

SURA YA KUMI NA MBILI

On the following morning the entire neighbourhood wore a festive air because Okonkwo's friend, Obierika, was celebrating his daughter's uri. It was the day on which her suitor (having already paid the greater part of her bride-price) would bring palm-wine not only to her parents and immediate relatives but to the wide and extensive group of

Asubuhi iliyofuata mtaa mzima ulikuwa wa sherehe kwa sababu rafiki ya Okonkwo, Obierika, alikuwa akisherehekea uri wa binti yake. Ilikuwa ni siku ambayo mchumba wake (akiwa tayari ameshalipa sehemu kubwa ya mahari yake) angeleta mvinyo wa mitende sio tu kwa wazazi wake na jamaa wa karibu bali kwa kundi kubwa na kubwa la jamaa

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kinsmen called umunna. Everybody had been invited--men, women and children. But it was really a woman's ceremony and the central figures were the bride and her mother. □

As soon as day broke, breakfast was hastily eaten and women and children began to gather at Obierika's compound to help the bride's mother in her difficult but happy task of cooking for a whole village.

Okonkwo's family was astir like any other family in the neighbourhood. Nwoye's mother and Okonkwo's youngest wife were ready to set out for Obierika's compound with all their children. Nwoye's mother carried a basket of coco-yams, a cake of salt and smoked fish which she would present to Obierika's wife.

Okonkwo's youngest wife, Ojiugo, also had a basket of plantains and coco-yams and a small pot of palm-oil. Their children carried pots of water.

Ekwefi was tired and sleepy from the exhausting experiences of the previous night. It was not very long since they had returned. The priestess, with Ezinma sleeping on

walioitwa umunna. Kila mtu alikuwa amealikwa - wanaume, wanawake na watoto. Lakini kwa kweli ilikuwa sherehe ya mwanamke na watu wa kati walikuwa bibi na mama yake.

Kulipopambazuka, kiamsha kinywa kililiwa kwa haraka na wanawake na watoto walianza kukusanyika kwenye boma la Obierika ili kumsaidia mama wa bibi harusi katika kazi yake ngumu lakini yenye furaha ya kupika kijiji kizima.

Nwoye na mke mdogo wa Okonkwo walikuwa tayari kuanza safari ya kwenda kwenye boma la Obierika pamoja na watoto wao wote. Mama Nwoye alibeba kikapu cha coco-viamu, keki ya chumvi na samaki wa moshi ambao angempa mke wa Obierika. Mke mdogo wa Okonkwo, Ojiugo, pia alikuwa na kikapu cha ndizi na viazi vikuu na chungu kidogo cha mafuta ya mawese. Watoto wao walibeba sufuria za maji.

Ekwefi alikuwa amechoka na kusinzia kutokana na uzoefu wa kuchosha wa usiku uliopita. Haukupita muda mrefu sana tangu warudi. Kuhani wa kike, na

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her back, had crawled out of the shrine on her belly like a snake. She had not as much as looked at Okonkwo and Ekwefi or shown any surprise at finding them at the mouth of the cave. She looked straight ahead of her and walked back to the village. Okonkwo and his wife followed at a respectful distance. They thought the priestess might be going to her house, but she went to Okonkwo's compound, passed through his obi and into Ekwefi's hut and walked into her bedroom. She placed Ezinma carefully on the bed and went away without saying a word to anybody.

Ezinma was still sleeping when everyone else was astir, and Ekwefi asked Nwoye's mother and Ojiugo to explain to Obierika's wife that she would be late. She had got ready her basket of coco-yams and fish, but she must wait for Ezinma to wake.

"You need some sleep yourself," said Nwoye's mother. "You look very tired."
As they spoke Ezinma emerged from the hut, rubbing her eyes and

Ezinma amelala chali, alikuwa ametoka kwenye patakatifu kwa tumbo kama nyoka. Hakuwa amewatazama sana Okonkwo na Ekwefi au kuonesha mshangao wowote kwa kuwakuta kwenye mdomo wa pango. Alitazama moja kwa moja mbele yake na kurudi kijijini. Okonkwo na mkewe walimfuata kwa umbali wa heshima. Walifikiri kuwa kasisi wa kike anaweza kuwa anaenda nyumbani kwake, lakini alienda kwenye boma la Okonkwo, akapitia obi yake na kuingia kwenye kibanda cha Ekwefi na kuingia chumbani kwake. Alimweka Ezinma kitandani kwa uangalifu na akaenda bila kusema neno kwa mtu yeyote.

