

The Storm

Radio: *It's another hot weekend in New York City, folks. The highs will be in the upper 90s. There is a chance of an afternoon thunderstorm. Stay cool if you can.*

Aku: *(looking at a photo of a boat)* Very nice, Dad! Bye! See you at the picnic.

Efie: Not so fast.

Aku: My friends are waiting for me. I'm late.

Efie: Do you have a hat?

Aku: Yes, Mom.

Efie: It's going to be really hot on the beach.

Aku: Don't worry. I've got a hat.

Efie: Your phone... What about your phone?

Aku: Don't worry, don't worry.

Efie: So, what time did I say to meet?

Aku: 4 o'clock. At the entrance to the park. I'll be there. Bye!

Kojo: Have fun.

Efie: Have fun. And be careful.

(Aku exits.)

Kojo: That's my girl, all right. Just like me... Born to swim. Born to fish! *(pointing to a photo of his boat)* I'm going to show this to Alberto. He told me he had a boat back home, too. What time are they coming over?

Kojo: Beautiful, Alberto. You know what we need,

Alberto? We need a boat, right here in New York.

Alberto: I totally agree.

Kojo: New York City is surrounded by water.

Alberto: If we had a boat...

Kojo: A fishing boat!

Alberto: We could quit the restaurant and start a business.

Kojo: A fishing business! Then, we wouldn't have to work in the restaurant. We could sell fish to the restaurant!

Alberto: Or, maybe a tour business... A tour boat.

Kojo: Exactly! A tour boat. We'll take tourists to the Statue of Liberty.

*(animation of boating to the Statue of Liberty,
then back to reality)*

Kojo: And, if there's another flood, we do not have to worry.

Alberto: Yeah, right... If there's another flood, we can sail away in the boat!

Efie: Forget about the boat dream for a moment. Let's talk about the picnic. We are very prepared. We are very organized. We've thought of everything. Isabel, where is the list? Isabel, do we have the food?

Isabel: Are you kidding? Do we have food?!... Chicken, jollof rice, empanadas...

Efie: Kojo, do we have the lemonade and iced tea?

Kojo: Lemonade, check. Tea, check.

Efie: Sumi and Fredy are bringing the plates and

napkins. Alberto, do you have the cake?

Alberto: The cake... I made it myself.

Efie: And a knife to serve it?

Alberto: Got it.

Efie: I will bring the hats and fans. And today, we will really need them. And we have our meeting place, too. Aku knows where to meet us. We are prepared for everything.

TV: *An alert has been issued for a severe thunderstorm and possible tornado. These are very dangerous weather conditions. Stay indoors. Do not go outside.*

Isabel: Flood warnings... hazardous weather conditions... that doesn't sound good.

Efie: No, it doesn't. It sounds bad.

Isabel: Do you think we can still have a picnic today?

TV: *Get ready, New York, for a serious, a dangerous storm.*

Alberto: Oh, they're just trying to scare you. They always make these things sound worse than they really are.

TV: *Put your emergency plan into place.*

Alberto: It looks fine outside. There's not a cloud in the sky.

Isabel: They didn't say anything about a hurricane, did they?

Alberto: Nobody said anything about a hurricane. If there's a hurricane, they tell you in advance, don't they? They give you time to prepare.

TV: *I repeat: An alert has been issued for a severe thunderstorm and possible tornado.*

Isabel: This sounds dangerous.

Efie: I'm worried about Aku.

Kojo: I'm going to call her right now.

Efie: Good. *(A phone rings.)* That's Aku's phone. *(Efie leaves the room, then returns with a phone in her hand.)* She left it home. She forgot it.

Alberto: It looks fine out there. I'm telling you, there's not a cloud in the sky.

Kojo: Look in that direction. That looks really bad. My daughter is out there. I'm going to find her.

Efie: But where are you going to look for her?

Kojo: She went to the beach. Coney Island, right?

Efie: She was going to her friend's house first. They were going together.

Kojo: Do you have the friend's number?

Efie: No. I should have asked her.

Kojo: That settles it. I am going to the beach to find her.

Efie: Well, that's it. I'm going, too.

Isabel: But what about the storm? What if you get stuck on the subway?

Kojo: That's why we better go now. Before the storm hits.

Isabel: Is leaving the house a good idea? They said to stay indoors.

Kojo: My daughter is at the beach. Big waves,

lightning... There's a huge storm coming. Efie, you better stay here in case she comes back.

Isabel: He's right.

Alberto: If you're going out there to find Aku, I'm coming with you.

Efie: Do you have your phone? Here, take this for Aku. *(handing Kojo a jacket)* And call us as soon as You find her.

TV: *The storm has hit with greater strength than expected. Flash flooding is reported in low-lying areas. Many areas are already under water.*

Efie: Where is she? What if power lines fall?

TV: *Cell phone service is also not working in many areas. Stay indoors. Do not go outside.*

Efie: *(a phone rings)* Kojo. Where are you? Kojo? Kojo! Nothing. The line went dead. *(trying to turn on the lights)* No lights. No power.

Efie: *(a door knock)* Thank god. *(Efie opens the door.)* Mrs. Chen.

Mrs.

Chen: I'm just checking on people I know in the building to see if everyone is okay. In storms like this, we have to take care of each other.

Radio: *This storm is serious. Power is already out in parts of the city. This is no picnic, folks. Heavy flooding is reported in low-lying areas.*

Mrs.

Chen: Your husbands used to be fishermen. They know what to do when a storm comes.

Efie: But Aku...

Mrs.

Chen: I'd be worried too. I understand, I understand.
Aku is a smart girl. A strong girl.

