

Question: Write a story that ends with "It never rains but it pours".

It was the eve of the wedding. Mama Sarah tended the gigantic pot of stew by the faint light of a yellow bulb. The small generator was humming away in the backyard and lit up tens of naked bulbs all over the compound, creating a festoon of lights around the canopies in which the guests would be sitting. The lights appeared very much like Christmas decorations.

Suddenly, there was a commotion at the other end of the backyard, shouting and the rushing of feet. The sound resolved into voices screaming, "Over there! Hit it! Hit it!" When the noise stopped, a group of nine or ten-year-old boys emerged from a corner, triumphantly holding up a huge, dead rat.

"What are they doing?" Sarah asked with a touch of exasperation. The two boys appearing to lead the group were twins and her maternal cousins who had come a full three days in advance in order to 'help' with the wedding preparations. In two days, they had managed to move Sarah's father's miniature bachelor kerosene-fridge from the parlour to the store – a distance of ten feet. They had also caught two hapless squirrels. The squirrels' crime was jumping over the jagged, broken bottles on the fence, to feast on the palm-fruits gathered in a corner of the backyard, and which everyone had forgotten as Sarah's wedding approached. The twins made a spit out of a long, sturdy Avocado tree branch and speared and staked the rat over a discarded fireplace.

Sarah's mother was shouting at the boys to be sure and not bring that 'thing' anywhere near her pots and it was at that moment that the boys' mother telephoned to ask how her private-schooled twins were doing and if they had had any 'adventures' yet as they would write an essay about it when they got back to school. The twins materialized with Mama Sarah's remaining bottle of kerosene and upended it over the dead pieces of coal.

Kerosene was hard to come by and was only sparingly used. Mama Sarah screamed at the sight of the boys, and the phone fell into the pot of stew. Ignoring the phone in the simmering stew, the elderly woman went after the boys and her kerosene bottle. The children streaked through an opening in the fence that Mama Sarah did not even know was there.

As other women joined Mama Sarah in lamenting the loss of the stew, a figure showed up at the doorway of Sarah's house. It was the photographer who had been contracted to cover the wedding the next day, in a matter of twelve hours or so. The photographer was out of breath and seemed to be in a panic. He had come to inform his client that his camera, which was the major tool of his business, had just been stolen, and he was in the process of going to the police station to report the matter. Sarah's family would have to look for another photographer.

Sarah's friends frantically began the search for another photographer. Then the old women of the clan, mostly the grandmothers, appeared out of the blue, demanding the traditional rites due to them whenever one of their daughters was getting married.

Mama Sarah was on the verge of losing her temper because of the food situation. She did not want to hear of another obstacle on the way to what she had planned to be a glorious wedding party for her daughter. However, the old women refused to budge and barricaded the bride's room, determined not to allow her entrance until all their requests had been met.

Sarah's friends were aghast at the turn of events. They still needed one more practice of the bridal train's entrance dance. But that seemed unachievable at the moment. The wedding was a few hours away; there was no stew to prepare for the main dish for the occasion. A new photographer had yet to be found.

Nonetheless, Sarah's friends did not let her see their fears. They assured her all would be well and that challenges were the norm and overcoming them was the reward.

But the bride was desolate. She shook her head and said, "It truly never rains but it pours."

(adapted from "The Road to a Wedding")