MAID OF HONOR SPEECH

FOR

MARIA BERRY

Hello everyone!!! It’s really so special to be here to witness and celebrate one of the most important moments in the life of a person who means more to me than almost anyone in this world. Ordinarily I would not be up here… for those of you that really know me… and that would be a hefty handful… you know that speaking in front of a crowd is not on my bucket list…. It might be on **ANOTHER** list that **RHYMES** with **BUCKET**…. (**Wait for the laugh**). But today is different. We all know that blood is thicker than water…. let’s just pray that it’s also thicker than the fear …. oh… why sugar coat this…. let’s pray that blood and sisterly love are both more powerful than my **ABSOLUTE DREAD** of public speaking…. because I really **DO** want to honor my wonderful sister Tina and my fabulous…. although somewhat clumsy….new brother-in-law Blake…. (**You can say**) By the way Blake, how **DOES** someone fracture an ankle… on a **GOLF CART**? (**Wait for the laugh**) **(If you want to make another joke you can say)** …uh, and Blake…. we who know and love you also notice that since you’re… uh… accident prone… I just want to say… Kudos to the person who suggested shortening the aisle!!! We can’t be too careful, can we??? (**Wait for the laugh**). You both know I love you and I’m kidding… the **ONLY** good reason to shorten that aisle would have been so that you two could have been married sooner!!

I really cannot imagine life without my beautiful, smart, kind and loving older sister, Tina. It’s a testimony to her patience and saintliness that she even **talks** to me now…. how many of you remember how much I annoyed the **CRAP** out of her when we were growing up? I followed her around. I did everything she did. I wanted to be just like her (**if you want to make a joke you can add**)… but not in a creepy way… no really!! She just made everything seem so cool…After college we became the best of friends…we worked at the same accounting firm and then when I left she came with me…. hey- once HR learns how to spell a last name, why waste the knowledge (**Wait for the laugh**)… and then I left and she followed to our new firm… once again…sustainability and recyclability in last name spelling!! That thoughtfulness extended to our living situation… we wound up in the same building!! You know what they say about the family that stays together…. it doesn’t matter what **THEY** say… I know that my life is truly blessed to have such a wonderful and close relationship with my sister.

Tina’s entire life has been devoted to her family. She is the best sister anyone could wish for and even better than that is her devotion to my (**do you want to say our)** son, Dylan. She’s like a second mother to him and watches over both of us with care and love and humor. In fact when I went into labor with him, she almost beat us to the hospital (**You can make another joke to Blake and say**)… did you hear that Blake??? You have a little less than a month to practice the next hospital drill…. please **don’t trip on anything**!! Please don’t slow Tina’s roll!! (**Wait for the laugh**). She’s been there for Dylan’s first steps… she was the first person to inspire him to giggle uncontrollably… and they have a special bond that is undeniable. When I asked Dylan if he has a message for Aunt TT, he said, “You are my sunshine.” Tina, you’re **MY** sunshine too….

And now our family is growing and Blake and his beautiful daughter, Jayce are joining Tina in a wonderful life together… in fact I have a feeling someone named Dylan is really happy about that… Some of you may wonder… how did these two lovebirds meet… Well, for those of you that may not know… I suppose we have Mark Zuckerberg to thank… indirectly… Man- he gets around!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Yup, Supposedly Blake “checked her out” on Facebook… repeatedly? **Uh**. Okay… Tina wasn’t having it, but when something is meant to be… She deliberated for weeks and employed sophisticated algorithms… okay… scratch that… she went by her gut to see if she could tell if he was creepy or sincere…. but the fates conspired…we found out “this guy” had a brother who lived in our building… on the same floor as Tina!!! Thank goodness her “gut” was working well… because in came Blake and swept Tina off her feet! And I will never forget the first time I saw them together- I **KNEW** he was the one. Blake, I am so happy Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook!!! And I am even happier that Tina found you! You’re charming, witty, smart, generous… please don’t let this all go to your head. No distractions!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Tina, I would love to think of some sisterly marriage advice to share with you, but the truth is, when I look at you with Blake, I see a natural ease and comfort that lets me know the two of you “have this covered.” (**If you can think of one piece of advice, say that instead- just keep it short-one sentence**) You make a beautiful, wonderful couple and I, as well as everyone in this room, look forward to many, **MANY** years of hearing of and sharing your family adventures, good times, and yes Blake… even a prank or two… on TINA!!. It’s a blessing to be your sister and I wish the both of you a lifetime of love, happiness, health and all you might wish for! Congratulations! We love you!