

SURA YA ISHIRINI NA MBILI

Mr. Brown's successor was the Reverend James Smith, and he was a different kind of man. He condemned openly Mr. Brown's policy of compromise and accommodation. He saw things as black and white. And black was evil. He saw the world as a battlefield in which the children of light were locked in mortal conflict with the sons of darkness. He spoke in his sermons about sheep and goats and about wheat

Mrithi wa Bw. Brown alikuwa Mchungaji James Smith, na alikuwa mtu wa aina tofauti. Alishutumu waziwazi sera ya Bw. Brown ya maelewano na malazi. Aliona mambo kama nyeusi na nyeupe. Na nyeusi ilikuwa mbaya. Aliuona ulimwengu kama uwanja wa vita ambamo watoto wa nuru walikuwa wamejifungia katika mapambano ya kimwili na wana wa giza. Alizungumza katika mahubiri yake kuhusu kondoo na

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and tares. He believed in slaying the prophets of Baal.

Mr. Smith was greatly distressed by the ignorance which many of his flock showed even in such things as the Trinity and the Sacraments. It only showed that they were seeds sown on a rocky soil. Mr. Brown had thought of nothing but numbers. He should have known that the kingdom of God did not depend on large crowds. Our Lord Himself stressed the importance of fewness. Narrow is the way and few the number. To fill the Lord's holy temple with an idolatrous crowd clamouring for signs was a folly of everlasting consequence. Our Lord used the whip only once in His life--to drive the crowd away from His church.

Within a few weeks of his arrival in Umuofia Mr. Smith suspended a young woman from the church for pouring new wine into old bottles. This woman had allowed her heathen husband to mutilate her dead child. The child had been declared an ogbanje, plaguing its

mbuzi na kuhusu ngano na magugu. Aliamini katika kuwaua manabii wa Baali.

Bwana Smith alihuzunishwa sana na ujinga ambao wengi wa kundi lake walionyesha hata katika mambo kama vile Utatu na Sakramenti. Ilionyesha tu kwamba zilikuwa mbegu zilizopandwa kwenye udongo wenye mawe. Bw. Brown hakufikiria chochote isipokuwa nambari. Alipaswa kujua kwamba ufalme wa Mungu haukutegemea umati mkubwa. Bwana wetu Mwenyewe alisisitiza umuhimu wa uchache. Njia ni nyembamba na idadi ndogo. Kujaza hekalu takatifu la Bwana na umati wa watu wanaoabudu sanamu unaolalamikia ishara ulikuwa ni upumbavu wa matokeo ya milele. Bwana wetu alitumia mjeledi mara moja tu katika maisha yake--kuwafukuza umati kutoka kwa kanisa Lake.

Ndani ya wiki chache baada ya kuwasili Umuofia Bwana Smith alimsimamisha kazi mwanamke kijana kutoka kanisani kwa kumwaga divai mpya kwenye chupa kuukuu. Mwanamke huyu alikuwa amemruhusu mume wake mpagani kumkatakata mtoto wake

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mother by dying and entering her womb to be born again. Four times this child had run its evil round. And so it was mutilated to discourage it from returning.

Mr. Smith was filled with wrath when he heard of this. He disbelieved the story which even some of the most faithful confirmed, the story of really evil children who were not deterred by mutilation, but came back with all the scars. He replied that such stories were spread in the world by the Devil to lead men astray. Those who believed such stories were unworthy of the Lord's table.

There was a saying in Umuofia that as a man danced so the drums were beaten for him. Mr. Smith danced a furious step and so the drums went mad. The over-zealous converts who had smarted under Mr. Brown's restraining hand now flourished in full favour. One of them was Enoch, the son of the snake-priest who was believed to have killed and eaten the sacred python. Enoch's devotion to the new faith had seemed so much greater than Mr.

aliyekufa. Mtoto huyo alikuwa ametangazwa kuwa ogbanje, akimsumbua mama yake kwa kufa na kuingia tumboni mwake ili kuzaliwa tena. Mara nne mtoto huyu alikuwa amekimbia raundi yake mbaya. Na kwa hivyo ilikatwa ili kuivunja moyo isirudi. Bwana Smith alijawa na hasira aliposikia haya. Hakuamini hadithi ambayo hata baadhi ya waaminifu walithibitisha, hadithi ya watoto waovu kweli ambao hawakuzuiliwa na ukeketaji, lakini walirudi na makovu yote. Akajibu kwamba hadithi hizo zilienezwa duniani na Ibilisi ili kuwapoteza wanadamu. Wale walioamini hadithi kama hizo hawakustahili meza ya Bwana.

