MAID OF HONOUR SPEECH

FOR

MELISSA JANSEN

Hello everyone!! It’s such a thrill to be here at Meanca and Eric’s wedding and it is even **more** thrilling to have been given the gift of being Meanca’s Maid of Honour. Of course I want to raise a glass to our happy couple-more about that in a little while, but first I want to congratulate both Meanca’s and Eric’s families. To the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Meanca’s parents and siblings**), we’ve known each other for a long time. You’ve watched us grow up together and I’m sure that today you must be very proud witnessing your daughter take one of the most important steps in her life. I don’t have to tell any (**either if just the parents**) of you just how special Meanca is to me and to all of her friends… after all, she inherited her winning, caring, loving personality from you! To the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Eric’s immediate family**), congratulations on being a part of this newly blended family and I am sure you realize that the best gift for your son is Meanca-and vice versa! They make a fantastic couple and we’re all very blessed to be sharing this wonderful day. It’s especially significant that we’re here in this nature preserve as it’s a reflection of the magnitude of this event. I don’t think there’s a better place on earth to celebrate this marriage-after all Meanca loves nature and she loves parties-**it’s perfect**!! We’re here among the trees and sky and earth and animals that make up the heavenly natural beauty of these surroundings. Being able to share this scenery and these resources helps to remind us of our part in the balance of nature and as this preserve renews itself every year with new growth and a sense that we’re all part of something much bigger than us as individuals, it’s fitting to honor the meaning and mission of marriage. Two people coming together to symbolize our place in the natural balance of life-love and nature-it’s all quite breathtaking! What more can we ask for?? It also gives us a clue into just how special our bride is.

Meanca and I met when we were three years old. That’s right-before the boys and before most of the toys, before the schooling and travel, before we developed our likes and dislikes and before we even thought about what we wanted to be when we grew up, we had each other. Both of us may be just embarking on our adult lives, and although we may live in different parts of the world and we may not see each other on a daily basis, she is a major and indelible part of my life and I have to say, I literally **cannot** imagine my life without her. There is a line in a poem by Tennyson that goes, “I am part of all that I have met…” and let me just say that it is an honor to have Meanca as a part of me. At three years of age, kids become friends, well, just because. Maybe little children have a certain clarity and intuition about which people should be in their lives. As I look back on our friendship, she’s been there for me, even if she wasn’t actually physically **there**. I am sure many of you who have had close friendships for most of your lives know the feeling that as we get older, friends really do become family. There’s a comfort and a sense of really deep knowing that can only be developed through time. It’s like we know each other inside and outside-and by the way, I’m not just being nice because this is her wedding day-let’s face it-she also **knows my secrets**!!! (**Say that with enthusiasm and wait for the laugh**).

And let’s just say that I know how to pick a best friend! Meanca has grown into a fantastic, beautiful, talented and considerate person. She’s fun loving and generous; considerate and kind. She loves life and all the treats and treasures that one discovers when he or she maintains an open mind and a creative curiosity for the unknown. She loves music and horseback riding, animals and everything “girly.” Her favorite flower is the daisy and that’s no accident. I checked and found out that throughout history and folklore, since ancient times, the daisy has symbolized loyalty and love, patience and simplicity-all qualities we treasure in Meanca.

Although as we got older, and fate placed us on different paths in life, we continued to make it a point to stay close to each other, meet when we can, and catch up, and when we do, it’s like we were never apart. We’ve had tons of fun travelling together. We’ve travelled the garden route and we’ve vacationed in Scotland. We’ve had adventures in Paris and I’ve had such a great time visiting my “worldly and stylish” fashion designer friend on her adopted home turf-London. She lives a fascinating life and is the personification of the saying, “If you want to be interesting, be interested!”

And speaking of being interested, it was a day that will go down in history-the day that Meanca met Eric while studying in Stellenbosch. The Rolling Stones may have serenaded us with the lyric “You can’t always get what you want, but if you try some time, you just might find, you get what you need,” I think that when these two met, they both realized they got what they wanted **AND** what they needed!! (**Turn to the groom and say**) Eric, congratulations on appreciating and loving Meanca as much as you do, and thank you for being there for each other. There’s a quote from an old movie that says, “In my opinion, the best thing you can you do is find a person who loves you for exactly what you are. Good mood, bad mood, ugly, pretty, handsome, what have you; the right person will still think the sun shines…. That’s the kind of person that’s worth sticking with.” (**The quote is from the movie, “Juno” if you want to mention it).** And I am really happy for the both of you for finding “that kind of person in each other!!

(**Regarding the bridesmaid that passed away, perhaps you and the other bridesmaids can carry a flower in your bouquets to symbolize her memory-maybe one flower that was her favorite kind and is in contrast to your bouquets, or one wild flower to symbolize the nature surrounding, and then say the following-you don’t want to make it too long or depressing, but you want to honor the bride’s friend**): In the midst of all this celebration, I want to take a moment to pause and remember \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She was a great childhood friend and an eager and enthusiastic riding buddy. She would have been a beautiful bridesmaid along with us, and although she was taken from us way too soon, I believe she is here with us in spirit and in her memory, we have added this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**name the flower**) to our bouquets. Her joy for life and laughter will always be remembered.

And now I would like to invite everyone to raise a glass as I propose a toast to the bride and groom:

The Beatles may have said, “All you need is love,” and the Stones may have urged, “Let’s spend the night together,” …although those lyrics were altered the first time they were performed on TV (If you want to include this-the American TV censors forced the Stones to change the lyrics to “let’s spend some time together”). Tom Petty may have begged “Break down, go ahead and give it to me,” and Pat Benetar may have cautioned that “Love is a Battlefield,” but in the end, remember the words of the **KING**, Elvis Presley, who said, “Take my hand, take my whole life too, cause I can’t help falling in love with you.” May the two of you live a long and full life together filled with love and inspiration, trust and respect, humour and wisdom, music and laughter.

Congratulations! We love you!