

# Jess and Lib's Ceremony Script

*(see photos and the full story at <http://theblender.com.au/lesbian-wedding-riverwood-downs/>  
Ceremony adapted from various sources online with extra written by Our Wedding Celebrant Jack van Netten and Jess van Netten)*

(Jess and Lib walk down hill, to front and face crowd)

Whoever you are, wherever you're from, whatever you believe, and whomever you love, you are welcome here. You have been invited to be a part of this celebration of love because you mean something to these two women. Both Libby and Jess spent a lot of time thinking about who they would invite because they believe a marriage is as strong as the community that supports it. With this ceremony today, and your attendance, you are sharing in the love that has blossomed between these two people and, in turn, their families and friends.

Jack, Jess' dad, will join us to say a few words about those who could not be with us today.

Today is about new beginnings and a new life together for Jess and Lib. Butterflies are very symbolic for them; they each purchased the same butterfly rings for each other, not knowing the other had bought it. To Jess and Lib, they symbolize the freedom and joy that love brings.

Today we want to remember those who are not with us, by releasing a couple of butterflies.

I am reading this poem, in the voice of those are not with us today.

Free the butterflies-

I'll be there

to see them soar

upon the air.

Know my spirit

is on the wing,

feel my laughter-

hear me sing.

Forever in your dreams

always in your heart.

Hugh and Kris will play an instrumental piece for quiet reflection as the butterflies are released.

It's good to reflect on the past, as we now look towards the future.

The marriage ceremony has been an important feature across nearly every culture, religion, generation, and society. We have thousands of important moments that happen throughout our lives, but this one is regarded as one so critical, we acknowledge its special status by sharing it with others.

A personal moment that has been shared with me was when Jess first met Libby and she realised she was falling in love. Although they had worked together for nearly 6 months, their paths had rarely crossed. Overhearing that Libby was looking for a chess player, Jess piped up to accept the challenge. Their first chess game at Libby's tiny flat in Mayfield went for over 8 hours. Libby won the game and Jess' heart.

Although the game did not really take that long to play, Libby said that she did not want it to end. Libby had just moved into the flat and the power had not been connected yet. When it became dark Jess said lets go to Kmart and get a lamp so that they could finish the game. I think really it was that they did not want their time together to finish.

Jess and Libby, you have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance as co-workers at Apple to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided it would be a good idea to get married. From that moment of "yes" to this moment of "yes", you have been making promises and agreements in a casual way. All those conversations you had riding in a car or over a meal or during your adventures — all those sentences that started with "When we're married" and continued with "I will and you will and we will"- those late night talks that included "someday" and "somehow" and "maybe"- all these common things are the *real* process of a wedding.

Jess formalised this process by proposing to Libby on their second anniversary. Although she had the prepared much earlier by having a guitar pick engraved, the right moment hadn't presented itself. On their second anniversary, they had signed the lease for their Wallsend house, got the keys and tried out the local Thai for dinner. After dinner, Jess surprised Lib with a tiny package. Inside was a silver guitar pick engraved with "I pick you everyday. Marry me Libby." Libby was suitably surprised and responded with tears of joy (just like she is now).

Despite all of our differences, love is what we all share. It's the great unifier — our one universal truth. That's why you both are standing here. We have all loved in our lifetimes, and in this moment, we're reminded that the ability to love is the very best part of our humanity - the greatest gift from God.

Catherine will now read The Apache Blessing

READING by Catherine

Now you will feel no storms, for each of you will be shelter to the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there is no loneliness, for each of you is companion to the other, You are two persons, but there is one life before you, and one home. Turn together to look at the road you traveled, to reach this---the hour of your happiness. It stretches behind you into the past. Look to the future that lies ahead. A long and winding, adventure-filled road, whose every turn means discovery, new hopes, new joys, new laughter, and a few shared tears. May happiness be your companion, May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead; And through all the years to come. Go this day to your dwelling place and enter into your days together. May your days be good and long upon the earth. Your adventure has just begun!

