

SURA YA NANE

Okonkwo did not taste any food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna. He drank palm-wine from morning till night, and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat when it was caught by the tail and dashed against the floor. He called his son, Nwoye, to sit with him in his obi. But the boy was afraid of him and slipped out of the hut as soon as he noticed him dozing.

He did not sleep at night. He tried not to think about Ikemefuna, -but

Okonkwo hakuonja chakula chochote kwa siku mbili baada ya kifo cha Ikemefuna. Alikunywa divai ya mawese tangu asubuhi hadi usiku, na macho yake yalikuwa mekundu na makali kama macho ya panya aliposhikwa na mkia na kugonga sakafu. Alimwita mwanawe, Nwoye, aketi naye katika obi yake. Lakini mvulana alimwogopa na akatoka nje ya kibanda mara tu alipomwona anasinzia.

Hakulala usiku. Alijaribu kutofikiria kuhusu Ikemefuna,

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the more he tried the more he thought about him. Once he got up from bed and walked about his compound. But he was so weak that his legs could hardly carry him. He felt like a drunken giant walking with the limbs of a mosquito. Now and then a cold shiver descended on his head and spread down his body.

On the third day he asked his second wife, Ekwefi, to roast plantains for him. She prepared it the way he liked--with slices of oil-bean and fish.

"You have not eaten for two days," said his daughter Ezinma when she brought the food to him. "So you must finish this." She sat down and stretched her legs in front of her. Okonkwo ate the food absent-mindedly. 'She should have been a boy,' he thought as he looked at his ten-year-old daughter. He passed her a piece of fish.

"Go and bring me some cold water," he said. Ezinma rushed out of the hut, chewing the fish, and soon returned with a bowl of cool water from the earthen pot in her

lakini kadiri alivyojaribu ndivyo alivyoziidi kumfikiria. Mara moja aliinuka kutoka kitandani na kutembea karibu na eneo lake. Lakini alikuwa dhaifu sana hivi kwamba miguu yake haikuweza kumbeba. Alijihisi jitu mlevi linalotembea na viungo vya mbu. Mara kwa mara mtetemeko wa baridi ulishuka kichwani mwake na kuenea mwilini mwake.

Siku ya tatu alimwomba mke wake wa pili, Ekwefi, amchomee ndizi. Aliitayarisha jinsi alivyopenda - kwa vipande vya maharagwe ya mafuta na samaki.

"Hujala kwa siku mbili," binti yake Ezinma alisema alipomletea chakula. "Kwa hivyo lazima umalize hii." Alikaa chini na kunyoosha miguu yake mbele yake. Okonkwo alikula chakula bila akili. 'Anapaswa kuwa mvulana,' aliwaza huku akimwangukia binti yake mwenye umri wa miaka kumi. Akampitisha kipande cha samaki.

"Nenda uniletee maji baridi," alisema. Ezinma alikimbia kutoka kwenye kibanda, akitafuna samaki, na mara akarudi na bakuli la maji baridi kutoka kwenye

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mother's hut.

sufuria ya udongo katika kibanda
cha mama yake.

Okonkwo took the bowl from her and gulped the water down. He ate a few more pieces of plantain and pushed the dish aside.

Okonkwo alichukua bakuli kutoka kwake na kumeza maji. Alikula vipande vichache zaidi vya ndizi na kusukuma sahani kando.

"Bring me my bag," he asked, and Ezinma brought his goatskin bag from the far end of the hut. He searched in it for his snuff-bottle. It was a deep bag and took almost the whole length of his arm. It contained other things apart from his snuff-bottle. There was a drinking horn in it, and also a drinking gourd, and they knocked against each other as he searched. When he brought out the snuff-bottle he tapped it a few times against his knee-cap before taking out some snuff on the palm of his left hand. Then he remembered that he had not taken out his snuff-spoon. He searched his bag again and brought out a small, flat, ivory spoon, with which he carried the brown snuff to his nostrils.

"Niletee mfuko wangu," aliuliza, na Ezinma akaleta mfuko wake wa ngozi ya mbuzi kutoka mwisho wa kibanda. Alitafuta ndani yake chupa yake ya ugoro. Ilikuwa ni begi refu na ilichukua karibu urefu wote wa mkono wake. Ilikuwa na mambo mengine mbali na chupa yake ya ugoro. Kulikuwa na pembe ya kunywea ndani yake, na pia mtango wa kunywea, wakagongana huku akitafuta. Alipoitoa ile chupa ya ugoro aliigonga mara chache kwenye kofia yake ya goti kabla ya kutoa ugoro kwenye kiganja cha mkono wake wa kushoto. Kisha akakumbuka kwamba alikuwa hajatoa kijiko chake cha ugoro. Akapekua tena begi lake na kutoa kijiko kidogo cha pembe za ndovu, tambarare, akabeba ugoro wa kahawia hadi puani.

