

The bride grooms speech

Ladies and Gentlemen, you are about to witness a unique event in history. The very first and very last time that the wife is going to let me speak on behalf of us BOTH. It is a privilege and an honour to do so. I just hope that, so soon into our married life, I don't let Linda down.

I'd like to start by welcoming you all here to celebrate our wedding. Some of you have travelled a long way, but whether your journey was 5,000 miles or 5 miles we thank you all sincerely for sharing this special day with us.

From the moment we got engaged Linda has hardly stopped planning and arranging things to make sure it all went as smoothly as it did today. Even yesterday I overheard her say to her mother, 'Mum, I've still got so much to do and I want everything to be perfect. I'm determined not to overlook even the most insignificant detail.' And her mother replying, 'Don't worry, his best man will make sure he's there.'

Seriously, I've been so proud of the way Linda has juggled organising this wedding with everything else and still remained calm and understanding. She is a strong and independent woman, something I realised the first time we dated – when, not only did she insist on buying the drinks, she drove me home, told me to phone her, told me when to phone her, then gave me a full account of what she expected me to say when I did phone her. Of course, I appreciate just how lucky I am. She's a beautiful lady and a gorgeous bride. But, I still don't know how I got her to say yes, because all she seems to say now is 'No! Paul, no!'

Quite rightly, this is the happiest day of my life. But Linda's father, Alan, on the other hand, who is picking up the bill for dinner, is completely distraught. When he saw the guest list, with addresses in Ireland, Egypt, the USA, Scotland as well as the four corners of England, he was delighted, since he felt sure that most of you wouldn't make the effort to turn up. And it's to his credit that during his speech you would never have guessed that he is, in fact, a broke, or rather a broken, man.

Naturally, I am extremely grateful to Linda's parents, not only for their generosity today but also for allowing me to marry their daughter. I feel honoured that they have taken me into their family. My sincere wish is that together Linda and I can build a home that is as welcoming and as full of love and happiness as Alan and Carol's is ... personally speaking, I also quite like the idea of five bedrooms, three bathrooms and a big garden too.

With all the gratitude being expressed this seems like an appropriate time to thank my mum and dad for the upbringing, the guidance and the support. It's impossible to sum up adequately what my wonderful parents have given me. They've put up with years of moaning, tantrums and huffs, and this is the pay-off ... now it's Linda's turn to put up with it.

Finally, I need to thank my best man. Every bridegroom needs a best man he can totally rely on, somebody organised, who can take charge and make the day run smoothly – a person who is very serious and responsible. But what do you do if you don't know anybody like that? Well, in my case I picked Jason – who, I should point

out is single and therefore in a position this evening to dance with any girl he pleases. But my guess is he won't please any ... especially, the bridesmaids. Which reminds me, I'm supposed to end this speech by proposing a toast in their honour.

So, ladies and gentlemen, could I ask you all now to raise your glasses in recognition of Lucy and Meg, for performing their role so gracefully and for looking fantastic throughout the day. I'd also like to congratulate them for doing such a great job in making sure that Linda went against her better judgement and didn't change her mind.

To the Bridesmaids!