Opening **1 / 5**

Good evening. I'm Darnell, Nate's cousin. Our mothers are sisters, so we grew up in each other's kitchens, and I've always thought of him as my brother with a different last name.

Part 2 **2 / 5**

When we were sixteen, our families rented a cabin by a lake. Nate and I took a canoe out alone. About halfway across, my paddle snapped in two. I was embarrassed, because I'd been bragging all morning about how well I could paddle. We had one paddle and a long way to go.

Part 3 **3 / 5**

Nate didn't say one word about the bragging. He took the good paddle, sat me in the front, and said we'd go slowly and sing. So we did. It took us an hour and a half to get back, and we sang every song our grandmother ever taught us, badly. Our whole family was waiting on the dock, laughing, and I have never felt so rescued.

Part 4 **4 / 5**

That's the cousin I know. He doesn't make you feel small when you've made a mistake. He makes it easier to laugh. Grace, you've probably seen him do that for a stranger, or for a waiter, or for a whole table of relatives. He does it every time.

Grace, our family has been lucky to have Nate. Now you are lucky too, and we are lucky to have you. I hope the two of you always have a second paddle, and a song to sing when the water gets slow. Welcome to the family. We love you both. Everyone, please raise a glass to Nate and Grace.