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Good afternoon everyone,

Thank you for being here to celebrate the life of my mum, Kathleen Rose Mitchell — Kate to almost everyone who knew and loved her.

I'm Anna, her daughter, and I stand here with my brother James and my sister Lucy, with Dad — Michael, her husband of 45 years — and with our children, her four adoring grandchildren, our cousins, our neighbours, and the community that gathered around her like sunlight on the sea. It means the world to us that you're here.

Mum was born on 14 July 1954, and she left us at 70, after a brief illness that felt far too swift for a woman whose energy seemed to refill itself every morning with the tide. She grew up in Brighton, never far from the salt and the gulls and the wind that tangles your hair. The sea was a language she spoke fluently — she swam in it, ate from it, photographed it, and taught us to respect it. In truth, she taught us to respect everything — people, places, ingredients, the earth. "Leave things better than you found them," she'd say, rinsing out a jar for the recycling like it was a small prayer.

If you knew Kate, you knew warmth. She had that sparkling, hospitable nature that could turn a queue of strangers into a table of friends. She trained as a chef when not many women felt welcome in professional kitchens, and she was one of the good ones — not just skilled, but properly decent, generous to a fault, never gatekeeping the secrets. She loved seasonal food like some people love novels — she read the year through asparagus and strawberries and the first proper tomatoes, and she could talk about potatoes like a poet.

Her seaside café began as an idea doodled in a notebook, and became a beloved Brighton fixture. People still tell me about the roast potatoes —

legendary, crisped edges with soft centres, as if someone had taught a cloud to caramelize. But it wasn't really about the food, not entirely. It was about the feeling. Sundays there were a chorus — big lunches, a clatter of plates, a football of children in the corner, Dad ferrying jugs of gravy and stories, Mum moving through the room like a conductor bringing everything into harmony. "Sit, love," she'd say, "there's always room for one more," and somehow there always was.

Later, when the café had become part of the town's heartbeat, she decided to give back in another way. She volunteered to teach cookery to young carers — teenagers who carried too much, too soon. She taught them how to turn inexpensive, honest ingredients into something delicious, and in doing so, she taught them agency and joy. "If you can make a soup," she'd say, "you can make a day better. Yours, and someone else's." She took such pride in those classes. She never once called it charity. To her, it was community. A kitchen, a table, a hand outstretched.

At home, she was our cheerleader and our friend. She championed our daft ideas and our serious ambitions with equal enthusiasm. If you came to her with a dream — open a shop, write a book, plant a row of dahlias — she'd find you a second-hand book about it within the week and then show up with a tin of flapjacks for your planning session. Her love was never stingy. It was loud and practical. A lift at 6 a.m. A babysit at short notice. A pan of something bubbling on the stove when your day had been too much.

Some of my favourite memories are the simple ones. Summer evenings at the beach, gulls wheeling, the sky unrolling its pinks and golds. We'd sit on the pebbles, wrapped in cardigans, unwrapping hot fish and chips from the paper, steam curling in the sea air. She'd put on her favourite 70s tunes — a little disco queen of Brighton — and sing along, off-key and radiant. She'd press a chip into a grandchild's hand, tuck my hair behind my ear, and say, "This is it, darling. This is life. Salt and laughter and something warm to share." I hold that like a lighthouse inside me.

She was never still for long. Sea swimming at an hour that should be illegal. Early-morning visits to her allotment, coming home with a bag of muddy beetroots and heroic leeks. Sourdough proving in bowls under tea towels, little flour fingerprints on every handle in the kitchen. A camera slung over her shoulder, always capturing the way light catches on water, or the way a grandchild's eyelashes look when they're plotting mischief. She made ordinary days feel worthy of celebration. Tuesdays were special. Rainy afternoons mattered. If someone arrived, the kettle did too. If you were hungry, well — that problem didn't last long at Kate's.