Ezinma alikuwa bado amelala wakati kila mtu alikuwa astir, na Ekwefi aliuliza mama yake Nwoye na Ojiugo kumweleza mke wa Obierika kwamba angechelewa. Alikuwa ameshatayarisha kikapu chake cha viazi vikuu na samaki, lakini lazima asubiri Ezinma aamke. "Wewe unahitaji kulala kidogo," mama yake Nwoye alisema. "Unaonekana umechoka sana." Wakiwa wanaongea Ezinma alitokeza kwenye kibanda hicho

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stretching her spare frame. She saw the other children with their waterpots and remembered that they were going to fetch water for Obierika's wife. She went back to the hut and brought her pot.

"Have you slept enough?" asked her mother. "Yes," she replied.

"Let us go."

"Not before you have had your breakfast," said Ekwefi. And she went into her hut to warm the vegetable soup she had cooked last night.

"We shall be going," said Nwoye's mother. "I will tell Obierika's wife that you are coming later." And so they all went to help Obierika's wife--Nwoye's mother with her four children and Ojiugo with her two.

As they trooped through Okonkwo's obi he asked: "Who will prepare my afternoon meal?" "I shall return to do it," said Ojiugo.

Okonkwo was also feeling tired, and sleepy, for although nobody else knew it, he had not slept at all last night. He had felt very anxious

huku akipapasa macho na kunyoosha sura yake ya akiba. Aliwaona watoto wengine wakiwa na vyombo vyao vya maji na akakumbuka kwamba walikuwa wakienda kumchotea maji mke wa Obierika. Alirudi kwenye kibanda na kuleta sufuria yake.

"Umelala vya kutosha?" aliuliza mama yake. "Ndiyo," alijibu.

"Twendeni."

"Si kabla ya kupata kifungua kinywa chako," Ekwefi alisema. Na akaingia ndani ya kibanda chake kuchota moto supu ya mboga aliyopika jana usiku.

"Tutaenda," mama yake Nwoye alisema. "Nitamwambia mke wa Obierika kwamba utakuja baadaye." Na kwa hivyo wote walikwenda kumsaidia mke wa Obierika--mama ya Nwoye na watoto wake wanne na Ojiugo na wake wawili.

Walipokuwa wakipitia obi ya Okonkwo aliuliza: "Ni nani atakayeniandalia chakula cha mchana?"

"Nitarudi kuifanya," Ojiugo alisema.

Okonkwo pia alikuwa akihisi uchovu, na usingizi, kwani ingawa hakuna mtu mwingine aliyejua hilo, hakuwa amelala kabisa jana

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but did not show it. When Ekwefi had followed the priestess, he had allowed what he regarded as a reasonable and manly interval to pass and then gone with his machete to the shrine, where he thought they must be. It was only when he had got there that it had occurred to him that the priestess might have chosen to go round the villages first. Okonkwo had returned home and sat waiting. When he thought he had waited long enough he again returned to the shrine. But the Hills and the Caves were as silent as death. It was only on his fourth trip that he had found Ekwefi, and by then he had become gravely worried.

Obierika's compound was as busy as an anthill. Temporary cooking tripods were erected on every available space by bringing together three blocks of sun-dried earth and making a fire in their midst. Cooking pots went up and down the tripods and foo-foo was pounded in a hundred wooden mortars. Some of the women cooked the yams and the cassava, and others prepared vegetable

usiku. Alikuwa na wasiwasi mwingi lakini hakuonyesha. Ekwefi alipomfuata kasisi huyo wa kike, aliruhusu kile alichooona kuwa ni muda mzuri na wa kiume kupita na kisha akaenda na panga lake hadi kwenye hekalu, ambako alifikiri lazima wawepo. Ni baada tu ya kufika huko ndipo ikamjia kwamba huenda kasisi huyo angechagua kuzunguka vijiji kwanza. Okonkwo alikuwa amerudi nyumbani na kukaa kusubiri. Alipofikiri kwamba alikuwa amesubiri kwa muda wa kutosha alirudi tena kwenye kaburi. Lakini Milima na Mapango yalikuwa kimya kama kifo. Ilikuwa ni safari yake ya nne tu ndipo alipompata Ekwefi, na wakati huo alikuwa ameingiwa na wasiwasi mkubwa.

