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## Nimbus

by Vera Gajic

“I was born under a rain cloud,” said Nimb in a resigned sort of way.

“What do you mean?” asked Sally, “are you feeling sorry for yourself?”

She hadn't seen her cousin, Nimb since they were teenagers and now at a family gathering for their grandmother's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday she couldn't believe how much he had changed. Instead of the cheerful cheeky boy she remembered here was a rather sad young man who looked uncomfortable in his skin. He had a longish beard but instead of looking like a trendy hipster he looked like a drowned rat. What had happened to him?

“Well I do feel a bit sorry for myself but I meant it literally, it always rains when I go anywhere,” said Nimb, “everywhere I go it rains, in fact the further I go or the more important the event, the more it rains.”

Sally was about to laugh but realised he was being earnest.

“Well that can't be true, it's just unlucky, or you go to rainy places.”

Sally was tempted to turn away, but something about the soulful look in his eyes wouldn't let her, “so how have you been apart from the rain, must be 5 or 6 years since we last met, was it at my parents 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary?”

“Was it raining?” asked Nimb.

“Mmm, yes it was, we had to stay in the marque.”

“Yep I was there.”

“That’s just a coincidence. It wasn’t raining at Grandma’s 87<sup>th</sup> birthday party, that was amazing, a really lovely day.”

“Yeah, didn’t go to that, Mum and Dad organised that one, they asked if I would be upset if I didn’t come as they really didn’t want it to rain on their turn to organise Grandma’s birthday. Of course I said I didn’t mind but I did.”

“Are you serious, is this a joke?” though Sally knew he was being completely serious, “that’s really mean of your parents, do they really believe that it always rains wherever you are? That you cause the rain?”

“I don’t think I cause the rain, at least I don’t see how I could, but if I am there it will rain. My Mum noticed it first. Originally she thought it was all of us, whenever we went on holiday or Legoland, the beach, a concert. Then I went to Uni and it stopped raining for them but not for me.”

“That is ridiculous, what are you doing here then, I’m surprised anyone invited you if that is the case?” said Sally

“Mum and Dad thought I should come to my Grandma’s 90<sup>th</sup> and as they weren’t organising it they said it wasn’t as important. We haven’t told anyone else though as I wouldn’t get invited anywhere would I? they did suggest I leave early though”

“That is the most horrible thing I’ve heard in ages,” said Sally, “I can’t believe it, your Mum has always been superstitious, a bit of witch really. She’s just hit on this coincidence and is blaming you for the weather. Now tell me what did you do at Uni?”

“Ancient Greek,” said Nimb with a half smile realising the implication.

“Oh that makes sense, all those Greek myths and stories, I can see how that fits with this rain myth.”

“OK don’t believe me but you have no idea what it feels like to be followed everywhere I go by the rain. It is seriously depressing”

“Look if you really believe this then go to a soothsayer, or a hypnotist, someone who will take the curse away. In fact I know the very person who can help, come with me.”

Sally led Nimb to Grandma, who was sitting quietly in a chair in the corner of the large reception room of the Grand Hotel. None of her family seemed to notice she was on her own, she’d been deaf for the last 30 years, no one really knew why and gradually her family had stopped making the effort to talk to her. Sally was her favourite grandchild.

“Sit down next to granny Nimb,” instructed Sally sitting on the other side of Granny, and whispering in her ear.

“I thought she was deaf?” said Nimb.

“Ahh,” said Sally, “she can hear me if I whisper in her ear, she knows everything does Grandma, don’t you?” as she gave her a squeeze.

Grandma cleared her throat and looked at Nimb for a long time, trying to place which of her 18 grandchildren he was. She leaned towards him and said, "what is your name"

"Nimb," he answered.

Grandma leaned over further and asked, "Why are you called rain?"

"Of course said Sally, Nimbus – yes rain. Your mum called you rain."

As she said that a shaft of sunlight came through the window.

"I think we might have solved that one," said Sally.