**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**LINDA VAN DOESBURG**

Hello everyone! For those of you that may not know, we are Linda and Lionel, the proud parents of Brett. We are thrilled to be here to celebrate the marriage of Brett and Melissa, and we are even happier that all of you are able to be here tonight to share our joy. We’d like to extend a special acknowledgement to all of you that have traveled from out of town to join us. Please know that this celebration is that much more complete having you here. To Murray and Heather, (**Do you think it’s too formal to say their last name? Please correct if you think it’s appropriate**) Melissa’s parents, we thank you for all the time and effort that you’ve invested to transform this new space into a “wedding wonderland.” To quote a well known Hollywood catch phrase, “If you build it, they will come...” You certainly did an amazing job of building a space that adapts, serves, and welcomes one and all.

Well, Brett, we stand here as proud parents, bursting with love and pride as we observe our baby... **ALL six feet seven inches of you,** (**Do you want to make a little joke and say**)... of course next to you, **NO ONE** looks like they’re **actually** standing... (**and wait for the laugh**), as you marry your high school sweetheart. Tonight we see a handsome, responsible, loving groom. Preparing for this day has brought back many memories and we would not trade any of them for the world.

Naturally, we had practice raising your three siblings, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, all of whom did a very thorough job teaching and training us to be parents, but with you... we were literally thrown different curve balls... or pucks, to be more specific. You had a wonderful spirit as a child, and early on, you exhibited the confidence and self assurance to be a winner... constantly... it was while playing Connect 4... and you always beat your very worthy opponent... or at least I thought she was... and that would have been **ME**... (**Wait for the laugh**). And when your winning streak in Connect 4 lost a little of its “shine,” it was on to hockey... in the basement... with me as the goalie... I think it was during that period that I realized just how much you love me... or at least wanted to protect me.... because you made sure to strap me into every piece of protective hockey gear ever invented, manufactured, or offered for sale in Canada.... and that’s a considerable variety! (**Wait for the laugh**). But it all came in handy.... once you started taking those wicked shots at me!! Yes, parenthood can be a **pain**, but it’s a **good** pain!! You were so good in so many sports, especially basketball... have I ever thanked you for **NOT** dunking **ME** into the basket? (**Wait for the laugh**).

Over the years you transitioned from an enthusiastic, athletic kid to a responsible, helpful, enthusiastic young man...being a wonderful helping hand on our farm... let’s remember milking cows is very good for upper body strength and muscle development! You’ve also been a great source of power on the Brunken farm and it’s always been know that when brute force is required... **Brett is the man**!!

To Heather and Murray, thank you for raising such a wonderful, loving daughter.... we are happy to welcome Melissa to our family and we look forward to many family occasions that we will all celebrate together..... Melissa, you and Brett have been together since high school. It’s been so heartwarming to watch the two of you as you’ve gotten to know each other, fall in love, and now set out on your own... Melissa, you know how much we care for you and we’re thrilled to officially welcome you to our family. You’re mature, thoughtful, kind, considerate, **generous** .... and, well.... how can I put this... if you ever have another sleep shopping spree, I’m a size medium and my favorite color is blue ....(**Adjust to your preferences and wait for the laugh**).

Melissa and Brett, your father and I have been married for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years. We’ve learned a lot in that time, and we’ve tried to pass that wisdom on to our kids.... from my point of view, I would have to say, listen to each other.... don’t have unrealistic expectations.... work together... your partners for life.... yes **LIFE**.... and Brett... **DO NOT** forget... “**Happy wife, happy life!**”

I’d like to invite all of you to raise a glass as we propose a toast:

To Melissa and Brett... Here’s to a life filled with health and happiness, respect and conversation, laughter, blessings, and always choosing the shared path... **TOGETHER**... congratulations! We love you!