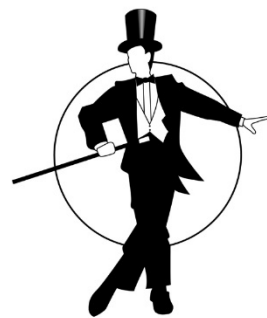


Imagination Never Gets Old

Roger Brookfield



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IMAGINATION NEVER GETS OLD

By Roger Brookfield

CAST

WANDA: Rudy's wife, older woman who uses a cane.

RUDY: Wanda's husband, older man who uses a walker.

Place

Back porch patio in a Middle America suburb.

Time

The present.

IMAGINATION NEVER GETS OLD

At rise: Night on the porch in dim light. RUDY, gripping his walker, inches onto the porch.

RUDY: Okay, we're here. Now then. Let's see...if we...can...

(RUDY slides the walker ahead just out of arm's length and stands up. He takes a step.)

RUDY: Aw, Jesus! Aw--

(barely catches himself on the arms of the walker before he collapses)

RUDY: God dammit! God dammit! God--Dammit!

WANDA: *(offstage)* Rudy?

RUDY: *(to himself)* No. Don't go tryin' to do that again. At least not right now.

WANDA: *(offstage)* Rudy? Where are you?

RUDY: Out here.

WANDA: Where's out here?

RUDY: Out on the porch.

(WANDA, using her cane, inches out onto the porch.)

WANDA: What hap—Oh my God, what's wrong?

RUDY: Nothin', nothin', I dunno. Rubber on the feet of this God damn thing caught on the carpet or somethin'...

WANDA: Are you all right?

RUDY: I'm okay. I'm on my feet. You don't have to call nobody.

WANDA: It's dark out here. No wonder you almost fell. Can't see where you're going.

RUDY: I'm just clumsy, that's all.

WANDA: Come on inside. *Dancing with the Stars* is on.

RUDY: Nah, not tonight.

WANDA: But they have--

RUDY: I got somethin' better out here.

WANDA: What's better out here?

RUDY: What I told you about.

WANDA: *(pause)* Is he out there now?

RUDY: Not yet.

WANDA: Where is he?

RUDY: I dunno. Inside somewhere probably.

WANDA: Is he gonna come out?

RUDY: That's what I'm out here for.

WANDA: In the cold?

RUDY: I got a sweater on.

WANDA: If you catch a cold--

RUDY: I'm not gonna catch a cold, Wanda.

WANDA: Or the flu.

RUDY: Or the flu.

WANDA: Or pneumonia—

RUDY: Or pneumonia. Or the galloping crud.

WANDA: What if he doesn't come out?

RUDY: He will, he will. It's that time of the month, that time of night...He'll come out. It'll be just like I told you.

WANDA: Maybe they've gone to bed.

RUDY: No they haven't. Their shades are still up.

WANDA: Maybe they don't draw them like we do.

RUDY: They do after they finish, like sayin' the show's over and they bring down the curtain. But until then, their shades stay up and you can see inside.

WANDA: You oughta be ashamed of that! Looking inside someone's window.

RUDY: It's what they do for me, what happens when they—Ooh! Hey, wait a minute, wait a minute...

WANDA: What? Is he coming out?

RUDY: Yeah, he is.

WANDA: Where? I don't see him.

RUDY: There. See him now?

WANDA: No, not really. I need the light on.

RUDY: Jeez, don't do that. Won't be able to see nothin' with the glare. And he'll be able to see us, too. Here, try it right here.

WANDA: Hey, watch it. Almost knocked me down.

RUDY: Can you see now?

WANDA: I don't know. What is there to see?

RUDY: Him. The guy. Here, try it without your glasses on.

WANDA: How am I gonna see without my glasses? It's dark out there.

RUDY: There's plenty of light from over there; they got their outside light on and we have ours off.

WANDA: Where do I put these?

RUDY: Here. In the basket.

WANDA: All right. Now then, let me try it...Aaah!

RUDY: What?

WANDA: It's all a blur. I'm gonna put my glasses back on.

RUDY: Okay, then just stay back from the window.

WANDA: How am I gonna be able to see?

RUDY: Like this—Ooh!

WANDA: You be careful. Keep your hands on your handles.

RUDY: I will, I will, I will. I was just gonna demonstrate.

WANDA: Don't demonstrate, just tell me.

RUDY: Like this, okay? Put your hand over your eyes like you were lookin' into the sun.

WANDA: Ha! I wouldn't do something that stupid.

RUDY: Pretend like it, okay? You wanna be able to see 'em both, don't you?

WANDA: Both?

RUDY: I told you. It's the guy and his wife, or his girlfriend—whatever she is.

WANDA: Some bimbo he picked up.

RUDY: No, it's the same one lives there. You've seen her.

WANDA: I've seen her. But I don't know if I've ever seen a ring on her finger.

RUDY: I don't, either, and I don't care. When she's at the window, I'm not lookin' at her fingers—Ooh! Hey, here he goes.

WANDA: What is it? What's he doing?

RUDY: Taking off his shirt—No, no, removing it.

WANDA: Removing?

RUDY: Removing his shirt, like it's—I dunno, a ritual or some kinda thing.

WANDA: Let me see, let me see.

RUDY: Ouch! Watch it. Knock me off my damn trolley here and—

WANDA: Sorry.

RUDY: And be careful with your hand on the glass. Smudge it up and we won't be able to see--Ooh, look out now, look out.

WANDA: What?

RUDY: There she is, there she is.

WANDA: Outside?

RUDY: At the window. See her?

WANDA: No.

RUDY: Hey, watch where you're—

WANDA: Shhh! You want them to hear you? Oh. Oh, yeah, I see her now—Oh my God, Rudy, she doesn't have a bra on.

