

## SURA YA TANO

The Feast of the New Yam was approaching and Umuofia was in a festival mood. It was an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess and the source of all fertility. Ani played a greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct. And what was more, she was in close communion with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies had been committed to earth.

The Feast of the New Yam was held every year before the harvest began, to honour the earth goddess and the ancestral spirits of the

Sikukuu ya Vitambaa Vipya ilikuwa inakaribia na Umuofia alikuwa katika hali ya tamasha. Ilikuwa ni tukio la kutoa shukrani kwa Ani, mungu wa kike wa dunia na chanzo cha uzazi wote. Ani alicheza sehemu kubwa katika maisha ya watu kuliko mungu mwingine yeyote. Alikuwa mwamuzi mkuu wa maadili na mwenendo. Na zaidi ya hayo, alikuwa katika ushirika wa karibu na baba wa ukoo walioaga ambao miili yao ilikuwa imekabidhiwa duniani.

Sikukuu ya Yam Mpya ilifanyika kila mwaka kabla ya mavuno kuanza, kuheshimu mungu wa dunia na roho za mababu za ukoo.

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clan. New yams could not be eaten until some had first been offered to these powers. Men and women, young and old, looked forward to the New Yam Festival because it began the season of plenty--the new year. On the last night before the festival, yams of the old year were all disposed of by those who still had them. The new year must begin with tasty, fresh yams and not the shrivelled and fibrous crop of the previous year. All cooking pots, calabashes and wooden bowls were thoroughly washed, especially the wooden mortar in which yam was pounded. Yam foo-foo and vegetable soup was the chief food in the celebration. So much of it was cooked that, no matter how heavily the family ate or how many friends and relatives they invited from neighbouring villages, there was always a large quantity of food left over at the end of the day. The story was always told of a wealthy man who set before his guests a mound of foo-foo so high that those who sat on one side could not see what was happening on the other, and it was not until late in the evening that one of them saw for the first time his in-law who had arrived during the course of the meal and

Viazi vikuu vipya havingeweza kuliwa hadi vingine vitolewe kwanza kwa mamlaka haya. Wanaume na wanawake, vijana kwa wazee, walitazamia kwa hamu Tamasha la New Yam kwa sababu lilianza msimu wa wingi--mwaka mpya. Usiku wa mwisho kabla ya tamasha, viazi vikuu vya mwaka wa zamani vyote vilitupwa na wale ambao bado walikuwa navyo. Mwaka mpya lazima uanze na viazi vikuu vitamu, vibichi na sio mazao yaliyosinyaa na yenye nyuzinyuzi ya mwaka uliopita. Vyungu vyote vya kupikia, vibuyu na bakuli vya mbao vilioshwa vizuri, hasa chokaa cha mbao ambamo viazi vikuu vilipondwa. Supu ya Yam foo-foo na mboga mboga kilikuwa chakula kikuu katika sherehe hiyo. Ilipikwa sana hivi kwamba, haijalishi familia ilikula sana au ni marafiki wangapi na jamaa walioalika kutoka vijiji vya jirani, kila mara kulikuwa na chakula kingi kilichobaki mwisho wa siku. Sikuzote hadithi hiyo ilisimuliwa juu ya mtu tajiri ambaye aliweka mbele ya wageni wake rundo la foo-foo juu sana hivi kwamba wale waliokaa upande mmoja hawakuweza kuona kinachotokea upande mwingine, na haikuwa

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had fallen to on the opposite side. It was only then that they exchanged greetings and shook hands over what was left of the food.

The New Yam Festival was thus an occasion for joy throughout Umuofia. And every man whose arm was strong, as the Ibo people say, was expected to invite large numbers of guests from far and wide. Okonkwo always asked his wives' relations, and since he now had three wives his guests would make a fairly big crowd.

But somehow Okonkwo could never become as enthusiastic over feasts as most people. He was a good eater and he could drink one or two fairly big gourds of palm-wine. But he was always uncomfortable sitting around for days waiting for a feast or getting over it. He would be very much happier working on his farm.

The festival was now only three days away. Okonkwo's wives had

hadi jioni sana ndipo yule mmoja. wao waliona kwa mara ya kwanza shemeji yake ambaye alifika wakati wa chakula na kuanguka kwa upande mwingine. Hapo ndipo walipopeana salamu na kupeana mikono juu ya kile kilichokuwa kimebakia.

