

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 354

Adrik

When we walked back to the house, the guys were all outside where they could see us, along with Trino and Aleksei. A couple of my father's other security guys were there as well. My guys were visibly relieved when Sephie came back. Ivan looked at her, likely wanting to know what had made her anger show up earlier. He raised an eyebrow at her, silently asking what had happened. She walked to him, wrapping her arms around his waist. "Have I mentioned lately how adorable you are when you get all twitchy when you're worried about me, Squish?" she said, kissing his cheek.

Aleksei laughed. "Squish?" He looked at Ivan. "You let her call you that?"

She looked at Ivan, stepping back slightly, worried that she'd made a mistake. He wrapped his arm around her shoulders tighter, keeping her there. "She's the go ddamn princess. She can call me whatever she likes," he said.

Sephie laughed, saying, "Ivan has had more nicknames than the rest of them, I think. Squish is just my favorite. Would you prefer I only called him Vanya? Is that it? You're jealous because no one ever gave you a more creative nickname than Alyosha?"

Aleksei's cheeks blushed. "My mother called me Alyosha."

"It's very Russian and it's very traditional. I would expect nothing less. I, however, am not so traditional and prefer the fun side of life, so I'm going to keep calling him Squish if you don't mind. And even if you do, f\*\*k off," she said, smiling at him.

In 30 years, I've never heard my father laugh as loudly as he did when he heard Sephie put Aleksei in his place. Everyone was laughing, even Aleksei. Russian men, particularly older Russian men tended to be hardened and didn't waste time on being overly polite. They understood frankness. They respected it. Much like with Ivan in her apartment kitchen, we all witnessed her earn Aleksei's respect.

"Come, we will talk business while Alyosha licks his wounds," Vitaliy said as he walked to the couches and tables on the patio outside the house. Ivan kept Sephie back for just a minute, having a quiet conversation with her. He still looked concerned, but whatever she said to him made him smile. She was still smiling when she turned to join me on the couch near my father. She happily climbed in my lap to free up more space on the couches for someone else. Ivan took advantage and sat next to us.

I glanced at him, making sure he was good from earlier. He leaned over saying, "checking on her contacts. I don't know a few of these guys. We're all still a little jumpy from Trino's guys."

I nodded once. "Good call," I said as she looked back at both of us. "Adorable. And twitchy," she said.

"I know Sal and Lorenzo orchestrated this coup attempt, but we didn't get around to where they are now. And what of the other bosses? I know Armando is being held, but what of everyone else?" Vitaliy asked.

"Trino took care of Sal's son, Anthony, as well as Lorenzo and Massimo," I said.

"Vitaliy, I don't know if you know about Trino's flair for the dramatic, but it's f\*\*king impressive," Sephie said..

"Explain," my father said.

Sephie glanced at Trino, grinning at him. Trino looked at Vitaliy and said, "I like the theater. I wanted their deaths to make a statement."

Vitaliy looked to Sephie for clarification. "He lit Massimo on fire and threw him off a cliff. Then he chopped off Anthony and Lorenzo's heads and delivered them to Sal."

Vitaliy looked at Trino, almost in admiration. "That is impressive," he said.

Trino laughed. "We do things a little differently in South America. That's tame compared to what I have planned next."

"Where is Sal now?" Vitaliy asked.

"He fled to Italy a couple days after he got Anthony and Lorenzo on his doorstep. He had tunnels under his house that he used to escape. My guys

were watching him," Trino said.

"He's with Ricardo. We're not completely sure, but we think Ricardo has been behind all of this, along with Lorenzo from the beginning," Viktor said.

"Ricardo De Luca?" Vitaliy asked.

"You know him?" I asked.

"Da. He was close associates with Giovanni, before Armando took over for bith. They were in business together regularly. He pitched me a couple of ideas, but I never was interested. I never liked him, although he was never in the illegal side of things," he said.

"We think he's been behind Armando the entire time. Armando isn't who he says he is. He's from a poor family in Italy. His m om was a crack wh ore, even. Very different story from the one he's been giving everyone else. Ricardo and Giovanni are related, but distantly. He's the connection between Armando and Giovanni. He likely placed him with Giovanni in the hopes that he would take over from Giovanni and he could control him," Ivan said.

