

## King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 512

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Adrik

"That's because you did not see the statements he's making," Misha said. He looked just as troubled as Sephie felt. I glanced at Stephen, who had gotten his anger under control. He nodded once, walking to Misha. He didn't even ask; he just grabbed his hand to help him clear what he'd just witnessed.

Viktor walked over after Stephen was done. "We're going to start being more proactive about this. This needs to happen before you guys go looking for anything pertaining to Martin or Ricardo. I think it will help," he said, putting his hand on Misha's shoulder lighting his aura up for all of us to see. We could clearly see the dark spot as we saw Kostya float down and land in Viktor's hand.

As Viktor and Kostya fixed Misha, Stephen walked to Sephie. He didn't bother making her move from my arms. He just took one of her hands, quietly helping her release the bad she'd just witnessed. I could feel her instant relief as Stephen helped her open everything back up. It wasn't as bad as when we helped Battista with his associate, but I could still feel her struggling with what to do with what she'd just seen.

She sighed, her body relaxing as Stephen finished and Viktor took his place. He didn't make her move either, he just held the same hand that Stephen had. She had a dark spot almost in the same spot as Misha when Viktor lit her up. Kostya fixed it quickly, once again making her feel lighter.

She inhaled deeply. She didn't move from my chest, but she said, "Martin is using religion as a weapon right now. His demon is making a mockery of every religious symbol Spanish people hold dear. I think that's why the Mexicans are scared of him. They likely don't know he's legit possessed by a demon, but they probably suspect it given his actions." She glanced at Misha, who looked lighter again as well, but both were still troubled with what they'd witnessed. "I do find it ironic that the Mexicans, who are known for being some of the cruelest cartels in the world, are scared of him right now."

Misha looked at Ivan. "That should tell you all you need to know about why the Mexicans are scared of him."

"Maybe we need to adjust our plans and take care of Martin first," Andrei said. "If innocent people are dying, we shouldn't leave him to last."

"Agreed," Ivan said.

"I also agree. I want to find out what Trino knows. We'll meet him tomorrow night. I'm not sure he knows the extent of what's happening. He didn't seem to think it was as urgent as it is," I said. "That could turn out to be a bigger problem, if the people he has keeping an eye on Martin aren't giving him the full truth."

We moved to the back room to the couches to finish our discussion of what to do about our plans. I pulled Sephie into my lap, leaning her back against me. She felt better, but she was still quiet after she and Misha had found Martin.

"Is the mayor ready for Dr. Moretti?" Ivan asked.

"Yeah. He said he's ready to hold a press conference announcing his arrest. He's the first domino. He can be linked to Sal, who can be linked to Henry, who can be linked to the switch-hitting representative. The only thing I'm uncertain of is how Sal and Ricardo are going to react to finding out he's in police custody. I'm hoping that most of the underbosses have been taken care of today, which will be a very obvious sign that Sal and Ricardo are no longer welcome in the city. By anyone," said.

"Has Battista gotten the information on what kind of demon Sal made a deal with? Do we know how to deal with him?" Stephen asked.

I shook my head. "I haven't heard anything on it yet. It sounded like his psychic that he's been using gets information sporadically from whatever she's using."

"I kind of want to know what she's using to get information. Not that we don't have alternative means of getting information, but it seems weird," Sephie said. "I also understand that I have no grounds to call anyone else weird."

Viktor's deep laugh filled the room. "Kostya said you are a little weird, but it's part of your charm." I could feel Sephie's happiness at hearing his laugh. The more things returned to normal between Viktor and the rest of us, the happier she got about it. I didn't even have to ask him to help Misha and Sephie tonight. He just stepped up and did it. It was nice to see.

"He's not allowed to use words like that. He's grounded," Sephie said, crossing her arms across her chest.

Viktor laughed once more, adding, "you might feel better once you know that the deal Sal made is not to the same level as Ricardo or Martin. Stephen will be effective with Niko, Vito, and Sal. Boss will be needed for Ricardo and Martin. He also says we need to be prepared for what will happen when Boss takes care of Ricardo and Martin, but it's not time yet." He looked at all of our puzzled faces with a sympathetic, knowing look of his own. "Yeah, trust me. I hate the cryptic messages as much as anyone. Little sh\*t won't budge though. Doesn't matter how I try to get more info out of him."

"He apparently takes after his old man," Ivan said, seriously, causing Viktor's deep belly laugh to fill the room once more.

"I can't say I haven't been thinking about what is going to happen when Boss sends Ricardo and Martin to Hell. I have questions," Stephen said.