Kulikuwa na msembo huko Umuofia kwamba mwanamume akicheza ndivyo ngoma zilipigiwa kwa ajili yake. Bwana Smith alicheza hatua ya hasira na hivyo ngoma zikawa wazimu. Waongofu waliokuwa na bidii ya kupita kiasi ambao walikuwa na akili chini ya mkono wa Bwana Brown unaowazuia sasa walisitawi kwa upendeleo kamili. Mmoja wao alikuwa Henoko, mwana wa kuhani-nyoka ambaye aliaminika kuwa aliua na kula chatu huyo

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Brown's that the villagers called him the outsider who wept louder than the bereaved.

Enoch was short and slight of build, and always seemed in great haste. His feet were short and broad, and when he stood or walked his heels came together and his feet opened outwards as if they had quarrelled and meant to go in different directions. Such was the excessive energy bottled up in Enoch's small body that it was always erupting in quarrels and fights. On Sundays he always imagined that the sermon was preached for the benefit of his enemies. And if he happened to sit near one of them he would occasionally turn to give him a meaningful look, as if to say, "I told you so." It was Enoch who touched off the great conflict between church and clan in Umuofia which had been gathering since Mr. Brown left.

It happened during the annual

mtakatifu. Kujitolea kwa Enoch kwa imani mpya kulionekana kuwa kubwa zaidi kuliko ile ya Bwana Brown hivi kwamba wanakijiji walimwita mtu wa nje ambaye alilia zaidi kuliko wafiwa.

Henoko alikuwa mfupi na mwenye umbo dogo, na kila mara alionekana kuwa na haraka sana. Miguu yake ilikuwa mifupi na mipana, na aliposimama au kutembea visigino vyake vilikutana na miguu yake ilifunguka kwa nje kana kwamba walikuwa wamegombana na kumaanisha kwenda pande tofauti. Hiyo ndiyo ilikuwa nguvu nyingi iliyojaa ndani ya mwili mdogo wa Henoko ambao kila mara ulikuwa ukilipuka kwa ugomvi na mapigano. Siku za Jumapili kila mara aliwazia kwamba mahubiri hayo yalithubiriwa kwa manufaa ya adui zake. Na ikitokea akaketi karibu na mmoja wao angegeuka mara kwa mara ili kumtazama kwa maana, kana kwamba alisema, "Nilikuambia." Alikuwa Enoko ambaye aligusia mzozo mkubwa kati ya kanisa na ukoo huko Umuofia ambao ulikuwa unakusanyika tangu Bwana Brown alipoondoka. Ilifanyika wakati wa sherehe ya

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ceremony which was held in honour of the earth deity. At such times the ancestors of the clan who had been committed to Mother Earth at their death emerged again as egwugwu through tiny ant-holes.

One of the greatest crimes a man could commit was to unmask an egwugwu in public, or to say or do anything which might reduce its immortal prestige in the eyes of the uninitiated. And this was what Enoch did.

The annual worship of the earth goddess fell on a Sunday, and the masked spirits were abroad. The Christian women who had been to church could not therefore go home. Some of their men had gone out to beg the egwugwu to retire for a short while for the women to pass. They agreed and were already retiring, when Enoch boasted aloud that they would not dare to touch a Christian. Whereupon they all came back and one of them gave Enoch a good stroke of the cane, which was always carried. Enoch fell on him and tore off his mask. The

kila mwaka ambayo ilifanyika kwa heshima ya mungu wa dunia. Nyakati kama hizo mababu wa ukoo ambao walikuwa wamejitolea kwa Mama Dunia wakati wa kifo chao waliibuka tena kama egwugwu kupitia mashimo madogo ya chungu. Mojawapo ya uhalifu mkubwa ambao mtu angeweza kufanya ilikuwa ni kufunua egwugwu hadharani, au kusema au kufanya chochote ambacho kinaweza kupunguza heshima yake isiyoweza kufa machoni pa wasiojua. Na hivi ndivyo Enoko alivyofanya.

