



*The  
Calendula  
Kitchen*

Bonus Scene • One Year Later

*Marigold Harbor – One Year Later*

# The Calendula Kitchen

## Bonus Scene - One Year Later

*Marigold Harbor, Late Summer*

The bell above the door rang softly, and Sylvia looked up from the counter, brushing a light dusting of flour from her hands.

Morning sunlight streamed through the windows, warmer now than it had been a year ago, or perhaps it only felt that way. The light caught the jars lined along the shelves, the golden calendula petals glowing softly, and the fresh loaves cooling along the wooden table.

The kitchen felt full. Full in the quiet way that comes from belonging.

She smiled as Mrs. Callahan stepped inside, already reaching for her usual loaf.

“Morning, Sylvia.”

“Morning,” Sylvia replied warmly. “The honey loaf is just cooling.”

Mrs. Callahan nodded approvingly. “I figured it would be.”

That had become part of the rhythm now, people knowing what they would find before they arrived. The kitchen had settled into its own quiet reputation, one built slowly over the past year.

Warm bread. Soft conversation. A place to linger.

Sylvia moved toward the table, carefully slicing the first loaf and wrapping it in paper. Outside, she could see the small cluster of calendula flowers blooming along the edge of the walkway, their golden faces turned toward the sun.

Quinn had planted those.

Just after the first autumn winds, when he’d said the space outside the kitchen needed a little more warmth.

She smiled at the memory.

“Busy morning?” Mrs. Callahan asked.

“A little,” Sylvia said. “But the good kind.”

Mrs. Callahan gave her a knowing look. “That’s the best kind.”

The bell rang again. Sylvia didn’t need to look. She already knew.

Quinn stepped inside, sunlight following him briefly before the door closed again. He carried a small wooden crate, and Sylvia caught the familiar hint of fresh herbs before he even set it down.

“Morning,” he said.

His voice still carried that same quiet steadiness.

But now, there was something else too. Ease.

“Morning,” Sylvia replied, her smile softening without her thinking.

Mrs. Callahan chuckled quietly as she accepted her wrapped loaf. “I’ll leave you two to it.”

Sylvia laughed lightly as the older woman stepped out, the bell chiming softly behind her.

Quinn set the crate on the counter.

“Lavender,” he said. “And lemon balm. The garden’s doing well.”

Sylvia leaned slightly to look inside, the fresh green and soft purple filling the crate.

“They’re beautiful.”

Quinn shrugged lightly. “They’re happy.”

She glanced at him. “Like the kitchen?”

He met her gaze. “Like the kitchen.”

There was no need to say more.

Sylvia reached for the lavender, gently placing it into a small jar near the window. The scent drifted softly through the space, blending with warm bread and calendula.

The kitchen held all of it. Warmth. Work. Something quietly built.

“Did you see the harbor this morning?” Quinn asked.

She shook her head. “Not yet.”

“Water’s calm,” he said. “Thought we might walk down later.”

Sylvia nodded, her heart settling at the familiar suggestion. “I’d like that.”

They worked side by side for a few minutes, the rhythm of the kitchen unfolding easily. Dough shaped. Tea prepared. A tray slid into the oven.

After a while, Sylvia paused, glancing around the kitchen.

A year ago, it had felt fragile.

Now... It felt lived in. Worn in the best way.

She reached for Quinn’s hand without thinking, her fingers brushing his lightly before settling.

He looked down at her hand, then back at her.

A quiet smile formed. “You did it,” he said softly.

Sylvia shook her head gently. “We did.”

He nodded. “Yeah.”

The bell rang again, and Sylvia reluctantly released his hand, turning toward the counter as another customer stepped in.

But the warmth remained. The quiet certainty.

The life they had built, not in grand moments, but in days like this.

Later, when the morning slowed and the last tray cooled, Quinn wiped his hands and glanced toward the door.

“Ready?”

Sylvia nodded.

They stepped outside together, the afternoon sun warm but gentle, the calendula blooms swaying lightly in the breeze.

The harbor stretched ahead, calm and familiar. They walked side by side, hands finding each other naturally, the path worn now from many quiet walks.

A year ago, everything had been uncertain.

Now... The kitchen behind them glowed softly in the sunlight.

The harbor stretched ahead.

And the life between them felt steady.

Quinn gave her hand a gentle squeeze.

“Still feels like home?” he asked.

Sylvia smiled, looking toward the water, then back at him. “More every day.”

Together, they continued along the harbor path, the breeze carrying the scent of salt and calendula, the quiet rhythm of Marigold Harbor moving gently around them.

And as the afternoon settled softly into place, Sylvia knew, just as she had a year ago, that some of the best things in life grow slowly.

And are all the stronger for it.