

A Favor 141

Chapter 141

Cheese had become my go-to craving, no matter the hour. I'd get these weird cravings at the worst times, and Davidson always made sure our kitchen was well stocked. He was unbelievably patient, even when my mood shifted constantly.

The truth was, sometimes he got more frustrated than I did, and it made me feel guilty. The exhaustion, the hormones, and the waiting had me on edge. Whenever I snapped, I apologized right away, and he always accepted it with a smile.

I turned to him and kissed his lips. "Thank you, Davidson. I love you," I whispered.

"I love you too, sweetheart," he replied, his eyes shining.

I headed back to the bedroom slowly, one hand supporting my enormous belly. At that point, anyone would've guessed I was carrying twins. Just as I reached the doorway, a sudden, sharp pain tore through me. It wasn't exactly a cramp, and I knew instantly what it meant.

"Winona, are you okay?" Davidson rushed over, his face full of worry.

"I think that was a contraction," I said, steadying myself.

“What? Oh my God!” He nearly bolted from the room. “We have to go to the hospital!” He lunged for the bag we’d packed for delivery.

I couldn’t help laughing as I caught his arm before he could sprint away. He spun back to me, breathless.

“Why are you stopping me? We have to go!” he insisted.

“Davidson, relax. It was just one contraction. Call Elsa and talk to her. We don’t need to leave yet. We should wait until the contractions are four or five minutes apart, or until my water breaks,” I reminded him.

“Right. Of course. I’m sorry.” He ran a hand through his hair, letting out a nervous laugh. “Go to bed and drink your tea with cheese. I’ll call Elsa.”

Elsa was our midwife.

I slipped beneath the sheets, grateful for the comfort of our own bed. Davidson brought me the tea and cheese before stepping out to call her. I just hoped it wasn’t another false alarm.

A few minutes later, he returned, a little calmer than before.

“Elsa’s on her way. She told me to relax, maybe have a shower, but if the contractions get worse before she arrives, we’ll meet her at the hospital,” he said, sitting on the bed beside me. “Just think, Winona—by this time tomorrow, we could be holding our little girl.”

“I hope so, sweetheart. I really hope it’s for real this time,” I said.

“Me too. Do you want me to run you a bath, or would you rather stay here and rest?” he asked gently.

“Let me lie down for a little while,” I said with a tired smile, resting my head on his chest.

“Oh my God—damn it!” I groaned, clutching my belly.

Three hours had passed since the contractions started. Now they were fast and intense, only a few minutes apart. Davidson, Elsa, and I had already grabbed everything and were on our way to the hospital, and every bump in the road made the pain spike even more.

“Breathe, Winona,” Elsa said from the front seat.

“Please don’t tell me to breathe,” I snapped, then added quickly, “Sorry.”

“Trust me, I’ve heard worse in a delivery car,” she joked, and it even made me laugh—until the next contraction hit.

I squeezed Elsa’s hand with one of mine and Davidson’s with the other, trying to breathe through the pain.

“We’re almost there, sweetheart,” Davidson choked out, rubbing my back.

Moments later, we pulled up to the hospital. Elsa had called ahead, so a nurse was waiting with a wheelchair. I didn’t like the idea—I could walk, even in labor—but neither Elsa nor Davidson would agree. Sure enough, the moment we stopped, someone in scrubs hurried out to meet us.

“Mr. Briggs?” the nurse called.

“Yes, that’s me. I’ve reserved a private room,” Davidson replied, his voice calm and steady.

I couldn’t help rolling my eyes. Honestly, I would’ve been fine in a regular room, but Davidson insisted on something more comfortable for us. He caught my look and laughed, but it only made me glare until he stopped. He helped me into the chair, holding my hand tightly as the nurse wheeled me inside. Soon enough, they brought us to our room.

The private room definitely had a few extra touches. I still thought I would’ve managed perfectly well in a standard one, but I knew Davidson only wanted the best for us. Before long, the doctor and a nurse came in, helped me off the wheelchair, and settled me into the bed. They did quick checks, making sure everything looked good.

“Just a little longer, Mrs. Briggs. I see here you chose gas and air for pain relief. Is that still what you want?” the doctor asked with a reassuring smile.

“Yes, that’s right,” I answered, nodding.

Technically, I still wasn’t married to Davidson, but I liked being called that.

