Opening 1 / 6

Good evening, everyone. I'm Elena, Hannah's mother, and I have been looking forward to this evening and dreading it for about twenty-eight years. Thank you for coming, for the long drives and the good shoes, and for loving Hannah and Sam the way you do. I brought notes, because I know myself.

Part 2 2 / 6

When Hannah was in second grade, I started leaving a note in her lunchbox every morning. Nothing grand. A joke, a drawing of our cat in a hat, a reminder about the dentist. I kept it up for six years. In sixth grade she asked me, very politely, to stop, because a boy named Tyler had read one aloud in the cafeteria. I stopped. I was crushed for about a week.

Part 3 3 / 6

Then, the day she left for college, I found a folded paper on my pillow. It said, don't forget your sweater, it's going to be cold. In her handwriting. She had been saving that line for years, waiting to hand it back. I sat on the bed and laughed until I cried, and that paper has lived in my wallet ever since.

Part 4 4 / 6

That is Hannah. She pays attention, and she returns what you give her, usually with interest and a little humor. She calls her grandmother every Sunday. She remembers which friend is afraid of dentists. She once drove two hours with soup for a coworker she barely knew, and never mentioned it. I only heard about it from the coworker.

Part 5 5 / 6

Sam, I met you on a rainy Thursday, when you came to dinner carrying a bag of lemons because Hannah had told you I was making fish. I never admitted the fish was an accident. You ate every bite and asked for the recipe. Since then I've watched you carry her umbrella, her bags, and her bad days with the same patience. Thank you for that.

Closing 6 / 6

Hannah, my wish for you is small and large at once. May there always be a note somewhere in your house, in a pocket or on a pillow, from someone who knows you by heart. May you and Sam keep leaving them for each other. I love you more than the whole lunchroom could hold. Everyone, please stand and drink to Hannah and Sam.