

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 234

Chapter Two Hundred Thirty-Four

Sephie

"I was trying to catch Mike talking to Anthony again so I could confirm it, but I haven't seen him around for a few days. I know Armando was gone over the weekend, so I figured he was with them, but I haven't seen Mike since they got back. I'm worried he went back to Anthony. And if I'm being honest, you guys always seem like you want to kill me anytime I give you information," Andy said, running his hand through his hair.

"And yet, you're still alive. It's like magic, really." I said, crossing my arms across my chest. "Don't be pussy, Andy. You've been in this world long enough, for fuck's sake. They saved your ass, gave you a safe place to live, and everything you need. If they wanted to kill you, you would've been dead a long time ago. Cut the bullshit."

Adrik cleared his throat quietly beside me and I knew it was because he was trying not to laugh. I felt his hand slip under my shirt, his thumb tracing circles on the bare skin of my back.

Andy looked to me, surprised at my words. He thought for a moment. Ivan was losing patience and said, "you realize if she's losing patience with you that mine was gone before I even walked into the office. It's in your best interest that you start talking."

Andy started to say something, then stopped himself. He took a deep breath, then said. "I was trying to work it into a job here. Either with your security or Armando's. I knew if I could catch Mike working for Anthony, it would look good for me and you'd be more willing to trust me, so I waited to try and get hard proof, But then I haven't seen him for a few days, so I got worried."

I looked at Viktor to gauge his reaction. The look on his face said he was not the least bit interested in hiring Andy at this moment. He said, in Russian, "he's not working for us. I can talk to Armando and see if he wants him."

"Only after all this is over. Not before," Adrik said. Viktor nodded his head in agreement. Adrik glanced down at me, like he was asking my opinion on it as well.

"I don't trust him. It was shaky at best before this, but this would've been good information to have weeks ago," I said.

Adrik looked at Andy. In English, he said, "next time you have information that directly affects us, you tell us right away. We'll consider the job after all this is over. Until then, nothing changes," I could feel Adrik's anger, but I could also feel that he was trying to contain it. It was almost like I could feel him struggling against it. Each time it happened, I could feel more than the time before. It felt almost like I could feel what he was feeling in his body and it was mirrored in mine.

Andy nodded and took his leave quickly. As we watched him walk out of the office, I turned toward Adrik, putting my hands on his chest. I could feel his anger fade away as he looked at me. I felt the calm return as he wrapped his arms around my waist. I smiled up at him. "That was different," I said.

He leaned down and kissed me quickly. "We'll talk about it later," he said, winking at me. He pulled me with him to his chair. Viktor had followed Andy to the door, closing it behind him as he left. Andy had his own guards assigned to make sure he didn't leave the building without permission, so there was no need to follow him any farther. Everyone moved to find a place to sit. Adrik pulled me into his lap as he sat back at his desk.

We all sat in silence for a few minutes, trying to wrap our heads around this new bit of information. I was frustrated with how difficult it was becoming to know who we could trust and who we couldn't trust through all this.

"Do you think this means that Keith and Chris are in question as well?" I asked.

"It's worth having a very serious conversation with both of them to find out," Ivan said.

"Call one of them up here. I want to get to the bottom of this right away, but I want to talk to them separately," Adrik said. While he had a moment of calm, I could feel his anger rising again. I could also feel that he wasn't fighting it this time. He wanted to be angry to talk to Chris and Keith.

If I'd learned anything since being with Adrik, it was that anger was a very useful emotion once you learned to control it. Especially if you needed to intimidate someone into telling you the truth. I smiled to myself. While I usually tried to keep him calm, I found myself enjoying being able to feel his anger because I knew it was needed.

We heard a knock on Adrik's office door. Viktor opened the door, letting Keith into the office. He walked in, somewhat curious as to what was going on, but he seemed quite calm. "What's going on?" he asked as he sat across from Adrik's desk.

"We need to know everything you know about Mike," Ivan said. He was still clearly angry, which caught Keith off guard.

"Yeah, man. Can I ask why? Seems kind of like a moot point now," Keith said.

"Did I ask for your opinion?" Ivan asked, a clear edge to his voice,

Keith looked quickly to Stephen. It was obvious that he was confused by what was happening. "I'll tell you anything you want to know, but I kind of need a direction here. Why are you asking about him? Like what are you looking for?"

While the guys were all quickly becoming angrier because it felt like Keith was trying to avoid the question, I could see that he was being honest and was trying to figure out how to appease them. "Let's start with when he left the police force in the small town you guys grew up in. Did he leave before or after you left the town?" I asked.

"He left before I did. He was gone for a couple years before I decided to leave. Honestly, we lost touch until we both showed up for this job. I didn't really like him when we worked together before, so I wasn't exactly jumping at the chance to catch up with him," he said. He looked at Stephen again, this time it was obvious that he was unsure how much he could say.

"He didn't know you're gay?" I asked. Keith turned back to me, his eyes wide.

Stephen chuckled. "They know, Keith."

"Oh. Okay. Well, no. He didn't know. He was not as observant as you." He cleared his throat. "Clearly."

The guys couldn't help but laugh quietly. I'm sure they would've given him a hard time if this conversation was a little more light hearted

"Did he ever say anything about what he'd been doing in the couple years between him leaving and getting this job?" I asked.

"Not much. He said he'd worked security here and there. Mostly odd jobs. He tried to get onto the police force in the city, but he failed the psych test," Keith said. "He never really went into details, but I also never really asked. I almost didn't take this job. because of him, if I'm being honest. It was so much better after he left," he said.

"Why did you leave then?" Misha asked.

"Basically, the same reason that Mike left. It was such a small town that there was no room for advancement. I'd pretty much topped out early on in my career. There, uh, also wasn't much of a dating scene in town. I knew Mike had initially moved to the city, but like I said, we lost touch, so I never dreamed I would meet him at the first job I applied to after moving here," Keith said.

"How long were you here before you applied for this job?" I asked.

"A week. This was the first job I applied for, too. I'm pretty sure I got lucky, but this conversation is making me wonder, not gonna lie," he said.

"You're doing fine, Keith. Just relax," I said. He gave me a tight smile, but did not relax.

"After you two started, did you ever notice him making calls that he wouldn't tell you about or did he ever disappear with no explanation? Did you notice anything weird?" Viktor asked.

Keith thought for a moment. "A couple of hushed phone calls. Or like he would end the call very quickly if he saw me. I never noticed him disappear, but once Armando was done for the day, I didn't keep track of Mike. I was usually looking forward to getting a break from him by the end of the day, so I didn't pay attention to what he was doing or not doing."

"Do you remember when those phone calls happened?" Viktor asked.

"Not precisely, no," Keith said. "Can I ask why this is important now? I mean, he's not really an issue now, right?"

The guys looked to me before saying anything further. I said, in Russian, "I don't think he's lying. I don't think he knows anything. I think he likely stayed away from him as much as possible. If Mike had that much of an issue with me, I can only imagine how horrific he would've been toward Keith if he found out. He's nervous because we're all here grilling

him, but I

don't feel like he's hiding anything."

While we were talking with Keith, I knew Adrik had been staring him down. It was a very effective strategy for him, as he could be extremely intimidating when he wanted to be. I saw Keith catch his gaze once or twice and immediately regret it. Once I told them that he was telling the truth, I felt Adrik relax slightly. His anger level lowering, but only slightly.