

# READING *between* THE LINES

By Natasha Johnson

**Natasha Johnson looks at the art of wedding readings and how with the right approach, choosing the best reading for your ceremony can make all of the difference.**

**F**or most couples preparing for their upcoming celebrations and putting the finishing touches to their wedding ceremony, their nuptials would not be complete without a reading or two. A wedding reading makes a great inclusion to any ceremony for so many reasons; it's a nice way to show how you think and feel through someone else's words, it's a great way to involve a friend or family member during the ceremony and it can be a good tool for bringing fun and humour to the proceedings.

## *Choosing the right reading*

It may come as a surprise to you but choosing a wedding reading is not as straightforward as it may seem! Most importantly, you yourself need to understand and have an affinity with the words that are being read and to make sure that the reading resonates with both you and your partner. Shakespeare may have been one of the world's most romantic writers of prose but his sonnets are not for everyone! Try not to pick poetry, which is too cryptic or classically styled, especially as the person who has to read it needs to be comfortable with the language. If you choose a reading for a specific reason, i.e your partner sent you a love letter containing the reading when you first met or it is a reading that you know from your childhood for example, it is always a nice touch to have your reader mention this before they do the reading. Sometimes, a reading needs to be given some context, so that your guests also understand why you have chosen it.

Many couples like to have someone read the lyrics of their

favourite song or a song that holds a lot of significance for them. This can be a wonderful element to any ceremony because many song lyrics contain some of the most powerful and expressive wording. However, it is also important to consider the rhythm of the lyrics and to make sure that they can be read rhythmically and not so that it sounds like the reader is doing a slow rap or trying to break into song!

A good rule of thumb is, if you read a reading that tugs at your heart, that rolls off of your tongue easily and gives you goose bumps, then it must be the right reading for you. And conversely, it's not a good idea to include a reading that does not make sense to you, that you are not one hundred per cent sure of, or that you don't instantly connect with.

## *Choosing the right person*

It is also important to think about the person who is going to be doing a reading for you. Again, something, which at first may seem quite an obvious thing to say, is sometimes not always applied by couples' when choosing their wedding reader. Your cousin Laura may be your best friend in the world and the sweetest person on the planet, but her squeaky high voice may not be the best for a wedding reading! Okay, so perhaps this is a little bit of an exaggeration but it does at least highlight the important point that the right reader is as crucial as the right reading. Think about honouring the role to someone who is a naturally confident speaker, with a nice tone of voice and more importantly, someone who is happy to do it. It is a shame to see a beautiful reading lost on a reader who is shy,





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extremely nervous (everyone is a bit nervous!) and lacking in confidence. Also, try to match the type of reading with the reader too. Giving a poignant reading to a reader who is known to be a bit of a laugh or a prankster, might be a disastrous, as would giving a humorous reading to some one who has quite a straight and serious manner.

Some couples also like to give their reader a selection of readings that they like and allow them to choose the final reading for themselves. Or the braver, more trusting couples allow their readers to choose the reading entirely by themselves and enjoy the surprise of what they have chosen on the day. This can be a really special part of any ceremony; waiting to hear a reading that someone has chosen to read to you.

#### *Thinking outside of the (text) box!*

There is a plethora of beautiful wedding readings to choose

from, from poignant to romantic, from light-hearted to silly. However, many couples employ a broader definition when they think about their wedding reading and some choose to include a more personalized reading. In recent years it has become popular for couples to write their own reading or a story about themselves. It can be an opportunity to have a friend read a poem you've written about each other or to share a story about how you met and fell in love, or about how you got engaged (if it is worth sharing!). Couples with children have been known to ask their little ones to pen something for their big day, which is a fantastic way of involving them in the ceremony and giving them their own voice. There are so many ideas that you can incorporate under the reading umbrella, which doesn't mean that you have to stick to a reading in the traditional sense.

So choose your readings well and stand back and enjoy your wonderful choices on your big day.

#### *Top Wedding Readings of 2013*

*He never leaves the seat up by*  
Pam Ayres

*Yes, I'll Marry you* by Pam Ayres

*The Owl and the Pussy Cat* by  
Edward Lear

*On Your Wedding Day*, Author  
Unknown

*Love is a Temporary Madness*,  
extract from *Captain Correllis*  
*Mandolin* by Louis de Bernieres

*Scaffolding* by Seamus Heaney

*The Apache Wedding Song*,  
Author Unknown

*On Marriage* by Kahlil Gibran

*A Lovely Love Story* by Edward  
Monkton

*The Key to Love*, Author Unknown