

# King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 345

chapter 345, that is the first chapter of the second book. There is no longer a need to go to the separate book. The second book is also not complete yet, but will be soon. Apologies for the confusion, this was not my

decision to make.

Sephie

As Adrik and Ivan were walking away from the kitchen, I asked everyone's input on the type of cookie I should be making. I had no idea they would all have such strong feelings on what kind of cookie they needed, but it turned into quite a spirited debate.

"I just feel like regular chocolate chip cookies are classic. Timeless, really," Misha said. "Like me."

"But they're boring. And overdone. And sometimes you get one that makes you wish you hadn't taken a bite of cookie," Stephen said, which made Viktor laugh. His deep belly laugh filled the kitchen."

"Shortbread is the way to go. It might seem plain, but nothing made with that much butter can ever be bad," Andrei said. "And you can also put frosting on them. Win-win."

"I don't know, I agree with both of you, but I feel like Andrei makes a very valid argument with the frosting," I said, laughing at Misha's indignant expression when he found out I agreed more with Andrei.

"You can put frosting on chocolate chip cookies, too," he said.

"Feels like overkill that way," Viktor said.

"I agree with Viktor," I said, walking to the pantry for something. "What about you, Papa Bear? I feel like you're a peanut butter guy. Simple, hardy, dependable, goes well with milk." I could hear his deep laugh as I walked in the pantry.

"You're right. It is my favorite. My wife used to make peanut butter cookies that she would dip in chocolate. It's a miracle I didn't gain 50 pounds the first year we were married. I think I talked her into making those cookies at least once a week," Viktor said. He was smiling as he fondly remembered that period of his life.

"That sounds amazing, if I'm being honest," I said, measuring out ingredients for the still to be determined cookies.

"They were. I don't think there was anything special about them. It was just a peanut butter cookie, dipped in chocolate, but I couldn't get enough of them," he said.

"I'll see if I can recreate them, if you like. But it might not be the same. The chef is always the secret ingredient," I said.

Viktor smiled his sweet smile at me. "I will never turn down anything you make for me, sestrichka."

I winked at Viktor, then turned to Stephen. I studied him for a minute, then said, "sh t, yours is a chocolate cookie, isn't it?"

He laughed. "Why is that a bad thing?"

"Because they're actually the hardest to master. It sounds so simple, but you can f\*\*k up a chocolate cookie faster than anything else. Of course that would be your favorite. They're so deceptively complicated, but when it's right, it's divine. Not unlike you," I said.

"I never would have guessed that talking about our favorite types of cookie would leave me so vulnerably diagnosed, but here we are," Stephen said, laughing.

"What about you, spider monkey?" Andrei asked.

"Guers."

Andrei thought for a moment, squinting his eyes as he tried to analyze me. "Sugar cookie?" he asked like he wasn't sure.

"You're not wrong, but you're not completely right either. Keep going, Bubba," I said.

He thought for a minute more, then I saw him get the answer. "Lemon sugar cookie," he said, his wide smile stretching across his face.

I nodded, unable to hide my amusement at his boyishly handsome smile. "But why, though?" I asked. I didn't think I would stump him with my question, but I did. It was actually Stephen that answered.

"Because it's simple, sweet, with a hint of tangy. Not unlike you," he said, smiling at me.

"Yoden for the win," I said.

"I had the simple part, but it would've taken me longer to get the rest," Andrei said, laughing. "Stephen might be as good as me at reading minds."

"What about Ivan? What are your best guesses for his favorite?" Misha asked.

Stephen and I both looked at each other, grinning. "Biscotti," we both said at the same time.

"Is that even a cookie?" Misha asked.

"It's why it's perfect. Is Ivan even a real person?" Stephen asked, laughing. It just so happened that Ivan and Adrik walked back in right as he said that which caused more laughter from everyone. Stephen apologized when he saw Ivan.

"Don't apologize. I ask myself that question almost daily," Ivan said, laughing with us. "What on earth are you guys discussing?"

"We've been debating what everyone's favorite cookie is and what it says about them," Andrei said, laughing loudly when he saw the look on Ivan and Adrik's faces. "It's actually pretty enlightening," he said, defending our debate. Adrik just laughed, shaking his head.

