

## The Marriage of Astrid and Mitchell

### Presentation

Who presents the bride in marriage?  
Her mother and I do.

### Opening Poem

Love is a sacred mystery.  
Love is a night where candles burn in space,  
Love is a dream beyond our reaching;  
Love is a noon where all shepherds are at peace and happy that their flocks are grazing;  
Love is an eventide and a stillness, and a homecoming;  
Love is a sleep and a dream.

- Kahlil Gibran, from "Jesus"

### Convocation

We are gathered here to join this man and this woman in marriage. Marriage is an ancient custom; its footfalls echoing down the corridors of history. Because marriage concerns itself with the most fundamental of human relationships --- it must not be regarded lightly. Those who enter into the promises of wedlock must cherish each other and their commitment with mutual esteem and love. With this in mind, let us pray.

### Invocation

Wondrous Creator of all Things, in bringing Astrid and Mitchell together, you have invited us to glimpse the profound majesty that is love. In love, we are empowered to stand in the presence of another and embrace that person with the gifts we have waited a lifetime to share. We give heartfelt thanks for this day, for the fulfillment of love we see before us in Mitchell and Astrid, and for the opportunity to witness the joining of these lives as one. Amen.

### Address

Astrid and Mitchell, the poetry of intimacy is a lush tapestry of words, of phrases, and of verses. Each of you were a soliloquy, the words of which have brought you to this place of union. Today, you form the epic poem of marriage in the exchanging of vows and rings and promises. In developing a poetic approach to your relationship, you may learn to recognize one another as a text, of sorts --- a gilded tome of stories, theories, ideas, memories, wishes, intentions, and love. Like any rich text, a person has many layers of meaning --- most unknown even to themselves. The poetics of a relationship are an aspect of its mystery; we never fully know the whys and wherefores of our thoughts and emotions. Likewise, marriage --- the most beautiful poetry two can create --- is shaded by mystery, for it is in the act of joining with another that we join, freely, with the Unknown. In your life together, you will meet success and challenge, the warmth of the sun and the shimmering, ever-changing light of the moon. Remember the wondrous words spoken here today, these promises you make with words that carry the depth of your love, your commitment and your sincerity. Go forth and write your own history together, choosing turns of phrase for their ingenuity . . . writing for a lyrical sound pleasing to the heart and soul. May you be blessed with an abundance of metaphor for the one word that has gathered us all here today . . . that word which is perhaps the most glorious word in any language . . . the word that unites us all and dissolves all barriers . . . the single word that in itself, is poetry . . . that word is Love.

### Poem

I would like to watch you sleeping,  
which may not happen.  
I would like to watch you, sleeping. I would like to sleep  
with you, to enter  
your sleep as its smooth dark wave  
slides over my head.

and walk with you through that lucent  
wavering forest of bluegreen leaves  
with its watery sun & three moons  
towards the cave where you must descend,

towards your worst fear

I would like to give you the silver  
branch, the small white flower, the one  
word that will protect you  
from the grief at the center  
of your dream, from the grief  
at the center. I would like to follow  
you up the long stairway  
again & become  
the boat that would row you back  
carefully, a flame  
in two cupped hands  
to where your body lies  
beside me, and you enter it as easily as breathing in

I would like to be the air  
that inhabits you for a moment  
only. I would like to be that unnoticed  
& that necessary.

- Margaret Atwood, "Variations on the Word *Sleep*"

### Expression of Intent

Now, having heard these words about love and marriage, Astrid and Mitchell, have you come to be joined in the spirit of shared love?  
We have.

### Consecration

In the serenity of this very special moment, we give thanks for all the rich experiences of life that have brought Astrid and Mitchell to this high point in their lives. We are especially thankful for the values that have flowed into them from those who have loved and nurtured them, directing them along life's path. We give thanks that within Astrid and Mitchell is the dream of a great love, a love that will grow into many things, including a home that shall endure. And now, as they make the promises that will marry them, may they make these vows with the deepest understanding of their import and meaning. May this be the beginning of a marriage that will grow and mature, becoming more wonderful as the years pass.

### Vows

I, Astrid, take you, Mitchell, to be husband of my days, father of my children, companion of my home. Together, we shall keep what share of trouble and sorrow our lives may lay upon us, and together, we shall hold our store of goodness and plenty and love.

I, Mitchell, take you, Astrid, to be wife of my days, mother of my children, companion of my home. Together, we shall keep what share of trouble and sorrow our lives may lay upon us, and together, we shall hold our store of goodness and plenty and love.

### Ring Blessing

A ring is a circle, a symbol of our Universe, the All, Infinity. It is also the symbol of completeness, peace, unbroken harmony and endless friendship. These two rings are symbols of the unity in which your two lives have been joined and blessed in one unbroken circle of love and life.

### Ring Exchange

Mitchell, I give you this ring as a token of my abiding love, as a sign that I have chosen you above all others. All that I am and all that I have I offer to you in joy, in thanksgiving and in sacred union.

Astrid, I give you this ring as a token of my abiding love, as a sign that I have chosen you above all others. All that I am and all that I have I offer to you in joy, in thanksgiving and in sacred union.

### Pronouncement

Mitchell and Astrid, because you have pledged your love and commitment to each other before these

witnesses, by the power vested in me by the State of Maryland, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

### Reading

Love is an ancient delirium, a desire older than civilization, with taproots stretching deep into dark and mysterious days . . . the heart is a loving museum. In each of its galleries, no matter how narrow or dimly lit, preserved forever like wondrous diatoms, are our moments of living and being loved.

- Diane Ackerman, from "A Natural History of Love"

### Benediction

May light and love surround both of you and always guide you to right action. Astrid, Mitchell: may love, joy and peace be yours in abundance.

### Kiss

You may now kiss.

### Presentation

Friends and family, I present to you Mitchell and Astrid as husband and wife.

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