Ibada ya kila mwaka ya mungu wa kike wa dunia ilianguka siku ya Jumapili, na roho zilizofunikwa zilikuwa nje ya nchi. Kwa hiyo wanawake Wakristo waliokuwa wameenda kanisani hawakuweza kwenda nyumbani. Baadhi ya wanaume wao walikuwa wametoka kuwasihi egwugwu wastaafu kwa muda mfupi ili wanawake wapite. Walikubali na walikuwa tayari wanastaafu, wakati Enoko alijisifu kwa sauti kwamba hawangethubutu kumgusa Mkristo. Hapo wote wakarudi na mmoja wao akampa Henoko kipigo kizuri cha miwa,

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other egwugwu immediately surrounded their desecrated companion, to shield him from the profane gaze of women and children, and led him away. Enoch had killed an ancestral spirit, and Umuofia was thrown into confusion.

That night the Mother of the Spirits walked the length and breadth of the clan, weeping for her murdered son. It was a terrible night. Not even the oldest man in Umuofia had ever heard such a strange and fearful sound, and it was never to be heard again. It seemed as if the very soul of the tribe wept for a great evil that was coming-- its own death.

On the next day all the masked egwugwu of Umuofia assembled in the marketplace. They came from all the quarters of the clan and even from the neighbouring villages. The dreaded Otakagu came from Imo, and Ekwensu, dangling a white cock, arrived from Uli. It was a terrible gathering. The eerie voices of countless spirits, the bells that clattered behind some of them, and the clash of machetes as they

ambayo kila mara ilibebwa. Henoko akamwangukia na kuirarua kinyago chake. Egwugwu mwingine mara moja akamzunguka mwenza aliyenajisiwa, ili kumkinga na macho machafu ya wanawake na watoto, na kumpeleka mbali. Henoko alikuwa ameuha roho ya mababu, na Umuofia akavurugwa. Usiku huo Mama wa Mizimu alitembea urefu na upana wa ukoo, akimlilia mwanawe aliyeuawa. Ulikuwa usiku wa kutisha. Hata yule mzee wa Umuofia hakuwahi kusikia sauti ya ajabu na ya kutisha namna hiyo, na haikuweza kusikika tena. Ilionekana kana kwamba nafsi yenyewe ya kabila ililia kwa ajili ya uovu mkubwa uliokuwa unakuja-- kifo chake cheneyewe.

Siku iliyofuata egwugwu zote za Umuofia zilizofunika nyuso zilikusanyika sokoni. Walitoka pande zote za ukoo na hata vijiji vya jirani. Otakagu aliyeogopwa alitoka kwa Imo, na Ekwensu, akining'iniza jogoo mweupe, alifika kutoka Uli. Ulikuwa mkusanyiko wa kutisha. Sauti za kutisha za mizimu isiyohesabika, kengele zilizopiga nyuma ya baadhi yao, na mgongano wa mapanga walipokuwa wakikimbia

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ran forwards and backwards and saluted one another, sent tremors of fear into every heart. For the first time in living memory the sacred bull-roarer was heard in broad daylight.

From the marketplace the furious band made for Enoch's compound. Some of the elders of the clan went with them, wearing heavy protections of charms and amulets. These were men whose arms were strong in ogwu, or medicine. As for the ordinary men and women, they listened from the safety of their huts.

The leaders of the Christians had met together at Mr. Smith's parsonage on the previous night. As they deliberated they could hear the Mother of Spirits wailing for her son. The chilling sound affected Mr. Smith, and for the first time he seemed to be afraid.