Nyumba ya Obierika ilikuwa na shughuli nyingi kama kichuguu. Tripodi za kupikia za muda ziliwekwa kwenye kila nafasi inayopatikana kwa kuleta pamoja vipande vitatu vya udongo uliokaushwa na jua na kuwasha moto katikati yao. Vyungu vya kupikia vilipanda na kushuka tripods na foo-foo ikapondwa katika chokaa mia moja cha mbao. Baadhi ya wanawake walipika

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soup. Young men pounded the foo-foo or split firewood. The children made endless trips to the stream.

Three young men helped Obierika to slaughter the two goats with which the soup was made. They were very fat goats, but the fattest of all was tethered to a peg near the wall of the compound and was as big as a small cow. Obierika had sent one of his relatives all the way to Umuike to buy that goat. It was the one he would present alive to his in-laws.

"The market of Umuike is a wonderful place," said the young man Who had been sent by Obierika to buy the giant goat "There are so many people on it that if you threw up a grain of sand it would not find a way to fall to earth again."

"It is the result of a great medicine," said Obierika. "The people of Umuike wanted their market to grow and swallow up

viazi vikuu na mihogo, na wengine walitayarisha supu ya mboga. Vijana walipiga foo-foo au kupasua kuni. Watoto walifanya safari zisizo na mwisho kwenye mkondo.

Vijana watatu walimsaidia Obierika kuchinja mbuzi wawili ambao supu ilitengenezwa. Walikuwa mbuzi wanene sana, lakini walionona kuliko wote walikuwa wamefungwa kwenye kigingi karibu na ukuta wa boma na ulikuwa mkubwa kama ng'ombe mdogo. Obierika alikuwa amemtuma mmoja wa jamaa zake hadi Umuike kumnunua mbuzi huyo. Ilikuwa ni ile ambayo angeiwasilisha akiwa hai kwa wakwe zake.

"Soko la Umuike ni mahali pazuri sana," alisema kijana ambaye alikuwa ametumwa na Obierika kwenda kumnunua yule mbuzi mkubwa, "Kuna watu wengi juu yake kwamba ukitupa punje ya mchanga hautapata njia ya kupata. kuanguka tena duniani."

"Ni matokeo ya dawa kubwa," alisema Obierika. "Watu wa Umuike walitaka soko lao likue na kumeza masoko ya majirani zao.

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the markets of their neighbours. So they made a powerful medicine. Every market day, before the first cock-crow, this medicine stands on the market ground in the shape of an old woman with a fan. With this magic fan she beckons to the market all the neighbouring clans. She beckons in front of her and behind her, to her right and to her left."

"And so everybody comes," said another man, "honest men and thieves. They can steal your cloth from off your waist in that market."

"Yes" said Obierika. "I warned Nwankwo to keep a sharp eye and a sharp ear. There was once a man who went to sell a goat. He led it on a thick rope which he tied round his wrist. But as he walked through the market he realised that people were pointing at him as they do to a madman. He could not understand it until he looked back and saw that what he led at the end of the tether was not a goat but a heavy log of wood."

"Do you think a thief can do that kind of thing single-handed?" asked Nwankwo. "No," said Obierika. "They use medicine."

Kwa hiyo wakatengeneza dawa ya nguvu. Kila siku ya soko kabla ya kuwika kwa jogoo wa kwanza, dawa hii husimama sokoni kwa umbo la mzee. mwanamke mwenye feni. Akiwa na feni hii ya uchawi anawaita sokoni koo zote za jirani. Anapunja mbele yake na nyuma yake, kulia kwake na kushoto kwake."

"Na hivyo kila mtu anakuja," mtu mwingine alisema, "wanaume waaminifu na wezi. Wanaweza kuiba nguo yako kutoka kwenye kiuno chako katika soko hilo."

