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Thank you all for being here today to remember and celebrate the life of my big brother, Daniel James Carter — Dan to most of us.

He was born on 14 March 1987 and left us far too soon, on 2 April this year, at just 39.
Those dates feel impossibly small when you think about how much life he fitted in between them.

We grew up in Leicester, where Dan somehow managed to be both my protector and my co-conspirator.
We were inseparable as kids, and that never really changed — even as adults we spoke most days, about everything and nothing.
He had a way of answering the phone that made the whole day feel steadier.

Dan was the beloved son of Martin and Elaine, devoted husband to Priya, and the proudest dad to Isla and Reuben.
He was a much-loved brother — my brother — and a doting uncle.
Family was never a speech for him; it was his calendar, his weekends, his WhatsApp groups, his whole compass.

He studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Nottingham and became a rail maintenance engineer, a job he loved because it mattered.
He took pride in keeping people safe and trains on time, and he did it with that Dan combination of patience and precision.
“Keep it on track,” he’d say — and he meant rails, plans, and sometimes me, when I was spiralling.
He cared about sustainable transport long before it was fashionable, and he mentored apprentices with the same steady care he brought to the rest of his life: listen first, teach properly, never show off, and always bring biscuits.

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If you’re looking for the essence of Dan, it’s in small moments.
A stormy Lake District camping trip comes to mind — the tent rattling like a drum, everything damp, spirits sinking.
Dan rigged a sorry-looking tarp between two trees, boiled a kettle on a stubborn stove, and handed round tea like it was courage in a mug.
Then came the jokes — terrible, dry, exactly what we needed — and somehow we were warm again.
He didn’t perform heroics; he just nudged the world back into place.

He was loyal, witty, patient, meticulous, and quietly generous.
Quietly, because for Dan, generosity wasn’t a headline — it was picking you up from a station without fuss, fixing your flat tyre on his lunch break, slipping a gift card into a birthday card he pretended was from “the cat”, or staying on the phone until you could sleep.
When he solved things — a dodgy socket, a nervous teenager’s first day at work, a friend’s wobble — it was calm, practical, and full of care.

He loved cycling and tinkering with bikes, and there was always a trail of allen keys and a cloth blackened with chain oil nearby.
He loved a pub quiz, Leicester City, and a proper Sunday roast.
If you’ve ever been on his team, you’ll know he had a specialty for the obscure round that arrived right when everyone else had given up.
And if you’ve ever been to ours on a Sunday, you’ll know he thought gravy was a serious business and overcooking vegetables a personal insult.

Dan believed in fairness, in reliability, and in community spirit.
He showed up when it mattered — sometimes with a socket set, sometimes with a casserole, sometimes with that easy laugh that could take the tension out of a room.
He valued doing a thing well, not for applause, but because it was the right thing.

To Priya, he was a partner not just in the big stuff — mortgages, holidays, the logistics of school runs — but in the ordinary, good days that make up a life.

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To Isla and Reuben, he was Dad: the one with the steady handlebars when you pedalled for the first time, the one who did voices at bedtime and could repair a toy faster than you could say the word “broken”.
He carried his love like he did most things — carefully, completely, and without drama.

We will miss his easy laugh.
We will miss how he could walk into a small crisis and make it feel solvable.
And we will miss those late-night calls that always ended with hope — not empty promises, but a plan, a path, and the sense that tomorrow would be manageable.

Today hurts, because losing Dan hurts.
But it also helps, in a quiet way, to look around and see the traces of him everywhere.
In apprentices who build safely because he taught them to.
In friends who learnt to call when things felt heavy, because he always answered.
In two brilliant children who know, already, what it looks like when someone shows up, every day.

If you want to carry him forward, do it the way he would.
Be fair.
Be reliable.
Show up.
Make time for the small, important fixes.
Boil the kettle when the weather turns.
And if you can, ride your bike instead of driving — he’d like that.

In lieu of flowers, our family would be grateful for donations to Sustrans, a cause close to Dan’s heart.
And thank you to those wearing a touch of blue today for his beloved Foxes.
He would have noticed, and he would have smiled that quiet smile of his.

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Dan, you kept so many things — and so many of us — on track.
You were my brother, my first friend, my steady hand.
I don’t know how to do this without you, but I hear your voice even now: “One thing at a time, sis. We’ll sort it.”
We will try.
We will look after one another.
We will make you proud.

Thank you for every cup of tea in the rain, every rescue, every laugh.
Thank you for the love you gave so simply, so well.

We love you, and we always will.

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