Good evening everyone.

First, thank you all for being here with us tonight. Seeing so many familiar faces in one room is a bit like opening the best kind of book—every page a memory, every chapter a friend or a relative we love.
To those who have travelled a long way to be here, thank you. It means the world that you made the journey.
To our parents—Mum, Dad, and to Amelia's mum and dad—thank you for your support, your patience and the way you've quietly shown us what love looks like in practice: lifts at unreasonable hours, advice when asked for, and the occasional nod when we didn't know what we were doing but pretended we did.

Amelia and I met in the University of Sheffield library during finals week.
It was one of those frantic afternoons when you live on coffee and misplaced confidence.
She was hunting for a dog-eared copy of a book I'd just checked out and was too embarrassed to admit I only wanted it for the introduction.
I offered her my notes, which in hindsight were mostly doodles and a very committed pie chart about how stressed I was.
She laughed—kindly, not at me—and I remember thinking, I could look at that smile for a very long time.

Our first date was in a tiny café near campus with a wobbly table and a barista who liked to sing along to the radio.
We spent more than we had on coffee we couldn't really afford, and time did that strange thing where it disappears.
I walked her back, we didn't make any grand declarations, but I knew I wanted a second date before we'd finished our cups.

Three years later we moved to Manchester, into a flat that had character in the

sense that the heating made noises like a small orchestra tuning up.
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That’s also where Pickles entered the picture—a rescue cat who decided, very quickly, that we were the ones being rescued.
He has judged every single furnishing choice we’ve made since.
If we’ve learned anything from Pickles, it’s that patience and snacks get you through most crises.

We’ve spent so many weekends getting lost and unlost in the Lake District.
Amelia packs the bag like a field commander—map, plasters, two extra layers for me because apparently I am perpetually underdressed—and somehow still remembers to tuck in a flapjack.
There’s a stretch of path above Grasmere where the world goes quiet except for your own breathing and the wind.
Walking there with her feels like the truest version of ourselves: steady, side by side, noticing the small things.

Last autumn, just before the clocks changed, we set the alarm far too early and climbed Helvellyn in the dark.
I’d rehearsed a dozen ways to ask her to marry me and forgot all of them when the horizon started to lift.
The sun came up, frost on the ground, breath in the air, and I finally found the words.
Amelia said yes and immediately asked if I was warm enough.
That’s her in a sentence—she says yes to the big things and still checks if you’ve got your gloves.

People sometimes ask what I love most about Amelia.
It’s not one thing—it’s the way she is warm and thoughtful in a way that changes the texture of a day.
It’s how brilliantly organised she is, not for show, but because she wants everyone to feel looked after.
It’s how she listens as if you’re the only person in the room.
And yes, it’s how she can navigate a local market with military precision and still make time to chat to the stallholder about their recipe for quince jam.

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She says I’m calm.
Mostly that’s me trying to keep up with her lists without getting in the way of them.
I try to be loyal because she deserves steadiness as much as laughter.
And the quiet wit—well, let’s just say I’ve learned that the right joke at the wrong time earns you that eyebrow she does.
Worth it, most days.

To our friends—you have been our chorus and our safety net.
Thank you for the late-night talks, the weekend visits, the spare rooms, and for pretending my risotto was edible until I learned that stock is not a suggestion.
To the team here at the venue and all the suppliers—you have made today feel effortless, which I know means it was anything but.

We also hold close those who couldn’t be with us tonight.
To absent friends and family—we miss you, we remember you, and you are part of this day.

In a few weeks, we’re off to Portugal for our honeymoon.
We plan to do what we’ve always loved: walk, eat, get a little lost, and find our way together.
If we come back with a suitcase full of olive oil and a new recipe we’ll insist on cooking for you, pretend to be surprised.

Amelia, my love—being with you has never felt like a leap; it’s felt like a path we’ve chosen, step by step, with muddy boots, good food, and the kind of laughter that makes ordinary days feel bright.
I promise more walks, more markets, more shared kitchens, and the same hand to hold when the weather turns.

Everyone—please raise your glasses to Amelia and to this life we’re building.
To love that shows up, to kindness in action, to friendship at the heart of it all.
To my wife.

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