Good afternoon everyone,

I’m honoured, and a little overwhelmed, to be standing here as Emily’s Chief Bridesmaid, and as her university housemate who never quite recovered from freshers’ week, a broken kettle, and the very serious bonding power of a panic-brewed cup of tea.

Emily, I knew from that first week that you were thoughtful to your core and determined in a way that quietly moves mountains. You’ve always had this calm focus that makes people feel safe. If something needs doing, you do it; if someone needs holding up, you hold them. And Oliver, when I met you at her birthday drinks, I saw the other half of that steady rhythm: you were calm, generous, and already the kind of listener who hears what isn’t said as much as what is. From the start, you looked at Emily the way a person looks at home.

Five years later, here we are, and what a beautiful path you’ve walked to this moment. You met through a work project in London—proof that deadlines occasionally deliver joy—and it wasn’t long before there were milestones stitched through your story like bright flags. That first holiday in Cornwall, wind in your faces, the kind of laughter that tastes like salt and freedom. Moving into your flat in Clapham, where you learned each other’s early-morning moods and the exact number of mixing bowls required for a rainy-Sunday bake-off. And then sunset on Primrose Hill, with a skyline you both love twinkling like it was clapping for you, and Oliver asking the question that was already answered in the way you two walk together.

I’ve loved watching your everyday life become something quietly extraordinary. You lace up together for morning runs when the city is still yawning awake, speaking in half-sentences that only the two of you understand. You bake on grey afternoons—there is no problem that cannot be improved by a warm

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kitchen and too much cinnamon—and you are, quite frankly, the world's most committed crime drama jurors. The rest of us are on episode three; you're already predicting the plot twist and debating it like a pair of silk-robed barristers.

But it isn't just the sweet stuff. It's the way you share the hard things. Emily, your determination has always been your superpower; Oliver, your calm turns it into something gentle and kind. When one of you sprints, the other paces. When one of you needs to speak, the other listens. That balance is rare, and it's beautiful to witness.

There's a memory from our student days that keeps returning to me today. Emily had a wall of notes above her desk, each one neat, purposeful, a plan. Life, of course, rarely sticks to the plan—broken kettles, broken hearts, missed buses—but Emily would look at the mess, smile that quiet smile, and begin again. Oliver, you've become part of that magic. Together, you make starting again look like the most natural thing in the world—like tying your laces before those early runs, or lining up ingredients before the flour storm.

To me, love looks like choosing, and choosing again. It looks like finding the person whose quiet matches your noise, whose calm softens your edges, whose generosity widens your world. It looks like Cornwall breezes and Clapham keys and a ring offered at sunset because you both already knew. It looks like a life built from small, faithful rituals: one more mile, one more slice, one more episode—fine, two.

Emily, you are radiant today, and not just because of the dress. You glow because you are entirely yourself, loved exactly as you are. Oliver, thank you for being the safe harbour and the sturdy hand; for listening the way you do; for bringing your gentleness to our fierce friend.

My wish for you is simple: that your mornings always begin with hope and good laces, that your Sundays always smell like sugar and rain, that you never run out of stories—fictional or otherwise—to solve together. May your determination

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and calm keep turning ordinary days into the kind of happiness that quietly lasts.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you would please raise your glasses with me:

To Emily and Oliver—may your love stay thoughtful and brave, calm and generous, and may the rest of your lives feel, always, like the best kind of home. Cheers.

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