"Ndiyo" alisema Obierika. "Nilimtahadharisha Nwankwo aweke jicho kali na sikio kali, kuna mtu mmoja alienda kuuza mbuzi. watu walikuwa wakimnyooshea kidole jinsi wanavyomnyooshea kichaa. Hakuweza kuelewa hadi alipotazama nyuma na kuona kwamba anachokiongoza mwishoni mwa kamba si mbuzi bali ni gogo zito la kuni."

"Je, unafikiri mwizi anaweza kufanya kitu cha aina hiyo kwa mkono mmoja?" aliuliza Nwankwo. "Hapana," alisema

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Obierika. "Wanatumia dawa."

When they had cut the goats' throats and collected the blood in a bowl, they held them over an open fire to burn off the hair, and the smell of burning hair blended with the smell of cooking. Then they washed them and cut them up for the women who prepared the soup.

All this anthill activity was going smoothly when a sudden interruption came. It was a cry in the distance: oji odu aru ijiji-o-o! (The one that uses its tail to drive flies away!). Every woman immediately abandoned whatever she was doing and rushed out in the direction of the cry.

"We cannot all rush out like that, leaving what we are cooking to burn in the fire," shouted Chielo, the priestess. "Three or four of us should stay behind."

"It is true," said another woman. "We will allow three or four women to stay behind."

Five women stayed behind to look

Walipomaliza kukata koo za mbuzi na kukusanya damu kwenye bakuli, waliziweka juu ya moto wazi ili kuchoma nywele, na harufu ya nywele zilizowaka ilichanganyika na harufu ya kupikia. Kisha wakaziosha na kuwakata kwa ajili ya wanawake waliotayarisha supu.

Shughuli hii yote ya kichuguu ilikuwa ikiendelea vizuri wakati usumbufu wa ghafla ulikuja. Kilikuwa kilio kwa mbali: oji odu aru ijiji-o-o! (Yule anayetumia mkia wake kukimbiza huruka!). Kila mwanamke aliacha mara moja chochote alichokuwa akifanya na kukimbilia nje kwa mwelekeo wa kilio.

"Hatuwezi sote kukimbilia hivyo, tukiacha kile tunachopika kiteketee kwa moto," akafoka Chielo, kasisi wa kike. "Watatu au wanne kati yetu wanapaswa kubaki nyuma."

"Ni kweli," mwanamke mwingine alisema. "Tutaruhusu wanawake watatu au wanne kubaki nyuma."

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after the cooking-pots, and all the rest rushed away to see the cow that had been let loose. When they saw it they drove it back to its owner, who at once paid the heavy fine which the village imposed on anyone whose cow was let loose on his neighbors' crops. When the women had exacted the penalty they checked among themselves to see if any woman had failed to come out when the cry had been raised.

"Where is Mgbogo?" asked one of them.

"She is ill in bed," said Mgbogo's next-door neighbour. "She has iba."

"The only other person is Udenkwo," said another woman, "and her child is not twenty-eight days yet."

Those women whom Obierika's wife had not asked to help her with the cooking returned to their homes, and the rest went back, in a body, to Obierika's compound.

"Whose cow was it?" asked the women who had been allowed to stay behind.

nyuma kuchunga sufuria, na wengine wote wakakimbia kwenda kumwona ng'ombe aliyeachiliwa. Walipoiona, wakamrudisha kwa mwenye nyumba, ambaye mara moja alilipa faini kubwa ambayo kijiji kilitoa kwa mtu yeyote ambaye ng'ombe wake aliachiliwa kwa mazao ya jirani yake. Wanawake walipokwisha kutoa adhabu hiyo waliangaliana wao kwa wao ili kuona kama kuna mwanamke yeyote aliyeshindwa kutoka wakati kilio kilitolewa.

"Mgbogo yuko wapi?" aliuliza mmoja wao.

"Yeye ni mgonjwa kitandani," alisema jirani wa jirani wa Mgbogo. "Ana iba."

"Mtu mwingine pekee ni Udenkwo," mwanamke mwingine alisema, "na mtoto wake hana siku ishirini na nane bado."

