**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**BILL MAXWELL**

Hello everyone! I want to take a few moments to say hello, welcome all of you, and to congratulate Jade and Ben, the wonderful reason why we’re all here. Whether you’ve traveled from near or far… whether you’ve known either or both for a lifetime or a little less, thank you for sharing this joy with us. For those of you that may not know, I’m Bill and I am Jade’s very proud father. It’s an honor to stand up and say a few words about our bride and groom.

It just so happens that I’ve known Jade for **all** of her life…. And a large part of mine… makes sense, no??? (**Wait for the laugh**). As her father, I’ve had the privilege of making, and now sharing, some of the memories and moments the two of us have had over the years. (**If you want, you can turn to Jade and say**)…. Don’t worry Jade… I won’t go **TOO** deep… (**and wait for the laugh**). Jade, as my oldest, I think it’s safe to say that you taught me how to be a father. I realized early on that what we witnessed with you as a baby… toddler… child… would definitely form the foundation of just who you would become today….. you were funny… bright… fierce…. stubborn…in a **GOOD** way … animal loving… and wildly independent. I’d say that sums up the Jade we know and love today. And yes, Jade, I’m about to give examples… (**Wait for the laugh**). Actually, let me paraphrase an expression I’ve heard that tells us, “Give me the child and I will show you the adult…”

When you were little, just four years old, before your sister Dana was born, it was you and me, kid… two for the road… I loved our bicycle trips and I remember them vividly. The world was ours and whether we traveled the distance of a few acres or several miles, those times were precious. You were a trooper and even if those little legs got tired…. you didn’t complain. And when I would take you to events… I remember how I’d put you on my shoulders so you would get a good view… of course I didn’t quite think through about how that would affect **ME**… I remember **SOMEHOW**… from **SOMEWHERE**, I would feel water falling on my head….one of life’s **unsolved** **mysteries**??? Wellllll… you see, those times were back in my tobacco chewing days… apparently I skipped the section in the kid manual that warned us that those little ones have the uncanny ability to mimic whatever we do….. and it seems that as I needed to spit as I chewed my “cud,” so did a certain someone on my shoulders….(**Wait for the laugh**). Note to Ben… exercise caution if you try to watch an event with Jade on your shoulders!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Jade… I worried and watched as you learned your lessons about life… and love, and through it all, I was … let’s say… “fascinated.” While I may not have agreed with or enthusiastically supported some of your choices, the bottom line is that I never lost sight of the simple truth that you were and are, a good, smart, compassionate, loving, and innately wise woman. While Ben may have entered your life as a “supporting player…” more on the sidelines… less as a star, as time wore on, you saw just how great he was and **is** for you…. There is **NOTHING** better in this world than knowing you have your best friend by your side, to love and laugh and care for each other, for a lifetime and beyond. Ben, I want to congratulate you for sensing that… knowing that… and exhibiting your own kind of stubbornness that insured the two of you would be together… just a brief bit of advice… please … **no chewing tobacco**!! Don’t say I didn’t warn you!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I also want to officially welcome you as my son.

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

To Jade and Ben… here’s to a lifetime of love and friendship, health and happiness, partnership and adventure… great times, incredible music, and more than you might ever wish for!!! I love you both!! Thank you all!!