Opening 1 / 8

Good evening, everybody. My name is Hannah, and Lucy is my little sister. Eight years ago she stood up at my wedding as my maid of honor, and tonight I finally get to return the favor. The program calls me the matron of honor. I prefer 'the sister who has been married the longest,' because it sounds like I know something.

Part 2 2 / 8

When I left for college, Lucy was eleven, and she was furious with me. She thought leaving home meant I was leaving her. So I made her a promise: I would write her a real letter, on paper, every single week. And I did, for four years. Lucy wrote back every time, two pages minimum, with drawings in the margins.

Part 3 3 / 8

Last month, while we were planning tonight, she brought over a shoebox. Inside were all of my letters, every one, in order, tied in bundles with hair ribbons. She had kept them for fifteen years. I sat on her kitchen floor and cried, and she sat down next to me, handed me a tissue and said, 'Well, you did promise.'

Part 4 4 / 8

That is my sister. She keeps her promises, and she keeps yours too, safe in a box, until you need them back.

Part 5 5 / 8

Daniel, I have watched you learn this about her. On your second date you mentioned that you missed your grandmother's lemon cake. Three weeks later Lucy had tracked down the recipe through your aunt and baked it, a little lopsided. You told me later that was the day you knew. I understood completely.

Part 6 6 / 8

Being married for a while has taught me a thing or two, and I will share just one. The big moments take care of themselves. It is the small promises that hold a marriage up: the coffee made the way the other one likes it, the call when you said you would call, the note left on the counter. Keep making those, both of you, and keep them.

Part 7 7 / 8

Lucy, you were the best maid of honor I could have asked for, and standing beside you today is one of the great honors of my life. I love you, and I am so proud of the woman you have become.

Closing 8 / 8

Now, if you would all stand with me and lift a glass. To Lucy and Daniel: may your promises be small, kept and countless. Cheers.