Wale wanawake ambao mke wa Obierika hakuwaomba wamsaidie kupika walirudi majumbani mwao, na waliosalia walirudi kwa mwili kwenye boma la Obierika.

"Ng'ombe wa nani?" aliuliza wanawake ambao walikuwa wameruhusiwa kubaki nyuma.

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"It was my husband's," said Ezelagbo. "One of the young children had opened the gate of the cow-shed."

Early in the afternoon the first two pots of palm-wine arrived from Obierika's in-laws. They were duly presented to the women, who drank a cup or two each, to help them in their cooking. Some of it also went to the bride and her attendant maidens, who were putting the last delicate touches of razor to her coiffure and cam wood on her smooth skin.

When the heat of the sun began to soften, Obierika's son, Maduka, took a long broom and swept the ground in front of his father's obi. And as if they had been waiting for that, Obierika's relatives and friends began to arrive, every man with his goatskin bag hung on one shoulder and a rolled goatskin mat under his arm. Some of them were accompanied by their sons bearing carved wooden stools. Okonkwo was one of them. They sat in a half-circle and began to talk of many things. It would not be long before the suitors came.

"Ilikuwa ya mume wangu," Ezelagbo alisema. "Mmoja wa watoto wadogo alikuwa amefungua lango la zizi la ng'ombe."

Mapema alasiri vyungu viwili vya kwanza vya mvinyo viliwasili kutoka kwa wakwe wa Obierika. Waliwasilishwa kwa wanawake, ambao walikunywa kikombe kimoja au viwili kila mmoja, ili kuwasaidia katika kupika kwao. Baadhi yake pia zilienda kwa bibi-arusi na wajakazi wake, ambao walikuwa wakiweka miguso ya mwisho ya wembe kwenye sanda yake na mbao za kam kwenye ngozi yake nyororo.

Joto la jua lilipoanza kupungua, mtoto wa Obierika, Maduka alichukua ufagio mrefu na kufagia ardhi mbele ya obi ya baba yake. Na kana kwamba walikuwa wakilingoja hilo, ndugu na marafiki wa Obierika walianza kuwasili, kila mtu akiwa na begi lake la ngozi ya mbuzi akiwa amening'inia kwenye begi lake na mkeka ulioviringishwa wa ngozi ya mbuzi chini ya mkono wake. Baadhi yao waliandamana na wana wao wakiwa wamebeba viti vya mbao vilivyochongwa. Okonkwo alikuwa mmoja wao.

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Walikaa nusu duara na kuanza kuongea mambo mengi. Muda si mrefu wachumba wakaja.

Okonkwo brought out his snuff-bottle and offered it to Ogbuefi Ezenwa, who sat next to him. Ezenwa took it, tapped it on his kneecap, rubbed his left palm on his body to dry it before tipping a little snuff into it. His actions were deliberate, and he spoke as he performed them: "I hope our in-laws will bring many pots of wine. Although they come from a village that is known for being closefisted, they ought to know that Akueke is the bride for a king."

"They dare not bring fewer than thirty pots," said Okonkwo. "I shall tell them my mind if they do."

At that moment Obierika's son, Maduka, led out the giant goat from the inner compound, for his father's relatives to see. They all admired it and said that that was the way things should be done. The goat was then led back to the inner compound.

Very soon after, the in-laws began

Okonkwo alitoa chupa yake ya ugoro na kumpa Ogbuefi Ezenwa, ambaye aliketi karibu naye. Ezenwa akaichukua, akaigonga kwenye goti lake, akapaka kiganja chake cha kushoto mwilini ili kukianika kabla ya kuingiza ugoro kidogo ndani yake. Matendo yake yalikuwa ya kimakusudi, na alizungumza huku akiyafanya: "Natumai wakwe zetu wataleta vyungu vingi vya divai. Ingawa wanatoka katika kijiji kinachojulikana kwa kufungiwa mkono, wanapaswa kujua kwamba Akueke ndiye bibi-arusi. mfalme."

"Hawathubutu kuleta vyungu chini ya thelathini," Okonkwo alisema. "Nitawaambia mawazo yangu kama watafanya."

