

A script from



“Black and White Photographs”

by
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- What** Nick visits his Grandparents and discovers there is a whole lot more to them than what he first thought. **Themes:** Honor, Grandparents, Grandparents day, Grandchildren, Wisdom, Experience, Memories
- Who** Nick
Emma (Gran)
Gus (Gramps)
- When** Present
- Wear (Props)** Old Black and White photograph to be seen on the screens at the beginning of the scene
Front Porch (outdoor furniture, adirondack chair, etc...)
Shoebox
Hat for Gus
Newspaper
Old photographs in a Photo album
Telephone
- Why** Proverbs 16:31, Psalm 145:4, Psalm 92:14-15
- How** This should have a very familiar feel, as if the audience is watching their own family. Emma and Gus clearly adore their grandson, and Nick admires them as well, and his respect for them grows throughout the scene.
- Time** Approximately 8-9 minutes

*An old black and white photo of a couple is seen on the video screens. They are young, about 18 or so. The stage is dark. A man enters. This is **Nick**. He speaks to the audience.*

Nick: Those are my grandparents. Gus and Emma Gianelli. Both of them were children of hard-working, but destitute, Italian immigrants. Looking back on the lives my grandparents led, I see a lot of these kinds of photos. Black and white. Faded. Aged. I don't mean to be cruel. I love them both so much. But as I look through these old photos– there's no life, no...color to them.

I think I know them pretty well. Well enough to say that anyway. They're not outgoing. They've done nothing special in their lives. But they're my grandparents. And I love them. I like to think that that's enough.

Its Sunday and every Sunday I head to their house. 29 years– 15 hundred and 8 Sundays, I've gone over for dinner. Now, it's been a while since I've visited. Too long. But now that both of my parents are retired and living in Phoenix, I'm all they've got left.

*Lights fade up on the house. **Gus**, **Nick's** paternal grandfather – an elderly man with a thick (non-stereotypical) Italian accent, is sitting on an Adirondack chair just beneath the front porch with a hat over his face and an old shoebox on his lap. He is sleeping.*

Nick: And so I head to the quaint yellow house that my grandfather built for my grandmother in 1946, to have a visit with my grandparents.

***Nick** enters the scene.*

Nick: Hey Gramps. Hi Nan.

Emma: Gus, Nicky's here. (*Gets no response from **Gus**. She hits him with a newspaper.*) Gus!

Gus: Why you always need to wake me up like that?

Emma: Nick's here.

Gus: Nicky! It's been so long!

***Gus** sees **Nick** and a big grin spreads across his face. **Gus** tries to get up but **Nick** comes over, takes his hand, gives him a kiss on the cheek. **Nick** sits down on the porch steps and **Gus** opens the newspaper that was lying on his chest.*

Nick: I know, I'm sorry.

Emma: How are you doing?

Nick: Good.

Emma: Are you hungry?

Nick: Actually, I just came from lunch. I'm still kind of full.

Emma: What did you have?

Nick: Sushi.

Emma: Sushi?

Nick: Nan–

Emma: You're telling me that's food?

Nick: Well, everyone eating it seemed to think so, yes.

Emma: Forty years ago I had dinner at a Sushi restaurant and to this day, I have no idea what I ate. I'll make you food!

Nick: Nan! I'm full!

Emma: Fine. *(Pause)* I'll make you a sandwich.

Nick: Nan!

Emma: You look hungry!

Nick: How do I look hungry?

Emma: Look at you– you're so pale and gaunt...practically wasting away before my eyes. Breaks your heart, Gus, doesn't it...our only grandson...

Nick: All right, all right! A small sandwich.

Emma: What do you want on it?

Nick: I don't care!

Emma: How about provolone and ham?

Nick: Perfect!

Emma: Good! Stay right there.

Gus: Your grandmother never made it through grammar school, never even learned how to drive a car. But lock her in a kitchen with a tomato, pasta dough and garlic, and the woman is Einstein.

Emma enters talking on the phone.

Emma: Nicholas, your mother is on the phone from Phoenix.

Nick: Oh really?

Emma: *(Into phone)* Nicholas ate sushi today. *(She exits.)*

Nick: What’s with the box?

Gus: Ahhh.

Nick: Wow, these photos look old. *(Opens the book and browses through the photographs.)*

Gus: *(Pointing to one)* They are. That’s the day I was born, 90 years ago.

Nick: Sometimes I forget how old you are.

Gus: Sometimes I lose count.

Emma: I’m out of provolone. Cheddar or Havarti?

Nick: Whatever, Nan!

Emma: I want to make it the way you like it.

Nick: How? I don’t even want it!

Emma: Don’t be smart. Cheddar or Havarti?

Nick: Cheddar.

Emma: You sure?

Nick: Absolutely.

Emma: But the Havarti’s so nice and fresh–

Nick: Alright, Nan. I want Havarti.

Emma: I thought so. *(Exits)*

Nick: *(To Gus, closing the book)* Nice photos.

- Gus:** 'Nice' photos. That's it? 'Nice'
- Nick:** Well. It's just that-
- Gus:** *(Grabs the book back from Nick, opens it and shows him a photo.)* Look.
- Nick:** Who's that?
- Gus:** That's your grandmother. Quite the looker, eh? This was taken right before I went off to war.
- Nick:** Oh yeah.
- Gus:** You say that like it was no big deal. "Oh yeah." I tell you it was a big deal when they captured me.
- Nick:** What?
- Gus:** In Denmark- 19...something...40, 41, I don't know...I was at a camp for, a year or - *(catching himself, realizing)* I don't talk about it. *(Waves his hand)* I don't want to talk about it
- Nick:** Okay.

Silence.

- Gus:** I wrote her a letter. Goodbye. And that I loved her. You know we married right before I went over. We were just a couple of kids then.
- Nick:** You get all that from this photo of Nan?

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ENDING:

- Emma:** Of course, he had to sing quietly, or else my father would hear.
- Gus:** Part of me didn't care if he killed me. Just to see her smile was all I wanted. Then I saw her. She looked out the window. And smiled. I was on cloud 9.
- Emma:** I had a nice smile back then.
- Gus:** You still do. When she came down to the street, I was still too nervous to say words to her, so I just kept on singing. And I took her by the hand...

(he takes Emma by the hand and begins to dance) and we danced underneath her window until the sun came up.

Emma: And we lived happily ever after.

Gus: Happily ever after...

Gus and Emma continue to dance as the LIGHTS fade. Nick addresses the audience.

Nick: Whenever I see an old, old black and white movie, I can't help but think that that's what things were like in my grandparents' day – that they lived these very black and white lives, and they were all very serious, very earnest, rather joyless. But it's only an image. A shadowy glimpse into the beautiful lives they lived. Full of color. More color than we would ever give them credit for. Full of passion, and war, and possibilities. Successes and failures, love and family. They've lived the lives that we are living now. Learned the lessons we're trying to learn. If only we flipped through the album a little bit more and learned from those who'd been there already. *(Lights out. The end.)*