

CEREMONIES.SCOT

—

Poetry & Readings

A curated collection of poems, prose, and passages for your ceremony.

Created for our couples

Warm, humanist-friendly, Scottish-inspired ceremonies.

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POETRY & READINGS COLLECTION

A Ceremonies.Scot Resource

Foreword

Choosing a reading for your ceremony can feel overwhelming — there are thousands out there, and not all of them feel right for a modern, humanist wedding. This booklet brings together a curated selection of poems, prose, and readings that couples love. Some are romantic, some are funny, some are deeply heartfelt — all are chosen because they work beautifully in a ceremony that feels personal, warm, and true to you.

Where a reading is copyrighted, we've included a short description so you can explore the full text yourself or ask us for guidance.

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1. Romantic & Modern

The One

A warm, contemporary piece about finding the person who feels like home.

When the one whose hand you're holding
Is the one who holds your heart,
When the one whose eyes you gaze into
Gives your hopes and dreams their start,

When the one you think of first and last
Is the one who holds you tight,
And the things you plan together
Make the whole world seem just right,

When the one whom you believe in
Puts their faith and trust in you,
You've found the one and only love
You'll share your whole life through.

I Love You...

A tender reflection on loving someone for who they are — their humour, their differences, their quiet moments.

I love you
For the kindness in your eyes
And the warmth in your voice,
For the honesty of your words
And the silence of your smile;
For the ways in which we're similar,
And those in which we're worlds apart.

For the openness of your understanding
And the acceptance of your heart;
For the tenderness of your touch
And the strength of your commitment,
For your sense of humour
And your seriousness of purpose;
For a thousand small reasons,

And one most important of all:
Simply because you are you.
You are the one whom I cherish most,
The one with whom I hope to share my life –
Its joys, its sorrows, its accomplishments, its challenges –

While building our dreams together and growing everyday
In the love that makes us one.

These I Can Promise

A heartfelt expression of devotion, offering companionship, support, and love through all of life's seasons.

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine
I cannot promise riches, wealth or gold;
I cannot promise you an easy pathway
That leads away from change or growing old.

But I can promise all my heart's devotion
A smile to chase away your tears of sorrow;
A love that's ever true and ever growing;
A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

True Love

True love is a precious flame
That burns perpetually
And none can dim its special glow
Or change its density

True love speaks in tender tones
And hears with gentle ear
True love gives with open heart
And true love conquers fear.

True love makes no harsh demands
It neither rules nor binds
And true love holds with gentle hands
The hearts that it entwines

Once in a Lifetime

Once in a lifetime, someone comes into our lives who is meant to be there

We breathe them in and they touch our hearts in a way that we thought not possible.

We know that if we ever let them go, it would surely be the end of us.

The body and soul is so full of emotion, it seems like another world.

We are teachers to each other when expressing our feelings and have let me experience these things I had only dreamed about.

My mind drifts and a smile follows.

2. Scottish & Local

A Red, Red Rose — Robert Burns

O, my luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O, my luve is like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Anke Von Tharau — Simon Dach

Even through hail, bitter weather and rain
Ever together we two will remain.

Sickness, affliction, distress and wrong
Tie the knot firmly and make our love strong.

Just as a palm tree grows higher and higher,
Thwarting attack both by wind and by fire,

So will affection continue to grow,
Love giving answer to suffering and woe.

Even if fortune decree we must part,
Taking you where no kind suns cheers the heart,

I'll trail you through forest and far ocean's damp,
Through ice, through iron, through enemy camp.

My star and my sun,
Now and forever, our hearts become one

3. Short & Sweet

I Love Thee — Thomas Hood

I love thee - I love thee,
'Tis all that I can say;
It is my vision in the night,
My dreaming in the day;
The very echo of my heart,
The blessing when I pray:
I love thee - I love thee
Is all that I can say

These I Can Promise – Mark Twain

A compact, heartfelt promise of devotion and support.

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine
I cannot promise riches, wealth or gold;
I cannot promise you an easy pathway
That leads away from change or growing old.

But I can promise all my heart's devotion
A smile to chase away your tears of sorrow;
A love that's ever true and ever growing;
A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow

4. Light-hearted & Funny

The Madness of Marriage!

A playful look at the quirks, joys, and occasional chaos of married life.

Marriage is all about giving and taking
And forgiving and forsaking
Kissing and loving and pushing and shoving
Caring and sharing and screaming and swearing.

About being together whatever the weather
About being driven to the end of your tether
About sweetness and kindness
And wisdom - and blindness.

It's about being strong when you're feeling quite weak
It's about saying nothing when you're dying to speak
It's about being wrong, when you know you are right
It's about giving in, before there's a fight.

And for you two today it's about to begin
And for all that the two of you had to put in
Some days filled with joy, and some days with sadness
Too late you'll discover that marriage is madness!

He Never Leaves the Seat Up...

A humorous poem about the realities of living together, celebrating love through laughter.

He never leaves the seat up
Or wet towels upon the floor.
The toothpaste has the lid on
And he always shuts the door!

She's very clean and tidy
Though she may sometimes delude.
Leave your things out at your peril
In a second they'll have moved!

He's a very active person
As are all his next of kin.
Whereas she likes lazy days
He'll still drag her to the gym!