Ezinma took the dish in one hand and the empty water bowl in the other and went back to her

Ezinma alichukua sahani kwa mkono mmoja na bakuli tupu katika mkono mwingine na kurudi

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mother's hut. "She should have been a boy," Okonkwo said to himself again. His mind went back to Ikemefuna and he shivered. If only he could find some work to do he would be able to forget. But it was the season of rest between the harvest and the next planting season. The only work that men did at this time was covering the walls of their compound with new palm fronds. And Okonkwo had already done that. He had finished it on the very day the locusts came, when he had worked on one side of the wall and Ikemefuna and Nwoye on the other.

"When did you become a shivering old woman," Okonkwo asked himself, "you, who are known in all the nine villages for your valour in war ? How can a man who has killed five men in battle fall to pieces because he has added a boy to their number ? Okonkwo, you have become a woman indeed."

He sprang to his feet, hung his goatskin bag on his shoulder and went to visit his friend, Obierika.

kwenye kibanda cha mama yake. "Anapaswa kuwa mvulana," Okonkwo alijisemea tena. Akili yake ilirudi kwa Ikemefuna na akatetemeka. Laiti angepata kazi ya kufanya angeweza kusahau. Lakini ulikuwa ni msimu wa mapumziko kati ya mavuno na msimu wa kupanda uliofuata. Kazi pekee ambayo wanaume walifanya kwa wakati huu ilikuwa kufunika kuta za kiwanja chao na matawi mapya ya mitende. Na Okonkwo alikuwa tayari amefanya hivyo. Alikuwa ameimaliza siku ile ile nzige walipokuja, alipokuwa amefanya kazi upande mmoja wa ukuta na Ikemefuna na Nwoye upande mwingine.

"Ni lini umekuwa bibi kizee anayetetemeka," Okonkwo alijiuliza, "wewe, ambaye unajulikana katika vijiji vyote tisa kwa ushujaa wako katika vita? Mtu ambaye ameua wanaume watano vitani anawezaje kuanguka vipande vipande kwa sababu ameongeza. mvulana kwa idadi yao? Okonkwo, umekuwa mwanamke kweli."

Alisimama kwa miguu yake, akatundika begi lake la ngozi ya mbuzi begani na kwenda

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kumtembelea rafiki yake,
Obierika.

Obierika was sitting outside under the shade of an orange tree making thatches from leaves of the raffia-palm. He exchanged greetings with Okonkwo and led the way into his obi.

"I was coming over to see you as soon as I finished that thatch," he said, rubbing off the grains of sand that clung to his thighs.

"Is it well?" Okonkwo asked.
"Yes," replied Obierika. "My daughter's suitor is coming today and I hope we will clinch the matter of the bride-price. I want you to be there."

Just then Obierika's son, Maduka, came into the obi from outside, greeted Okonkwo and turned towards the compound, "Come and shake hands with me,"

Okonkwo said to the lad. "Your wrestling the other day gave me much happiness." The boy smiled, shook hands with Okonkwo and went into the compound.

Obierika alikuwa ameketi nje chini ya kivuli cha mti wa michungwa akitengeneza nyasi kutoka kwa majani ya mitende ya raffia. Alipeana salamu na Okonkwo na kuongoza njia kwenye obi yake.

"Nilikuwa nakuja kukuona mara tu baada ya kumaliza ile nyasi," alisema huku akijisugua punje za mchanga zilizong'ang'ania kwenye mapaja yake.

"Ndiyo," alijibu Obierika.
"Mchumba wa binti yangu anakuja leo na natumai tutashughulikia suala la mahari. Nataka uwe huko."

Muda huohuo mtoto wa Obierika, Maduka aliingia ndani ya obi kutoka nje, akamsalimia Okonkwo na kugeukia boma, "Njoo unipe mkono"

Okonkwo akamwambia yule kijana. "Mieleka yako juzi ilinipa furaha nyingi." Kijana akatabasamu, akapeana mikono na Okonkwo na kuingia

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ndani ya boma.

"He will do great things," Okonkwo said. "If I had a son like him I should be happy. I am worried about Nwoye. A bowl of pounded yams can throw him in a wrestling match. His two younger brothers are more promising. But I can tell you, Obierika, that my children do not resemble me. Where are the young suckers that will grow when the old banana tree dies? If Ezinma had been a boy I would have been happier. She has the right spirit."

"You worry yourself for nothing," said Obierika. "The children are still very young."
"Nwoye is old enough to impregnate a woman. At his age I was already fending for myself. No, my friend, he is not too young. A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches. I have done my best to make Nwoye grow into a man, but there is too much of his mother in him."

