WEDDING SPEECH

FOR

MICHAEL ESKANDER

Hello everyone!! Welcome… I mean BIENVENIDOS a Mexico!! We’ve been here for all of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days…I think I can get used to this!! (**Wait for the** **laugh**). It’s sort of surreal …. but wonderful… being in Puerta Vallarta for such a beautiful occasion. I mean, after all, when Alan came to me and told me of the plan I was a bit stunned…. Mexico? Interesting!! Finally getting married??? **EXCELLENT!**!! (**As an aside say to Alan**) ….. This **IS** the last time we’ll be doing this… Please? I think you’ve got it right now… And besides-who could ever be better for you than Suzy? …Then it hit me… MEXICO? We’re lucky enough to live in “the most livable city in the world,” and they want to get married in Mexico? I thought… Ahhh a destination wedding… just a few family members and close friends…. I kept thinking about this yet somehow…. I had a feeling we were all in for some more surprises… Yes. I thought this adventure would be maybe thirty people tops…. but no… **EIGHTY-SIX** happy, healthy, gorgeous friends and family here to dance at this beautiful wedding…. Alan did someone bet that you would be able to fill a plane? (**Wait for the laugh**). Kind of makes me wonder if **SOMEONE** subsidized the travel… I also understand why this trip is lavish but brief… I mean a destination wedding is exciting and fun but seriously… each one of us is only allowed three ounces of liquids… How to choose? Shampoo or vodka? (**Wait for the laugh**) . And all of that packing…. and baggage restrictions and plane fare… I think you two better prepare yourselves for receiving some pretty small gifts!! Oh wait… I better not go there… cheques are fairly compact and lightweight… even **ONES** with lots of zeros!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). And then, as is probably typical for a doting father, I worried some more… 86 people in one hotel!! 43 women and 43 men!! All pursuing sartorial splendor simultaneously… Would there be enough hot water for all of those showers? Does the hotel have enough hairdressers and hairdryers? Would the staff be pushed to breaking point pressing, polishing, primping, prepping? My nerves got the better of me and I shot a message through to Alan. In his inimitable, cool, “handled” way he told me I worry too much. “Just bring a pair of shorts and a shirt. It’s casual!!!” **CASUAL**?!?! What **IS** this new world in which we live? We can just enjoy and we don’t have to stress? And then it occurred to me (**stop in your tracks and say**) …… wait a minute… I don’t have to buy a suit and a shirt and a tie? And Olivia won’t need a new dress and a new bag and new shoes and a new hat and new gloves and new accessories… and.. and… and….oh. And then I snapped back to reality… Olivia would get all of those things whether this was casual or not… (**Turn to Olivia and say**) Right honey? Oh, Alan…this is the part where we remind you… **“Happy wife, happy life!!”** (**Wait for the laugh**).

Alan, I look at you today, here with Suzy, and our entire lives flash before my eyes… maybe it was the water…(**Wait for the laugh**) I think of what you were like as a youngster. You were a bright kid and you never really got into trouble. Come to think of it, I also rarely saw you crack open a book but then again, it didn’t seem like you needed to. You had a natural gift and an ease with life. I will never forget when you came to me and told me you wanted to go into the “family business.” Alan? The Trinity boy? But look at you now!! You innately knew how to handle tricky situations. You knew then… you know now… and your mother and I are so proud of you. And whether you were dodging shady characters or rubbing shoulders with politicians, businessmen and the likes of Tony Mokbel, you have it **all** covered. We are all so proud of the way you’ve built Betstar into a profitable and healthy business.

Alan, I know how important family is to you. I know how much your sisters Pauline and Lisa mean to you. I know your friends are like family too and it’s great to see familiar faces that have been by your side for years. I know how much you love Suzy and your mother and I are so thrilled to be able to officially call her “daughter.” And Arlo… I mean Arlo **Michael**… what could be more precious and special than your beautiful son… with **MY** name in his… and what could be more wonderful than the joining of two families… to Suzy’s parents Mark, and Lyn, you’re stuck with us now!! (**Wait for the laugh**)… Just kidding… What a family!!

Olivia and I would like to join Mark and Lynn in expressing our gratitude to all of you for being in our children’s lives and for “**going the distance**”… not only to be here, but everywhere, every day.

Wedding days are all about love, and I am sure the love that Alan and Suzy share will sustain through life’s ups and downs. With any luck, that love might also produce a brother or sister for Arlo… wouldn’t **THAT** be great? I’d like to ask all of you to raise a glass… and if it’s water… go for the bottled stuff… just kidding!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Here’s to Alan and Suzy. May being married in Mexico inspire your marriage - may you have a long, fruitful, hot, and colorful life together!! Congratulations… We love you! Thank you all!