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Good evening, everyone.

I'm Emma, Olivia's younger sister and, since 1998, her self-appointed shadow, co-conspirator, and lifelong best friend.

First, thank you all for being here to celebrate Olivia Bennett and Michael Reed.

To our parents and families—your love built the runway for today.

To friends who traveled, rearranged schedules, and showed up with open hearts—thank you.

And to the incredible vendors and team who somehow turned a jumble of spreadsheets and Pinterest boards into this beautiful night—your work is seen and deeply appreciated.

I also want to take a quiet moment to honor our grandparents—those who are with us tonight and those we hold in our memories. They taught us how to love across years, miles, and different versions of ourselves. We feel them here.

Olivia, before anyone in this room knew you as a bride, I knew you as the girl who insisted we color-code our sock drawer because “it makes mornings feel calmer,” and who taped her own “library card” into every book she owned so she could lend them out with due dates. You didn't just keep order—you built a world around you where people felt safe and seen. I learned very early that if I needed a plan, a pep talk, or someone to bring snacks and charge into a mess with me, you were the person.

Michael, you came into that world on a Tuesday afternoon at NYU, in a classroom where twenty people were pretending to love group work. Olivia had already re-sectioned the assignment into neat bullet points, and you, with ridiculous optimism, volunteered to handle the part everyone was avoiding. After the meeting, Olivia called me and said, “There's this guy in my group who

actually reads the instructions” which in Olivia-speak is basically, “I might marry him.”

Eight years later, here we are.

In between, you two have built a quiet, steady middle that I admire more than anything. There was the year of long-distance after graduation, the kind that teaches you how to listen when there’s a three-hour time difference and a Wi-Fi signal that disappears exactly when someone is being vulnerable. Every Sunday night call ended with both of you promising, “Okay, Monday. We’ll get through it.” You learned how to keep choosing each other with nothing more dramatic than that—just deliberate kindness, over and over again.

There was the backpacking trip through Europe—the one where Olivia insisted on a meticulously planned itinerary and Michael pretended he was fine being “spontaneous” as long as the spontaneity happened in twenty-minute windows slotted between train schedules. Somewhere in the south of Italy, you missed a connection. Olivia, the color-coded calendar started to unravel; Michael, you put one hand on her shoulder, pointed at a café that smelled like oranges and espresso, and said, “Alright, new plan: we sit and breathe.” You sat. You breathed. And the world didn’t end—it got bigger. That’s your rhythm: Olivia, you anchor. Michael, you soften. Together, you widen the circle.

You love traveling, but you also love the small rituals you build at home—the Sunday morning runs where you race to beat your own time and then pretend it was a “recovery jog” when the cat looks unimpressed. And those Italian dinners you cook together, the ones where the kitchen looks like a flour bomb exploded and somehow there’s basil leaves on the ceiling. There was that night you attempted handmade ravioli, and half of them burst like little pasta piñatas. You laughed, plated the survivors, and high-fived over lopsided, perfect food. It’s not the flawless moments that tell me you’ll last. It’s the way you celebrate the slightly broken ones.

And then there’s the rescue cat—who, if we’re honest, is the true head of

household. I've watched the two of you get down on the floor to coax her out from under the couch with a new toy you "definitely didn't need," and I've seen the way she's taught you to be patient and present. If this is how you love a skittish cat, I can't wait to see how you love each other through the inevitable days when one of you is the one hiding under the metaphorical sofa.

Last year you bought a condo. In our family, we don't measure time just by birthdays or holidays, but by life's semi-chaotic projects. I will never forget the day I walked in to find Michael reading an assembly manual upside down while Olivia attempted a "collaborative" approach that sounded suspiciously like, "Hand me the screwdriver." The bookshelf wobbled. You both stepped back, laughed, and then—because this is who you are—fixed it together. You don't rush each other out of frustration. You make room for each other to be fully yourselves, tools and all.

And then Rome. The Trevi Fountain. Olivia, you FaceTimed me later with mascara in glorious ruins, and between hiccup-sobs I pieced together the story: sunrise to avoid the crowds, the water catching the first light like it had been waiting its whole life for that color, and Michael, your hands steady even while your voice shook. You didn't make a production out of it; you made a promise. You knelt, you asked, and it felt less like a question and more like a truth finally said out loud.

Michael, since the day you met our family, you have shown up with humility, humor, and a kind of gentleness that doesn't waver. You're the person who asks my mom to tell one more story and actually listens to the whole thing; the person who keeps extra water bottles in your car because "someone's going to forget." I've watched you watch my sister—across a room, across a week, across a decision—and it's not just love I see, it's respect. You admire her mind, her tenacity, the way she holds herself to a high standard and then extends that grace to everyone around her. Thank you for loving her in a way that makes our whole family breathe easier.

Olivia, there is no one like you. You are exacting in the best sense—you expect

the best from yourself, and you gently demand it from the people you love, not because you're hard to please, but because you believe in who we can be. You text me before big meetings to remind me I know what I'm doing. You show up with soup when I'm sick, and with spreadsheets when my life looks like a junk drawer. You taught me that plans are not cages; they're bridges. And you've found someone who walks those bridges with you and occasionally says, "Let's look at the view from here."

Together, the two of you have created a life that looks a lot like the meals you cook: a little messy, a little extra basil, always enough for one more person at the table.

To everyone here—look around. This is what it takes to make a marriage: not just two people, but a community that celebrates, steadies, and reminds them, on the days it's hardest, why they chose each other. We are your people. We're here to cheer for your 10Ks, to babysit the cat, to send you pasta recipes and meet you at the airport after the red-eye.

Before I close, I want to offer a simple blessing for you both:

May your home be a place where the coffee is strong, the Sunday runs unhurried, and the cat occasionally decides your lap is the only acceptable throne.

May your travels continue to stretch time and stitch stories into your days, and may your returns be just as sweet.

May your kitchen stay a little chaotic and your conversations stay honest.

May you find, again and again, that love is not a finish line you cross, but a practice you keep—like kneading dough, like tying your laces, like tossing a coin into a fountain and then doing the work to make the wish real.

To Olivia and Michael—eight years in, countless more to go.

Please raise your glasses.

To steady hands and open hearts

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To long walks and late trains that turn into better plans.

To the fierce, gentle, ordinary, extraordinary love you give each other every day.

To Olivia and Michael.

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