RUDY: I know. Spec-tacular, ain't she? Who's she remind you of?

WANDA: Nobody I know.

RUDY: Yeah you do.

WANDA: Who?

RUDY: You've known her all your life.

WANDA: Me? Ha! I never looked like that.

RUDY: If you say so.

WANDA: Well...What's he doing now?

RUDY: I'm not watching him.

WANDA: I am. I don't care about her. What's he doing—Oh my, doesn't he know it's cold out there?

RUDY: I don't think he cares. I didn't used to.

WANDA: You were nuts.

RUDY: Ooh! Here we go, here we go, heeere...weee ...gooo...

WANDA: Where?

RUDY: At the window.

WANDA: Oh yes, I see her now, I see her—What's she doing?

RUDY: Dancing.

WANDA: That's not dancing. Jiggling maybe, but not dancing.

RUDY: Jell-O jiggles. What she's doing...

WANDA: Is not dancing. I know what dancing is—we know what it is. What she's doing is just--

RUDY: Undulating.

WANDA: Undulating?

RUDY: Undulating. Like so: un-dulate, un-dulate, un-dulate—Ow! Dammit!

WANDA: You're gonna un-dulate yourself down to the floor and then you'll be in a fix.

RUDY: Hey, you're gettin' in the way. I can't see. What?

WANDA: You know what we should do? We should put up a fence.

RUDY: What?

WANDA: For our protection.

RUDY: From who? They're not comin' over here after us.

WANDA: I mean a fence high enough so we don't have to see. A stockade fence or something.

RUDY: Stockade fences are only five or six feet high.

WANDA: You can get 'em taller than that—I've seen 'em taller than that.

RUDY: What do you want? You wanna be walled in like those places we saw in Arizona?

WANDA: That's not what I mean.

RUDY: Or walled in like we're in a fort? Fort Wanda.

WANDA: I don't want to have to see what's going on over there!

RUDY: I do. I want to look.

WANDA: Why?

RUDY: You'll see.

WANDA: No, why?

RUDY: Because it's fun.

WANDA: For who?

RUDY: Me! What they do for me! What they'll do for you, too, if you'll let them.

WANDA: *(after a moment)* You come back inside.

RUDY: No. Ooooh...Look at that.

WANDA: What? What's going on?

RUDY: Her. His wife, his—whatever she is.

WANDA: What's she doing?

RUDY: Sort of...motioning to him, like this here. Yeah. Like that. Here it goes.

(a glow begins to come over RUDY and WANDA)

WANDA: What are you doing--You be careful! You're gonna fall!

RUDY: I'm not gonna fall.

WANDA: What's happening?

RUDY: What always happens when I'm out here with them. This is where it starts.

(a romantic ballad starts to play)

WANDA: But if you fall--

RUDY: Shhh, honey...I'm not gonna fall. And neither are you.

WANDA: This is—

RUDY: Shhh, honey, just listen...Mmm, just...listen...

(The glow is at its brightest. RUDY steps away from his walker and WANDA lays her cane against it.)

RUDY: You see?

WANDA: Oh my.

(RUDY and WANDA dance to the music and we see them as graceful as they were when they were young. When the music fades, RUDY and WANDA hold each other. The glow begins to fade.)

WANDA: What's happening?

RUDY: They're going inside. This is what happens when they go inside. Hurry!

WANDA: God, if we fall, who are we gonna call to help us?

RUDY: Quick! *(RUDY grabs his walker and hangs on as WANDA props herself up with her cane and regains her balance. A silence.)*

RUDY: That was close.

WANDA: This always happen this way?

RUDY: Not when I'm by myself. When I'm by myself, I always know when the light's gonna fade. They go inside and it starts to fade, and I have time to get hold of the walker. But tonight, with you out here, it's the first time I went too far.

WANDA: And they do this every night?

RUDY: No, not every night. I'm not out here every night. Just once a month, along about this time of the month.

WANDA: How long have they been doing this?

RUDY: I don't know. For a while, I guess, I don't know. But one night I was out here and they came out, and I watched 'em and...it happened.

WANDA: How does it happen? What do they do?

RUDY: I don't know. They just do. And I don't think I wanna know, either.

WANDA: *(after a moment)* Ha, ha, ha...

RUDY: What?

WANDA: I just had a thought.

RUDY: What.

WANDA: They're from outer space.

RUDY: Outer space?

WANDA: Like that movie? The one where they took the old people off in a spaceship?

RUDY: You see a spaceship out there? I see a pickup truck and a Honda Civic, but no spaceship. I don't know what it is they do, or how, I just know it happens. And so I come out here. I look forward to it. And I wanted you to come out here to share it with me.

WANDA: *(after a moment)* No.

RUDY: Why?

WANDA: I don't want to be reminded of what we were. I don't look that way anymore, I don't feel that way.

RUDY: Neither do I, except for a minute or two once a month.

WANDA: Then it's all in your imagination.

RUDY: Yours, too, if you want it. I'd rather be in my imagination for a minute or two each month than live without it. That's the good thing about imagination. It never gets old and no one ever steals it from you.

WANDA: *Dancing with the Stars* is what we were.

RUDY: Dancing out here under the stars is what I am. I look forward to it. And I want to look forward to it with you.

WANDA: *(after a moment)* I'm cold. It's cold out here. I'm going inside.

RUDY: I'll be along in a bit.

WANDA: You want the porch light on?

RUDY: No, I'll be okay.

(WANDA pauses at the door)

WANDA: It was fun. Once a month, hunh?

RUDY: Once a month.

WANDA: We just have to be more careful. *(WANDA exits)*

RUDY: *(toward the neighbors' house)* Thank you.

THE END