

Question 3: Tell a story that ends with the advice: “Cut your coat according to your cloth”.

My eldest sister, Joy, was getting married. The marvelous day was around the corner, and for her, everything had to be perfect. She had many friends who had rich parents, and she and her husband-to-be wanted to highly impress them.

She chose a glittering wedding gown full of jewels and hundreds of hand-made flowers stitched into the floating yards-long train. Our Dad had promised to pay for her wedding gown after she graduated from university with an outstanding result. But he had not bargained for her outrageously expensive gown. It depleted his savings from his job as a civil servant, but he purchased it because he had made the promise.

Mom was going to bring her friends and a few hired hands to cook the wedding feast, but Joy would have none of that. She decided on a caterer that one of her friends recommended. The caterer promised to deliver intricate-sounding international cuisines for an astronomical fee. And since Joy did not have a job yet, Mom had to foot the bill with all her savings, with additional help from soft loans from close friends.

The big day finally arrived. The formal ceremony was over, and guests were seated in the reception venue. The groom had brushed aside every advice to pay for a hall at an event centre, but instead chose to rent a huge cruise boat that would be floating around on a man-made lake until the event was over. The boat was festooned with lights and fireworks going off at intervals. The cost was many times the amount for the event centre.

Between the huge, many-tiered cake and the wining and dining on exotic cuisines, the wedding party was very exuberant. However, some guests could not help but notice that the bride and groom seemed inordinately focused on their phones and typing with much frenzy.

As it turned out, the deposit they had made on a new apartment was rejected by the Landlord, who wanted full payment. But sadly, they had exhausted all their resources, including those of their parents, on extravagant items just to please friends.

In the end, the new couple had to lodge at the groom’s parents’ house. They became a good example of why it is important to always cut your coat according to your cloth.