**MAID OF HONOR SPEECH**

**FOR**

**DANA GRIMM**

Hello everyone!! I’m Dana, Kate’s very happy and proud Maid of Honor, and it’s really great to be here... Every once in a while, we have the privilege to be a part of a beautiful moment... a fairy tale... a dream come true.... and today is one of those rare times in life where we all get to participate. Now I’m not sure that this is a **REAL** fairy tale... although we have most of the major themes.... we have our steadfast and true hero... Tom.... and our gorgeous, savvy, stylish, and funny heroine.... Kate, who, I must say, has never looked more incredible... love agrees with you!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)... we’re in a beautiful, whimsical setting... and we’re surrounded by many magical elements....there’s been adversity to overcome.... there’s lots of love involved, which, by the way, is doing a pretty good job of “conquering....” and... there’s all of us, honoring that love and celebrating a long and winding happily ever after. Let’s call this “Wonderland...” Speaking of, the Cheshire Cat reminds us, “Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality...” I would say that true, real, lasting love does its part too...

Kate and I have been friends since high school...she took me under her wing and we’ve been commiserating ever since... dreaming.... plotting our futures... discovering our way in the world...and supporting each other while rising to the challenges life tends to place in our paths... Although we found ourselves in different places as Kate went off to college and later so did I, there was always that connection... traveling back to Michigan and reestablishing our very special bond.... and while some seemingly insurmountable challenges may conspire to alter our course, a true and meaningful love story may very well wait in the wings... it features someone wonderful.... and in this case, his name is Tom. You know... the same Tom that was there in junior high.... and the same Tom that just so happened to escort Kim to the high school homecoming dance.... **THAT** Tom... if there’s one thing I’ve learned in life, thanks to my friendship with Kate, it’s that true friendship and unbreakable bonds outlast distance, tests, and time.

So much has happened in Kate’s life since we hung out and befriended one another in high school. She has faced and tackled her issues with patience and grace... Though time and circumstances found us in different places, if anyone tells you that “All roads lead to Florida,” **BELIEVE THEM!!!** (**Wait for the laugh**). True friends find one another, and as we grew older, we both wound up near each other, here in the same part of Florida... Fate found someone else that was to return to Kate’s life..... also in Florida, and while we never know who may have thought of any one of us over the years, in **THIS** fairy tale we **DO** know why cousins were created!! Kate and Tom had and have, Kate’s Cousin Ryan in common.... family to Kate, friend to Tom... I guess we can refer to him as this love story’s Cupid... the three met up one night to reconnect over dinner, and then, as in most juicy and unpredictable sagas, love struck one evening when cancelled plans provided Kate and Tom the opportunity to become inseparable... In Wonderland, when Alice asked the Mad Hatter, “How long is forever?” He replied, “Sometimes just one second....” apparently that’s what it takes to **KNOW** that someone is about to become your destiny...

The Mad Hatter teaches us, “You know what the issue is in this world? Everyone wants some magical solution to their problems and everyone refuses to believe in magic.” I think in the case of Kate and Tom, it’s important to note that the magic we may be thinking of really is love. It was probably puppy love that brought these two together the first time. It was a curious love that reconnected them, and now it’s an unconditional, growing love that “seals the deal.”

Kate and Tom, I know I speak for everyone when I say how happy we are for the two of you. The beauty of this setting reflects that love you share... it’s a little bit of each of you represented in this real Wonderland. Kate, we’ve known each other for half our lives and knowing you as I do, what can I say??? Love **REALLY** is in the air and you know that as you and Tom officially build your future together, I will be there to support, commiserate, and encourage you and Tom all the way. I’d also like to express congratulations to both families as you all enjoy your newly blended extended clan...

(**If you want to propose a toast you can say**) I would like to invite you all to raise a glass as I propose a toast ... (**If no toast, just say**)

Here’s to Kate and Tom ... Remember when Alice asked The White Rabbit, “How long is forever?” In your case it’s clearly not just one second... Here’s to a lifetime of love and happiness... partnership and health (**Do you want to say health? If not you can say humor or respect**) and more good things than you might ever wish for...

 Congratulations!! We love you!!! Thank you all!!