

SURA YA PILI

Okonkwo had just blown out the palm-oil lamp and stretched himself on his bamboo bed when he heard the ogene of the town crier piercing the still night air. Gome, gome, gome, gome, boomed the hollow metal. Then the crier gave his message, and at the end of it beat his instrument again. And this was the message. Every man of Umuofia was asked to gather at the market place tomorrow morning. Okonkwo wondered what was amiss, for he knew certainly that something was

Okonkwo alikuwa ametoka tu kuzima taa ya mawese na kujinyoosha kwenye kitanda chake cha mianzi aliposikia ogene wa mlilo wa mji akitoboa hewa tulivu ya usiku. Gome, gome, gome, gome, boomed chuma mashimo. Kisha mpiga kelele akatoa ujumbe wake, na mwisho wake akapiga chombo chake tena. Na huu ulikuwa ujumbe. Kila mtu wa Umuofia aliombwa kukusanyika sokoni kesho asubuhi. Okonkwo alijiuliza kulikoni, kwani alijua hakika kuna kitu kilikuwa

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amiss. He had discerned a clear overtone of tragedy in the crier's voice, and even now he could still hear it as it grew dimmer and dimmer in the distance.

The night was very quiet. It was always quiet except on moonlight nights. Darkness held a vague terror for these people, even the bravest among them. Children were warned not to whistle at night for fear of evil spirits. Dangerous animals became even more sinister and uncanny in the dark. A snake was never called by its name at night, because it would hear. It was called a string. And so on this particular night as the crier's voice was gradually swallowed up in the distance, silence returned to the world, a vibrant silence made more intense by the universal trill of a million million forest insects.

On a moonlight night it would be different. The happy voices of children playing in open fields would then be heard. And perhaps those not so young would be playing in pairs in less open places, and old men and women

kimeharibika. Alikuwa amegundua sauti ya wazi ya msiba katika sauti ya mlío, na hata sasa bado aliweza kuisikia jinsi ilivyokuwa ikipungua na kupungua kwa mbali.

Usiku ulikuwa kimya sana. Ilikuwa kimya kila wakati isipokuwa usiku wa mbalamwezi. Giza lilikuwa na hofu isiyoeleweka kwa watu hawa, hata wajasiri zaidi kati yao. Watoto walionywa kutopiga filimbi usiku kwa kuogopa roho mbaya. Wanyama hatari wakawa wabaya zaidi na wasio wa kawaida gizani. Nyoka hakuwahi kuitwa jina lake usiku, kwa sababu angesikia. Iliitwa kamba. Na hivyo hivyo katika usiku huu hasa kama sauti ya mlío wa kilio ilikuwa hatua kwa hatua kumezwa kwa mbali, kimya kikarejea duniani, ukimya mahiri ulifanywa kuwa mkali zaidi na trill ya ulimwengu ya wadudu milioni milioni wa msitu.

Katika usiku wa mbalamwezi itakuwa tofauti. Sauti za furaha za watoto wakicheza katika uwanja wazi basi zingesikika. Na labda wale ambao sio wachanga sana wangukuwa wakicheza wawili-wawili katika sehemu zisizo wazi,

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would remember their youth. As the Ibo say: "When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk."

But this particular night was dark and silent. And in all the nine villages of Umuofia a town crier with his ogene asked every man to be present tomorrow morning. Okonkwo on his bamboo bed tried to figure out the nature of the emergency - war with a neighbouring clan? That seemed the most likely reason, and he was not afraid of war. He was a man of action, a man of war. Unlike his father he could stand the look of blood. In Umuofia's latest war he was the first to bring home a human head. That was his fifth head and he was not an old man yet. On great occasions such as the funeral of a village celebrity he drank his palm-wine from his first human head.

In the morning the market place was full. There must have been about ten thousand men there, all talking in low voices. At last

na wazee na wazee wangekumbuka ujana wao. Kama Waibo wanavyosema: "Mwezi unapowaka, kilema huwa na njaa ya kutembea."