"What are they planning to do?" he asked. No one knew, because such a thing had never happened before. Mr. Smith would have sent for the District Commissioner and his court messengers, but they had gone on tour on the previous day.

mbele na nyuma na kusalimiana, vilipeleka mitetemeko ya hofu katika kila moyo. Kwa mara ya kwanza katika kumbukumbu hai yule mungurumaji mtakatifu alisikika mchana kweupe.

Kutoka sokoni bendi ya hasira ilitengeneza jumba la Enoko. Baadhi ya wazee wa ukoo walikwenda pamoja nao, wakiwa wamevalia ulinzi mzito wa hirizi na hirizi. Hawa walikuwa wanaume ambao mikono yao ilikuwa na nguvu katika ogwu, au dawa. Kwa upande wa wanaume na wanawake wa kawaida, walisikiliza kutoka kwa usalama wa vibanda vyao.

Viongozi wa Wakristo walikuwa wamekutana pamoja kwenye makao ya Bwana Smith usiku uliopita. Walipokuwa wakijadiliana walimsikia Mama wa Mizimu akimlilia mwanae. Sauti ya baridi ilimuathiri Bwana Smith, na kwa mara ya kwanza alionekana kuwa na hofu.

"Wanapanga kufanya nini?" Aliuliza. Hakuna aliyejua, kwa sababu jambo kama hilo lilikuwa halijawahi kutokea hapo awali. Bwana Smith angetuma kwa Mkuu wa Wilaya na wajumbe wake wa mahakama, lakini

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"One thing is clear," said Mr. Smith. "We cannot offer physical resistance to them. Our strength lies in the Lord." They knelt down together and prayed to God for delivery.

"O Lord, save Thy people," cried Mr. Smith. "And bless Thine inheritance," replied the men.

They decided that Enoch should be hidden in the parsonage for a day or two. Enoch himself was greatly disappointed when he heard this, for he had hoped that a holy war was imminent,- and there were a few other Christians who thought like him. But wisdom prevailed in the camp of the faithful and many lives were thus saved.

The band of egwugwu moved like a furious whirlwind to Enoch's compound and with machete and fire reduced it to a desolate heap. And from there they made for the church, intoxicated with destruction.

Mr. Smith was in his church when

walikuwa wameenda kwenye ziara siku iliyotangulia.

"Jambo moja ni wazi," alisema Bw Smith. "Hatuwezi kutoa upinzani wa kimwili kwao. Nguvu zetu ziko katika Bwana." Walipiga magoti pamoja na kumwomba Mungu kwa ajili ya kujifungua. "Ee Bwana, waokoe watu wako," akalia Bw. Smith. "Na ubariki urithi wako," watu wakajibu.

Waliamua kwamba Henoko afichwe katika makao ya wachungaji kwa siku moja au mbili. Henoko mwenyewe alivunjika moyo sana aliposikia hivyo, kwa kuwa alitumaini kwamba vita vitakatifu vilikuwa karibu, na kulikuwa na Wakristo wengine wachache waliofikiri kama yeye. Lakini hekima ilitawala katika kambi ya waaminifu na maisha mengi yakaokolewa.

Kundi la egwugwu lilisogea kama kisulisuli kali hadi kwenye boma la Henoko na kwa panga na moto likaifanya kuwa rundo la ukiwa. Na kutoka huko wakafanya kwa ajili ya kanisa, wamelewa uharibifu.

Bwana Smith alikuwa kanisani

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he heard the masked spirits coming. He walked quietly to the door which commanded the approach to the church compound, and stood there. But when the first three or four egwugwu appeared on the church compound he nearly bolted. He overcame this impulse and instead of running away he went down the two steps that led up to the church and walked towards the approaching spirits.

They surged forward, and a long stretch of the bamboo fence with which the church compound was surrounded gave way before them. Discordant bells clanged, machetes clashed and the air was full of dust and weird sounds. Mr. Smith heard a sound of footsteps behind him. He turned round and saw Okeke, his interpreter.