“I’ll be back to check on you in a bit,” the doctor said before leaving the room.

My water still hadn’t broken, and the doctor said we needed to wait a little longer. Elsa stayed close, keeping an eye on everything. Davidson climbed onto the bed beside me, wrapped his arms around me, and held me tight.

“Can you believe it, sweetheart? I can’t believe we’re finally about to meet our baby,” Davidson whispered in my ear.

“We still haven’t decided on her name,” I managed, my voice barely above a whisper.

“I think I love the name Sofia Winter Briggs,” he suggested, watching my face for approval.

"I do too. It's perfect," I whispered, kissing him gratefully on the lips.

Just then, the nurse returned and adjusted my gas and air. Relief washed through me; everything was starting to hurt so much more, and I welcomed anything that could help.

"If you need anything, just press the call button. The doctor will be back soon," she said with an encouraging smile before stepping out again.

Davidson left for a moment to call our parents. We'd both made them promise we'd let them know the second anything happened, no matter what time it was. When he came back, he brought me a cup of crushed ice, his face flushed with excitement.

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"My mom and my sister will be here in an hour. Your parents are booking the first flight they can. Everyone's on the way. I can't wait to meet our daughter, Winona." His eyes filled with tears. "I swear, loving you and knowing you're having our baby makes me love you even more."

"Me too," I said, starting to cry at the weight of it all. Tears slid down my cheeks as everything hit me at once.

I just hoped the waiting wouldn't last much longer. Barely had the thought crossed my mind when I felt a sudden pop and a rush of warmth beneath me, soaking the bed.

"Davidson, I think you should call Elsa and the doctor," I said, trying to keep my voice steady. "I'm pretty sure my water just broke."

He moved instantly, barely pausing before he sprinted out the door for help. Within minutes, Elsa and the doctor were back, surrounding me and checking my progress. Everything turned into a whirlwind of motion—hands guiding me, voices soothing me, making sure I was as comfortable as possible. The contractions grew stronger and faster, leaving me breathless between each one.

And then I understood: our little girl was on her way. I knew it could still be a long wait, but every wave of pain brought us one step closer to finally meeting her.

Davidson's POV:

"Just push a little more, Winona. Push harder, sweetheart, and your baby will be here," the midwife encouraged gently.

Winona had been in labor for more than twelve hours, her strength nearly spent. But with one final, determined push, she gave everything she had left. A moment later, the sweetest sound I had ever heard filled the room—our daughter's first cry.

"You did it. You have a beautiful little girl," the midwife said, guiding my hand as I cut the umbilical cord before carefully placing our daughter on Winona's chest.

I stood beside them, watching Winona look at our baby for the first time. There was so much love in her eyes it was almost overwhelming.

"Davidson... she's here," Winona whispered through tears. "We have our little girl. She's so beautiful."

I leaned down and kissed her forehead.

“You were incredible, sweetheart. I’m so proud of you. She’s truly beautiful—just like her mother,” I whispered, tears streaming down my face. “She’s perfect.”

The midwife lifted our daughter for a moment so I could have my turn, settling her gently against my chest for skin-to-skin contact.

“Welcome to the world, little one,” I murmured, stroking her tiny cheek with my fingertips as tears fell. I could hardly believe she was ours.

I never imagined how surreal it would feel to hold my daughter for the first time. For a long moment, I just stared at her, caught in awe, not wanting to let her go. She was perfect in every way.

After I held her for a moment, the midwife smiled and said, “We’re going to weigh her and clean her up, then we’ll bring her right back.”

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I leaned down and kissed the top of her soft little head before handing her over. Once she was in the nurse’s arms, I knelt beside Winona’s bed and brushed her hair back from her face. She looked at me, her lips curved into a sweet, exhausted smile, her eyes full of tears.

“You were amazing, my love. Seeing you like that... I didn’t think I could love you more, but somehow I do. I’m so proud of you,” I whispered, caressing her cheek.

She was completely drained, but she still lifted her hand to touch my face, warm and soft.

“I love you,” she murmured, barely a whisper.

“I love you too,” I replied.

Soon after, the nurse returned with our baby, clean and wrapped snugly in a soft blanket. She placed her in Winona’s arms.

“Is she okay?” Winona asked anxiously.