Efie: But, I am so afraid.

Mrs.

Chen: What can we do to be ready when they come back?
First of all, do you have water?

Efie: Water...

Mrs.

Chen: In case the water shuts off, it's good to have
some. Do you have any empty containers, pots or
something?

Isabel: And maybe we should fill the bathtub. My mother
always did that. Every time we had a big storm
back home, she'd fill up the tub... for washing,
for flushing the toilet.

Mrs.

Chen: And what about flashlights and extra batteries?

Efie: Yes, my husband keeps extra batteries in the
refrigerator. He says they last longer.

Mrs.

Chen: Very prepared. A wise man.

Isabel: When there was that big hurricane, I bought extra
food and water. I got ready. But this storm was
so sudden, there was no time.

Mrs.

Chen: It pays to get ready, to be prepared all the
time. Every storm is different.

Efie: Get ready... Aku had a booklet about getting
ready. She brought it home from school...

(flashback)

Aku: Hi, Mom.

Efie: Hi, dear.

Aku: I'm hungry.

Efie: So, tell me what you did in school today.

Aku: The usual, Mom... Math, Science, English...

Efie: *(looking at a booklet)* What's this?

Aku: Some information they gave us about getting ready for emergencies... Go Bags. Meeting places.

Efie: Go Bags?

Aku: Yeah, a Go Bag... A bag of stuff you need in case you have to evacuate. Look in the book.

Efie: Copies of important documents, and addresses and phone numbers of family and friends, bottled water, and flashlight, and a change of clothes.

Aku: See where it talks about a place to meet?

Efie: Meat place? What... Chicken? Lamb?

Aku: Mom, not that kind of meat. A place to meet, m-e-e-t. You know, a place where the family meets up in case of an emergency.

(back to the present)

Efie: ...in case of an emergency... *(Efie is coming out of her remembrance.)* Why did I let her go?

Isabel: It's not your fault. You didn't know there would be a terrible storm like this.

Efie: I'm so, I'm so glad I'm not alone. I don't know what I would do without you.

Mrs.

Chen: Yes. We're all in the same boat together.

Efie: (a door knock) Thank god. (*Efie goes to the door.*) Fredy! Come in, come in.

Fredy: You don't have electricity either, huh?

Isabel: The radio said that power is out in a lot of places in the city.

Fredy: It's so hot.

Efie: Do you want some water? Where's Sumi?

Fredy: I don't know. She called to say she was leaving work. But that was a while ago. Before the storm. I tried to call, but there's no phone service. I'm really worried. *When is this storm going to end?!*

Mrs.

Chen: I have a landline phone. I will go to my apartment and call 311 to get some information.

Isabel: Not 911? Isn't this an emergency?

Mrs.

Chen: Let's start with 311. They'll have some good information. I'll be back.

Efie: I can't just stand here. I've got to do something. I'm going to start cooking.

Isabel: How can you think about food at a time like this?

Efie: They're going to be hungry when they come home. (*Kojo enters.*) What happened?

Kojo: There was too much wind and rain. Huge branches were breaking off the trees. Things were blowing everywhere. It's terrible out there.

Isabel: Where is Alberto?

Kojo: There are two kids stuck in the elevator. Alberto is talking to them right now while the super gets help.

Isabel: Stuck in the elevator? Don't they know... You never get in an elevator in an emergency!
Alberto!

(Isabel rushes out. Efie and Kojo hug.)

(Sumi appears in the doorway.)

Fredy: Sumi! Are you okay?

Sumi: I'm okay. I mean, we're okay.

Efie: Come in, come in. Sit down.

Isabel: Put your feet up.

Isabel: The trees aren't moving. The wind has stopped.

Fredy: The rain has stopped, too.

Alberto: Look at all that water in the street!

Fredy: The power is still out. It could be out for a while.

Kojo: It's going to be dark soon. Where is my child?

Efie: *(a phone rings)* Hello? Where are you? Are you okay?

(later on, everyone in the kitchen)

Kojo: So, when you heard there was a storm coming, you never left for the beach?

Parent: I got a storm alert from *Notify NYC*, so I didn't let the kids go outside.

Kojo: So you never left the house.

Aku: Right. We, uh... *sheltered in place*. Just like

they said in school.

Parent: We tried to call, but...

Efie: *(to Aku, holding her phone)* You forgot this.

Aku: Hey, what smells so good? I'm hungry.

Alberto: Me, too.

Isabel: Yeah, what about our picnic?

Efie: It's still wet outside.

Isabel: We can spread a blanket right here on the floor.

Fredy: The food is all cooked!

Kojo: And everyone's here.

Efie: Are we prepared? Isabel, do we have the food?

Isabel: Do we have food?! Chicken, jollof rice, empanadas...

Efie: Sumi and Fredy, do we have the plates and napkins?

**Sumi
& Fredy:** Check!

Efie: Mrs. Chen, do we have the flashlights and batteries?

**Mrs.
Chen:** Batteries, flashlight... Check, check.

Fredy: Radio, check.

Radio: *The good news is... the storm is over. But, power is still out in large parts of the city, and it could be out for hours, possibly for days.*

Efie: Daughter?



Aku: Check.

Efie: Alberto, do you have the cake? Alberto?

Alberto: Cake? Check!

All: Oh, it's a boat! It's a boat! Aha, ha-ha-ha!

Efie: It's good to be prepared, to have a plan.

Isabel: For a picnic or for a storm.

Alberto: And it's good to be together.

Kojo: With all of you here, my friends and family, from all over the world. In New York City, in times like these, we are all in the same boat.

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