



A week before the wedding, the weather predictions were dire. The first major storm of the season was heading right for their wedding. Allison and Mike wondered if they would have to move the wedding to Portland, after all, or even cancel. Two days before the wedding there were severe weather warnings: the height of the storm would coincide with their wedding. Power failures were expected.

The trolley cancelled and Bloomin Crazy Floral, which was doing the flowers, called to ask if they could deliver the flowers early; they thought they might have to close on Saturday. Again the couple considered canceling >>

That's when a good friend arrived for the wedding. He told them that two weeks before his parents' wedding the church had burned down; they hadn't cancelled. "This is your first test," he said, "and we're with you even if it's in your living room."

They called Chris Holen at Baked Alaska. Could he provide food, even if the power was off? He guaranteed that he would feed them, one way or another. They called the Swing Cats, who were providing the music. Would they be there come hell or, more likely, high water? Absolutely. Allison's mother bought half the candles and mason jars in town. This wedding was going to happen with or without electricity.

Saturday afternoon, the Columbia reflected a dark and ugly sky. "The river was darker than I've ever seen it," Allison says, and thought to herself, "I won't get my sunset, but I'll get my husband."

The ceremony began and the bridge was invisible except for the flashing red lights at the top. Allison walked down the aisle to "All You Need Is Love." Allison says, "It was perfect."

The couple had written their own vows. Allison was to be the serious poet, Mike the comic relief. Mike went off script. He began to speak of the meaning of love, and how he was giving his whole heart to her.

"The room was filled with love," Allison remembers. "The whole space glowed." Everyone was tearing up, and as Allison looked at all the people, at that moment, "the whole room and everyone, and the water in their eyes glowed with a soft orange and pink glow."

Allison had her sunset. The sun had dropped below the clouds and cast an incredible light on their wedding.

The couple had thought to spend five minutes alone together after the wedding, but there came an insistent knocking on the door. "Guys, I'm really sorry," photographer Don Frank called, "but we have to do it now."

They ran out of the building for five minutes of hurried and spectacular photography before the light disappeared. Shades of coral and tangerine were reflected on the water. "It was exactly the sky I had seen in all my dreams," says Allison. "It felt like a dream."

Back inside there was amazing food, the wine was flowing, and the couple danced cheek to cheek while the band played jazz standards. When all was done, Mike, who is not known for sentimentality, turned to Allison.

"That moment?" he asked. She knew the moment he meant. "Our love did that." ■