Lakini usiku huu ulikuwa wa giza na kimya. Na katika vijiji vyote tisa vya Umuofia mpiga kelele wa mji akiwa na ojani yake alimtaka kila mwanaume awepo kesho asubuhi. Okonkwo kwenye kitanda chake cha mianzi alijaribu kubaini hali ya dharura - vita na ukoo wa jirani? Hiyo ilionekana kuwa sababu inayowezekana zaidi, na hakuogopa vita. Alikuwa mtu wa vitendo, mtu wa vita. Tofauti na baba yake aliweza kusimama sura ya damu. Katika vita vya hivi karibuni zaidi vya Umuofia alikuwa wa kwanza kuleta nyumbani kichwa cha binadamu. Hicho kilikuwa kichwa chake cha tano na hakuwa mzee bado. Katika hafla nzuri kama vile mazishi ya mtu mashuhuri wa kijijini alikunywa divai yake ya mawese kutoka kwa kichwa chake cha kwanza cha mwanadamu.

Asubuhi soko lilikuwa limejaa. Lazima kulikuwa na wanaume elfu kumi pale, wote wakizungumza kwa sauti za chini.

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Ogbuefi Ezeugo stood up in the midst of them and bellowed four times, "Umuofia kwenu," and on each occasion he faced a different direction and seemed to push the air with a clenched fist. And ten thousand men answered "Yaa!" each time. Then there was perfect silence. Ogbuefi Ezeugo was a powerful orator and was always chosen to speak on such occasions. He moved his hand over his white head and stroked his white beard. He then adjusted his cloth, which was passed under his right arm-pit and tied above his left shoulder.

"Umuofia kwenu," he bellowed a fifth time, and the crowd yelled in answer. And then suddenly like one possessed he shot out his left hand and pointed in the direction of Mbaino, and said through gleaming white teeth firmly clenched: "Those sons of wild animals have dared to murder a daughter of Umuofia." He threw his head down and gnashed his teeth, and allowed a murmur of suppressed anger to sweep the crowd. When he began again, the

Hatimaye Ogbuefi Ezeugo alisimama katikati yao na kupiga kelele mara nne, "Umuofia kwenu," na kila tukio alikabiliana na upande tofauti na alionekana kusukuma hewa kwa ngumi iliyokunjwa. Na watu elfu kumi wakajibu "Yaa!" kila mara. Kisha kukawa kimya kabisa. Ogbuefi Ezeugo alikuwa mzungumzaji hodari na alichaguliwa kila mara kuzungumza katika hafla kama hizo. Akausogeza mkono wake juu ya kichwa chake cheupe na kuzipapasa ndevu zake nyeupe. Kisha akarekebisha kitambaa chake, ambacho kilipitishwa chini ya shimo la mkono wa kulia na kufungwa juu ya bega lake la kushoto.

"Umuofia kwenu," akapiga kelele kwa mara ya tano, na umati ukapiga kelele kujibu. Na kisha ghafla kama mtu aliyepagawa alitoa mkono wake wa kushoto na kuelekeza uelekeo wa Mbaino, na kusema kwa meno meupe yenye kumetameta yaliyokazwa kwa nguvu: "Wale wana wa wanyama pori wamethubutu kumuua binti wa Umuofia." Alitupa kichwa chake chini na kusaga meno yake, na kuruhusu manung'uniko ya hasira iliyokandamizwa kufagia

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anger on his face was gone, and in its place a sort of smile hovered, more terrible and more sinister than the anger. And in a clear unemotional voice he told Umuofia how their daughter had gone to market at Mbaino and had been killed. That woman, said Ezeugo, was the wife of Ogbuefi Udo, and he pointed to a man who sat near him with a bowed head. The crowd then shouted with anger and thirst for blood.

Many others spoke, and at the end it was decided to follow the normal course of action. An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war - on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation.

Umuofia was feared by all its neighbours. It was powerful in war and in magic, and its priests and medicine men were feared in all the surrounding country. Its most potent war-medicine was as old as the clan itself. Nobody knew how old. But on one point there was general agreement--the active

umati. Alipoanza tena, hasira usoni mwake ikatoweka, na mahali pake tabasamu la aina fulani lilitanda, la kutisha na mbaya zaidi kuliko hasira. Na kwa sauti ya wazi isiyo na hisia alimweleza Umuofia jinsi binti yao alivyoenda sokoni Mbaino na kuuawa. Mwanamke huyo, alisema Ezeugo, alikuwa mke wa Ogbuefi Udo, na akanyoosha kidole kwa mwanamume aliyeketi karibu naye akiwa ameinamisha kichwa. Kisha umati ukapiga kelele kwa hasira na kiu ya damu.

