

# KELSEY & STEVE'S CEREMONY

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Please rise. [Processional starts]

You may be seated.

Welcome, friends & family. I am so excited to be standing in front of you today for the reason of bringing Steve & Kelsey together in matrimony...and to not be wearing an Elvis costume... ahh, yeah, that's a long story. So I first got to know Kelsey & Steve when they stopped by my office one day, & we popped open a bottle of sparkling blueberry pomegranate cider which we sipped in champagne flutes...I think we even toasted to something.

But what makes me most excited is that this ceremony has been pieced together from various communications I have had with Steve. He wanted to kick off their marriage by showing her that he is dedicated to her happiness & by showing (versus just telling) her how much she means to him.

One of the first things Steve shared with me is the similarity between their romance & the book Pride and Prejudice. Steve told me their story, like Mr. Darcy & Elizabeth Bennet's, is one of: "two proud, smart, opinionated people who butt heads at first but come to respect each other and take the others' feedback to heart, even though admitting fault doesn't come easily to either." Steve also told me that there were some other twists on the classic: Kelsey once pulled him out of a river in West Virginia, and one of their earlier dates involved him using her oven to fix one of his circuit boards. It is fitting that Steve's mind would turn to a book in thinking of his love story with Kelsey because the very reason that Kelsey initially caught his eye is because she was carrying a copy of Neil Gaiman's book Fragile Things to her office one day. This is one of Steve's favorite books!

Steve also shared with me that he sees the story of their love as the thawing of his proud & stubborn heart, having realized after intense reflection that he had found his equal & that he would rather learn, grow, & share in life together than remain the loneliest emperor, all control & no subjects. In hearing those words, I heard vows.

So Steve, do you promise to learn, grow, + share in life together with Kelsey & also to be her fellow adventurer, to support her in any quest, to comfort her in times of sorrow, to conspire with her in times of mischief, & to always honor & admire the spark of magic in her that is both timeless and ever reincarnating? [I do]

Kelsey, do you promise to learn, grow, & share in life together with Steve & also to be his fellow adventurer, to support him in any quest, to comfort him in times of sorrow, & to conspire with him in times of mischief, & to always honor + admire the spark of magic in him that is both timeless and ever reincarnating...oh, & to carve "See you Space Cowboy" into his tombstone someday? [I do]

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May I have the rings please?

While Pride & Prejudice is a popular love story, there was another more obscure love story that also resonated with Steve—the one between Arwen + Aragorn in Lord of the Rings. A half-Elven daughter of an Elven lord named Arwen is giving up her immortality to stay and marry the human man she loves. Arwen and her human love, Aragorn, go on to be happily married for 100 years, presumably never arguing about what's for dinner & leaving clothes on the floor. Steve told me as love stories go, this one resonated best with him at a young age.

So what better way to kick off the ring exchange in this ceremony than with a quote from Arwen to Aragorn in Lord of the Rings? She said, *"I would rather share one lifetime with you than face all the ages of this world alone."*

In that spirit, Steve, repeat after me. I give you this +20 ring of reciprocal binding / as a permanent bonus / to our Relationship Attribute / Equip it now / in preparation for / our upcoming Married Life quest.

[Steve, put ring on Kelsey's finger]

Kelsey, repeat after me. I give you this +20 ring of reciprocal binding / as a permanent bonus / to our Relationship Attribute / Equip it now / in preparation for / our upcoming Married Life quest.

[Kelsey, put ring on Steve's finger]

So for those of you who are wondering what the heck that ring exchange was all about, those were references to Dungeons + Dragons, a game Kelsey & Steve enjoy playing together. I think a reference to the world of fantasy is a wonderful way to wrap up this ceremony. Steve shared a fabulous quote with me from George R.R. Martin, writer of Game of Thrones. He said, *"We read fantasy to find the colors again, I think. To taste strong spices and hear the songs the sirens sang. There is something old and true in fantasy that speaks to something deep within us, to the child who dreamt that one day he would hunt the forests of the night, and feast beneath the hollow hills, and find a love to last forever somewhere south of Oz and north of Shangri-La."*

On that note, Steve & Kelsey, may you always use what you learned from reading fantasy to create your own worlds & your own roles. Like Terry Pratchett said, "Fantasy is like an exercise bike for the mind. It may not get you anywhere, but it tones up the muscles that can." When times are tough, remember that you have the learned abilities to make your marriage as great as you can imagine.

And my *role* here today is to pronounce that you are now officially husband & wife. You may kiss the bride!

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Announce: "Ladies & gentlemen, we will now be heading over to Croce's Park West for brunch. Our newlyweds will be getting a few just married portraits here before heading over, but Coordinator Mikaela will take care of anything you need in the mean time."

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