Tamasha la New Yam kwa hivyo lilikuwa tukio la furaha kote Umuofia. Na kila mtu ambaye mkono wake ulikuwa na nguvu, kama watu wa Ibo wanasema, alitarajiwa kualika idadi kubwa ya wageni kutoka mbali na mbali. Okonkwo kila mara aliuliza uhusiano wa wake zake, na kwa vile sasa alikuwa na wake watatu wageni wake wangefanya umati mkubwa.

Lakini kwa namna fulani Okonkwo hangeweza kamwe kuwa na shauku ya karamu kama watu wengi. Alikuwa mlaji mzuri na angeweza kunywa kibuyu kimoja au viwili vya divai ya mitende. Lakini kila mara alikuwa hana raha kukaa karibu kwa siku akingojea karamu au kuimaliza. Angefurahi sana kufanya kazi kwenye shamba lake.

Sikukuu hiyo sasa ilikuwa imesalia siku tatu tu. Wake za

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scrubbed the walls and the huts with red earth until they reflected light. They had then drawn patterns on them in white, yellow and dark green. They then set about painting themselves with cam wood and drawing beautiful black patterns on their stomachs and on their backs. The children were also decorated, especially their hair, which was shaved in beautiful patterns. The three women talked excitedly about the relations who had been invited, and the children revelled in the thought of being spoiled by these visitors from the motherland. Ikemefuna was equally excited. The New Yam Festival seemed to him to be a much bigger event here than in his own village, a place which was already becoming remote and vague in his imagination.

And then the storm burst. Okonkwo, who had been walking about aimlessly in his compound in suppressed anger, suddenly found an outlet.

"Who killed this banana tree?" he asked. A hush fell on the

Okonkwo walikuwa wamesugua kuta na vibanda kwa udongo mwekundu hadi zikaangazia mwanga. Kisha walikuwa wamechora michoro juu yao kwa rangi nyeupe, njano na kijani kibichi. Kisha walianza kujichora kwa mbao za cam na kuchora michoro nzuri nyeusi kwenye matumbo yao na migongoni mwao. Watoto pia walipambwa, hasa nywele zao, ambazo zilinyolewa kwa mifumo nzuri. Wanawake hao watatu walizungumza kwa furaha juu ya uhusiano ambao walikuwa wamealikwa, na watoto walifurahi kwa wazo la kuharibiwa na wageni hawa kutoka nchi ya mama. Ikemefuna alifurahi vile vile. Tamasha la New Yam lilionekana kwake kuwa tukio kubwa zaidi hapa kuliko katika kijiji chake mwenyewe, mahali ambapo tayari ilikuwa mbali na haijulikani katika mawazo yake.

Na kisha dhoruba ilipasuka. Okonkwo, ambaye alikuwa akitembea ovyo ovyo katika boma lake kwa hasira iliyokandamizwa, ghafla alipata njia.

"Ni nani aliyewa mti huu wa mgomba?" Aliuliza. Kimya

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compound immediately.

kilianguka kwenye kiwanja mara moja.

"Who killed this tree? Or are you all deaf and dumb?"

"Ni nani aliyeua mti huu? Au nyote ni viziwi na mabubu?"

As a matter of fact the tree was very much alive. Okonkwo's second wife had merely cut a few leaves off it to wrap some food, and she said so. Without further argument Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her and her only daughter weeping. Neither of the other wives dared to interfere beyond an occasional and tentative, "It is enough, Okonkwo," pleaded from a reasonable distance.

Kwa kweli mti huo ulikuwa hai sana. Mke wa pili wa Okonkwo alikuwa amekata majani machache tu ili kufunga chakula, na alisema hivyo. Bila mabishano zaidi Okonkwo alimpa kipigo cha sauti na kuwaacha yeye na bintiye wa pekee wakilia. Hakuna hata mmoja wa wake wengine aliyethubutu kuingilia kati zaidi ya mara kwa mara na kujaribu, "Inatosha, Okonkwo," aliomba kwa umbali wa kutosha.