Wengine wengi walizungumza, na mwisho iliamuliwa kufuata njia ya kawaida ya utekelezaji. Mara moja kauli ya mwisho ilitumwa kwa Mbaino ikiwataka kuchagua kati ya vita - kwa upande mmoja, na kwa upande mwingine kutoa fidia ya kijana na bikira.

Umuofia aliogopwa na majirani zake wote. Ilikuwa na nguvu katika vita na katika uchawi, na makuhani wake na waganga walikuwa wakiogopwa katika nchi zote zilizoizunguka. Dawa yake yenye nguvu zaidi ya vita ilikuwa ya zamani kama ukoo wenyewe. Hakuna aliyejua umri gani. Lakini

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principle in that medicine had been an old woman with one leg. In fact, the medicine itself was called agadi-nwayi, or old woman. It had its shrine in the centre of Umuofia, in a cleared spot. And if anybody was so foolhardy as to pass by the shrine after dusk he was sure to see the old woman hopping about.

And so the neighbouring clans who naturally knew of these things feared Umuofia, and would not go to war against it without first trying a peaceful settlement. And in fairness to Umuofia it should be recorded that it never went to war unless its case was clear and just and was accepted as such by its Oracle - the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves. And there were indeed occasions when the Oracle had forbidden Umuofia to wage a war. If the clan had disobeyed the Oracle they would surely have been beaten, because their dreaded agadi-nwayi would never fight what the Ibo call a fight of blame.

kwa wakati mmoja kulikuwa na makubaliano ya jumla - kanuni ya kazi katika dawa hiyo ilikuwa mwanamke mzee mwenye mguu mmoja. Kwa kweli, dawa yenyewe iliitwa agadi-nwayi, au mwanamke mzee. Ilikuwa na kaburi lake katikati ya Umuofia, mahali paliposafishwa. Na kama mtu yeyote alikuwa mjinga sana kupita karibu na patakatifu baada ya jioni alikuwa na uhakika wa kumwona yule mwanamke mzee akirukaruka.

Na kwa hivyo zile koo za jirani ambazo kwa asili zilijua mambo haya ziliugopa Umuofia, na hazingeingia vitani dhidi yake bila kwanza kujaribu suluhu ya amani. Na kwa uadilifu kwa Umuofia iandikwe kwamba haikuingia vitani kamwe isipokuwa shauri lake lilikuwa wazi na la haki na likakubaliwa hivyo na chumba chake cha ndani - chumba cha milima na mapango. Na kwa hakika kulikuwa na nyakati ambapo Oracle ilikuwa imekataza Umuofia kufanya vita. Ikiwa ukoo huo ungeasi Oracle bila shaka wangepigwa, kwa sababu agadi-nwayi wao wa kutisha hawangepigana kamwe na kile ambacho Waibo wanakiita vita

Mambo Husambaratika vya lawama.

But the war that now threatened was a just war. Even the enemy clan knew that. And so when Okonkwo of Umuofia arrived at Mbaino as the proud and imperious emissary of war, he was treated with great honour and respect, and two days later he returned home with a lad of fifteen and a young virgin. The lad's name was Ikemefuna, whose sad story is still told in Umuofia unto this day.

The elders, or ndichie, met to hear a report of Okonkwo's mission. At the end they decided, as everybody knew they would, that the girl should go to Ogbuefi Udo to replace his murdered wife. As for the boy, he belonged to the clan as a whole, and there was no hurry to decide his fate. Okonkwo was, therefore, asked on behalf of the clan to look after him in the interim. And so for three years Ikemefuna lived in Okonkwo's household.

Okonkwo ruled his household

Lakini vita ambavyo sasa
vinatishia vilikuwa vita vya haki.
Hata ukoo wa adui walijua hilo.
Na kwa hivyo Okonkwo wa
Umuofia alipofika Mbaino kama
mjumbe wa vita mwenye kiburi na
mwenye mamlaka, alitendewa
kwa heshima na heshima kubwa,
na siku mbili baadaye alirudi
nyumbani akiwa na mvulana wa
kumi na tano na bikira mchanga.
Jina la kijana huyo lilikuwa
Ikemefuna, ambaye hadithi yake
ya kusikitisha bado inasimuliwa
huko Umuofia hadi leo.

