

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE

An Oration

by
Katherine Marin



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

**www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com**

CAUTION: Wetmore Declamation Bureau material is protected by United States copyright law and conventions. None of our material may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means-electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other-without prior permission. No trademark, copyright or other notice may be removed or changed. All rights reserved. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE
An Oration

Katherine Marin

Copyright 1962 by the author. Permission granted to the WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU, Sioux City, Iowa, by the author.

“For better, for worse--for richer, for poorer--in sickness and in health as long as you both shall live.” These are just a few phrases taken from the marriage vows. What do they mean to you? I’ll tell you what they mean to me. I feel that no other vows should be more binding; none more sacred than those taken in marriage. Yet how lasting can this bond be when made at the age of fourteen or fifteen? How sacred can these vows be when taken by children who don’t even understand the true meaning of the pact they agree to? To teenagers, very often the words seem only to say, “for better--for richer--in health--as long as we like the arrangement.”

You may say this isn’t really a big problem, that it affects only a very small number but did you know that statistics taken in 1959 showed that two hundred and forty-three thousand persons from the ages fourteen through seventeen were married or had been married? In almost every state, a person must be at least eighteen to be married without the permission of his parents. Yet, surprisingly, the age requirement drops as much as six years in some states when the parents’ permission is given. I would like to know who takes the marriage vows? Who promises to live together forever? The parents, or the couple about to be married? The age requirements in states vary from thirteen to eighteen with consent. Also there is a convenient clause stating that this age can be lowered if the welfare and the morals of the young couple so require. I would question the use of this, however, because generally when it is used, it is too late to help the couples’ morals and it does nothing to promote their welfare.

What happens to these young marriages? A recent study showed that out of two hundred and forty school-age couples, after five years, only sixteen of these were still together. What about the ones that don’t divorce during this time? Some will later, some separate with either the boy or girl going back to mother, some stay together but constantly quarrel about money or other problems, and some (a select few) will remain happy together. If you ask people from any of these groups, even the last, and they answer you truthfully, I think they will probably say that things would have been much more in their favor if they had waited.

What is the advantage of waiting? What do these marriages lack? Just what are the ingredients for a good marriage? I would cite love as the first and main factor, but I would not state it as the only one. Two other big parts are maturity and a means of income.

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---