

Tea & Treachery: Mini Bonus Scene

(Spoilers ahead!)

This bonus scene extends Chapter Thirty-Eight, immediately after “that scene.”

Glendevyn chuckled. There was a warm light in her eyes. “I’m not going anywhere. We have cookies to make!”

The first time Glendevyn had helped Irdruan bake their grandparent’s cookie recipe, it had ended in horrible, painful embarrassment for both of them. It would take time, Glen thought, for that memory to turn into a source of laughter, but it certainly helped that this second time was pure, tender sweetness.

Ambrosine had gleefully agreed to conspire with her to ambush Irdruan during their staff dinner preparations, and had helped her gather all the ingredients ahead of time. Ambrosine had even sent a bag of almonds down to the village mill to be ground into a flour much finer than they could make by hand.

Irdruan still looked endearingly distracted by their conversation and that kiss. They were *smiling*, lit up with happiness. She hadn’t seen them like this in a long while.

“So,” she prompted, “where do we start?”

Chuckling at themselves, Irdruan pulled their attention back. “Since we’ve got time, let’s toast the almond flour. It’s not strictly necessary, but I love how it brings out the flavor.”

This involved spreading the flour in a wide pan over heat, stirring it so it wouldn’t burn. Glen squeezed in beside them at the stove, snuggling an arm around their waist, and they both took turns with the spatula until the flour started to smell like toasty goodness. Setting it aside to cool, they turned to the other ingredients.

Glen volunteered to mix the wet ingredients together: cracking eggs, measuring out honey and olive oil, and stirring it all together. Irdruan was in charge of grating the zest from the oranges, and the kitchen soon filled with a heady citrus fragrance.

“Ready for this?” Irdruan brought over the bowl of zest and poured it in. As they reached for the flour, though, she caught their wrist.

“Hold on,” she ordered them. With a mischievous smile, she bent her head, inhaling the sharp citrus scent from their skin. “You’re extra delicious now.” Tenderly, she rose up to kiss their cheek.

They turned their head to intercept her lips, stealing a proper kiss. “Mmm. Remind me to bake with you more often.”

“You know that I will.”

“Everyone decent in here?” called Ambrosine’s teasing voice. “Much as I want to give you space, I need to make sure you’re not burning our dinner.”

Glen and Irdruan both laughed. To Glen’s surprise, Irdruan didn’t step away, though they did take a break from the kissing. While Irdruan spooned the dough into little haystack mounds, Glen slipped over to Ambrosine’s side.

“That went well, I take it?” Ambrosine asked with a knowing smile.

“We’re good now. Thank you for helping me—with *all* of this.”

“Aw, you just needed a little nudge.” Squeezing her shoulder, Ambrosine added, “I’m proud of you, Glennie. And I’m so happy for you both.”

“I’m happy too.” Looking around the kitchen at her two best friends—one of them now her beloved—she felt buoyed up with their love. “Things are going to be okay.”

Irdruan's Almond Citrus Cookies

These cookies are easy, tasty, and very forgiving. Crisp on the outside and chewy inside, they share some influences from Italian amaretti, Chinese almond cookies, and wedding cookies, but adapted to the world of the Infinite Pantry.

They call for almond flour and olive oil, which would have been local to the region where Irdruan's grandparent lived, though the Infinite Pantry would import them. Honey would be a more common sweetener than refined sugar, and the Pantry has its own hives. This recipe includes brown sugar and almond extract for a better balance of flavors, but for a more "authentic" and rustic version, you can leave them out, add a couple more tablespoons of honey, and toast the almond flour to up the almond flavor.



Time: half an hour

Yield: about 12-18 cookies

1 3/4 cups almond flour

1/4 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup honey

1 egg

1 1/2 tablespoons mild olive oil

Pinch of salt

1 tsp almond extract, or to taste

Zest of 1 orange



(Optional) Toast almond flour. In a wide pan, heat the flour over medium heat, stirring frequently. When it begins to darken and become fragrant, remove from heat. Don't let it burn!

Heat oven to 350F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Mix together brown sugar, honey, beaten egg. Add olive oil, salt, extract, and zest, stirring to combine. Add cooled almond flour and mix until well blended.

Form dough into rough balls of generous tablespoon size and arrange on tray about 1 inch apart. Bake for 14-16 minutes until golden brown and slightly crispy on the outside. The inside will stay softer.

They keep well in an airtight container at room temperature.