“She’s absolutely perfect. A very healthy little girl—she weighs 3.9 kilos. Have you chosen a name?” the nurse asked with a warm smile.

“Yes. Her name is Sofia Winter Briggs,” I said, beaming.

“Such a beautiful name for a beautiful girl,” the nurse said kindly. “Would you like to try breastfeeding? Is that what you’re planning?”

“Yes, I’d like to... if she’ll take to it,” Winona replied, her smile hopeful.

The nurse guided Winona patiently, helping little Sofia latch. It took a few tries, but soon Sofia began to nurse, and relief washed over Winona’s face, as if a weight had lifted.

“Do you feel comfortable now? We’ll give you some time alone. We’ll come back in a little while to help you freshen up, and hopefully you can get some rest,” the nurse said with a gentle smile.

We both nodded and thanked her as the staff quietly stepped out, leaving the three of us alone. I pulled a chair close to the bed. Winona looked completely captivated by our daughter. She couldn’t stop smiling, her fingers softly tracing Sofia’s little face, playing with her tiny hands and feet.

I couldn’t help smiling as I watched her. I felt like the luckiest man alive. Wanting to capture this moment, I took out my phone and snapped a photo of Winona gazing at our baby, her eyes full of love. I’d never seen anything so beautiful.

Winona took my hand, and our eyes met.

“I can’t believe we created this perfect little person, Davidson. She’s so sweet. I already love her with everything in me. Look at her—she’s perfect. She has your eyes and your nose,” she said with a light, awed laugh.

“She really is perfect... just like you,” I said, leaning in to kiss her lips, then kissing the top of our daughter’s head. “I love her more than I ever imagined. And I love you, Winona. We’re holding our daughter. We’ve made our family—our own little family.”

Sofia soon fell asleep in Winona’s arms. I sat there in wonder, watching them together, still trying to understand how I’d gotten so lucky—what I’d done to deserve any of this. This was everything I’d ever wanted: a little family of my own, and Winona was the one who gave it to me. I’d never felt so complete.

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The room stayed quiet, wrapped in a peaceful hush as we both watched our daughter. She was truly beautiful—though I was convinced she got it from her mother.

“Sweetheart, would you like to freshen up and rest for a bit? Or would you rather let everyone waiting outside come in to meet your little one?” the midwife asked.

“Can I shower first, and then let everyone in?” Winona suggested.

“Of course. Dad, do you feel comfortable holding the baby for a little while? Would you like to try dressing her, or would you prefer help?” the nurse asked.

“I’d like to do it myself, if that’s okay,” I said with a smile as the nurse carefully placed Sofia in my arms.

While the nurses checked on Winona, making sure she didn't need stitches or anything extra, I sat with Sofia, cradling her gently and stroking her tiny fingers. Thankfully, Winona didn't need stitches, and soon the nurses helped her out of bed and into a wheelchair so she could freshen up.

"See you soon, my love. I love you," I whispered, leaning in to kiss the top of her head before she left.

"I love you too. I'll see you in a little bit," Winona said with a smile as the nurses wheeled her toward the bathroom.

I grabbed the baby bag and carefully laid Sofia on the changing pad, my hands trembling slightly. I found the outfit Winona had chosen for her first day: soft pink with little flowers—the one she'd shown me weeks ago.

I was nervous. Terrified I'd do something wrong, or worse, hurt her by accident.

"You'll be fine," Elsa said gently as she stepped closer.

"What if I mess it up?" I blurted, panic clear in my voice.

"You'll do great, Davidson. Take your time and be gentle. I'll stay right here with you," Elsa said, calm as always.

I took a deep breath and carefully unwrapped Sofia, handing her blanket to Elsa. She passed me a tiny diaper, talking me through every step—how to fold it, how to fasten it—keeping her hand on my shoulder the whole time, never rushing me. Dressing Sofia turned out to be much easier than I expected. All my worries melted away the moment I lifted her into my arms.

I sank into the chair, cradling her against my chest. Elsa slipped out quietly, leaving the two of us alone for the first time.

“Hi, sweetheart. Welcome to the world. I’m your dad. I promise I’ll love you and protect you every day of your life. No one will ever hurt you—not while I’m here. Your mom and I already love you more than anything, sweet girl,” I whispered, my voice soft and full of awe.

