Opening 1 / 8

Good evening, everyone. I'm Nolan. And I'm Cyrus. We are Pete's two brothers, and we flipped a coin to decide who would talk first, and then we agreed to share, because the coin landed under the buffet table.

Part 2 2 / 8

Our brother Pete is the middle one. That means he spent his childhood between two loud boys, and he handled it like a diplomat at a very small embassy.

Part 3 3 / 8

Nolan here. When I was twelve, we built a model rocket from a kit. Pete was eleven and Cyrus was ten. Pete read the instructions out loud, all fourteen pages. Cyrus and I did not listen. We were busy deciding what color to paint the nose.

Part 4 4 / 8

Cyrus here. That is accurate, except it was orange, and orange was the right choice. The launch day was windy. The rocket went up very well, turned left at the top, flew over three yards, and landed on the roof of Mr. Abernathy's garage.

Part 5 5 / 8

Nolan again. We froze. We were certain Mr. Abernathy would call our parents. Then Pete walked up the driveway alone, knocked on the door, and said, 'We built a rocket, it's on your roof, and I'm sorry. May we please get a ladder?' Mr. Abernathy looked at him for a long time. Then he said, 'Orange. Good color.'

Part 6 6 / 8

Cyrus again. Here is what we have both noticed. Pete walks up the driveway. Nolan and I stand at the corner and cheer. That is how it has gone for thirty years. Vera, you should know that when something lands on a roof, Pete will be the one to knock. He will say sorry first and ask for the ladder second. It is the most dependable thing in the family.

Part 7 7 / 8

Nolan again. Vera, you have already shown you can do the driveway part too. At the picnic in June, our cousin's kite got stuck in a tree, and you were halfway up before the rest of us put our plates down. Welcome to a family where two brothers will stand at the corner and cheer for you, too.

Closing 8 / 8

Pete, that's all from us. We are proud of you, and we will be at the corner. Everyone, please raise your glasses to Pete and Vera: may every rocket land softly, and may there always be a ladder nearby.