His anger thus satisfied, Okonkwo decided to go out hunting. He had an old rusty gun made by a clever blacksmith who had come to live in Umuofia long ago. But although Okonkwo was a great man whose prowess was universally acknowledged, he was not a hunter. In fact he had not killed a rat with his gun. And so when he called Ikemefuna to fetch his gun, the wife who had just been beaten murmured something about guns that never shot. Unfortunately for her Okonkwo heard it and ran

Hasira yake iliridhika, Okonkwo aliamua kwenda kuwinda. Alikuwa na bunduki kuukuu yenye kutu iliyotengenezwa na mhunzi mwerevu ambaye alikuja kuishi Umuofia zamani sana. Lakini ingawa Okonkwo alikuwa mtu mashuhuri ambaye ustadi wake ulikubaliwa kote, hakuwa mwindaji. Kwa kweli hakuwa ameuua panya kwa bunduki yake. Na hivyo alipompigia simu Ikemefuna achukue bunduki yake, mke ambaye alikuwa ametoka tu kupigwa alinung'unika kuhusu

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madly into his room for the loaded gun, ran out again and aimed at her as she clambered over the dwarf wall of the barn. He pressed the trigger and there was a loud report accompanied by the wail of his wives and children. He threw down the gun and jumped into the barn and there lay the woman, very much shaken and frightened but quite unhurt. He heaved a heavy sigh and went away with the gun.

In spite of this incident the New Yam Festival was celebrated with great joy in Okonkwo's household. Early that morning as he offered a sacrifice of new yam and palm oil to his ancestors he asked them to protect him, his children and their mothers in the new year.

As the day wore on his in-laws arrived from three surrounding villages, and each party brought with them a huge pot of palm-wine. And there was eating and drinking till night, when

bunduki ambazo hazikuwahi kufyatua risasi. Kwa bahati mbaya Okonkwo aliisikia na kukimbilia chumbani mwake kwa wazimu kwa ajili ya bunduki iliyojaa, akatoka mbio tena na kumlenga huku akipanda juu ya ukuta mdogo wa ghalani. Alibonyeza kifyatulia risasi na kulikuwa na sauti kubwa iliyoambatana na vilio vya wake na watoto wake. Aliitupa chini ile bunduki na kuruka ndani ya ghala na pale mwanamke huyo alikuwa amelala, akiwa ametetemeka sana na kuogopa lakini hakujeruhiwa kabisa. Akashusha pumzi nzito na kuondoka na bunduki.

Licha ya tukio hili Tamasha la New Yam lilisherehekewa kwa shangwe kuu katika kaya ya Okonkwo. Asubuhi hiyo mapema alipokuwa akitolea dhabihu ya viazi vikuu na mafuta ya mawese kwa babu zake aliwaomba wamlinde yeye, watoto wake na mama zao katika mwaka mpya.

Siku ilipozidi kwenda wakwe zake walifika kutoka vijiji vitatu vya jirani, na kila chama kilileta chungu kikubwa cha mvinyo wa mawese. Na kulikuwa na kula na kunywa hadi usiku, wakati wakwe

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Okonkwo's in-laws began to leave for their homes. The second day of the new year was the day of the great wrestling match between Okonkwo's village and their neighbours. It was difficult to say which the people enjoyed more, the feasting and fellowship of the first day or the wrestling Contest of the second. But there was one woman who had no doubt whatever in her mind. She was Okonkwo's second wife Ekwefi, whom he nearly shot. There was no festival in all the seasons of the year which gave her as much pleasure as the wrestling match. Many years ago when she was the village beauty Okonkwo had won her heart by throwing the Cat in the greatest contest within living memory. She did not marry him then because he was too poor to pay her bride-price. But a few years later she ran away from her husband and came to live with Okonkwo. All this happened many years ago. Now Ekwefi was a woman of forty-five who had suffered a great deal in her time. But her love of wrestling contests was still as strong as it was thirty years ago.

wa Okonkwo walianza kuondoka kwenda nyumbani kwao. Siku ya pili ya mwaka mpya ilikuwa siku ya pambano kubwa la mieleka kati ya kijiji cha Okonkwo na majirani zao. Ilikuwa vigumu kusema ni watu gani walifurahia zaidi, karamu na ushirika wa siku ya kwanza au Shindano la mieleka la pili. Lakini kulikuwa na mwanamke mmoja ambaye hakuwa na shaka lolote akilini mwake. Alikuwa mke wa pili wa Okonkwo Ekwefi, ambaye alikaribia kumpiga risasi. Hakukuwa na tamasha katika misimu yote ya mwaka ambayo ilimpa raha kama mechi ya mieleka. Miaka mingi iliyopita alipokuwa mrembo wa kijiji Okonkwo alishinda moyo wake kwa kumtoa Paka katika shindano kubwa zaidi ndani ya kumbukumbu hai. Hakuolewa naye wakati huo kwa sababu alikuwa maskini sana asingeweza kulipa mahari yake. Lakini miaka michache baadaye alimkimbia mumewe na kuja kuishi na Okonkwo. Haya yote yalitokea miaka mingi iliyopita. Sasa Ekwefi alikuwa mwanamke wa miaka arobaini na tano ambaye alikuwa ameteseka sana wakati wake. Lakini upendo wake wa

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mashindano ya mieleka bado  
ulikuwa na nguvu kama  
ilivyokuwa miaka thelathini  
iliyopita.