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I sat there, completely mesmerized, trying to absorb the fact that I’d helped bring this little girl into the world. I had no idea a feeling like this existed until I looked at her—she was only an hour old, and yet I already felt an aching need to protect her, to love her with everything I had. Maybe this was what being a father really meant. All I could think about was how badly I wanted to be like my dad, because he was everything a father should be.

“Your grandpa would have adored you, sweetheart. He would’ve spoiled you so much. I know he’s here with us somehow, watching over you. If I can be even half the father he was, I’ll count myself lucky. I wish you could’ve met him. But I promise your other grandparents will love you just as much. And your aunts will spoil you too,” I murmured, stroking her tiny hand.

I never imagined it was possible to feel this happy—so full of emotion all at once. Looking at Sofia, I couldn’t help thinking about the future. Someday, maybe in a few years, she might have a little brother or sister. Maybe two or three. Of course, that would be our secret for now. There was no need to tell Mom my plan.

"I love you, Sofia Winter Briggs," I whispered, kissing the top of her head.

What more could a man ask for in this life?

Winona's POV:

The midwife guided me gently back to the room once I'd changed into clean pajamas. My whole body ached, and I felt like I could fall asleep standing up, but all I wanted was a little more time with my daughter. I wanted to introduce her to the rest of the family waiting outside. I could hardly believe how perfect she was.

It still felt surreal knowing Davidson and I had created this beautiful baby together. When I stepped back into the room, I was met with a sight that nearly made me cry. Davidson was asleep in the chair, Sofia curled in his arms, both of them peaceful and still. The moment was too perfect to let pass, so I quietly pulled out my phone and took a few pictures.

"Typical, isn't it? The mother does all the work, and the father takes a nap with the baby," one of the midwives joked behind me, her laugh warm and contagious.

Her teasing made everyone chuckle, easing some of the tension and exhaustion in the room. I slowly rose from the wheelchair and made my way over to where Davidson sat with our daughter. I leaned down and pressed a soft kiss to his cheek. He woke a moment later, smiling at me—sleepy and warm.

"Hi, sweetheart. How are you feeling?" he asked, brushing my hair back.

"I'm okay. Just sore... and really tired," I whispered.

"I'm sorry, baby. I hope you feel better soon," Davidson said, glancing at Elsa. "Let's put her back in her bed for now. Elsa, could you help me with Sofia for a second?"

Elsa stepped forward and carefully lifted Sofia from his arms. Davidson turned to me, wrapped an arm around my waist, and guided me back to the bed. He leaned down and kissed the top of my head, and even after all this time, my heart thudded like it did in the beginning.

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He helped me settle in, and soon Elsa placed Sofia in my arms with gentle care. As I cradled her, she blinked and opened her eyes, staring up at me. They were a bright blue—so clear and beautiful. I knew they might change in the coming days.

"Well, hello there, my sweet girl," I whispered, my heart overflowing. "You're perfect. Yes, you are."

I'd never seen anything so tiny and beautiful as Sofia. There was something so pure and innocent about her that I could barely look away. I lifted a hand and softly stroked her cheek, watching her eyes flutter closed again. A quiet smile tugged at my lips. It still didn't feel real that she was mine.

"Are you ready for the rest of the family to come in?" the midwife asked gently from the doorway.

“Yes, please,” I replied, my smile widening.

I couldn’t wait to introduce her to everyone. I knew they’d fall in love with her as quickly as I had. Davidson stepped into the hallway and told them they could come in. In an instant, the room filled with hugs, happy tears, and the rustle of gift bags. Every face softened as they gathered around Sofia. Seeing her surrounded by people who already loved her so fiercely filled me with joy.

After an hour, our family began heading home. I didn’t want them to leave, but they needed rest. The room grew quiet again, leaving only the three of us. I fed Sofia, then Davidson lifted her carefully and tucked her into the bassinet beside my bed. He slipped under the covers next to me, and I immediately curled into his chest. He held me tight, as always, his arms soothing and steady.

“I think everyone’s already fallen in love with Sofia,” he said, kissing my forehead with a smile.

“I think you’re right. Can you blame them? She’s perfect,” I murmured.

“She really is,” he said, his smile full of pride. “And, Winona... I’m so proud of you.” He kissed the top of my head. “You gave me the most wonderful gift—our daughter. She’s so lucky to have you as her mother.”

