WELCOME SPEECH

FOR

ROCHELLE EKER

Hello everyone and welcome to Jesse and Jenn’s engagement party!! I like to think of this occasion as a great big “Welcome” appetizer (**Would the crowd appreciate you saying “amuse bouche” instead” Too sophisticated?**) to the festivities that will be “The Wedding of the Year!!” So many thoughts and emotions have been going through my mind and heart lately…. yes… even **MORE** than usual…. (**If you are known as a “thinker,” say this with emphasis and wait for the laugh**) but most of all, I’m feeling gratitude, joy, and a whole lot of “**Naches**!” When Jesse was born…. well… I’m not going to go all the way back **there**… but let’s just say, I had great hopes and dreams for my beautiful son… and here we are, and those dreams are coming true!

Jenn, I want to welcome you to our family and really acknowledge you for the love and understanding you have for Jesse. You two are a great team and your happiness is infectious… just look around the room… the “**kvell-o-meter**” is off the charts!!! (**Is that too corny? Let me know**). Having you in our family is a real gift, but it doesn’t stop there… I want to welcome all of your clan to ours…. To your mother, Dawn and your dad, Robert, thank you both for raising such a wonderful daughter. To Tom who is Dawn’s fiancé, and Robert’s wife Helen, this is just a taste of our future celebrations, and I say, the more, the merrier!! And of course Jenn’s family would not be what it is today… **really**, without the loving guidance, humor and wisdom of the inimitable Grandma Blanche **(I hope she’s a pistol?)** Blanche, it’s a real honor to know you and to enjoy that twinkle in your eye… I do see so much of you shining through in Jenn’s spirit (**Is Jenn like her at all? Maybe mention a characteristic or two**) and seeing you together really is an affirmation of all the good that the legacy of generations represents.

(**I thought this was the most inclusive and diplomatic way to introduce Jenn’s extended family-didn’t want to use last names-it might sound too formal-let me know what you think**)

Looking around the room I can’t help but think about what a blessing it is to have children and to have **mitzvahs** like this to bring us together. Kids really are the glue in a family…. Who knew that glue could be so gorgeous, considerate and happy? (**Wait for the laugh**). I guess you learn something new every day.

And when it comes to gratitude, I have to say that if kids are the glue, then friends are the armature of life. Good ones are rare, but if we’re lucky enough to be blessed, they come into our lives and watch out for us and offer us strength and support in all sorts of situations. I have been blessed to have the friendship and sisterhood of someone very, very special for just about most of my life… my partner in party planning… my rock, my sounding board… and truly the “wind beneath my wings”…. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) … Did I ever tell you you’re my hero??? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**You didn’t mention her name**). Thank you, thank you, **thank you!! (Did I go overboard with the descriptions? If so, choose which you like-I thought it could be a cute build up**)

Before I “yield the floor,” I want to thank **ALL** of you for being with us and sharing our joy. Thank you for being such and important part of Jesse and Jenn’s life together, and thank you for allowing all of this to be reflected in your smiling faces and good wishes. I would now like to introduce Jesse’s dad, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_... I’m sure he’d love to say a few words and offer a toast to our happy couple…

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_...It’s all yours!!