

## The Speech for the Defence

“My learned colleague would have you believe that marriage is doomed just because women used to be treated worse than men. But we aren’t talking about history. And don’t be fooled by her statistics – marriage is *not* a thing of the past. Some 85% of the people still get married, although we don’t have such moral or economic pressures to tie the knot as our parents had. When people do get married today, more often than not, it’s a question of deliberate choice they have made. It shows that matrimony is respected.

The lack of pressure probably explains the decline in the number of marriages, just like the changes in the role of women have something to do with the increase in divorces. But even if a minority of people no longer have the stamina to stick it through, it does not mean marriage as an institution is irrelevant to the majority. Quite the contrary. Most people still want to show to the world that they are serious about their relationship, and ready for the commitment. That’s why they get married.

Another main reason for the matrimony is the link it creates with the family. We tend to feel isolated and anonymous on our own in the modern world. Getting married provides us with a social identity as a member of a larger social unit, the family. It’s also a sign of continuity in the face of the insecurities of our lives: daughters following in their mothers’ footsteps, sons stepping on the path of their fathers.

Let me conclude by quoting Rachel, a young Jewish girl, who just got married. ‘I’d had lots of relationships,’ she says. ‘Nothing went on very long, but that’s what happened to all my friends, so I didn’t expect anything else. My parents kept on at me that I should meet a nice Jewish boy, but they would, wouldn’t they? It was the last thing in the world I wanted. Then I met one – not the type I’d normally go for at all. But somehow we just clicked, however much we tried not to! Somehow what we felt for each other changed things so dramatically that, not only did we want to marry, we wanted it to be very different from everything that had come before.

‘The first thing was to get engaged, and that was wonderful. Not only had I never been engaged before – I always thought it was so, so naff – I’d never even owned a ring. And suddenly there I was, feeling coy, telling friends about it, touching the ring and knowing I was loved. We married in the synagogue with the full works and I’m very very happy. I feel part of something that is old and that I’m helping to continue.’

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, this is what it is all about: marriage is a testimony to the depth of our feelings for our loved ones.”

**Find and underline the arguments in the text that show acceptance to marriage.**

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**The lack of pressure probably explains the decline in the number of marriages**, just like the changes in the role of women have something to do with the increase in divorces. But even if a minority of people no longer have the stamina to stick it through, **it does not mean marriage as an institution is irrelevant to the majority**. Quite the contrary. Most people still want **to show to the world that they are serious about their relationship, and ready for the commitment**. That’s why they get married.

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Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, this is what it is all about: **marriage is a testimony to the depth of our feelings for our loved ones**.”

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