

“Don't Forget the Pants!”

Readers Theater developed by Sylvia M. Vardell and Cynthia Leitich Smith

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CAST

- Ray
- Grampa Halfmoon
- Jonah
- Best Man
- Narrator



Narrator: As Ray and Grampa Halfmoon climbed a flight of stairs to the front terrace of the rented mansion, Jonah appeared to greet them.

Jonah: Welcome to the wedding.

Grampa: I believe, Ray, that you and the groom have some business to attend to.

Narrator: Grampa was right. That afternoon Jonah, a Polish-Menominee from Chicago, was marrying Nancy Lee, a Choctaw girl from Norman, Oklahoma. Ray had agreed to pitch in as their ring bearer.

Ray had never been to a wedding before. He knew he'd have to carry the ring down an aisle in front of a lot of people. Ray's stomach flipped just thinking about it, but he was looking forward to the wedding cake.

Then Jonah bent down in his gray tux, digging in his breast pocket.

Jonah: This was my grandmother's wedding ring. Today it'll become Nancy Lee's.

Narrator: Ray watched as Jonah set the white gold band in his palm. Tiny diamonds glittered. The metal felt cool in Ray's hand.

Grampa: Sure is pretty.

Ray: I'll take good care of it. I mean, WE'LL take good care of it.

Narrator: He handed the ring to Grampa.

Jonah: I'd appreciate that. As it turns out, Nancy Lee remembered everything except a pillow to carry it on.

Grampa: That's how it goes with weddings. This or that always goes wrong.

Narrator: Ray couldn't understand why he'd need a pillow to carry the ring. He'd been carrying things his whole life without a pillow.

Grampa slipped the ring into his jacket pocket.

Ray and Grampa Halfmoon walked past a window framed in forest green velvet curtains, climbed a spiral staircase, and joined the groomsmen in an upstairs bedroom.

A row of rented gray tuxes and crisp, white shirts had been hung in the closet, and Grampa pulled out the smallest size in each after handing Ray his belt, socks, and dress shoes.

Grampa: This'll look mighty handsome on you. Need any help?

Ray: Nope. I'll be okay.

Narrator: Ray headed toward the bathroom to get dressed for the wedding. But when he slipped the gray jacket off the hanger, its matching pants were nowhere to be found. The second hanger was empty. Ray quickly pulled on the jacket, opened the bathroom door a crack, and called for Grampa Halfmoon.

Grampa: How're you doin' in there?

Ray: No pants. Can you double-check in the closet?

Narrator: Grampa sped off, while Ray waited in the bathroom. A couple of minutes later, Grampa returned and shut the bathroom door.

Grampa: No pants. I checked three times.

Narrator: They could still hear the groomsmen laughing outside, but in the bathroom, nothing seemed too funny. Ray shifted his weight from one sock-clad foot to another. He held up his neon purple sweatpants.

Ray: I can't go out there in my underwear. Can I just wear these?

Grampa: I don't reckon so. Everybody'd be starin' at you instead of Nancy Lee.

Narrator: Rap-rap-rap-rap came a knock on the bathroom door. Ray and Grampa heard the best man's friendly voice.

Best Man: Ten minutes until show time.

Ray: Can't we just get another pair of pants?

Grampa: Not in ten minutes. But I have another idea.

Narrator: Grampa excused himself to see if any of the guests were sporting pants Ray's size. Meanwhile, Ray paced and made faces at himself in the mirror.

Six minutes later, Grampa Halfmoon returned empty-handed. The only other kids at the wedding were frilly girls, he reported. The kinds with lace and bows.

Ray: Too bad I can't borrow your pants. But I'd drown in them.

Narrator: For another minute, Ray and Grampa tried to come up with a solution. They even thought about Grampa pitching in for Ray, becoming the oldest ring bearer ever, but they decided he couldn't do that without being specially asked.

Then Grampa Halfmoon stepped out to talk to the best man about handling the ring delivery, but he'd already left with the groomsmen to usher.

Grampa: No luck. We've got about a minute and a half.

Ray: I can't go out there half naked.

Narrator: Grampa looked from his own pants to Ray's bare legs.

Grampa: Maybe you can borrow my slacks after all. At least it's worth a try.

Narrator: At the last rap-rap-rap-rap knock, Ray stared at his reflection. He looked smart enough in the white shirt, tux jacket, white rosebud boutonniere, and Grampa's church slacks, rolled at the waist and leg bottoms, held tight by his own leather belt.

He grinned at Grampa, standing there in his boxer shorts.

Ray: It'll do.

Grampa: You look like your daddy did back when he got married. Except shorter, don't you know?

Narrator: As a harp began to sing, Ray marched out of the bathroom, down the spiral staircase, and past a window framed in forest green velvet curtains, barely in time to start down the aisle.

The maid of honor led him in front of the line of bridesmaids to a little girl, no older than five. She gripped a basket of white rose petals and stared at him with scared, watery eyes.

Ray: Don't worry. We'll do all right.

Narrator: After all, the worst part is behind me, Ray thought. Just then, Ray realized he'd forgotten the wedding ring. Grampa Halfmoon still had it upstairs in his jacket pocket.

Ray: Uh-oh, I'll never make it back in time.

Narrator: Racing around bridesmaids, he was just about to shoot up the spiral stairs when he spotted Grampa Halfmoon peeking from behind one of the forest green velvet curtains. A lace-trimmed tablecloth had been tied around his waist.

In his outstretched hand, waiting for Ray, was— Nancy Lee's diamond ring!

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