Okeke had not been on the best of terms with his master since he had strongly condemned Enoch's behaviour at the meeting of the leaders of the church during the night. Okeke had gone as far as to say that Enoch should not be hidden in the parsonage, because he would only draw the wrath of the clan on the pastor. Mr. Smith

kwake aliposikia roho zilizofunika nyuso zikija. Alitembea kwa utulivu hadi kwenye mlango ambao uliamuru kukaribia kwa kiwanja cha kanisa, na kusimama hapo. Lakini egwugwu tatu au nne za kwanza zilipotokea kwenye jumba la kanisa alikaribia kufunga bolt. Aliushinda msukumo huu na badala ya kukimbia akashuka hatua mbili zilizokuwa zikielekea kanisani na kuziendea roho zile zinazomkaribia.

Walisonga mbele, na sehemu ndefu ya uzio wa mianzi ambayo kiwanja cha kanisa kilizingirwa kikapita mbele yao. Kengele zenye ugomvi ziligonga, panga ziligongana na hewa ilikuwa imejaa vumbi na sauti za ajabu. Bwana Smith alisikia sauti ya nyayo nyuma yake. Aligeuka na kumuona Okeke, mkalimani wake.

Okeke hakuwa ameelewana vyema na bwana wake tangu alipokemea vikali tabia ya Enoko kwenye mkutano wa viongozi wa kanisa hilo wakati wa usiku. Okeke alikuwa amefikia hatua ya kusema kwamba Henoko hapaswi kufichwa katika makao ya wachungaji, kwa sababu angevuta tu hasira ya ukoo kwa mchungaji.

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had rebuked him in very strong language, and had not sought his advice that morning. But now, as he came up and stood by him confronting the angry spirits, Mr. Smith looked at him and smiled. It was a wan smile, but there was deep gratitude there.

For a brief moment the onrush of the egwugwu was checked by the unexpected composure of the two men. But it was only a momentary check, like the tense silence between blasts of thunder. The second onrush was greater than the first. It swallowed up the two men. Then an unmistakable voice rose above the tumult and there was immediate silence. Space was made around the two men, and Ajofia began to speak.

Ajofia was the leading egwugwu of Umuofia. He was the head and spokesman of the nine ancestors who administered justice in the clan. His voice was unmistakable and so he was able to bring immediate peace to the agitated spirits. He then addressed Mr. Smith, and as he spoke clouds of smoke rose from his head.

Bwana Smith alikuwa amemkemea kwa lugha kali sana, na hakuwa ametafuta ushauri wake asubuhi hiyo. Lakini sasa, alipokuja na kusimama karibu naye akikabiliana na roho zilizokasirika, Bwana Smith alimtazama na kutabasamu. Lilikuwa tabasamu la wan, lakini kulikuwa na shukrani ya kina pale.

Kwa muda mfupi mshtuko wa egwugwu ulidhibitiwa na utulivu usiotarajiwa wa watu hao wawili. Lakini ilikuwa ni ukaguzi wa kitambo tu, kama ukimya wa wakati kati ya milipuko ya radi. Shambulio la pili lilikuwa kubwa kuliko la kwanza. Liliwameza wale watu wawili. Kisha sauti isiyo na shaka ilipanda juu ya ghasia na kukawa kimya mara moja. Nafasi ikatengenezwa kuwazunguka wale watu wawili, Ajofia akaanza kuongea. Ajofia ndiye aliyekuwa egwugwu mkuu wa Umuofia. Alikuwa mkuu na msemaji wa mababu tisa waliosimamia haki katika ukoo huo. Sauti yake ilikuwa isiyo na shaka na hivyo aliweza kuleta amani ya haraka kwa roho zilizochafuka. Kisha akamwambia Bw. Smith, na alipokuwa akiongea mawingu ya moshi yalipanda

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kutoka kichwani mwake.

"The body of the white man, I salute you," he said, using the language in which immortals spoke to men.

"The body of the white man, do you know me?" he asked.

Mr. Smith looked at his interpreter, but Okeke, who was a native of distant Umuru, was also at a loss.

Ajofia laughed in his guttural voice. It was like the laugh of rusty metal. "They are strangers," he said, "and they are ignorant. But let that pass." He turned round to his comrades and saluted them, calling them the fathers of Umuofia. He dug his rattling spear into the ground and it shook with metallic life. Then he turned once more to the missionary and his interpreter.