Wakati huo mtoto wa Obierika, Maduka, akamtoa yule mbuzi jitu kutoka kwenye boma la ndani, ili ndugu wa baba yake wamuone. Wote walistaajabia na kusema kwamba hiyo ndiyo njia ambayo mambo yanapaswa kufanywa. Kisha mbuzi alirudishwa kwenye boma la ndani. Muda mfupi baadaye, wakwe

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to arrive. Young men and boys in single file, each carrying a pot of wine, came first. Obierika's relatives counted the pots as they came. Twenty, twenty-five. There was a long break, and the hosts looked at each other as if to say, "I told you." Then more pots came. Thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five. The hosts nodded in approval and seemed to say, "Now they are behaving like men." Altogether there were fifty pots of wine. After the pot-bearers came Ibe, the suitor, and the elders of his family. They sat in a half-moon, thus completing a circle with their hosts. The pots of wine stood in their midst. Then the bride, her mother and half a dozen other women and girls emerged from the inner compound, and went round the circle shaking hands with all. The bride's mother led the way, followed by the bride and the other women. The married women wore their best cloths and the girls wore red and black waist-beads and anklets of brass.

walianza kuwasili. Vijana na wavulana katika faili moja, kila mmoja akiwa amebeba chungu cha divai, walikuja kwanza. Jamaa wa Obierika walihesabu sufuria walipokuja. Ishirini, ishirini na tano. Kulikuwa na mapumziko marefu, na wenyeji walitazamana kana kwamba wanasema, "Nilikuambia." Kisha sufuria zaidi zilikuja. Thelathini, thelathini na tano, arobaini, arobaini na tano. Waandaji walitikisa kichwa kukubali na walionekana kusema, "Sasa wanafanya kama wanaume." Vyungu hamsini vya divai vilikuwa pamoja. Baada ya wabeba vyungu wakaja Ibe, mchumba, na wazee wa familia yake. Waliketi katika nusu-mwezi, na hivyo kukamilisha mduara na wenyeji wao. Vyungu vya mvinyo vilisimama katikati yao. Kisha bibi-arusi, mama yake na nusu dazeni ya wanawake na wasichana wengine walitoka kwenye eneo la ndani, na wakazunguka duara wakipeana mikono na wote. Mama wa bibi harusi alitangulia, akifuatiwa na bibi harusi na wanawake wengine. Wanawake walioolewa walivaa nguo zao nzuri zaidi na wasichana walivaa shanga nyekundu na nyeusi kiunoni na vifundo vya miguu vya

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When the women retired, Obierika presented kola nuts to his in-laws. His eldest brother broke the first one. "Life to all of us," he said as he broke it. "And let there be friendship between your family and ours."

The crowd answered-. "Ee-e-e!"

"We are giving you our daughter today. She will be a good wife to you. She will bear you nine sons like the mother of our town."
"Ee-e-e!"

The oldest man in the camp of the visitors replied: "It will be good for you and it will be good for us."
"Ee-e-e!"

"This is not the first time my people have come to marry your daughter. My mother was one of you."

"Ee-e-e!"

"And this will not be the last, because you understand us and we understand you. You are a great family."

"Ee-e-e!"

"Prosperous men and great warriors." He looked in the direction of Okonkwo. "Your

Wanawake hao walipostaafu, Obierika aliwasilisha njugu za kola kwa wakwe zake. Kaka yake mkubwa alivunja ya kwanza. "Maisha kwetu sote," alisema huku akiivunja. "Na kuwe na urafiki kati ya familia yako na yetu."

Umati ulijibu-. "Ee-e-e!"

"Tunakupa binti yetu leo. Atakuwa mke mwema kwako. Atakuzalia wana tisa kama mama wa mji wetu."
"Ee-e-e!"

Mtu mzee zaidi katika kambi ya wageni alijibu: "Itakuwa nzuri kwako na itakuwa nzuri kwetu."
"Ee-e-e!"

"Hii sio mara ya kwanza kwa watu wangu kuja kumuoja binti yako. Mama yangu alikuwa mmoja wenu."

"Ee-e-e!"

"Na hii haitakuwa ya mwisho, kwa sababu unatuelewa na tunakuelewa. Wewe ni familia kubwa."

"Ee-e-e!"