"I think we all do. The main one being how the f\*ck do I even do it," I said, trying not to laugh.

Sephie wrapped my arms around her waist tighter, hugging my arms to her. She could feel my frustration over everything. "I think like most things that have happened with us, it's going to be something that likely just happens exactly when we need it to happen. Or else you get a visit from someone who explains it to you before it happens. We seem to have enough extra help around us that everything falls into place exactly when it's meant to."

We were all quiet for a few moments, contemplating the unknown that we were facing. It was Andrei that broke the silence. "Can someone explain what the difference is between when Stephen is needed and when Boss is needed? I'm still really fuzzy on that detail."

Sephie snapped her fingers, pointing at him. "Same, Bubba. Same."

They all looked to me like I should have this answer. "Bold of you all to assume I'd have that answer," I said, smirking at them. Sephie laughed softly, leaning her head back against my shoulder so she could look at me.

"Did my dad offer any insight into it when he leveled you up?" she asked.

I sighed, thinking back to the conversation I had with Sephie's dad. "Not really. He just told me I'd be able to do it. We talked more about other things, including you," I said, kissing her neck.

"Okay, so what do we know already?" Stephen asked. "Armando's demon was running the show, but apparently not strong enough that Boss's skillset was needed to take care of him. It seems to be the same for the other bosses. What's the difference with Ricardo and Martin?"

"Maybe they needed to agree to more that the other bosses wouldn't agree to. Maybe Armando's demon didn't own his soul, per se, but had still taken over in this body. Ricardo and Martin's demons own their souls?" Ivan theorized.

"That makes sense to me," Sephie said. "I'm also curious whether Ricardo and Martin are the ones that initiated the deal. It feels more like Armando just gave in to his demon. Like as much as I hate him, he didn't have an easy childhood. Feels like he just gave in to evil and accepted that's how life was supposed to go. His demon saw an opportunity and took it. Ricardo and Martin are next level somehow."

She had been fidgeting with my hands while she thought through the situation out loud with all of us. I could feel the goosebumps rising over my arms the more she talked. "Look at me," I said when she was finished. She turned toward me, her deep purple eyes making it obvious she was on the right track.

"Purple?" she asked when she saw my familiar smirk that meant her eyes had changed. I nodded.

"Your dad did tell me that the deals Ricardo and Martin made were such that their souls would be tied to those demons for eternity. Armando is now separated from his demon, so his soul gets a fresh start in the next life. For whatever reason, Ricardo and Martin can't be separated from their demons now, so they both go to Hell," I said.

"I realize we don't have specifics on why that is, but I would like to know why that is, at some point," Stephen said. "Not just because I'm having performance anxiety knowing my particular set of skills are ineffective against those two, either."

I could feel Sephie's irritation at Stephen's words. I knew he was about to get reprimanded.

"Don't do that, Stephen. Your soul isn't as old as ours. Your demon likely isn't either. You've already come up with your own level up that nobody saw coming. Who's to say that won't continue? Who's to say that both of you won't be needed at some point so you also learn how to do it? Demon crushing is still, and will always be on the table, for you. Stop comparing yourself to others."

He had a sly grin that was turning up one side of his mouth as he tried not to laugh at her being miffed with him. He looked at her for a moment, then said, "you know that feeling that I imagine kids have when their parents admonish them for any kind of negative self-talk? Yeah, that's me right now. I just got scolded. Why am I so happy about it though?" He finally let a quiet laugh out.

"You're happy about it because you know she loves you. We all do. Your gift is pretty b\*dass on its own, man. I don't know that I'd want the responsibility of having to condemn people for eternity," Misha said.

"It's not something I plan to use often. Assuming I ever figure out how to use it in the first place," I said.

"We're a team. We've always been a team. We'll always be a team. Just like before we met Sephie, we each have unique talents that we bring to the table and the team is stronger because of it. Just 'cause we can do weird sh\*t now doesn't mean that changes," Ivan said. I could feel his irritation that Stephen would doubt himself, even.

"You're so eloquent, Squish," Sephie said, giggling.

"One other point that Sephie's dad brought up was that it had to be all of us for this to work. No one is more important than anyone else. It's all or nothing. We're all here, together, in this lifetime for a reason. We all found each other for this. Just like Ivan said, we'll always be a team. Each member is just as important as the next," I said.

Stephen was looking at the floor, leaned forward with his elbows on his knees as we talked. His sly grin spread across his face once more as he looked up at all of "So this is what having a real family is like."