Wazee, au ndichie, walikutana ili
kusikia ripoti ya misheni ya
Okonkwo. Mwishoni waliamua,
kama kila mtu alijua wangefanya,
kwamba msichana aende kwa
Ogbuefi Udo kuchukua nafasi ya
mke wake aliyeuawa. Kuhusu
mvulana huyo, alikuwa wa ukoo
kwa ujumla, na hakukuwa na
haraka ya kuamua hatima yake.
Kwa hivyo Okonkwo aliombwa
kwa niaba ya ukoo kumtunza kwa
muda. Na hivyo kwa miaka mitatu
Ikemefuna aliishi katika nyumba
ya Okonkwo.

Okonkwo alitawala kaya yake kwa

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with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children. Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and of the forces of nature, malevolent, red in tooth and claw. Okonkwo's fear was greater than these. It was not external but lay deep within himself. It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father. Even as a little boy he had resented his father's failure and weakness, and even now he still remembered how he had suffered when a playmate had told him that his father was agbala. That was how Okonkwo first came to know that agbala was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken no title. And so Okonkwo was ruled by one passion - to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved. One of those things was gentleness and another was idleness.

mkono mzito. Wake zake, hasa mdogo zaidi, waliishi kwa hofu ya daima ya hasira yake kali, na hivyo hivyo watoto wake wadogo. Pengine moyoni Okonkwo hakuwa mtu katili. Lakini maisha yake yote yalitawaliwa na woga, woga wa kushindwa na udhaifu. Ilikuwa ya kina na ya ndani zaidi kuliko hofu ya miungu mibaya na isiyo na nguvu na ya uchawi, hofu ya msitu, na ya nguvu za asili, mbaya, nyekundu katika jino na makucha. Hofu ya Okonkwo ilikuwa kubwa kuliko hizi. Haikuwa ya nje bali ilikuwa ndani ya nafsi yake. Ilikuwa ni hofu ya nafsi yake, asije akaonekana kufanana na baba yake. Hata kama mvulana mdogo alichukizwa na kushindwa na udhaifu wa baba yake, na hata sasa bado alikumbuka jinsi alivyoteseka wakati rafiki wa kucheza alimwambia kwamba baba yake alikuwa agbala. Hivyo ndivyo Okonkwo alivyoanza kujua kwamba agbala halikuwa tu jina lingine la mwanamke, pia linaweza kumaanisha mwanaume ambaye hakuwa na cheo. Na kwa hivyo Okonkwo alitawaliwa na shauku moja - kuchukia kila kitu ambacho baba yake Unoka alikuwa akipenda. Moja ya

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mambo hayo ilikuwa upole na
nyingine ilikuwa uvivu.

During the planting season Okonkwo worked daily on his farms from cock-crow until the chickens went to roost. He was a very strong man and rarely felt fatigue. But his wives and young children were not as strong, and so they suffered. But they dared not complain openly. Okonkwo's first son, Nwoye, was then twelve years old but was already causing his father great anxiety for his incipient laziness. At any rate, that was how it looked to his father, and he sought to correct him by constant nagging and beating. And so Nwoye was developing into a sad-faced youth.

Okonkwo's prosperity was visible in his household. He had a large compound enclosed by a thick wall of red earth. His own hut, or obi, stood immediately behind the only gate in the red walls. Each of his three wives had her own hut,

Wakati wa msimu wa kupanda Okonkwo alifanya kazi kila siku kwenye mashamba yake kuanzia kuwika kwa jogoo hadi kuku walipotaga. Alikuwa mtu mwenye nguvu sana na mara chache alihisi uchovu. Lakini wake zake na watoto wadogo hawakuwa na nguvu kama hiyo, na hivyo waliteseka. Lakini hawakuthubu kulalamika waziwazi. Mwana wa kwanza wa Okonkwo, Nwoye, alikuwa na umri wa miaka kumi na miwili wakati huo lakini tayari alikuwa akimsababishia babake wasiwasi mkubwa kwa sababu ya uvivu wake wa mwanzo. Vyovyote vile, ndivyo baba yake alivyoonekana, naye akajaribu kumrekebisha kwa kumsumbua na kumpiga mara kwa mara. Na hivyo Nwoye alikuwa akiendelea kuwa kijana mwenye uso wa huzuni.

