

Having to leave in a hurry that morning, denied me the pleasure of reading my morning devotionals. I rushed into the bath, then rushed out of the house in mismatched clothes. Can you imagine teaming a purple blouse with a red skirt? *God have mercy*. Lol :)

Getting to work did nothing to ease the stress. Almost as soon as I arrived, I was presented with a wedding invitation. A second cousin, on my mother's side - a 21 year-old cousin - is about to tie the nuptial knot. Whoa! What is this world turning into? When ladies like me in my late 40s, are still looking for good men to settle down with, some girls are in a hurry to fly down the aisle. Well, I don't blame them ...

To add insult to my injury, shortly before I left the office, my mother called to confirm the receipt of the invitation, and also to inform me that she had paid for the *aso ebi* on my behalf ... without my permission. Just because the bride is a cousin twice removed! Oh, what a day!

Two & a half months later, my mother, siblings and some other relatives sat in my living-room as they waited for the make-up artist I paid for, to get them ready for the wedding. I hadn't known that so many people could fit into my house! The ooh-ing and aah-ing over the different eye and lip colors, and the tying of the *geles* seemed to go on forever. Finally, everyone felt they were fine enough to start heading for the wedding venue. Just before we left, I went into the only quiet part of my tiny duplex - my bathroom. If anyone noticed, they didn't say anything. They would have thought I went to give myself a final check in the bathroom mirror. But, in there, I knelt on the floor and prayed to God - I asked Him that the next wedding I would attend, would be my own. It just had to be! Here I was, being forced to go along with my siblings and their families ... but I know *sha*, that I serve a living God.

At the wedding reception, I rejoiced and danced like no-one was watching. I felt the peace of God enveloping me, despite the fact that I could feel the eyes of some of my distant relatives on me. I chose to have fun and simply enjoy the merriment, regardless. After all I should be immune to different questions and stares from relatives and even total strangers, by now. Questions like "Where is your first-born?", "How

come *oga* didn't come along with you?" or "Oh! Don't tell me you are still searching?"

A few hours into the occasion, I looked around the reception-hall. I knew there were people looking at me, but I could feel that there was a specific someone who had his eyes on me. I could feel his stare as those eyes followed me around. So, I turned around to see who it was. I could not believe my eyes – my former neighbor. The recognition was instant. This was the first boy who ever asked me out. Well, he was now a man, but he used to be the boy who competed with me during our primary school days. He came over to me, and hugged me. We were both shouting, to make ourselves heard above the noise in the reception-hall. After a few minutes, we left the hall. Outside, we caught up really good. He told me how he had been overseas, and had to come home in search of a good wife. He asked about my family and I informed him of my *predicament*. Before we parted, we shared a hug, and promised to keep in touch.

That night, as I lay in my empty bed, I pinched myself. Could it be that God had finally answered my prayers? Keeping my fingers crossed ...