Good evening everyone.

I’m Tom, Daniel’s best man, former university flatmate, and the person who still can’t believe the quiet lad from second year halls has just married the sharpest wit in Yorkshire.

First off, a quick thank you to the speakers before me.
Mr Bennett, you set the bar with warmth and polish.
Daniel, you kept it admirably brief — a man after my own heart.
And I look forward to hearing from the Chief Bridesmaid once I’ve stopped incriminating myself.

To both families — the Bennetts and the Carters — congratulations on this brilliant day.
You’ve clearly done something right, because we’re all here celebrating two people who make each other unmistakably better.

I met Daniel at uni, when he moved into a flat that contained three frying pans, one spoon, and a houseplant we all pretended was thriving.
Even back then, he was solid as a rock — calm under pressure, loyal to a fault, and the sort of person you could ring at 3am because you’d lost your keys, your phone and, for a troubling half hour, your trousers.

Sophie, I didn’t know you then, but I’m convinced the universe had a plan.
You two met at a friend’s summer barbecue in Leeds — that famously romantic setting of slightly undercooked chicken and folding chairs — and somehow made it look like a meet-cute from a film.
Daniel came back afterwards looking dazed and said, “She’s very… organised.”
I thought, “Good. Someone has to be.”

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Your first date was a small jazz bar.
I know this because Daniel spent the next week trying to pretend he “got” jazz.
He didn’t.
But he got you, and that turned out to be far more important.

Now, I promised one tasteful story, and here it is.
During third year, our oven staged a mutiny during a Sunday roast.
Smoke everywhere, fire alarm blaring, flatmates evacuating like it was a drill.
I was flapping about with a tea towel.
Daniel, utterly calm, opened the windows, turned off the gas, and said, “Let’s not make it worse.”
Problem solved.
Fast forward a few years, and I hear about a rainy walk in the Lake District last autumn, where Daniel produced a ring with those same steady hands, said something beautifully simple, and Sophie said yes before the umbrella turned inside out.
Same man, same calm — just braver jewellery choices.

What I loved seeing over the seven years since that barbecue is how your lives gradually clicked into place.
You moved in together after two years and found that the Venn diagram of your hobbies is full of great things.
Weekend hikes in the Peaks, where Sophie sets a pace that politely suggests “uphill” is a mindset problem.
Pub quizzes, where Sophie’s quick wit and Daniel’s encyclopaedic random knowledge combine into a team nobody wants to sit near.
And cooking pasta together, which sounds peaceful until you walk in and see a whiteboard ranking sauces.
Sophie, you bring warmth, order and a one-liner that can reset a whole room.
Daniel, you bring loyalty, steady judgement and that gentle support that lets other people shine.

I’ve watched you build a life with intent.
Little choices, stacked up carefully.

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From the jazz bar to a shared postcode, from hike routes to a rainy proposal, you've shown that love isn't performed — it's practised.
It's a hundred small decisions to be on each other's side, especially on the days that don't look like today.

And for all the laughs — and there are many — you've got the serious bits right.
You listen.
You give each other room to be yourselves.
You've made a home where things work not because they're perfect, but because you both keep choosing to make them work.
That's not grand language; that's just good partnership.

So, to end on a practical note — and I know Sophie appreciates a plan — here are three tiny vows from an old friend, offered with love:
- Keep the Peak District walks, even when it's drizzly and the café is out of cake.
- Keep the pub quizzes, even when you miss the picture round and pretend you didn't care.
- And keep making pasta together, even when the sauce splits — because it's not about perfection, it's about who's standing next to you at the hob.

Right, I believe this is the moment I invite you all to raise your glasses.

To Sophie and Daniel — for seven brilliant years behind you, and a lifetime of steady hands, quick wit, good hills, tricky quiz questions and excellent pasta ahead.
To the Carters!

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