

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 447

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Sephle

Vitaliy had finally furnished his new house, which was Armando's old house, and had been there for a week. He invited all of us over for dinner the day that Stephen took Armando to the nursing home, as a hit of a celebration, Like we were going to say no to that...

Battista had come back to the city the day before, so he joined us for dinner. He had information on Ricardo and the other three bosses for us, as well as more information on the police commissioner. He was proving to be quite the asset for us.

I'd never been to Vitaliy's house when it was still Armando's house, so this was a bit of an adventure for me. I did make sure to tell him to check all the windows on the first floor before he moved in, just in case. You can never be too careful.

Vitaliy greeted us warmly when we arrived, his smile that showed up quite often now spreading across his face when we walked in. "Sladkaya, I'm happy to see you," he said, opening his arms for me.

"I've missed you, old man," I said, hugging him. I turned to Battista, who had been standing next to Vitaliy. "Battista, it's good to see you again, as well." He took my hand, flipping it over to kiss the back of it, like normal.

"Sephie, it's always a pleasure," he said. He had a devious glint to his eye that made me think he wanted something.

"Out with it, Battista. Who do you need help with?" I asked.

He looked at Vitaliy, who was laughing. He didn't say anything, but he reached into his pocket, pulling out a money clip that was holding a w*d of hundred dollar bills. He counted off five and handed them to Vitaliy, folding the rest back up and putting them back in his pocket. He turned back to me, smiling. "Another business associate I'm unsure about. They'll be here in five days," he said.

"Another woman?" I asked. Adrik was behind me as I greeted Vitaliy and Battista both, but he had pulled me against him when he heard Battista needed me for something.

Battista shook his head no. "Not a woman this time. This guy has been influential in Europe for years, but there's something about him that many people don't like. Only, no one knows why. Vitaliy has met him before, but it's been years. He didn't feel anything off about him then, but the feeling has persisted. You," he said, then paused to look at Adrik and the guys before continuing, "all of you, offer a much more detailed picture. When Ricardo goes down, I have a feeling he's only the first domino. I would like to have those who are connected to me completely vetted before that happens."

"She doesn't go anywhere without all of us," Adrik said, pulling me tighter against him.

"Nor would I want her to. I value all of your insights. I still don't know the specifics of how you're all connected, but I know you are. If this associate can pass this test, then I won't need to worry about them," Battista said.

"Let us know when and where, then," Adrik said.

The conversation turned to small talk. I asked Vitaliy for a tour of the house, since I'd never been there. He gladly obliged, taking my hand and sliding it through his arm as he walked me around the house. I could tell it made the guys slightly itchy to let me go with him alone, but they did.

"How's Ilya working out?" I asked once we were alone.

He exhaled loudly. "Much better than the little flowers. I didn't realize how much I'd come to despise them until they were gone.

He told me his training was not where it should be, but he's quite good already. It won't take any time to catch him up. Most importantly, he wishes to be caught up." He looked down at me, a sly grin on his face. "You inspired him, sladkaya," he said.

"Shut up. When?"

"He saw you with Ivan. He remembers Ivan from when he was younger. He said he wished to be able to hold his own against Ivan as well as you did the other day."

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I laughed. "Ivan still takes it very easy on me, Vitaliy. He shouldn't be that impressed."

He clicked his tongue. "I've seen Ivan fight plenty of times. You made him work. You're very fast."

"Not as fast as I was. I'm still trying to get it back, but it's coming."

"Keep training like you did the other day and Ivan won't have to hold back at all with you," he said, patting my hand as we continued our house tour.

Once we were back with everyone else, Battista filled us in on what he'd found out about Ricardo and the other three bosses.

"We don't know exactly when yet, but Niko and Vito, are planning on returning to the city. We don't even know exactly why they're returning to the city, but we think it's because the underbosses have stopped collecting the taxes in their absence. They're running short of cash," Battista said.

"The underbosses have been keeping very low profiles," Ivan said. "They heard what happened to Anthony, Lorenzo, and Massimo. They're scared."

"They also know no one has seen Armando or Dario in months. The rumors abound about what happened to those two," Stephen said.

"You have them both, no?" Battista asked. Adrik simply nodded his head, which kept the rest of us from saying anything further.

"We have eyes on all of them, so when Niko and Vito leave, we'll be able to notify you. I'm not sure if you want to pick them up at the airport or let them come back to the city," Battista said.

Adrik was quiet for a moment, which meant he was weighing his options. "If we let them come back to the city, it might lull them into a false sense of security. We can also see just how loyal those underbosses are going to be. My guess is not that loyal, given that they've all taken a vacation while the bosses have been away. Might be fun to crush them a little bit before we grab them," Ivan said.

"What are your plans for them? Same as Armando?" Vitaliy asked.

I could feel Adrik's anger, just under the surface, as he thought about what to do with Niko and Vito. Battista didn't know about his eyes changing or Ivan's eyes changing yet. Tonight might be the night he found out.

He looked to me, asking for my thoughts. Instead of saying anything, I just thought about Stephen breaking Niko and Vito the same way he did. Armando. I saw the look on Adrik's face that meant my eyes had changed to purple. It was half enchantment, half disappointment. He looked back at his father, nodding his head once.

"Where are you at with the mayor? That could help determine your plan for Niko and Vito," Battista asked.

"He's currently looking through most of what we have on Ricardo. We kept back some of it until we know for sure he's willing to move on it. We told him we have Dr. Moretti. He was going to meet with his DA to see what they could actually charge him with. Since no one but Sephie can remember him, it's difficult to charge him there. There's also no evidence that he's the one that created brawn, past what Sal's security guy told us. I'm not turning him over if he's going to walk free," Adrik said.

"We checked out the DA. He's also good. At least for now. If there's a way to charge him, he'd be willing to do so." Battista thought for a minute more, adding, "perhaps we can help them find evidence that will hold up in court. Has anyone been to Sal's house since he left

"No. He's still got security there, the last time we checked. But I can't say I wouldn't like to go take a look to see what we could find," Viktor said.

"How much security? Can you guys get past it?" Battista asked. "I only ask because I know Ricardo likes to keep records. If Sal has been working with him, then he will also like to keep records. What we're looking for could very well be in his house."

"I'll have a team check it out in the morning." Viktor said. "Depending on how many guys he has on the house, we might be able to get in and get out without anyone knowing."

Misha clapped his hands together. "I love breaking and entering."

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