It was not yet noon on the second day of the New Yam Festival. Ekwefi and her only daughter, Ezinma, sat near the fireplace waiting for the water in the pot to boil. The fowl Ekwefi had just killed was in the wooden mortar. The water began to boil, and in one deft movement she lifted the pot from the fire and poured the boiling water over the fowl. She put back the empty pot on the circular pad in the corner, and looked at her palms, which were black with soot. Ezinma was always surprised that her mother could lift a pot from the fire with her bare hands.

"Ekwefi," she said, "is it true that when people are grown up, fire does not burn them?" Ezinma, unlike most children, called her mother by her name.

"Yes," replied Ekwefi, too busy to

Haikuwa bado saa sita mchana katika siku ya pili ya Tamasha la New Yam. Ekwefi na bintiye wa pekee, Ezinma, waliketi karibu na mahali pa moto wakisubiri maji yaliyokuwa kwenye sufuria yachemke. Ndege ambaye Ekwefi alikuwa ametoka kumuua alikuwa kwenye chokaa cha mbao. Maji yalianza kuchemka, na kwa harakati moja ya ustadi akainua sufuria kutoka kwa moto na kumwaga maji ya moto juu ya ndege. Alirudisha sufuria tupu kwenye pedi ya duara iliyokuwa pembeni, na kutazama viganja vyake ambavyo vilikuwa vyeusi kwa masizi. Ezinma alishangaa kila wakati kwamba mama yake angeweza kuinua sufuria kutoka kwa moto kwa mikono yake wazi.

"Ekwefi," alisema, "ni kweli kwamba watu wanapokuwa watu wazima, moto hauwaunguzi?" Ezinma, tofauti na watoto wengi, alimwita mama yake kwa jina lake.

"Ndiyo," alijibu Ekwefi akiwa na



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argue. Her daughter was only ten years old but she was wiser than her years.

"But Nwoye's mother dropped her pot of hot soup the other day and it broke on the floor."

Ekwefi turned the hen over in the mortar and began to pluck the feathers. "Ekwefi," said Ezinma, who had joined in plucking the feathers, "my eyelid is twitching."

"It means you are going to cry," said her mother. "No," Ezinma said, "it is this eyelid, the top one." "That means you will see something."

"What will I see?" she asked. "How can I know?" Ekwefi wanted her to work it out herself. "Oho," said Ezinma at last. "I know what it is--the wrestling match."

At last the hen was plucked clean. Ekwefi tried to pull out the horny beak but it was too hard. She turned round on her low stool and put the beak in the fire for a few moments. She pulled again and it came off.

shughuli nyingi sana za kubishana. Binti yake alikuwa na umri wa miaka kumi tu lakini alikuwa na busara kuliko miaka yake.

"Lakini mama yake Nwoye alianguka sufuria yake ya supu moto juzi na ikavunjika sakafuni."

Ekwefi alimgeuza kuku kwenye chokaa na kuanza kunyonya manyoya. "Ekwefi," alisema Ezinma, ambaye alijiunga na kunyonya manyoya, "kope langu linatetemeka."

"Ina maana utalia," mama yake alisema. "Hapana," Ezinma alisema, "ni kope hili, la juu." "Hiyo ina maana utaona kitu."

"Nitaona nini?" Aliuliza. "Nawezaje kujua?" Ekwefi alimtaka alifanyie kazi yeye mwenyewe. "Oh," Ezinma alisema hatimaye. "Najua ni nini - mechi ya mieleka."

Hatimaye kuku akang'olewa. Ekwefi alijaribu kuutoa mdomo huo wenye pembe lakini ulikuwa mgumu sana. Aligeuka kwenye kinyesi chake na kuweka mdomo kwenye moto kwa dakika chache. Alivuta tena na ikatoka.

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"Ekwefi!" a voice called from one of the other huts. It was Nwoye's mother, Okonkwo's first wife.

