Opening

1 / 8

Good evening, everyone. I'm Ellis, Warren's half brother. We have the same father and different mothers, and for the first part of my life we lived four states apart. I want to tell you how a brother gets made from a distance.

Part 2

2 / 8

Warren is twelve years older. When I was five, he was seventeen and had a life that I could not picture. But on the first of every month, a postcard came in the mail with my name on it. Not our dad's name. Mine.

Part 3

3 / 8

They were never long. A picture of a bridge, a lighthouse, a bus station. On the back he wrote one line. 'Saw this and thought of you.' Or, 'The pie here is not as good as the one you told me about.' Once it said only, 'Hi, Ellis. Still your brother.'

Part 4

4 / 8

I kept every one in a cookie tin under my bed. By the time I was eighteen, the tin would not close. When I was twelve, I finally spent a whole week with him at our dad's place. I was shy, and he was shy, and then he handed me a deck of cards and said, 'I'll teach you to lose gracefully.' I did not learn. We have been close ever since.

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Part 5 5 / 8

Bianca, there is a word people use, half. I have never liked it. A half brother sounds like someone who shows up for half of the party. Warren has shown up for every part of mine, from a distance, and then in person, and then at my door with a toolbox on the day I moved into my first apartment.

Part 6 6 / 8

Last month, I found a new postcard in my mailbox. A picture of this very hall, taken from the street. It said, 'Still your brother. Bianca says I should stop being sentimental. I will not.'

Part 7 7 / 8

Warren, I never wrote back as often as I should have. Tonight I'll answer them all at once. Thank you for every bridge, every lighthouse, and every first of the month. Bianca, welcome. You are marrying the most faithful mail carrier in the country, and he doesn't even work for the post office.

Closing 8 / 8

Everyone, please join me. A toast to Warren and Bianca: may every day bring you something worth sending home.