

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 236

Chapter Two Hundred Thirty-Six

Adrik

While the information we'd just discovered was important, I was having trouble keeping my mind from thinking about Sephie and how much I could feel her anger feed into mine. But also, how much control she had over hers, compared to me. My anger always felt like a ticking time bomb, just under the surface. I would have to struggle to keep it contained when it reached a certain point. I had learned over the years to keep it just under that point, so I could use it to my advantage when I needed to intimidate someone. Sephie, however, could raise and lower her anger at will.

I'd seen her get so angry that her eyes went dark a few times since I noticed it in the ring with Mike that day. But the few times it happened before, she was visibly angry. Tonight, she looked and felt like she was calming down, but when she opened her eyes after Chris left the office, they were as clear as I'd ever seen them. It surprised me. It was like her anger was cloaked. She didn't look like she was about to lose control, but her eyes told a different story.

While we waited on Keith, I let my anger rise to the point where I knew it was still easily controlled. I needed it to intimidate Keith into telling us everything. Before, Sephie would feel me get angry and would try to help keep me calm. I'd learned that it actually helped me increase the level of anger since I knew I had her to help mitigate it. But tonight, she didn't try to keep me calm when she felt it. I could feel her anger feeding mine, but also controlling mine. I was at a level that it would have been difficult to control previously when Keith walked into the office, but with Sephie by my side, I felt a mastery of it that I'd never felt before. We're going to need to discuss this later.

I squeezed Sephie just a little tighter in my lap, as she was worried that she'd made a huge mistake. I knew she was going to worry over this for a while. "I don't think Chris and Keith are a problem either. I will admit to wanting to just kill Andy and be done with it, but he seems to provide valuable information periodically, so I'm torn on wasting that resource. Maybe we should restrict his movements in the building until this is over, just to be safe. Either keep him in his apartment or keep him in room," I said.

"Room" was a nice way of saying holding cell. It was my own psychological trick I played on people.

"I will say that Keith has talked extensively about his hatred for Mike since he's been gone. I've heard a few stories about when they worked together before moving here and they weren't pleasant stories. There is clear hatred there," Stephen said. "And Chris has talked to Keith about his mom being sick. I might've checked that one out already. It's legit."

We all looked to Stephen, somewhat surprised that he'd checked Chris's story already. "What? I have trust issues," he said, shrugging his shoulders.

"Okay, so Keith and Chris check out, which actually makes life easier. That means less work for us with Armando's security and it also means I don't have to look at Giana as much, which makes me happy. I vote for putting Andy in a room. He can still get messages outside the building with access to windows. If he is getting messages outside," Ivan said.

One of Ivan's strongest traits was being able to think like the enemy. He could put himself in their shoes, think like them, and be able to predict what they would do next. It was a useful skill to have.

"Agreed. Have him moved right away. Chris and Keith can go back to their apartments," I said. Viktor stood up to take care of the arrangements, his phone in hand as he left the office.

Keith stopped by the office on his way by. He looked visibly relieved. "Um, sir, in the interest of full transparency, there is one more thing." He noticed the look on my face and immediately put his hands up in defense in front of him. "No, no. Not about Andy or Mike. This one is about Giana." Chris walked up beside him as he was talking.

"What about her?" Misha said. He was still harboring extreme anger toward her, so it didn't take much to set him off when her name was mentioned right now.

"She does feel bad about what happened and she wants to apologize, but she thinks you all are really intimidating. We overheard her talking to Armando at his house this past weekend, Keith said.

Misha cursed under his breath while Sephie just laughed. "Keith, I appreciate you trying to help her out and put in a good word for her, but she needs to learn how to be an adult and realize that we're not intimidating. She's just intimidated. If she would grow a pair, she might get some respect, but having the men in her life speak for her is not going to gain her any favors. Not with me and I feel fairly confident in saying not with any of these guys either," she said.

"Definitely not with me," Misha said. He looked disgusted to even be talking about this.

"I basically told her as much last night,

1. She knows what needs to happen to get back in our good graces. She will either choose to do it or she can continue to live in the Hell she's created for herself," I said. My tone was short, in hopes that it would end the conversation. I was growing tired of any extra drama that affected Sephie.

"She will eventually realize that she's made this into an even bigger issue by acting the way she has," Ivan said. "She's the only one that can correct it."

"You'll do her a bigger favor by telling her that than you will by trying to smooth things over for her," Andrei said. "She's chosen to learn this lesson the hard way, so get out of her way and let her learn it." Even Andrei's tone was short. We were all stressed and this topic seemed ridiculous and trivial comparatively,

Keith simply nodded his head and turned to leave. Chris, who was still visibly nervous, followed quickly behind him. Sephie waited until she heard the elevator doors close, then groaned. "Is it just me or is this Giana thing the stupidest thing ever now? How is she playing the victim card in this?" She looked at Ivan, who was grinning at her. "Make it stop." She paused for a moment, then added, "wait, no. I didn't mean that in the permanent way. Just make her stop being stupid. Don't make her stop forever more." She couldn't help but laugh at the absurdity of it all, which helped the rest of us relax slightly. I pulled her back against me. I moved her hair off her shoulder, rubbing my facial hair against her neck lightly. I felt her body relax as she took a deep breath. She hugged my arms tighter around her, whispering, "thank you."