"Is that me?" Ekwefi called back. That was the way people answered calls from outside. They never answered yes for fear it might be an evil spirit calling.

"Will you give Ezinma some fire to bring to me?" Her own children and Ikemefuna had gone to the stream.

Ekwefi put a few live coals into a piece of broken pot and Ezinma carried it across the clean swept compound to Nwoye's mother.

"Thank you, Nma," she said. She was peeling new yams, and in a basket beside her were green vegetables and beans.

"Let me make the fire for you," Ezinma offered.

"Thank you, Ezigbo," she said. She often called her Ezigbo, which means "the good one."

"Ekwefi!" sauti iliita kutoka kwenye moja ya vibanda vingine. Alikuwa mama yake Nwoye, mke wa kwanza wa Okonkwo.

"Je, ni mimi?" Ekwefi aliita tena. Hivyo ndivyo watu walivyojibu simu kutoka nje. Hawakujibu ndio kwa kuogopa inaweza kuwa wito wa roho mbaya.

"Utampa Ezinma moto aniletee?" Watoto wake mwenyewe na Ikemefuna walikuwa wameenda kwenye mkondo.

Ekwefi aliweka makaa machache ya moto kwenye kipande cha chungu kilichovunjika na Ezinma akakibeba kwenye eneo lililofagiwa na mama yake Nwoye.

"Asante, Nma," alisema. Alikuwa akimenya viazi vikuu vipya, na kwenye kikapu kando yake kulikuwa na mboga za kijani na maharagwe.

"Acha nikutengenezee moto," Ezinma alijitolea.

"Asante, Ezigbo," alisema. Mara nyingi alimwita Ezigbo, ambayo inamaanisha "mzuri."

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Ezinma went outside and brought some sticks from a huge bundle of firewood. She broke them into little pieces across the sole of her foot and began to build a fire, blowing it with her breath.

"You will blow your eyes out," said Nwoye's mother, looking up from the yams she was peeling. "Use the fan." She stood up and pulled out the fan which was fastened into one of the rafters. As soon as she got up, the troublesome nanny goat, which had been dutifully eating yam peelings, dug her teeth into the real thing, scooped out two mouthfuls and fled from the hut to chew the cud in the goats' shed. Nwoye's mother swore at her and settled down again to her peeling. Ezinma's fire was now sending up thick clouds of smoke. She went on fanning it until it burst into flames. Nwoye's mother thanked her and she went back to her mother's hut.

Just then the distant beating of drums began to reach them. It came from the direction of the ilo, the village playground. Every village had its own ilo which was as old as the village itself and

Ezinma alitoka nje na kuleta vijiti kutoka kwenye kundi kubwa la kuni. Alizivunja vipande vipande kwenye nyayo ya mguu wake na kuanza kuwasha moto, akiupuliza kwa pumzi yake.

"Utatoboa macho," alisema mama Nwoye huku akitazama juu kutoka kwenye viazi vikuu alivyokuwa akivimanya. "Tumia feni." Alisimama na kuchomoa feni iliyokuwa imefungwa kwenye moja ya rafu. Alipoinuka tu, yule mbuzi msumbufu ambaye alikuwa akila maganda ya viazi vikuu, alichimba meno yake ndani ya uhalisia, akatoa midomo miwili na kukimbia kutoka kwenye kibanda hicho na kucheua kwenye zizi la mbuzi. Mama Nwoye alimtukana na kutulia tena kwa kujichubua. Moto wa Ezinma sasa ulikuwa ukituma mawingu mazito ya moshi. Aliendelea kuipepea hadi ikawaka moto. Mama Nwoye alimshukuru kisha akarudi kwenye kibanda cha mama yake.

Hapo hapo mipigo ya mbali ya ngoma ilianza kuwafikia. Ilitoka upande wa ilo, uwanja wa michezo wa kijiji. Kila kijiji kilikuwa na ilo lake ambalo lilikuwa la zamani sawa na kijiji

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where all the great ceremonies and dances took place. The drums beat the unmistakable wrestling dance - quick, light and gay, and it came floating on the wind.

Okonkwo cleared his throat and moved his feet to the beat of the drums. It filled him with fire as it had always done from his youth. He trembled with the desire to conquer and subdue. It was like the desire for woman.

"We shall be late for the wrestling," said Ezinma to her mother. "They will not begin until the sun goes down."