Thank you Catherine.

By coming to this service, family and friends, you are showing your love for Jess and Libby.

I now have something to ask you:

(ask crowd)

Will you, their loved ones, family and friends, agree to help them keep these bonds strong, reminding them always of their love for each other? To accept them not only as individuals, but as a couple? To be their friends and their support, today and everyday to follow?

Crowd: "We will"

Before Jess and Libby take their vows, I'd like to remind them that their commitment they are making today is for life. In front of this community, I'd like to now ask them to make this commitment.

Libby and Jess, please join hands.

Now Libby, do you take Jess to be your partner for life? Do you promise to walk by her side forever, and to love, help, and encourage her in all she does? Do you promise to take time to talk with her, to listen to her, and to care for her? Will you share her laughter, and her tears, as her partner, lover, and best friend? Do you take her as your wife for now and forever?

Libby: I Do

Jess, do you take Libby to be your partner for life? Do you promise to walk by her side forever, and to love, help, and encourage her in all she does? Do you promise to take time to talk with her, to listen to her, and to care for her? Will you share her laughter, and her tears, as her partner, lover, and best friend? Do you take her as your wife for now and forever?

Jess: I Do

Jess and Libby, the vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, "You know all those things we've promised and hoped and dreamed- well, I meant it all, every word."

These vows also reflect Jess and Libby's understanding of life's ever-changing circumstances. Life does not always go where we plan and no matter how much arranging is done, sometimes, you just have to wing it. After you speak these words, things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you will say to the world, we are committed, for life!

Libby and Jess have prepared their vows, to be read together now. In sharing the reading of their vows, they take another step towards sharing the rest of their lives together.

Jess: I promise you, until my very last breath, to fight for life, for joy, for us,

Libby: to never take your actions, words and kindness for granted,

Jess: to always speak the truth, in love and listen with loving ears.

Libby: I vow to grow with you and not apart,

Jess: to make my accomplishments, ours, and your challenges, mine,

Libby: I will always love you deeply and honestly, as your equal and your partner.

Jess: I fiercely want to grow old with you;

Libby: so we can sit on our front deck in the summertime,

Jess: and snuggle on the couch in winter,

Libby: and be always surrounded by family

Jess: and take pleasure in shared memories.

Libby: I vow that through it all, I will be yours and you mine,

Jess: so that when I am simply with you, I know that I am home.

Throughout time, lovers have exchanged rings as a token of their vows. These rings are a symbol of love. They are forged from earth dug silver into a precious ring just as Jess and Lib's relationship has been forged from raw friendship into love. They have no beginning and no end just as love has no beginning and no end.

Helen (Lib's mum) if you could bring forward the ring.

Libby, please take the ring, place it on Jess' finger and repeat after me:

"Jess, with this ring I give you my heart.

I promise from this day forward you will not walk alone.

May my arms be your shelter

and my heart be your home."

Now, Jennie (Jess' mum) if you could bring forward the ring.

Jess, please take the ring, place it on Libby's finger and repeat after me:

"Libby, with this ring I give you my heart.  
I promise from this day forward you will not walk alone.  
May my arms be your shelter  
and my heart be your home."

With their rings on, it is now time for Libby and Jess to sign the certificate. Jess and Lib, if you will join me for the signing. Elke and Beth, Catherine and Helen, if you could also come and sign as witnesses.

Kate plays I Choose You on guitar.  
(Jess and Lib return to main area, hold hands facing crowd)

Libby and Jess,  
May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring.  
May you need one another, but not out of weakness.  
May you want one another, but not out of lack.  
May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!" and take no notice of small faults.  
May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy.  
May you have love, and may you find it loving one another.

Family and friends, now is the time for us to say the final words together:  
"We, your family and friends, now pronounce you married! You may kiss the bride!"  
KISS

Walk back on out of there to Love You Til The End played by Kate