Good evening, everyone.

For those I haven’t had the pleasure of meeting yet, I’m James’s cousin and lifelong friend, and I have the honour of standing here as his Best Man. I met James at a family Christmas when we were both small enough to be more interested in the wrapping paper than the present inside. We grew up side by side—same holidays, same muddy knees, same terrible haircuts—and I’ve loved him like a brother all my life.

Tonight, I get to speak about two people who have known how to look after one another for eight years now: James Whitaker and the extraordinary woman he gets to call his wife, Olivia Morgan.

They met, as many good stories do, when someone kind and nosy made an introduction. It was at a charity gala in London, all soft lighting and too-warm champagne flutes. Colleagues steered them into the same conversation, and I’m told James suddenly had a lot of opinions about art auctions he didn’t know he had. Olivia, poised and warm as you see her now, made space for him—really listened. That’s her gift. James, diligent and generous to his core, showed her the side of himself we’ve always known—the one who remembers everyone’s tea order and quietly fixes the things that aren’t quite right.

From there, the milestones came like lights along a familiar street.

Their first holiday to Spain, where they learned they travel well together—not because everything went smoothly, but because when it didn’t, they answered it with humour and grace. I remember James telling me about a missed train and a long walk in the heat. By the end, they were laughing, sharing a bottle of water, and pointing out the colours in the tiles as if the detour had been the plan all along.

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They started a small photography blog together—typical of them, really. It wasn't about the grand gesture; it was about noticing. Sunday light on a windowsill. A stranger's red umbrella on a grey day. The click of the shutter became a way of saying, "I see it too." That's how their love works: two people turning toward the same beauty in the world.

After five years, they bought a flat. A place to build a life, to invite family for Sunday roasts, to host friends after gallery openings, to hang the photos they'd made. I visited not long after they moved in, and what struck me was the feeling of it—calm, warm, full of books and laughter and a kettle that never seemed to be off. It felt like them.

And then, on a snowy evening in Edinburgh, James proposed. He told me he'd never known snow could make a city feel like a secret. He took a breath, she took his hand, and in that hush, they promised each other a future. The snow kept falling, as if it wanted to wrap the moment in quiet applause.

What I respect most about Olivia and James is not only what they've done, but how they do it. Olivia carries herself with a poise that makes everyone around her stand a little taller. She's warm in the way that matters—curious, kind, present. James is diligent in ways that rarely draw attention: the late-night planning, the extra thought for someone else's comfort, the generosity that isn't performative but woven into his everyday choices. Together, they are grace under pressure, resilience when life tests its weight, and humour—always humour—because they know a shared laugh is a bridge over almost anything.

If you want to know a couple, follow them on a Sunday. These two love a long city walk that stretches one hour into three because there's a new corner to see, a hidden courtyard to discover, a coffee to be savoured. They like to wander through gallery openings, arguing tenderly over brushstrokes and light, teaching each other to look again. And then they come home to family, to a roast that brings the generations to one table, to stories that overlap and soften and remind them where they came from.

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For my part, I've been lucky to witness James grow from a determined little boy into the man Olivia chose. When we were young, James was the one who would stay behind to stack chairs after the party. Now, he's the man who stays up late to read over a friend's application, or who walks an extra twenty minutes to pick up flowers he knows someone loves. I see the same conscientious heart. Olivia, you've matched it with your own—equal parts steadiness and warmth—and you've helped him shine.

Marriage, in the end, is a daily practice of attention. It's the willingness to keep saying, "I'm here," through seasons that will be easy and seasons that will require every bit of your grace, resilience, and humour. You've already shown you have those in abundance. You know how to notice the small loveliness of a day and how to hold each other when it isn't lovely at all. You know how to build—slowly, thoughtfully—a life that feels like a home.

I want to share one small memory. Years ago, before the flat and the snowy evening, we had a family Sunday roast. People were everywhere, plates were mismatched, and the timing was not what any cookbook would recommend. I found the two of them by the sink, sleeves rolled up, quietly coordinating: one drying, one stacking, moving in a rhythm that made the clatter into music. No grand speech, no fuss. Just two people doing a simple thing beautifully together. That's the picture I carry of them—ordinary acts, done with love, turning into something extraordinary.

To Olivia and James: may your life together be full of long walks that end in places you never expected, of photographs that catch the light just right, of Sundays that taste like home. May you continue to meet the world with the grace you show each other, the resilience that carries you through, and the humour that makes it all sing. And may you always keep noticing—because noticing is a kind of love.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you would, please raise your glasses.

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To Olivia and James—may your days be joyful, your nights restful, your challenges shared, and your triumphs celebrated. To eight remarkable years behind you, and to all the beautiful years ahead. To love, to partnership, to the Whitakers. Cheers.

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