He romances her and dines her
Home cooked dinners and the like.

He even knows her favourite food
And spoils her day and night!

She's thoughtful when he looks at her
A smile upon his face.
Will he look that good in 50 years
When his dentures aren't in place?!

He says he loves her figure
And her mental prowess too
But when gravity takes her over
Will she charm with her IQ?

She says she loves his kindness
And his patience is a must
And of course she thinks he's handsome
Which in her eyes is a plus!

They're both not wholly perfect
But who are we to judge?
He can be pig headed
Whereas she won't even budge!

All that said and done
They love the time they spent together
And I hope, as I'm sure you do,
That this fine day will last forever.

He'll be more than just her husband
He'll also be her friend
And she'll be more than just his wife
She'll be his soul mate 'till the end.

This poem for (Name) and (Name)
A married couple now
Is a token of the love they share
And the thought behind each vow

When Your Hair Has Turned To Winter

When Your Hair Has Turned To Winter
And your teeth are in a plate,
When your get up and go
Has gone to stop and wait -
I'll still be loving you.

When your attributes have shifted
And you're not as spry as now,
I'll count the joys you bring me,

Not the wrinkles on your brow
I'll still be loving you.

When the crackle in your voice
Matches that within your knee,
And the times are getting frequent
That you don't remember me -
I'll still be loving you.

Growing old is not a sin,
It's something we all do.
I hope you'll always understand
I'll still be loving you.

5. Poetic Prose

A North American Indian Marriage Ceremony

A gentle, atmospheric reading about walking through life together with care and companionship.

May the sun bring you new energies by day
May the moon softly restore you by night.
May the rain wash away any worries you may have
And the breeze blow new strength into your being.
And then, all the days of your life,
May you walk gently through the world
And know its beauty.

Now you will feel not the rain, for each will shelter the other.
Now you will feel not cold, for each will warm the other.
Now you will feel not solitude, for each will be company the other.
Now you are two persons, but both will lead one life.
Go now to your dwelling to enter into the days of your life,
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

These Are the Hands of Your Best Friend

A tender description of the hands that will support, comfort, and love you throughout your life.

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow and forever.

These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as together you build your future.
These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch will comfort you like no other.

These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief fills your mind. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes; tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

They're Not Perfect Bob Marley

They're not perfect. You aren't either, and the two of you will never be perfect. But if they can make you laugh at least once, causes you to think twice, and if they admit to being human and making mistakes, hold onto them and give them the most you can. They're not going to quote poetry, they're not thinking about you every moment, but they will give you a part of them self that they know you could break. Don't hurt them, don't change them, and don't expect for more than they can give. Don't analyze. Smile when they make you happy, yell when they make you mad, and miss them when they're not there. Love hard when there is love to be had. Because perfect guys don't exist, but there's always one guy that is perfect for you.

People Are Like Cities — Hilary T Smith

A poetic reflection on how love reveals the hidden, beautiful places within each person.

People are like cities: We all have alleys and gardens and secret rooftops and places where daisies sprout between the sidewalk cracks, but most of the time all we let each other see is a postcard glimpse of a skyline or a polished square. Love lets you find those hidden places in another person, even the ones they didn't know were there, even the ones they wouldn't have thought to call beautiful themselves.

These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children. These are the hands that will help you to hold your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it.

And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged, will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.

6. Timeless & Traditional

Love Is a Mighty Power — Thomas à Kempis

A reflective piece on the strength, endurance, and transformative nature of love.

Love alone lightens every burden, and makes rough places smooth.
It bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable.

Nothing is sweeter than love,
Nothing stronger,
Nothing higher,
Nothing wider,
Nothing more pleasant,
Nothing fuller or better on earth.

Love flies, runs and leaps for joy.
It is free and unrestrained.
Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds.
Love feels no burden, takes no account of toil,
attempts things beyond its strength.

Love sees nothing as impossible,
for it feels able to achieve all things.

Love therefore does great things;
It is strange and effective,
while he who lacks love faints and fails.

Love is not fickle and sentimental,
nor is it intent on vanities.
Like a living flame and a burning torch,
it surges upward and surely surmounts every obstacle

Friends

There is no better way
To live on this earth
Than to be friends,
Friends who will always
Love and
Stand by each other
'til life's end.

Friends,
Who will share
Their lives together

Through good times
And bad, and
Who will bring joy
And comfort
To each other when times are sad.

Friends
Who will always stand together,
And stand strong.
To help share life's burdens,
To help each other carry on,
Through the tears, through the pain,
Through the sun, through the rain,
No matter what happens to them
As friends, they will always remain.

And
So it is
That your friendship
Now has grown into love
And into marriage
Into a love
That is so beautiful to see.

So may your love
And your friendship
As you begin life together
Last you for an eternity
And as friends
May you both
Forever be.

How to Choose a Reading

Choosing a reading isn't about finding the "perfect" poem — it's about finding something that feels like *you*. Here are a few tips:

- Think about the tone you want: romantic, funny, simple, Scottish, or modern.
- Decide who will read it — some pieces suit friends, others suit family.
- Don't worry about length; short readings can be incredibly powerful.
- If you love a reading but not every line, we can help you adapt it.

We're always happy to guide you.

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