“She’s lucky to have both of us, Davidson. Not just me,” I smiled, brushing my lips against his neck.

“We have our little girl, and in two months it’ll be our wedding day. You’ll finally be Mrs. Winona Briggs, and I can’t wait,” he said happily.

“And I can’t wait to be your wife, Davidson,” I whispered, warmth blooming in my chest.

He leaned in and kissed me—soft and tender—sending heat shivering through me. Even though it was quick, it left me breathless. He pulled the blanket up over us, and I nestled closer, resting my head against his chest.

I could hear his heart pounding, a sound I’d come to adore. Mine raced the same way whenever we were together. It might sound cheesy, but it was true—my heart really did beat for him. And in that moment, I realized I didn’t want to wait two more months to marry him.

“Davidson, I don’t want to wait. Is there any way to move up the wedding? I don’t care if it’s something simple—nothing expensive or complicated,” I asked.

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“Sweetheart, I don’t care about money or any of that. If that’s what you want, we’ll do it.” He propped himself up a little, his face bright with emotion. “You want to move the date up?”

Hearing him say it made me laugh with relief. I wasn’t the only one who wanted it sooner.

“Yes. I want to be your wife as soon as possible. Can we really make it happen?” I asked, hope swelling in my voice.

“Winona, I’d do anything for you. You know that.” He smiled. “I’ll make some calls. When do you want to move the wedding to?”

“In the next few weeks, if it’s possible,” I suggested, hope shining through.

“I’ll see what I can do,” he said with a wink, kissing me quickly before sliding out of bed. He looked suddenly energized as he grabbed his phone and stepped into the hallway, already dialing.

Maybe it seemed impulsive to change our wedding date so quickly, but I didn’t care. I just wanted to be Mrs. Winona Briggs soon. I wanted to stand beside Davidson as his wife and share the same last name as our little girl.

Turning onto my side, I watched Sofia sleep peacefully, her tiny chest rising and falling. My heart filled every time I looked at her. For the next twenty minutes, I got lost in the soft sound of her breathing and the simple joy of being her mother. Sleep started to tug at me, but then I heard the door open.

Davidson rushed back in, grinning from ear to ear, his face lit with excitement.

“Guess what, sweetheart?” he said, hurrying to my side.

“What is it?” I asked, pushing myself up a little, curiosity sparking at the look on his face.

“We have a new wedding date. Three weeks from now—it’s the soonest they could fit us in,” he said, glowing.

“Really?” My voice shook with happiness. “How did you do that?”

“You know me. I can be pretty convincing when I need to be.” He smiled, shrugging slightly.

I had a feeling there was more to it, but Davidson wasn’t about to reveal his secrets. And I didn’t care. All that mattered was that I’d be marrying the love of my life sooner than I ever imagined.

“I can’t believe you pulled it off,” I whispered, smiling as I covered his face with kisses.

“Sweetheart, my job is to make you happy. You and our little princess are everything to me. I’d do anything for you,” he said, gently twirling a strand of my hair around his finger. “In three weeks, we’ll be standing side by side, ready to start the next chapter. I can’t wait for that day.”

He climbed back into bed and told me all the details. Then he softened his voice.

“Now please, get some rest, okay? We’ll talk more later.”

“Okay. Will you stay with me? Will you watch her?” I asked.

“I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.” He kissed my forehead. “Now close your eyes, sweetheart. I love you.”

"I love you too. Thank you for everything, Davidson. Thank you for loving me," I whispered, sleep pulling me under.

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"Thank you for letting me love you. I plan to do it for the rest of my life," he murmured.

Those were the last words I heard before I drifted off, a happy smile on my lips, sleeping more peacefully than I ever had.

Davidson's POV:

Nerves had me restless, pacing around my room.

"Davidson, what's going on? You look way too nervous," said Ryan, my best friend and best man, stopping right in front of me.

"I can't stop thinking about everything. I'm about to marry the woman who changed my life and gave me a daughter. What if I mess it all up? What if one day she decides she doesn't want this anymore?" I said, running a hand through my hair.

Every emotion seemed to crash over me at once—happiness, anticipation, anxiety, fear—all tangled together. No matter how hard I tried to push it away, part of me still worried she'd leave me, the way Leona did, even though Winona was nothing like her.

