

# Zack's Vows

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## *OPENING GREETING*

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I'm sure I'll get a little emotional today... so if I get a little blubbery, cut your old man some slack. I've gotten softer in my old age.

It means the world to your mother and I that all of you were willing to fly almost 3000 miles and spend this week with us to make this so special and memorable. You guys have put up with a lot. We're family and we love each other... but you've shared beds, shared rooms, been flexible to accommodate everybody... and somehow even managed to put up with me.

I love all of you very much. Forty years ago it was just your mom and I starting our life together... and now we can't even imagine what our lives would have been without each one of you in it.

Over the years your mom has always said she wished we could have gotten married with our toes in the sand on a beautiful beach. So being here like this today... honestly feels like a dream come true for both of us.

I don't think we'll keep everybody too long. What we thought we'd do is let your mom start first... and then after she turns me into a complete emotional wreck, I'll try to get through my vows.

Honey...

## *FALLING / EARLY LOVE TRANSITION*

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I was kind of a klutz back then. I'd walk into the corner of cars... trip on cracks in the pavement... probably because I was constantly tipping over my own ego. Who knew falling for a girl would turn into something so much bigger.

That first real date... dancing... walking down the street to the phone booth just to hear your voice... walking the beach together... I was already fallin'.

That first kiss probably should have been your warning sign. I've always hard charged at things when something catches my eye... and you definitely did.

But that second kiss... that probably should have been my warning sign.

That I was going to spend the rest of my life falling for this beanpole of a girl.

## *SKIPPING STORY*

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It's been over 40 years, but I have a memory I'm not even sure you know I carry.

There was a look you gave me that I can still see vividly in my mind.

We were at the mall, just getting out of the car. You jumped off ahead of me, skipping through the parking lot, and I just stopped... mesmerized by you.

Floored by your joy, your happiness, your love of life. I had no idea just how amazing you were.

Mid-bounce you looked back over your shoulder, your hair sweeping across your eyes, and even from 15 feet away I could see them like I was standing right next to you.

You had this smile that said,

“Hey boy... you gonna come get me?”

And sweetheart... I've been chasing and fallin' after you ever since.

I just had no idea then...

how far I'd be falling.

## *WALKING DOWN THE AISLE*

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The day we got married I was standing up there in front of everybody waiting for you. I bet my knees were knocking so hard.

But the moment I saw you walking down that aisle... I looked at your face and everything just became calm.

I remember thinking,

“Wow... I love this girl.”

You have always brought such peace to me.

And standing there that day... I remember wondering just how much further I could fall.

## *MOTHERHOOD / TINY HOUSE*

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You became a mother... and that's when you really started to shine.

I've learned so much about being a dad just from watching you be a mom.

I remember one night back when we only had the boys and you were pregnant with Amanda. I'd been out playing basketball and got home around 10:30. I opened the door and there you were sitting on the floor surrounded by what looked like every New Asia takeout container they had.

You just looked up at me with that smile and said,

“You want some Chinese food? ...I got all of it.”

I just stood there laughing...

and somehow fell even farther.

I'm still baffled by your ability to create a home.

Somehow you took this little 800 square foot puzzle piece with four kids running around in it... and made it feel like a mansion.

## *TRAVEL / WORK YEARS*

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I'm amazed by the strength you've shown over the years.

I was on the road so much... yet somehow all four kids still have ten fingers and ten toes.

You held this family together through so many hard seasons with grace, patience, and love...

even when they didn't necessarily want to be loved. ■

## *ADMIRATION / LAUNDRY STORY*

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I don't think you know just how much I admire you.

For the last few months when people hear we're celebrating our 40th anniversary, they're often shocked.

"How did you make it 40 years?"

"What's the secret?"

Like somehow the world has forgotten how this works.

A lot of men go straight to the joke:

*“HAPPY WIFE, HAPPY LIFE.”*

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But honestly... that's a little trite.

I think the recipe for a good marriage is actually pretty simple.

Marry a good woman... and work to become a good man.

Your mother was right about one thing though...

“Just friends.”

That really is where it starts.

Not just starting as friends...

but staying friends.

Being there for each other.

You are my best friend.

Life gets tense sometimes. I'm sure every one of the kids could tell stories about you and I having friction over the years. But underneath all the rough edges, we always held onto one thing...

we loved each other.

And sweetheart... you've shown a lot of grace under fire.

I've been a bit of a knuckle dragger over the years.

I remember one day I came home completely oblivious to the absolute hell these two boys had apparently put you through all day. Honestly, the fact they're both still alive is proof of your patience and love.

I walked into the bedroom and with all the tact of a wrecking ball demanded to know why the laundry wasn't done.

Your response was perfectly measured for the situation.

You calmly opened the back door...

grabbed all my laundry...

and threw it out into the backyard between the two houses.

Then turned around and said:

“Laundry's done.”

Oh... I was HOT.

I went storming outside picking it all up and your dad walked by, looked over at me and said,

“Having a domestic dispute are we?”

Even then... standing there angry... I realized how stupid I was being.

You really do know how to handle time bombs.

And believe it or not...

even moments like that made me fall deeper in love with you.

## *N ■ PALI SECTION*

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The other day we were on the N ■ Pali coast boat tour. All those incredible green and red mountains, the cliffs, the aqua blue water crashing against the shore... the scenery was staggering in its creation.

And still... I couldn't take my eyes off you.

After 40 years, I am still completely amazed by you.

You embody everything I value most in this world:

a brilliant mind,

a heart that always finds a way to care,

and a beauty and grace that somehow only deepen with time.

You make everything around you better.

And I am so lucky to share this life with you.

But after 40 years... I have a confession.

Over the years I've told you how deeply I love you... but I don't think I've ever been completely truthful.

Because the truth is...

I still don't know how much I love you.

I'm still fallin'...

and I don't think I'll ever find the bottom of my heart.

## *TRANSITION INTO POEM*

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There are so many more stories...

so many moments...

some beautiful,

some hard,

some only you and I will ever fully understand.

But through all of it...

through every season of our life together...

there's been one truth that never really changed.

I have loved you.

And when I look back at our life together... I don't just see memories. I see a lifetime of small moments that somehow became sacred.

When I started on these vows... I wrote this.

## *FINAL RING / RENEWAL VOWS*

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This ring I give you today is shaped with the Plumeria flower...

a flower that represents love, grace, beauty... and the ability to keep blooming even after hard seasons.

That feels a lot like you to me.

No matter what life brought us...

you kept loving,

kept giving,

and kept making things beautiful.

And this ring I wear is made from Kona wood.

Strong and grounded... shaped by time, weather, pressure, and endurance.

But also warm.

Alive.

Marked by every season it survives.

That feels a lot like us to me.

Because somewhere along the way... you stopped just being the girl I married  
and became part of my soul.

My safe place.

My peace.

My home.

The person my heart still reaches for first...  
after all these years.

And somehow...

after all this time...

I'm still fallin' for you.

When I wear this ring, I want it to remind me that love is not something we  
simply fall into once.

It's something we choose...

protect...

nurture...

and return to...

again and again.

And sweetheart... after 40 years...

I still choose you.

I choose your hand to hold.

Your voice to hear.

Your heart to protect.

Your soul to walk beside.

I choose you in calm seas and rough waters.

In laughter and in friction.

In joy and in hard seasons.

I choose you now...

and I will keep choosing you...

for all the days God gives me.

I love you more.