"Ricardo has also been in business with Lorenzo for years. Once you banished Lorenzo to Sicily, he set up extensive networks throughout Europe. He's been rebuilding his fortune over there with Ricardo's help," Viktor said.

"Why would Ricardo care about controlling Armando if he's not part of that side of the business?" Vitaliy asked.

"That's the question we can't figure out. Either he is and we just haven't found it yet or there's another reason. Armando said he's basically obsessed with Boss. Ricardo has been trying to beat him in business for years, but has never been able to. Boss always has a bigger project going than Ricardo and is always more successful," Ivan said.

Vitaliy looked at me, nodding his head once. "This is why I turned the business over to you so early. I knew you wouldn't f\*\*k it up like the other bosses' children." I chuckled.

"Was Sal in the flesh trade when you were still running things?" Sephie asked Vitaliy

"If he was, I didn't know about it. That's abhorrent. I wouldn't allow it," he said.

"That's how Lorenzo rebuilt his fortune in Sicily. Those are his networks throughout Europe. According to Dario, Sal has been in it for years, too. That's what caused me to find Sephie. I went to their meeting because I'd heard about Sal's son trying to bring it to the city," I said.

"What happened at the meeting?" Vitaliy asked.

"Um, it got a little derailed," Sephie said. She looked at Vitaliy, almost like she was going to be in trouble. She said, "see, I have this problem with my mo uth. I can't not be a di ck sometimes. It tends to get me in trouble."

He looked amused, as he asked again what happened. She sighed. "The bosses knew he was coming and that they were in trouble. It wasn't just about Anthony. The other bosses had raised taxes so they were all in for it. Anthony was supposed to create a diversion, which involved me and was mostly successful, but nobody expected your son to react the way he did when Anthony used me as a distraction. It kind of set off a chain of events that night."

"What did he do to you?" Vitaliy asked, clearly starting to get angry.

Sephie looked at the floor. I could feel the light shaking start in her legs. "First he smacked her a ss so hard that she fell over the table," I said. "She quickly left the room, which gave me the opportunity to teach that kid some manners. Later, he caught her coming out of the kitchen and tried to touch her. She refused so he choked her."

"Boss knew something was wrong when she hadn't returned and neither had he. Anthony had her off the floor by her neck when we found him. Viktor and I took him outside and almost beat him to death that night. He didn't like that," Andrei said.

"Was this before or after he told you his name?" Vitaliy asked Sephie.

"After," she said.

"I'm surprised you didn't ki ll him, then," he said, nonchalantly.

"At the time, I was more worried about her. And I still had an ounce of respect for Salvadori, although that was short lived," I said.

"And what about your guy?" Vitaliy asked Trino.

Trino cursed in Spanish, disgusted at the thought of Martin. "That's also Sal's fault," Sephie said. "Sal convinced Martin to help them overthrow Trino. He involved the Mexican cartels, too. Either Ricardo or Lorenzo or both decided to use the cartels as their army. They needed manpower and they knew it. Overthrowing Trino was the payment for the cartels helping them, but Ricardo knew there likely wouldn't be enough of them left at the end of it all to worry about that. When Tino stayed loval and wouldn't negotiate, they changed their plan slightly. Somewhere along the way, they convinced Martin to help them overthrow Trino, with Sal's goddaughter as payment.

"The same goddaughter that was sleeping with Armando when she first met Martin, let the record reflect," Misha said. I wondered to myself if he would ever get over his hatred for her

"This is all connected nicely, I must say," Vitaliy said.

Sephie snapped her fingers, pointing at him. "Same, Vitaliy. Same." He laughed at her, shaking his head.

"It all points back to Salvadori. And apparently Ricardo," he said. "I still have a few contacts in Italy. I'll see what I can find out about Ricardo."

"We have a way to get rid of him and make the people of the city think the mayor and police are actually doing something, but we also think the mayor is in Sal's pocket. The police commissioner is not, but he can only do so much. The people are ready to revolt against the other bosses. They still love Boss though. They will stand with him if he gets rid of all the other bosses," Ivan said.

"That's your plan? Get rid of all the other bosses?" he asked me. I nodded my head. "What do you need from me?" he asked.