"But they are beating the drums."  
"Yes. The drums begin at noon but the wrestling waits until the sun begins to sink. Go and see if your father has brought out yams for the afternoon."

"He has. Nwoye's mother is already cooking."

"Go and bring our own, then. We must cook quickly or we shall be late for the wrestling."

Ezinma ran in the direction of the barn and brought back two yams

chenyewe na ambapo sherehe na ngoma zote kubwa zilifanyika. Ngoma zilipiga ngoma ya mieleka isiyo na shaka - ya haraka, nyepesi na ya mashoga, na ikaja ikielea juu ya upepo.

Okonkwo alisafisha koo lake na kusogeza miguu yake kwenye mdundo wa ngoma. Ilimjaza moto kama ilivyokuwa siku zote tangu ujana wake. Alitetemeka kwa hamu ya kushinda na kutiisha. Ilikuwa kama hamu ya mwanamke.

"Tutachelewa kwa pambano,"  
Ezinma alimwambia mama yake.  
"Hawataanza hadi jua litue."  
"Lakini wanapiga ngoma."

"Ndiyo. Ngoma huanza saa sita mchana lakini mieleka hungoja hadi jua lianze kuzama. Nenda ukaone kama baba yako ametoa viazi vikuu kwa ajili ya mchana."

"Ana. Mama yake Nwoye tayari anapika."

"Nenda ukalete za kwetu basi lazima tupike haraka la sivyo tutachelewa kwenye mieleka."

Ezinma alikimbia kuelekea kwenye ghala na kurudisha viazi

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from the dwarf wall.

vikuu viwili kutoka kwa ukuta mdogo.

Ekwefi peeled the yams quickly. The troublesome nanny-goat sniffed about, eating the peelings. She cut the yams into small pieces and began to prepare a pottage, using some of the chicken.

Ekwefi alimenya viazi vikuu haraka. Yaya-mbuzi matata alinusa huku akila maganda. Alikata viazi vikuu vipande vipande na kuanza kuandaa mchuzi kwa kutumia kuku.

At that moment they heard someone crying just outside their compound. It was very much like Obiageli, Nwoye's sister. "Is that not Obiageli weeping?" Ekwefi called across the yard to Nwoye's mother. "Yes," she replied. "She must have broken her waterpot."

Wakati huo walisikia mtu akilia nje kidogo ya boma lao. Ilikuwa kama Obiageli, dadake Nwoye. "Huyo sio Obiageli analia?" Ekwefi aliita ng'ambo ya yadi kwa mama Nwoye. "Ndiyo," alijibu. "Lazima atakuwa amevunja mtungi wake wa maji."

The weeping was now quite close and soon the children filed in, carrying on their heads various sizes of pots suitable to their years. Ikemefuna came first with the biggest pot, closely followed by Nwoye and his two younger brothers. Obiageli brought up the rear, her face streaming with tears. In her hand was the cloth pad on which the pot should have rested on her head.

Kilio sasa kilikuwa karibu kabisa na mara watoto wakaingia ndani, wakiwa wamebeba vichwani mwao vyungu vya ukubwa mbalimbali vinavyofaa miaka yao. Ikemefuna alikuja kwanza na chungu kikubwa zaidi, akifuatiwa kwa karibu na Nwoye na wadogo zake wawili. Obiageli alinua upande wa nyuma, uso wake ukibubujikwa na machozi. Mkononi mwake alikuwa na kitambaa cha kitambaa ambacho chungu kilipaswa kuwekwa kichwani mwake.

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"What happened?" her mother asked, and Obiageli told her mournful story. Her mother consoled her and promised to buy her another pot.

Nwoye's younger brothers were about to tell their mother the true story of the accident when Ikemefuna looked at them sternly and they held their peace. The fact was that Obiageli had been making inyanga with her pot. She had balanced it on her head, folded her arms in front of her and began to sway her waist like a grown-up young lady. When the pot fell down and broke she burst out laughing. She only began to weep when they got near the iroko tree outside their compound.

The drums were still beating, persistent and unchanging. Their sound was no longer a separate thing from the living village. It was like the pulsation of its heart. It throbbed in the air, in the sunshine, and even in the trees, and filled the village with excitement.

Ekwefi ladled her husband's share of the pottage into a bowl and

"Nini kimetokea?" mama yake aliuliza, na Obiageli akasimulia hadithi yake ya huzuni. Mama yake alimliwaza na kuahidi kumnunulia sufuria nyingine.