"Too much of his grandfather," Obierika thought, but he did not

"Atafanya mambo makubwa," Okonkwo alisema. "Kama ningekuwa na mtoto wa kiume kama yeye ningefurahi. Nina wasiwasi na Nwoye. Bakuli la viazi vikuu linaweza kumtupa kwenye pambano la mieleka. Wadogo zake wawili wana matumaini zaidi. Lakini naweza kukuambia Obierika kwamba wangu watoto hawafanani nami. Wako wapi wanyonyaji wachanga ambao watakua mti mzee wa ndizi unapokufa? Ikiwa Ezinma angekuwa mvulana ningekuwa na furaha zaidi. Ana roho sahihi."
"Unajisumbua bure," alisema Obierika. "Watoto bado ni wadogo sana."
"Nwoye ana umri wa kumpa mimba mwanamke, kwa umri wake tayari nilikuwa najitengenezea mwenyewe, hapana rafiki si mdogo sana, kifaranga kitakachokua jogoo kinaweza kuonekana siku ile kinapototolewa. nilifanya niwezavyo kumfanya Nwoye akue na kuwa mwanamume, lakini kuna mengi ya mama yake ndani yake."

"Babu yake sana," Obierika aliwaza, lakini hakusema. Wazo

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say it. The same thought also came to Okonkwo's mind. But he had long learned how to lay that ghost. Whenever the thought of his father's weakness and failure troubled him he expelled it by thinking about his own strength and success. And so he did now. His mind went to his latest show of manliness.

"I cannot understand why you refused to come with us to kill that boy," he asked Obierika.
"Because I did not want to," Obierika replied sharply. "I had something better to do."

"You sound as if you question the authority and the decision of the Oracle, who said he should die."
"I do not. Why should I? But the Oracle did not ask me to carry out its decision." "But someone had to do it. If we were all afraid of blood, it would not be done. And what do you think the Oracle would do then?"

"You know very well, Okonkwo, that I am not afraid of blood and if anyone tells you that I am, he is telling a lie. And let me tell you one thing, my friend. If I were you

hilohilo likamjia pia Okonkwo. Lakini alikuwa amejifunza kwa muda mrefu jinsi ya kuweka mzimu huo. Kila wazo la udhaifu na kushindwa kwa baba yake lilipomsumbua alilifukuza kwa kufikiria nguvu na mafanikio yake. Na ndivyo alivyofanya sasa. Akili yake ilienda kwenye onyesho lake la hivi punde la uanaume.

"Sielewi kwa nini ulikataa kuja nasi kumuua mvulana huyo," aliuliza Obierika.
"Kwa sababu sikutaka," Obierika alijibu kwa ukali. "Nilikuwa na kitu bora zaidi cha kufanya."

"Unasikika kama unahoji mamlaka na uamuzi wa Oracle, ambaye alisema anapaswa kufa."
"Sijui. Kwa nini nifanye? Lakini Oracle haikuniuliza nitekeleze uamuzi wake." "Lakini ilibidi mtu afanye hivyo. Kama sote tungeogopa damu, isingefanyika. Na unafikiri Oracle ingefanya nini wakati huo?"

"Unajua sana Okonkwo kuwa mimi siogopi damu na mtu akikwambia mimi anaongea uwongo. nyumbani. Ulichofanya hakitaipendeza Dunia. Ni aina ya

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I would have stayed at home.
What you have done will not
please the Earth. It is the kind of
action for which the goddess
wipes out whole families."

"The Earth cannot punish me for
obeying her messenger,"
Okonkwo said. "A child's fingers
are not scalded by a piece of hot
yam which its mother puts into its
palm."

"That is true," Obierika agreed.
"But if the Oracle said that my son
should be killed I would neither
dispute it nor be the one to do it."

They would have gone on arguing
had Ofoedu not come in just then.
It was clear from his twinkling
eyes that he had important news.
But it would be impolite to rush
him. Obierika offered him a lobe
of the kola nut he had broken with
Okonkwo. Ofoedu ate slowly and
talked about the locusts. When he
finished his kola nut he said: "The
things that happen these days are
very strange."

"What has happened?" asked
Okonkwo.

"Do you know Ogbuefi Ndulue?"
Ofoedu asked.

hatua ambayo mungu mke
anaangamiza familia nzima."

"Dunia haiwezi kuniadhibu kwa
kumtii mjumbe wake," Okonkwo
alisema. "Vidole vya mtoto
haviunguzwi na kipande cha viazi
vikuu moto ambacho mama yake
hukiweka kwenye kiganja chake."

