WEDDING SPEECH

FOR

DENNIS HINZ

Good evening everyone! For those that may not know, I am Dennis and I am the proud father of our beautiful bride Jennifer. On behalf of our family and the Cooper family, welcome and thank you all for being here to share our joy. Your presence means so much to Jen and Jason. To be surrounded by the love and support of so many friends and family… especially those of you that made the effort to travel from far and wide, makes this moment that much more special.

I am privileged… and I am sure all of you will be relieved… that I have been selected to be the “first up at bat” to share some thoughts and make a toast to the new Mr. and Mrs. Jason Cooper. (**If you want you can say**) Although some may think this looks easy, I am sure with my “eloquence” and “flair” with public speaking, I will make **everyone else** that gets up here look and sound amazing… Who would have imagined… the bride’s father acting as “**the ringer**.” (**Wait for the laugh**). If you’ll all just have a little patience and bear with me, I promise… it gets **worse**… (**Give a big smile, pause and wait for the laugh**).

I would like to acknowledge the Cooper family… Jason’s parents Lynn and Phil, his brother Justin and Justin’s wife Kate, and of course, Jamie, Justin’s sister. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**). Thank you for having such a wonderful family, for raising such a terrific son, and for accepting our daughter as you have with open arms. (**Turn to your wife and say**) … And Linda…. did you notice with all of those “J” names in the Cooper family Jen will never have to stress over monogrammed towels…. I warned all of you… it gets **worse**… (**Wait for the laugh**). You guys have done so much for our family, for our kids, and especially for this wedding… from the engagement party to the rehearsal dinner… all the work that went into the bridal shower and everything you all did to make this celebration as beautiful as it is. As the father of the bride of course I would like to believe I had an integral part in the logistics of this event, but… **NAH**…. my job was to stand over on the side, nod approval, and possibly ask an occasional question as long as it wasn’t, “**How much**?” (**Wait for the laugh**). Those of you that know me know that if the planning were left up to me, we’d probably be eating Portillo’s in my backyard…. (**Wait for the laugh**).

This is the point in the speech where everyone may expect me to share revealing details about my daughter, but I promised Jen I wouldn’t do that, and Jen, I will keep my word…. **HOWEVER** later your mom and I plan to hit every table and spill as many humiliating stories as we can remember…. by then our “thirsts” should be sufficiently “quenched.” **(Make a devilish smile and wait for the laugh**). Jen, I have been thinking about this moment for quite some time, and as I ponder, the memories flood back… first to the day you were born… you were the cutest little baby but I remember thinking, “What the heck am I going to say to a baby girl?” And then the nurse handed you to me and that was it. I was **DONE**. In no time you were a toddler chatting up a storm. You were the smartest little girl I ever knew and to think at the beginning I worried about what to say to you… I didn’t get a chance! You did all the work! You were earnest and dedicated to your studies and while other kids were watching TV, you were making flash cards to learn your lessons. Your **FOMUWF** (**Note- this is an update to the popular acronym FOMO- Fear of missing out**) … yes, that stands for “Fear of Messing Up with Flute” were unfounded at your first recital… you **NAILED** it. In the next blink of an eye you were off to college, joyfully advising that your intended dorm was called “**SIX PACK**.” and I flashed back to **DAY ONE**… now **REALLY**… **What the heck AM I GOING TO SAY???** (**Wait for the laugh**). Ah… the college years… a period where I had the privilege to hone my moving man skills. The stairwells got steeper, the alleys got narrower, the furniture got heavier… but then a knight in shining armor… with a better back than me… showed up… to rescue all of us.

I have to admit I was a little skeptical when I first met Jason at my birthday dinner. I had met other would be suitors and they were never “good enough” for my little girl, but you… you were respectful and kind. You two clearly had and have a great chemistry. Jen’s maternal grandparents love you… let’s face it, it’s been thirty years and I’m still on probation!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)… But best of all, you did the heavy lifting!! Really!!! I will never forget how you showed up out of nowhere, in the freezing cold morning, to move Jen’s overstuffed furniture into the Wicker Park apartment. I was not about to let you get away.

Jen, there’s so much more I want to express, but soon someone will get the hook and shut me up. I want you to know that you are the greatest blessing in our life, we have always been so proud of the baby, the toddler, the determined little girl, the dedicated, independent, thoughtful young woman, and now we are stunned by the beautiful bride and wife that you have become. Jason, we are so happy to welcome you to the family and so proud to be able to call you our son.

When our kids were little, I used to read Aesop’s Fables and my favorite story was of the tortoise and the hare. I would like to paraphrase that moral as I propose a toast.

Ladies and gentlemen, please raise a glass…

To Jen and Jason, it’s been said that the secret to winning is to never give up and to always keep trying. That advice applies to marriage as well. Remember you are each other’s best friend and partner and respect the other’s point of view. Life will not always be easy or smooth, but hold this moment in your hearts and remember it as you work to get past the obstacles while you renew and recommit. It’s worked for your mother and me for thirty-three years. May your lives be filled with love and respect, adventure and partnership… and remember you have each other for the “**heavy lifting**!” Congratulations! We love you!