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Friends, family, loved ones,

Thank you for coming together today to honour the life of my sister, Charlotte Anne Reid—
our Lottie.

It is a hard thing to stand here and accept that she is gone at just forty-seven,
born on 29 November 1976,
a daughter of Manchester whose life reached far beyond any one city.
Yet in the midst of our grief,
I feel the steady warmth of the love she sowed among us,
the values she lived by,
and the quiet courage she offered whenever the world seemed too loud.

Lottie was my older sister,
and in time my mentor,
and—in the most ordinary and extraordinary sense—a true friend.
We grew up sharing bedrooms and secrets,
later trading train times and case notes,
and eventually, as life pulled us to different postcodes and different seasons,
we learned the art of staying close across years and cities.
She had a way of bridging distances.
A phone call at just the right moment,
a postcard sent from a windy shore,
a message that said,
“I’m here. Keep going.”
She believed in me before I did,
and I am forever grateful that she showed me what it means to lead with integrity.

She was shaped by places:

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by Manchester's grit and humour,

by Durham's cloisters and lecture halls where she studied law,

by London's restless energy where she built her career.

And she was softened and steadied by the Northumberland coast,

where the sky feels bigger and the tide keeps its own counsel.

Those beach holidays were her kind of sanctuary.

On Boxing Day, when the rest of us were huddling in coats,

Lottie would race the tide barefoot,

laughing,

pockets filling with shells,

already sketching plans for the year ahead as if the horizon had whispered a promise only she could hear.

I can still see her:

cheeks flushed with cold,

eyes bright,

as if the sea itself had signed off on her next chapter.

Professionally, Lottie was exacting and principled.

She became a respected employment law solicitor in London,

known for meticulous care and a fierce, steady commitment to fairness.

She believed that work should honour dignity,

that systems should bend to the needs of people,

not the other way round.

Her colleagues will remember the composure she brought to the tensest negotiations,

the way she could see past noise to the heart of the matter,

and the exact sentence that would unlock a stalemate.

But ask those she represented,

and you'll hear about something deeper:

her integrity,

her unshowy compassion,

the hours no one saw,

and the pro bono work at youth legal advice centres where she championed

those who were told to wait

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or to accept less than they deserved.

She was, to many, a first door that finally opened.

In her personal life, she gathered people as carefully as she chose her words.

She was partner to Nadia,

and together they built a home full of laughter and gentle stubbornness,

the kind that says, "We will do this properly and we will do it kindly."

She was a devoted aunt to three nieces and a nephew,

the aunt who brought over a stack of books and a puzzle,

who somehow turned washing up into a game,

who taught small people that a cryptic clue is an invitation to look twice and smile.

She was a cherished daughter and sister,

the elegant fixed point at the centre of so many of our family conversations,

who always had time for one more call,

one more pot of tea,

one more careful piece of advice that somehow sounded like encouragement rather than instruction.

What will we miss most?

Her clear-eyed counsel that cut through fog.

Her dry humour—the raised eyebrow,

the precisely placed remark that made you laugh and think at once.

And the calm she brought to difficult moments.

She could walk into a room humming the first bar of a piano piece

and you'd feel the temperature change.

She was brave without spectacle,

principled without fanfare,

witty without unkindness.

Under pressure, she was composed,

and when the pressure lifted,

she was quietly, attentively joyful.

Lottie loved things that required attention.

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Sea swimming at dawn when the water feels like truth.

Piano pieces that asked for patience and reward it.

Cryptic crosswords where every answer is earned twice: first by logic, then by delight.

Her book club selections were never accidental;

she curated them the way she curated friendships:

with care, curiosity, and a sense that reading together is a kind of belonging.

She believed in diligence,

in making time for people,

in the simple covenant of showing up.

Fairness, integrity, diligence—these were not slogans to her.

They were habits.

And they shaped everyone around her.

I think of those Boxing Day walks,

her feet numb, her laughter warm,

the wind running off the sea as she talked about the year to come.

She carried a quiet audacity in those moments.

She didn't chase grand gestures;

she set a direction and walked towards it, step by steady step.

If you were walking beside her,

she'd hand you a shell, point out a line of birds,

and, without quite meaning to,

she'd help you put your life in order.

There are so many small scenes I want to keep:

her perched at the piano, half-smiling when she nailed a difficult passage;

her late-night texts with a crossword clue and a dare to solve it;

her hand briefly on your arm as she said, "You've got this."

And the infinitely ordinary kindnesses—

the kettle on before you asked,

the extra scarf she brought because she knew you'd refuse the first one,

the way she remembered the names of people you mentioned only once.

To be loved by Lottie was to be seen,
and to be seen was to be steadied.

To Nadia:

you shared a partnership marked by tenderness and good humour,
and by a shared belief that life should be lived thoughtfully.

Thank you for loving her so well.

To her nieces and nephew:

your aunt adored you.

She loved your questions, your chaos, your celebrations.

Carry her curiosity with you.

Ask good questions.

Finish the puzzles.

Read the last chapter and then read it again.

To our parents and our wider family:

we hold each other up today, and we will keep doing so.

To her colleagues and clients:

you were part of a vocation she treasured.

Keep doing the work the way she did it—meticulously, fairly, humanely.

We have lost her far too soon.

There is a harshness to that truth that cannot be softened by any sentiment.

But love is stubborn,

and memory is generous.

Lottie's life will go on speaking in the choices we make.

When we give clear, careful advice without condescension,

when we lend our skills to those who cannot pay,

when we defend fairness even when it is inconvenient,

when we take a moment to breathe before answering,

when we choose diligence over shortcuts,

we will feel her next to us,

walking at our pace,

smiling that small smile that said, "Yes—this."

If you want to honour her

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you could do worse than to take a page from her unassuming playbook:

- Make time for people, especially when time feels scarce.
- Fight for fairness without making yourself the hero of the story.
- Keep learning—another case, another book, another piece of music.
- Laugh softly and exactly when it matters.
- And when the weather is uninviting and the sea looks cold,

go anyway.

Race the tide.

Pockets open for whatever the day offers.

I am her brother,

and I carry a catalogue of thanks I will never finish.

Thank you, Lottie, for believing in me before I did.

For the late-night pep talks, the ruthless edits, the gentle course corrections.

For the example you set—that strength and kindness are not opposites,

that principle need not be loud to be unbreakable,

that the best kind of clever is the kind that makes other people braver.

You have left us with a map:

integrity for the route,

diligence for the miles,

fairness for the crossings,

and time—for each other—for the rest.

We gather at this memorial service not only to mourn,

but to celebrate a life that was coherent and beautiful,

precise and generous.

Charlotte Anne Reid—our Lottie—lived as if character was a daily practice

and love a decision made over and over.

We will miss her every day.

But in the calm she taught us to make,

in the laughter she shared,

in the work she dignified,

in the shorelines she loved,

she remains.

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May we hold one another close.

May we look for the good work to be done and then do it carefully.

May we keep a place at the table for those who need it.

And may we, from time to time, take off our shoes,

feel the cold water brace our ankles,

and remember a woman racing the tide,

pockets full of shells,

eyes on the year ahead.

Thank you, Lottie.

For everything.

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