**FATHER OF THE BRIDE SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JACEK DROZDZ**

Hello everyone!!! Welcome to this incredible magical place where we celebrate the union of my incredible, magical daughter to the equally wonderful, Alex. We are all so thankful that you have traveled from far and wide to witness and dance at Maja and Alex's wedding..... come to think of it.... **so have we!!** (**Wait for the laugh**)... the time, the effort, the plotting, the planning...and the tenacity.... and that was just to be allowed to stay on the plane! (**Wait for the laugh**).... anyway, we made it and here we are. I've waited for all of **HER** lifetime to tell the world... and my daughter... just what I think of her...this seems like the perfect place and time, so here goes....

Thirty years ago, in a distant place... not **THAT** far from here.... hey- it's all relative....a **STAR** was born.... and then came Maja... bursting forth with all of the intention and purpose that she still demonstrates to this day. From the very beginning she showed us that she was tough... but with a tender heart. She exhibited determination and focus beyond her years, and even as a toddler she innately knew how to watch out for herself. This quality was revealed at an early age... She was not overly demonstrative as a baby, in fact I can barely recall moments when she cried for whatever reason, but **BABY** did she know how to get her point across.... Pay attention, Alex... this **COULD** come in handy.... although I have a sneaking suspicion that you already know so many sides of Maja.... But keep in mind... she might surprise you....

I will never forget when she was just six months old... we had to take her to the doctor for her immunization shots. (**Name your wife if appropriate**).... were we apprehensive? I would say so.... after all, who wants to see their baby threatened with pain as she explodes in an outburst of drama, fear... the adrenaline rush one gets In a crisis situation....well, **WE** certainly didn't.... and it didn't matter.... because our little champ....our delicate, precious baby girl, our sugar... our spice...somehow instinctively stared down the nurse.... looking her straight in the eye...took those delicate baby banana fingers, curled them up into a fist, and you guessed it.... **PUNCHED** the nurse in the arm as hard as she possibly could...(**wait for the laugh**). She has not stopped surprising us with her tenacity and inspiring us with her compassion and bravery. Later on, as she grew up, we were so proud of Maja as she traveled alone to conservation camp in Namibia and spent six months studying abroad in New Zealand..... I guess knowing you have a **good, tight left hook** has its perks.... (**wait for the laugh**).

Maja has blossomed into a beautiful, compassionate, woman. She knew from a very early age just what she wanted to do with her life and she focused and achieved her goals. At the age of six, she knew she wanted to be a veterinarian..... when Maja was six, **I didn't even know how to spell the word!!! (Wait for the laugh**)... her love of animals knows no bounds, in fact, Maja has always had a special relationship with her pets and all animals. Even though she grew up as an only child, she knew how to connect.... in her world... she always regarded Oscar, our dog (**turn to Maja and say**) ?.. Sorry honey... (**and wait for the laugh**) as her brother and declared as much on a picture captioned on Facebook.... yes.... that's our girl....

There are so many memories I have of Maja living and really loving life throughout the years....and whether it was acknowledging how proud she was of my ability and declaring that I was "just like 'MacGyver'" when she was only ten years old, spending time with her Swiss cousins Nadja, who was and is more of a "surrogate sister," and Natalie, or visions of Maja and I sharing time making school projects, playing games... which frankly Maja preferred if she won.... ahem.... fishing, biking, skiing.... except that one time we ended up on the double diamond.... boy was she scared... but she faced that hill... and metaphorically punched it in the arm. ... she was and is a wonderful companion, a super daughter, and a great friend....

She rarely ceases to amaze US and upon that first encounter.... I think Alex sat up and took notice too... that night up in "the club..." a bunch of male friends.... a bunch of female friends... and one young man broke away from the crowd, approached the effervescent brunette.... he offered to buy her a drink but she declined. She said she was "On Call." **Wink Wink**... while Maja meant that she would have to work that night at the veterinary hospital, Alex was under the impression that she was a "professional" of a different sort and he apologized and confessed that he couldn't afford her.... (**wait for the laugh**)....

Somehow, over the years, they figured out the "details" and one day last summer in front of the magnificence of Mother Nature, their parents, and Alex's brother, Jamie, Maja got the best birthday gift of her life... and here we are... celebrating their love and union.

On behalf of (**name your wife if appropriate**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I want to congratulate (**Name Alex's parents and brother**)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and Jamie and I want to officially welcome all of you to our family. Alex, we are so happy that you and Maja " hung in Da Club" that night and we are so happy that we have a new son.

(**Maybe it would be cute if you carry over a couple of Snicker's candy bars and at this point say**) Maja, you know I that I could go on forever taking about you, praising you, admiring your noble choices in life, acknowledging your warmth and compassion for all living creatures, but I also know that, having been named after Maja the Bee, your "stingers" get revealed....especially if you haven't eaten. (**Take out the Snickers bar and say**), let's face it, "You **KNOW** you're not **YOU** when you're hungry" (T**oss it over to her and wait for the laugh... of course since it's the snickers slogan, only the Americans will get it.... use it if you think it'll work... you can also toss a 2nd one over to Alex and say**) ... and Alex, may I suggest you keep a spare.... just in case.... (**And wait for the laugh**).

Maja and Alex, we are all so happy to celebrate your marriage and we wish you all the beauty, love, health and happiness that anyone might desire. Today signifies a new chapter in all of our lives and like the heirloom presented to you by Alex upon your engagement, honor the legacies you've both inherited and have an incredible time making new ones.... Congratulations! We love you!