My heart had never belonged to anyone the way it belonged to Winona. I refused to throw that away. Losing her would be unbearable. I wanted to be the husband and father she deserved, but a small part of me still wondered if I would ever be enough.

"Don't be ridiculous. Winona loves you with everything she has, Davidson. Anyone can see it. She's nothing like Leona. You two are made for each other, and you know it. You'll be an incredible husband and an even better father. Trust me. Now have a drink and try to relax," Ryan said, pressing a glass of whiskey into my hand.

With a shaky exhale, I nodded and finally took a sip.

"I'm ready. Don't tell me you're trying to stall now," he said, bursting out laughing.

"Are you kidding? I'm not about to miss the chance to marry the woman I love. Let's go." With that, I flashed Ryan a wide smile and headed into the hall, where I could already see the crowd settling into their seats.

Sunlight spilled over the garden—exactly the way Winona had always dreamed for our wedding day. Around two hundred friends and family gathered, their faces bright with excitement. I took several deep breaths and made my way to the altar, pausing to greet the people closest to me. My mother, Winona's mother, and my sweet baby girl were seated in the front row, waiting.

It had been three weeks since Sofia came into the world, but she already seemed completely at home. There was something sharp and bright in her eyes—an intelligence that made things a little easier for us as first-time parents.

“How are you holding up, son?” Winona’s mother asked.

“Honestly? I’m a bundle of nerves,” I admitted, “but I couldn’t be happier to marry your daughter.” I smiled widely, then hugged her quickly and lifted Sofia into my arms.

She looked like a little princess in her pink dress, with a matching bow. She was beautiful, and every day she looked more like Winona.

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“Hey, sweetheart. You know it’s almost time for Daddy to marry Mommy. Your mom’s about to make me a real gentleman—she really is,” I whispered, holding her close.

“I’m so glad you’re here, princess. You mean everything to me. I love you,” I added, kissing the top of her head.

Sofia’s big blue eyes stayed locked on mine as I spoke to her.

“I’ll be back for you soon, sweetheart,” I murmured, handing her carefully back to my mother before walking toward the altar. Winona would be here any minute.

My hands wouldn't stay still. Sweat dampened my palms, and every heartbeat thundered in my chest. Music drifted through the air. Winona's maid of honor led the way, and each bridesmaid glowed in the light. Then she appeared, holding tightly to her father's arm.

The dress stole my breath. Soft curls fell around her face, framing it perfectly. Nothing in my life had ever looked half as beautiful. My gaze fixed on her as she drew closer.

I wanted to cry watching her walk toward me. Winona met my eyes with a radiant smile and winked. A quiet laugh slipped from her, and I found myself smiling back. She paused to hug Sofia, whispered that she loved her, and pressed a gentle kiss to her cheek. Moments later, she stood in front of me, her father at her side.

"There's no one I'd want for my daughter but you, Davidson," he said, gripping my hand. "I'm happy to have you as a son-in-law and to see you take care of my girl. I know you'll do right by both of them. Welcome to the family."

"You have my word," I said firmly. "I'll give everything I have to love and protect Winona and Sofia. It means a lot to me to be part of your family."

Winona's father leaned in, kissed her cheek, and smiled.

"You chose a wonderful man. I love you, sweetheart," he said, his eyes shining.

"I love you too, Dad. I really do," she replied softly.

He stepped away and took his seat. When everyone settled, I leaned in and brushed my thumb along Winona's cheek.

"You look unbelievable. Having you as my wife fills me with pride," I said, kissing her forehead. "I love you."

"And you look very handsome," Winona murmured, eyes bright. "I love you too. Now come on—let's make it official and turn me into Mrs. Briggs," she added, winking at me.

After we shared our vows and exchanged rings, the officiant smiled.

"By the power vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride."

Without hesitation, I pulled Winona into my arms and kissed her with everything I had.

Her arms wrapped around my neck, returning the kiss with the same fierce joy. When we finally parted, I stayed close, pressing my forehead to hers.

"Mrs. Briggs, I love you. You just made me feel like the luckiest man in the world," I whispered, brushing her cheek gently.

“I love you too, Mr. Briggs,” Winona whispered, her smile shining through her tears. “It feels unreal that we’re married.”