He walked to me, wrapping his arms around my waist as he stood behind me. I had my hands full, so he rested his chin on my shoulder, watching what I was doing, happy to be near me. "I love you and your randomness," he said, still chuckling.

"Bubba wasn't lying. It's been very enlightening," I said, still laughing.

"What's your favorite cookie, Ivan?" Misha asked.

"I don't really like cookies that much. Or any kind of sweets. I never had it as a kid, so I don't think I ever developed a taste for sweet things. But I'll eat an entire package of biscotti if it's in front of me," he said, smiling.

"You heard them say that, didn't you?" Andrei and Misha both said at the same time.

"Heard who say what?" Ivan asked.

"Stephen and Sephie said that was your favorite cookie before you two came back to the kitchen. That's when I asked if it was even a cookie and Stephen asked if you were actually a real person," Misha said, now even more amused with the conversation than he was before..

"I enjoy the f\*\*kery as much as you do, Misha, but I did not hear them this time. I just heard Stephen ask if I was real. Still undecided, for the record," Ivan said.

Adrik had moved to lean against the counter beside me, his arms folded across his chest. He was watching everyone, laughing at our silliness, enjoying a moment of peace before what we all knew was coming.

"Ok, what about Boss? Who can guess his favorite?" Misha asked. He was not going to let this conversation die yet and I loved him for it.

I glanced at Adrik, searching his eyes for a moment to find the answer. I smiled when I found it.

"Nope. Nope. Sephie's not allowed to answer. She's clearly cheating. Andrei can't answer either. They have a clear advantage," Misha said.

"You're very bossy when it comes to cookies, my adorable Russian guardian."

I watched Ivan and Viktor look at each other, then Viktor said, "it's probably exactly the same one as Sephie. Maybe with a flavor twist, but he

probably likes it because he knew as a 5-year-old that it was her favorite so he made it his too."

I couldn't contain my laughter. Neither could Adrik. "What's her favorite, then?" Adrik asked.

"Lemon sugar cookie," Misha said. "Was Viktor right?"

Adrik laughed. "He was. He was also right about the flavor twist. I like orange better. And they have been my favorite since I was 5. One of my father's chefs used to make them for me regularly when he found out I liked them."

"Why didn't I think of that," Misha said, shaking his head.

"If nothing else, we're having the important conversations here. We're changing the world right now, boys," I said, laughing, I suspected my eyes would turn green, so I looked at Adrik when I said it. I recognized the look on his face, so I closed my eyes briefly, trying to switch them back to normal.

"As much as I've enjoyed this conversation, I also want to know what old friends you have in Panama," Viktor said, looking at Adrik.

"My father," he said. "I just called him."

"I thought he was in Europe?" Viktor said.

"He was during the summer. He likes to migrate south for the winter," Adrik said.

"So, his guys are going after Trino?" Stephen asked.

Adrik nodded his head. "I told him Trino would be there tonight, but he needed a day or two before they got him out, given the situation with his mom. He said he would send a team tonight to make sure Trino stayed safe, but they wouldn't make contact for a couple days."

"Does your father know Trino?" I asked, curious.

"He does. Trino was making a name for himself before I took over for my father. Trino made his move shortly after I took over, partly because we had already worked out a deal for after he took over. The guy he took power from was hated by pretty much everyone. It was in my best interest to support Trino. My father saw it coming a few years before Trino got the idea, although he wasn't sure if it would be Trino or another guy that was similarly positioned as Trino," Adrik said.

"What happened to that guy?"

"He still runs part of Trino's business. He decided he didn't want to be in charge when it came down to it, but he said he'd support Trino in taking over the previous guy," he said.

"What happens after Vitaliy's guys get Trino out of Colombia?" Viktor asked.

"We're going to go fetch him," Adrik said. He looked to me as he said it. I could tell he was uncertain about whether I'd be able to make the trip. Or would want to make the trip.

"Everyone is going to fetch him?" I asked. I knew the answer, but I wanted to toy with him.