

"Brother Speech #1"

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Before I undertake the customary duty of providing Christopher with an uncomfortable few minutes, it is part of the official duty of the best man to thank Chris on behalf of the bridesmaids, Teresa, Lynne and Sheryl for his kind words and for having them play a part of this really special day. They all look wonderful and I think we can all agree that they have done an excellent job. Indeed they are only eclipsed by Alison herself, who looks absolutely stunning.

I feel very privileged to be asked by Chris to be his best man. He has rather generously returned the favour that I asked of him 4 years ago, during which Chris took the opportunity to make lots of cheap jokes at my expense. It is now with great anticipation, and years of planning, that I have the right to reply!

I believe the first thing the best man should do is explain how he knows the groom. Well, being his identical twin our first meeting was long before any time we can both remember, so we are very close. There's nothing I wouldn't do for Chris and likewise there's nothing Chris wouldn't do for me, in fact we spent most of our time doing just that...nothing for each other.

A good starting point is maybe our early life together as toddlers. While we were growing up together in those early days, I am proud to say that I was an angelic child, never causing any trouble, but the same could not be said of Chris. He demonstrated no respect for his elder twin brother. His actions lead me to be an innocent victim of his loutish behaviour. "David, flush you socks down the toilet" he would demand. And under severe duress I did.

But somehow over the years that lout grew up into the well-mannered and well-presented individual we see before us today. Chris has matured. For example I can provide you with evidence that Chris is extremely well read - he has after all read all 45 of the Mr Men books from cover to cover on multiple occasions. In fact, at the age of five, whilst living in Wendover, Chris had a great idea to wander off into the dense, wild woods located close to our house to look for Mr Jelly, whom he had just read lived in the middle of a forest. He convinced me to go with him and it was not long before we were both terribly lost. By the time we had managed to find our way home there were lots of tears. Not for the fact that he had been lost in a forest, but that Chris never found Mr Jelly's house.

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It was only a short while after this disappointing experience that Chris began a love affair which still lasts to this day. McDonalds. At the grand old age of six, we were ever so excited to make our first visit to McDonalds...and the great thing about this particular one was the kids playground - it was like a mini-theme park - things to climb, things to slide down, things to spin around in, all for the

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enjoyment of children who had just filled themselves to the brim with burgers and fries. It was whilst Mum, Dad, and I were sat inside the restaurant that Chris appeared the other side of the window banging on the glass loudly so that everyone in the restaurant couldn't help but notice him. My parents played along and waved back...until Chris, in full sight of everyone tucking into their lunch, brought up his fast food with the same speed that it had originally gone down, all over the window. At this point my parents quickly stopped waving and momentarily tried to pretend he wasn't theirs, although sadly as I, his twin, was sat right next to them at their table, this didn't fool anyone. The waitress did offer them some reassurance. "Don't worry guys, that happens here all the time."

His love of fast food has never stood however in the way of his enjoyment of sport. Chris usually waits until half time to drag himself off the sofa to ring for a pizza.

Some of you may already be aware of his passion for cricket. What many of you will not know is that his interest in the sport came about during his time at school. Chris is a modest man - well, that's what he has insisted I tell you - so his cricket achievements are not well known. But I can reveal today that at school, Chris SCORED more runs than any other person in the entire cricket team - that was because he was always 12th man putting up the numbers the scoreboard at the pavilion.

After school, Chris went on to study environmental science at Kings College London. I am reliably informed by his friends, many of whom are here today, that Chris had a natural ability for the subject. I have been told that when Chris was sent on field trips it did not matter how remote a place was, he could gauge and interpret the direction of the wind, the contamination of the soil and the pollution in the air to produce an accurate assessment of where the nearest local pub would be, ensuring that they could all skive off to enjoy a pint of lager and a packet of crisps.

But being a student is not cheap and so with far too much time on his hands and always in need of an extra few quid, Chris decided to exploit a promotional campaign at Selfridges, the famous department store on London's Oxford Street. The deal was that customers were entitled to a substantial gift voucher if they purchased an item from all seven floors. Chris managed to get round the store and buy a multitude of small items which came to the grand total of Â£2.25. It was an all time record amongst his fellow students. Selfridges had no choice but to pay out the gift voucher, which Chris then redeemed for cash. What is more impressive (or maybe I should say sad) is that he achieved this seven times in a single day, ensuring he would walk away with a substantial amount of 'hard earned' money for his beer fund. Unsurprisingly, Selfridges ended their promotional campaign rather abruptly.

Although Chris did study environmental science, I began to doubt whether his commitment to the green cause was true when he purchased his first car after leaving university - a Volkswagen Beetle. Now, I have no idea what year the Beetle was made, though I have my suspicions that the front of the car was created roughly in the early nineties and the rear of the car many years previously. Chris spent many hours within that car, more often than not trying to get it to actually start. It was the only vehicle that I know of for which the use of a traditional road atlas or street map to navigate your

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journey would be totally useless. Chris' Beetle was so economically inefficient and powerless (or quirky as he would rather put it) that hours of planning would be required to plot out his journey using an ordinance survey map to ensure that the entire route could be made whilst travelling downhill. With careful thought and planning, Chris could achieve this, the only (and rather major) flaw was making the return journey home by the same route.

All joking aside, I want to take this moment to say what a privilege it is today to be your best man. I really couldn't wish for a better brother and it is truly impossible for me to put into words just how much you mean to me. I can assure you that the whole family is proud of you Chris, and we are all thrilled to see you marrying your beautiful bride Ali today.

So it now gives me immense pleasure to invite you all to stand once more and raise your glasses in a toast for Christopher and Alison. We wish them well for the future. To love, life, laughter and happily together forever. Christopher and Alison!

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