Opening 1 / 8

Good evening, everyone. I'm Russell, Everett's big brother. I'm four years older, which in our house meant I was in charge of him. He never agreed to that. Our mother did.

Part 2 2 / 8

Every Saturday morning, Mom handed me a basket of laundry and Everett's hand, and sent us to the laundromat on Pine Street. I was eleven. He was seven. The job was simple: keep him in sight and keep the socks together.

Part 3 3 / 8

I did the first part badly and the second part not at all. I read comic books on the folding table while the machines hummed. Everett, meanwhile, made friends. Within a month he knew the woman who ran the front desk, the man who repaired shoes next door, and a retired bus driver named Mr. Hollis, who taught him checkers.

Part 4 4 / 8

I thought I was watching over my little brother. It took me years to see it was the other way around. He was the one who made that noisy, warm room feel like ours. When I was eleven and a little embarrassed to be there, he was seven and glad to be anywhere with me.

Part 5 5 / 8

Marisol, I think you know this man. He is the one who talks to the person next to him in every line, on every train, in every waiting room. At first it made me nervous. Now I see it for what it is. Everett makes strangers feel expected.

Part 6 6 / 8

Last spring I found a red checkers piece at the bottom of an old laundry basket, a leftover from Mr. Hollis. I called Everett right then. He remembered the whole afternoon, down to the color of the machines. We talked for an hour.

Part 7 7 / 8

Everett, I was supposed to look after you. You looked after me better. Marisol, thank you for loving him out loud, the way he has always loved everyone else. I'm proud to be the big brother of the groom today.

Closing 8 / 8

Please stand with me. Here's to Everett and Marisol, and to a long life with a warm room, an open seat, and someone new to meet every day. Cheers.

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