"Tell the white man that we will not do him any harm," he said to the interpreter. "Tell him to go back to his house and leave us alone. We liked his brother who was with us before. He was foolish, but we liked him, and for his sake we shall not harm his brother. But this shrine which he built must be destroyed. We shall

"Mwili wa mzungu, nakusalimu," alisema kwa lugha ambayo watu wasiokufa walizungumza na wanaume.

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Ajofia alicheka kwa sauti yake ya uchungu. Ilikuwa kama kicheko cha chuma chenye kutu. "Hao ni wageni," alisema, "na ni wajinga. Lakini acha hilo lipite."

Akawageukia wenzie na kuwasalimia akiwaita baba wa Umuofia. Akachimba mkuki wake unaogugumia

ndani ya ardhi na ilitetemeka kwa maisha ya metali. Kisha akamgeukia tena mmisionari na mkalimani wake.

"Mwambie huyo mzungu kwamba hatutamdhuru," alimwambia mkalimani. "Mwambieni arudi nyumbani kwake na atuache peke yetu. Tulimpenda ndugu yake aliyekuwa nasi hapo awali. Alikuwa mjinga, lakini sisi tulimpenda, na kwa ajili yake hatutamdhuru ndugu yake. Lakini patakatifu hili alilolijenga. lazima

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no longer allow it in our midst. It has bred untold abominations and we have come to put an end to it." He turned to his comrades.

"Fathers of Umuofia, I salute you." and they replied with one guttural voice. He turned again to the missionary. "You can stay with us if you like our ways. You can worship your own god. It is good that a man should worship the gods and the spirits of his fathers. Go back to your house so that you may not be hurt. Our anger is great but we have held it down so that we can talk to you."

Mr. Smith said to his interpreter: "Tell them to go away from here. This is the house of God and I will not live to see it desecrated."

Okeke interpreted wisely to the spirits and leaders of Umuofia: "The white man says he is happy you have come to him with your grievances, like friends. He will be happy if you leave the matter in his hands."

"We cannot leave the matter in his hands because he does not understand our customs, just as we do not understand his. We say he

iangamizwe. Hatutairuhusu tena katikati yetu. Imezaa machukizo yasiyosemeka na tumekuja kuyakomesha." Akawageukia wenzake. "Wababa wa Umuofia, nawasalimu." nao wakamjibu kwa sauti moja ya kishindo.

Akamgeukia tena mmisionari. "Unaweza kukaa nasi ukipenda njia zetu, unaweza kumwabudu mungu wako mwenyewe, ni vyema mtu aiabudu miungu na roho za baba zake, rudi nyumbani kwako usije ukadhurika. hasira ni kubwa lakini tumeizua ili tuweze kuzungumza nawe."

Bwana Smith akamwambia mkalimani wake: "Waambie waondoke hapa. Hii ni nyumba ya Mungu na sitaishi kuona ikinajisiwa."

Okeke aliwafasiria kwa hekima mizimu na viongozi wa Umuofia: "Mzungu anasema amefurahi kuwa umekuja kwake na malalamiko yako, kama marafiki. Atafurahi ikiwa utaliacha jambo hilo mikononi mwake."

"Hatuwezi kumuachia jambo hilo mikononi mwake kwa sababu haelewi mila zetu, vivyo hivyo na sisi hatumuelewi, tunasema ni

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is foolish because he does not know our ways, and perhaps he says we are foolish because we do not know his. Let him go away."□

Mr. Smith stood his ground. But he could not save his church. When the egwugwu went away the red-earth church which Mr. Brown had built was a pile of earth and ashes. And for the moment the spirit of the clan was pacified.

mjinga kwa kuwa hajui njia zetu, na pengine anasema sisi ni wapumbavu kwa kuwa hatujui. wake. Mwache aende zake."

Bw. Smith alisimama imara. Lakini hakuweza kuokoa kanisa lake. Wakati egwugwu ilipoondoka kanisa la red-earth ambalo Bw. Brown alikuwa amejenga lilikuwa ni rundo la udongo na majivu. Na kwa wakati huo roho ya ukoo ilitulia

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