Good afternoon everyone.

I’m Tom, James’s older brother and today’s best man, which mainly means I’m here to say nice things and not frighten the grandparents.

James and Sophie met, as all great romances begin, by being trapped on a delayed train to Manchester.
They bonded over a shared packet of crisps and the mutual acceptance that Northern Rail would test the strongest of souls.
If you can split a bag of salt and vinegar without argument, you can split a life.

Since then it’s been five years of very them things.
A first holiday to Lisbon, where James learnt pastéis de nata are not a personality but he gave it a go.
City breaks that are really bakery marathons.
Cheering on county cricket with the kind of calm only James can sustain during a rain delay.
And a fixer-upper in Leeds that taught them the difference between “weekend project” and “we now live in a dust cloud.”

Sophie, you are thoughtful, razor-witty and somehow brilliant under pressure.
When the kitchen ceiling briefly became a water feature, you didn’t panic—you produced a plan and a mop schedule.

James, you’re big-hearted, practical and unflappably calm.
You also own a toolbox labelled… with a label-maker.
Every spanner has a surname.
It’s like visiting a very small, very organised museum.

Together, you bring out the best in everyone around you.

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You make friends feel welcome, family feel closer, and even flat-pack furniture feel slightly less hostile.
Kew Gardens said yes before Sophie did, but under those blossoms she made the best decision of her life—and so did you, mate.

A quick nod to the stag do—what happens there stays there.
Mainly because some of it happened before 9pm and we're not proud.

Before we finish, to absent friends and family who couldn't be here today—you're in our hearts, and we raise a glass to you too.

So, ladies and gentlemen, please raise your glasses to Sophie and James.
May your travels be sweet, your projects finished on only the third trip to the hardware shop, and your crisps always equally shared.

To Sophie and James!

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