The traits that defined her are easy to list and impossible to limit. She was sparkling — truly — like laughter made into a person. She was energetic; the kind of tireless that made the rest of us wonder if she'd found extra hours in the day. She was creative, not only with recipes, but with life — turning small budgets into feasts, small rooms into parties, small moments into memories. And generous — to a fault, we say — but I don't think she believed in "to a fault." If she had it, you had it. That was the rule.

She loved this town, these neighbours. She loved being "Mum" to us and "Gran" to four little people who adored her back with sticky hands and unfiltered joy. She loved Dad — in that steady way that doesn't shout but endures. Forty-five years of partnership, of Sunday roasts and seaside walks and a thousand quiet kindnesses. They teased each other with familiarity and tenderness. They built a life that was warm and useful and welcoming, and the door was always open.

People will miss her laughter most, I think. It filled rooms and loosened knots. They'll miss those roast potatoes, which deserve their own plaque. And they'll miss knowing that if you turned up at Kate's, you were welcome. No judgement, no ceremony. Just "Come in, love," and a chair pulled out.

For me, for James and Lucy, there's gratitude at the core of the ache. Gratitude that she taught us to love loudly — not in speeches, but in soup. To feed people well — not with fuss, but with care. To find joy in the ordinary — the damp towel after a swim, the first slice of bread, the way children insist on one more story.

She showed us that ~~small, consistent kindness changes lives~~. That hard work done with humour can be its own kind of prayer. That community isn't an abstract noun — it's faces, names, casseroles, lifts, texts, and turning up.

When someone shines as she did, it's easy to fear the light will go out. But I don't think that's how it works. I think her light has tucked itself into each of us — into Dad, who taught us how to stand steady; into James and Lucy and me, in the way we'll open our own doors; into her grandchildren, who know that a kitchen is a place of magic; into her cousins and neighbours, who learned that the best parties are a little chaotic and everyone helps with the washing-up.

To the young carers she mentored, to the cooks she encouraged, to the allotment friends who swapped beans and gossip, to everyone who learned to make a proper gravy because she stood beside you and made you believe you could — you carry her forward too. Every time you choose seasonal and simple, every time you pick up litter on the way home, every time you add one more chair at the table, she is there in that choice.

There is sorrow today, of course there is. Grief is the cost of loving someone worth loving. But even in this, she'd nudge us towards comfort. She'd say, "Eat something. Have a cup of tea. Tell me a story." So let's do that. Let's tell the stories. The time she dragged us into the sea when it was far too cold. The Great Sourdough Phase when everyone got a starter for Christmas. The Sunday she fed three extra families after a power cut because she had a gas oven and a belief that no one should eat cold beans if there was another way.

And afterwards, when we go back to our kitchens and our lives, let's braid her values into the everyday. Work hard, but leave enough room for dancing in the kitchen to a 70s track. Be generous, especially when no one is looking. Celebrate the unremarkable Tuesdays. Leave places better than you found them — beaches, parks, shared rooms, and conversations. Keep the door open.

Mum, you were our cheerleader and our friend. You made a life that was useful and beautiful. You loved Dad for 45 faithful years, raised three noisy, grateful

children — Anna, James and Lucy — and watched four grandchildren become the sparkling centre of your days. You fed a town. You mentored young people who needed someone to see them. You grew food, you baked bread, you welcomed anyone who knocked, and you laughed like it mattered — because it does.

We will miss you with a fierceness that catches in the throat, and we will honour you with dinners that stretch to fit whoever arrives, with walks by the sea, with sand between our toes and a bag for the litter, with photographs of ordinary miracles. We will love loudly, feed people well, and keep finding joy in the ordinary — because that's how you taught us to live.

On those summer evenings, when the sky goes soft and the gulls draw their commas across the dusk, we'll unwrap hot chips, put on your favourite songs, and sing along — off-key, gloriously. And we'll say what you always said when the light got golden and everyone was fed:

“This is it, love. This is life.”

Thank you, Mum. Thank you, Kate.

We love you. We always will.

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