"Watu waliofanikiwa na wapiganaji wakuu." Akatazama upande wa Okonkwo. "Binti yako

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daughter will bear us sons like you.

"Ee-e-e!"

The kola was eaten and the drinking of palm-wine began. Groups of four or five men sat round with a pot in their midst. As the evening wore on, food was presented to the guests. There were huge bowls of foo-foo and steaming pots of soup. There were also pots of yam pottage. It was a great feast.

As night fell, burning torches were set on wooden tripods and the young men raised a song. The elders sat in a big circle and the singers went round singing each man's praise as they came before him. They had something to say for every man. Some were great farmers, some were orators who spoke for the clan. Okonkwo was the greatest wrestler and warrior alive. When they had gone round the circle they settled down in the centre, and girls came from the inner compound to dance. At first the bride was not among them. But when she finally appeared holding a cock in her right hand, a loud cheer rose from the crowd. All the other dancers made way

atatuzalia wana kama wewe.

"Ee-e-e!"

Kola ililiwa na kunywa divai ya mawese kukaanza. Vikundi vya wanaume wanne au watano waliketi pande zote na sufuria katikati yao. Jioni ilipoingia, chakula kilitolewa kwa wageni. Kulikuwa na mabakuli makubwa ya foo-foo na masufuria ya kuanika ya supu. Pia kulikuwa na sufuria za viazi vikuu. Ilikuwa sikukuu kubwa.

Usiku ulipoingia, mienge inayowaka iliwekwa kwenye tripods za mbao na vijana wakainua wimbo. Wazee walikaa kwenye duara kubwa na waimbaji walizunguka huku na huko wakiimba sifa za kila mtu walipofika mbele yake. Walikuwa na kitu cha kusema kwa kila mwanaume. Wengine walikuwa wakulima wakubwa, wengine walikuwa wasemaji waliozungumza kwa ajili ya ukoo. Okonkwo alikuwa mwanamieleka na shujaa mkuu aliye hai. Walipokwisha kuzunguka duara walitulia katikati, na wasichana wakaja kutoka eneo la ndani kucheza. Mwanzoni bibi harusi hakuwa miongoni mwao. Lakini

Mambo Husambaratika

for her. She presented the cock to the musicians and began to dance. Her brass anklets rattled as she danced and her body gleamed with cam wood in the soft yellow light.

The musicians with their wood, clay and metal instruments went from song to song. And they were all gay. They sang the latest song in the village: " If I hold her hand She says, 'Don't touch!' If I hold her foot She says, 'Don't touch!'

But when I hold her waist-beads she pretends not to know." The night was already far spent when the guests rose to go, taking their bride home to spend seven market weeks with her suitor's family.

They sang songs as they went, and on their way they paid short courtesy visits to prominent men like Okonkwo, before they finally left for their village. Okonkwo

hatimaye alipotokea akiwa ameshika jogoo katika mkono wake wa kulia, shangwe kubwa iliinuka kutoka kwa umati. Wacheza densi wengine wote walimfungulia njia. Aliwasilisha jogoo kwa wanamuziki na akaanza kucheza. Vifundo vya miguu vyake vya shaba vilinguruma huku akicheza na mwili wake uking'aa kwa mbao za cam katika mwanga laini wa manjano.

Wanamuziki wakiwa na mbao, udongo na ala za chuma walitoka wimbo hadi wimbo. Na wote walikuwa mashoga. Waliimba wimbo wa hivi punde zaidi kijijini: "Nikimshika mkono Anasema, 'Usiguse!' Nikimshika mguu Anasema, 'Usiguse!'

Lakini ninapomshika kiunoni shanga anajifanya hajui." Usiku ulikuwa tayari umepita wakati wageni walipoamka kwenda, wakimchukua bibi harusi wao nyumbani kukaa wiki saba za soko na familia ya mchumba wake.

Waliimba nyimbo walipokuwa wakienda, na walipokuwa njiani walifanya ziara fupi za heshima kwa wanaume mashuhuri kama Okonkwo, kabla ya hatimaye

Chinua Achebe

made a present of two cocks to
them.

kuondoka kuelekea kijijini kwao.
Okonkwo aliwaletea zawadi ya
jogoo wawili.