Ustawi wa Okonkwo ulionekana katika nyumba yake. Alikuwa na kiwanja kikubwa kilichozungushiwa ukuta mnene wa ardhi nyekundu. Kibanda chake mwenyewe, au obi, kilisimama mara moja nyuma ya

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which together formed a half moon behind the obi. The barn was built against one end of the red walls, and long stacks of yam stood out prosperously in it. At the opposite end of the compound was a shed for the goats, and each wife built a small attachment to her hut for the hens. Near the barn was a small house, the "medicine house" or shrine where Okonkwo kept the wooden symbols of his personal god and of his ancestral spirits. He worshipped them with sacrifices of kola nut, food and palm-wine, and offered prayers to them on behalf of himself, his three wives and eight children.

So when the daughter of Umuofia was killed in Mbaino, Ikemefuna came into Okonkwo's household. When Okonkwo brought him home that day he called his most senior wife and handed him over to her.

"He belongs to the clan," he told her. "So look after him." "Is he

lango pekee katika kuta nyekundu. Kila mmoja wa wake zake watatu alikuwa na kibanda chake, ambacho kwa pamoja kiliunda nusu mwezi nyuma ya obi. Ghala lilijengwa kwenye ncha moja ya kuta nyekundu, na milundo mirefu ya viazi vikuu ilijitokeza kwa ufanisi ndani yake. Upande wa pili wa kiwanja hicho kulikuwa na banda la mbuzi, na kila mke alijenga kiambatisho kidogo kwenye kibanda chake kwa ajili ya kuku. Karibu na ghala hilo kulikuwa na nyumba ndogo, "nyumba ya dawa" au patakatifu ambapo Okonkwo aliweka alama za mbao za mungu wake wa kibinafsi na wa roho za mababu zake. Aliwaabudu kwa dhabihu za kola nut, chakula na mvinyo ya mawese, na akawatolea maombi kwa niaba yake mwenyewe, wake zake watatu na watoto wanane.

Kwa hivyo binti ya Umuofia alipouawa huko Mbaino, Ikemefuna aliingia katika nyumba ya Okonkwo. Okonkwo alipomleta nyumbani siku hiyo alimwita mke wake mkuu na kumkabidhi kwake.

"Yeye ni wa ukoo," alimwambia. "Basi mtunze." "Je, anakaa nasi

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staying long with us?" she asked.

kwa muda mrefu?" Aliuliza.

"Do what you are told, woman," Okonkwo thundered, and stammered. "When did you become one of the ndichie of Umuofia?"

"Fanya unachoambiwa, mwanamke," Okonkwo alinguruma, na kwa kigugumizi. "Lini umekuwa mmoja wa wachie wa Umuofia?"

And so Nwoye's mother took Ikemefuna to her hut and asked no more questions.

Na hivyo mama Nwoye alimpeleka Ikemefuna kwenye kibanda chake na hakuuliza maswali zaidi.

As for the boy himself, he was terribly afraid. He could not understand what was happening to him or what he had done. How could he know that his father had taken a hand in killing a daughter of Umuofia? All he knew was that a few men had arrived at their house, conversing with his father in low tones, and at the end he had been taken out and handed over to a stranger.

Kuhusu mvulana mwenyewe, aliogopa sana. Hakuweza kuelewa ni kitu gani kilikuwa kinamtokea au alichokifanya. Je, angejuaje kuwa baba yake alihusika kumuua binti wa Umuofia? Alichojua ni kwamba wanaume wachache walikuwa wamefika nyumbani kwao, wakizungumza na baba yake kwa sauti ya chini, na mwisho akatolewa nje na kukabidhiwa kwa mtu asiyemfahamu.

His mother had wept bitterly, but he had been too surprised to weep. And so the stranger had brought him, and a girl, a long, long way from home, through lonely forest paths. He did not know who the girl was, and he never saw her again.

Mama yake alikuwa akilia kwa uchungu, lakini alikuwa ameshangaa sana hata kulia. Na hivyo mgeni alikuwa amemleta, na msichana, kwa muda mrefu, kwa muda mrefu kutoka nyumbani, kupitia njia za upweke za msitu. Hakujuua msichana huyo ni nani,

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na hakumuona tena.