Wadogo wa Nwoye walikuwa wanakaribia kumweleza mama yao kisa cha kweli cha ajali hiyo ndipo Ikemefuna alipowatazama kwa ukali na wakanyamaza. Ukweli ni kwamba Obiageli alikuwa akitengeneza inyanga kwa chungu chake. Alikuwa ameiweka sawa kichwani, akaikunja mikono yake mbele yake na kuanza kuzungusha kiuno chake mithili ya mwanadada aliyekua. Chungu kilipoanguka na kukatika aliangua kicheko. Alianza kulia tu walipofika karibu na mti wa iroko nje ya boma lao.

Ngoma bado zilikuwa zikipigwa, zikiendelea na hazibadiliki. Sauti yao haikuwa tofauti tena na kijiji kilicho hai. Ilikuwa kama mapigo ya moyo wake. Ilivuma angani, kwenye mwanga wa jua, na hata kwenye miti, na kukijaza kijiji kwa msisimko.

Ekwefi aliweka sehemu ya mume wake kwenye bakuli na

## Mambo Husambaratika

covered it. Ezinma took it to him in his obi.

Okonkwo was sitting on a goatskin already eating his first wife's meal. Obiageli, who had brought it from her mother's hut, sat on the floor waiting for him to finish. Ezinma placed her mother's dish before him and sat with Obiageli.

"Sit like a woman!" Okonkwo shouted at her. Ezinma brought her two legs together and stretched them in front of her.

"Father, will you go to see the wrestling?" Ezinma asked after a suitable interval. "Yes," he answered. "Will you go?"

"Yes." And after a pause she said: "Can I bring your chair for you?" "No, that is a boy's job." Okonkwo was specially fond of Ezinma. She looked very much like her mother, who was once the village beauty. But his fondness only showed on very rare occasions.

"Obiageli broke her pot today,"

kukifunika. Ezinma aliipeleka kwake katika obi yake.

Okonkwo alikuwa ameketi juu ya ngozi ya mbuzi tayari akila mlo wa mke wake wa kwanza. Obiageli, ambaye alikuwa ameileta kutoka kwenye kibanda cha mama yake, aliketi sakafuni akimngoja amalize. Ezinma aliweka sahani ya mama yake mbele yake na kuketi na Obiageli.

"Keti kama mwanamke!" Okonkwo alimfokea. Ezinma alileta miguu yake miwili pamoja na kuinyoosha mbele yake.

"Baba, utaenda kuona pambano?" Ezinma aliuliza baada ya muda kufaa. "Ndiyo," akajibu. "Utaenda?"

"Ndiyo." Na baada ya pause alisema: "Je! ninaweza kuleta kiti chako kwa ajili yako?" "Hapana, hiyo ni kazi ya kijana." Okonkwo alipenda sana Ezinma. Alifanana sana na mama yake, ambaye hapo awali alikuwa mrembo wa kijiji. Lakini upendo wake ulionyesha tu katika matukio machache sana.

"Obiageli amevunja chungu chake

## *Chinua Achebe*

Ezinma said.

"Yes, she has told me about it,"

Okonkwo said between mouthfuls.

"Father," said Obiageli, "people should not talk when they are eating or pepper may go down the wrong way."

"That is very true. Do you hear that, Ezinma? You are older than Obiageli but she has more sense."

He uncovered his second wife's dish and began to eat from it. Obiageli took the first dish and returned to her mother's hut. And then Nkechi came in, bringing the third dish. Nkechi was the daughter of Okonkwo's third wife.

In the distance the drums continued to beat.

leo," Ezinma alisema.

"Ndio, amenieleza kuhusu hilo,"

Okonkwo alisema katikati ya watu waliojaa midomo.

"Baba," alisema Obiageli, "watu hawapaswi kuzungumza wakati wanakula au pilipili inaweza kwenda vibaya."

"Hiyo ni kweli kabisa. Unasikia hivyo, Ezinma? Wewe ni mkubwa kuliko Obiageli lakini ana akili zaidi."

Alifunua sahani ya mke wake wa pili na kuanza kula. Obiageli alichukua sahani ya kwanza na kurudi kwenye kibanda cha mama yake. Na kisha Nkechi akaingia, akileta sahani ya tatu. Nkechi alikuwa binti wa mke wa tatu wa Okonkwo.

Kwa mbali ngoma ziliendelea kupiga.