be full by the time it's finished. As for taxes, I don't charge unfair taxes in my area of the city," Armando said.

Sephie stood up, going to a map showing the location of the building. "Gentlemen, I don't know the location of all of your restaurants, but I do know where yours is, Kevin. You've got at least 15 other restaurants within a 5-block radius of your restaurant. Those are just the ones I could remember off the top of my head. I'm guessing it's a similar situation for the rest of you, give or take." She pointed to the map. "This building will be here." She ran her finger over an entire block of buildings on the map. "These buildings? Apartments. There's one bodega, but no restaurants." She moved to the next block. "These buildings? Office space. Two more bodegas and one coffee shop. No restaurants." She continued for three more blocks around the location of the new building. "So that makes 5 restaurants total in this 5-block radius, not counting the restaurant space this building will provide. I'm not the best at numbers, but even I know those are pretty fucking good odds. You'd be idiots not to jump at this chance, but by all means, keep hesitating if you hate making an easy profit."

I heard Viktor clear his throat at the door. I knew he was trying not to laugh. I had casually rested my chin in my hand to hide my smile when she got up because I knew whatever she was about to do was going to be great. I glanced at everyone's faces as she walked back to sit down. My business associates were all trying not to laugh as well. The restaurant owners who were on board originally were also trying not to laugh. The ones who were hesitant all had the look of being foolish across their faces. Armando caught Sephie's eye as she sat down, winking at her.

The meeting continued. All restaurant owners were on board by the end of the meeting, all signing contracts to lease space in the building once the building was finished. As the meeting concluded and everything was being finalized with the lawyers in attendance, several of my business associates, including Neal, came up to me and Sephie. "Can she please come to every meeting?" Neal asked, finally able to laugh. The others agreed with him, making her blush. They kept laughing amongst themselves as they talked with each other and the restaurant owners. The owner of the restaurant she used to work at, Kevin, walked up to her as well.

"Sephie, it's good to see you again," he said, extending his hand to her.

"Hi Kevin. How are things at the restaurant?" she asked. I knew she was likely curious about Max.

"They're good. We had a rough patch after you left, but we're recovering now. Staffing issues," he said, dismissively.

"Chef issues, you mean?" she asked.

He laughed. "Of course you'd know. Yes, chef issues. It's been taken care of now and business is picking back up. Numbers at the bar are almost back to normal now," he said.

"Good. That makes me happy to hear. I hope no one died while you resolved the chef issues," she said.

"Oh, you know know. It was very dicey, not gonna lie," he said, chuckling. "I'm glad to see you doing so well, Sephie. I was very sorry to see you leave the restaurant, but clearly you were meant for bigger and better things. Mostly convincing stubborn restaurant owners to take advantage of great offers in front of them."

"Oh that? That's just a normal Monday, Kevin," she said sarcastically. One of the lawyers interrupted their conversation, pulling Kevin back for more signatures and paperwork, leaving Sephie and I alone.

I stepped closer to her. "I'm glad you decided to come, my love."

"You're just saying that because you can't stop looking at my ass in this skirt," she said as she turned away from me. "Seriously. Look at it. It looks amazing," she said. I stepped closer to her, my lips close to her ear. "Careful, love. I'm not above bending your over the desk in my office before everyone has a chance to leave." I heard her breath hitch. "Shit. That backfired." She turned to face me, her eyes showing a mix of lust and worry. "You're so much better at this than I am," she said. She glanced around the room, then quickly pressed her lips to mine.

I laughed quietly, brushing my cheek against her neck. I knew that feeling my facial hair on her neck turned her on, but this time I felt her response. I groaned under my breath, causing her to look at me, somewhat surprised. She searched my eyes for a just a moment, then let out a small gasp. "You felt that too?" I nodded. "We are in so much trouble," she said, giggling.