

## A Toast to Vanessa and Carlotta

9/12/15

Hello everyone. My name is Matt, I'm Vanessa's brother and, as of about an hour ago, Carlotta's brother-in-law.

Forgive me for reading this, but my better half, Ivan – he's the handsome one over there looking slightly nervous – has assured me that if I try to wing-it, I'll just end up talking about myself, sobbing hysterically, and then talking about myself a little more.

He thinks that because the last time I gave a toast, I ended up practicing my Oscar acceptance speech for about 10 minutes.

Though, it should be noted that my Oscar acceptance speech DOES need to be revised. I used to talk about the two most extraordinary women in my life – my mom and my sister. Now, I get to add Carlotta to that list.

Because Carlotta *is* extraordinary. And not just because – as many of you know far better than I – she's a compassionate, generous, talented, and beautiful cat-loving woman; yes, all those things are true, but mostly she's extraordinary because she just made my sister the happiest woman in the world.

And that, folks, takes some doing.

Because, and this won't come as surprise to *any* of you, my sister is...*complex*.

Allow me to explain.

When I was young, I used to make up stories about Vee. I'd tell people that she was a professional football player, an international spy, a gay Ninja, to name a few. I did this because, regrettably, I didn't know her very well. When I finally got to know her better, it became immediately clear that I was setting the bar way too low. To my delight, I learned that my sister is a painter, a photographer, a writer, an actress, an EMT, a singer, a songwriter, a drummer, a landscaper, an animal lover, a comedienne, a much-loved friend, a GREAT sponsor, and so much more.

On top of that she excels at the far more complicated duties of daughter and sister and now, wife.

She also farts like crazy, thinks she can bring back the flip phone, and eats like a tiny bird.

I'll be honest, I wasn't sure there was a woman out there fierce enough to match my sister. Tough enough to endure her gas. Crazy enough to put up with the Montelongsos – cause, Carlotta, we've been keepin' it *real* sane up until now.

But there is.

It's Carlotta.

Thank you for not just loving my sister, but for loving her family as well. For welcoming us into your home, letting us play with your cats, and teaching us about Christmas Sauce.

I can't think of two people who more deserve each other's ferocious loyalty and companionship.

Four weeks ago, Vee, me, my mom, and John were in Chicago for the passing of my Abuela. Though unbelievably sad, I'm heartened because I know she's here with us now, taking precious time away from watching her telenovelas and making tortillas, to bless this wonderful occasion.

So, in conclusion:

Be kind to each other, and to yourselves.

Be demanding of each other, and of yourselves (Carlotta, if you want a smooch the minute Vee walks in the door, you get it girl).

Have the highest expectations of each other, and of yourselves.

Forgive each other, and yourselves, when those expectations aren't met.

I'm so proud of you both. Of the life you've carved out for yourselves. Of your sobriety. Of the care you give and receive from your friends and family.

And since I started this toast by talking about myself, it's appropriate that I conclude by doing the same: I'm an actor and writer. I've performed and written dozens of speeches and yet, tonight, when I'm toasting two of the people I hold closest in my heart, I'm at a loss for words.

Believe it or not, this is me at a loss for words.

So, rather than devolve into a series of bad jokes about Santa Fe lesbians and dreamcatchers, I'll let what can't be spoken do the work for me.

Please join me in raising a glass to that incredible bond we all see pulsing between Vee and Carlotta and to that glowing warmth we all feel, because we're so much better for having witnessed it:

To Vee, Carlotta, and their love.

Salud.