"Hiyo ni kweli," Obierika
alikuwambia. "Lakini kama Oracle
ingesema kwamba mwanangu
auawe sitapinga wala sitakuwa
mtu wa kufanya hivyo."
Wangeendelea kubishana kama
Ofoedu hangeingia tu wakati huo.
Ilionekana wazi kwa macho yake
ya kupepesa macho kwamba
alikuwa na habari muhimu. Lakini
itakuwa ni kukosa adabu
kumkimbiza. Obierika alimpa lobe
ya kola nut aliyovunja na
Okonkwo. Ofoedu alikula
polepole na kuzungumza juu ya
nzige. Alipomaliza kola nut yake
alisema: "Mambo yanayotokea
siku hizi ni ya ajabu sana."

"Nini kimetokea?" aliiuliza
Okonkwo.

"Unamfahamu Ogbuefi Ndulue?"
Ofoedu aliiuliza.

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"Ogbuefi Ndulue of Ire village," Okonkwo and Obierika said together. "He died this morning," said Ofoedu.

"That is not strange. He was the oldest man in Ire," said Obierika. "You are right," Ofoedu agreed. "But you ought to ask why the drum has not beaten to tell Umuofia of his death."

"Why?" asked Obierika and Okonkwo together.

"That is the strange part of it. You know his first wife who walks with a stick?" "Yes. She is called Ozoemena."

"That is so," said Ofoedu.

"Ozoemena was, as you know, too old to attend Ndulue during his illness. His younger wives did that. When he died this morning, one of these women went to Ozoemena's hut and told her. She rose from her mat, took her stick and walked over to the obi. She knelt on her knees and hands at the threshold and called her husband, who was laid on a mat. 'Ogbuefi Ndulue,' she called, three times, and went back to her hut. When the youngest wife went to call her again to be present at the washing

"Ogbuefi Ndulue wa kijiji cha Ire," Okonkwo na Obierika walisema pamoja. "Alifariki asubuhi ya leo," Ofoedu alisema.

"Uko sahihi," Ofoedu alikubali. "Lakini unapaswa kuuliza kwa nini ngoma haijapigwa kumwambia Umuofia kuhusu kifo chake."

"Kwa nini?" aliuliza Obierika na Okonkwo kwa pamoja.

"Hiyo ni sehemu ya ajabu. Unajua mke wake wa kwanza ambaye anatembea na fimbo?" "Ndiyo. Anaitwa Ozoemena."

"Ndiyo hivyo," alisema Ofoedu.

"Ozoemena, kama unavyojua, alikuwa mzee sana hakuweza kuhudhuria Ndulue wakati wa ugonjwa wake, wake zake wadogo walifanya hivyo. Alipokufa asubuhi ya leo, mmoja wa wanawake hawa alikwenda kwenye kibanda cha Ozoemena na kumwambia, akainuka kutoka kwenye mkeka na kuchukua fimbo yake. akasogea mpaka kwa obi, akapiga magoti na mikono kwenye kizingiti na kumwita mumewe aliyelazwa kwenye mkeka, 'Ogbuefi Ndulue,' akaita mara tatu

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of the body, she found her lying on the mat, dead."

"That is very strange, indeed," said Okonkwo. "They will put off Ndulue's funeral until his wife has been buried."

"That is why the drum has not been beaten to tell Umuofia."

"It was always said that Ndulue and Ozoemena had one mind," said Obierika. "I remember when I was a young boy there was a song about them. He could not do anything without telling her."

"I did not know that," said Okonkwo. "I thought he was a strong man in his youth."

"He was indeed," said Ofoedu. Okonkwo shook his head doubtfully.

"He led Umuofia to war in those days," said Obierika.

Okonkwo was beginning to feel like his old self again. All that he required was something to occupy his mind. If he had killed Ikemefuna during the busy planting season or harvesting it would not have been so bad, his mind would have been centred on his work. Okonkwo was not a man

na kurudi kwenye kibanda chake. mke akaenda kumwita tena awepo kwenye kuuosha mwili, akamkuta amelala kwenye mkeka, amekufa."

"Hiyo ni ya kushangaza sana," Okonkwo alisema. "Wataahirisha mazishi ya Ndulue hadi mkewe azikwe."

"Ndio maana ngoma haijapigwa kuwaambia Umuofia."

"Siku zote ilisemekana kuwa Ndulue na Ozoemena walikuwa na nia moja," alisema Obierika.

"Nakumbuka nilipokuwa mvulana mdogo kulikuwa na wimbo kuhusu wao. Hakuweza kufanya chochote bila kumwambia."

"Sikujua hilo," Okonkwo alisema. "Nilidhani alikuwa mtu mwenye nguvu katika ujana wake."

"Kwa kweli alikuwa," Ofoedu alisema. Okonkwo akatikisa kichwa kwa mashaka.

"Aliongoza Umuofia vitani siku hizo," alisema Obierika.

Okonkwo alianza kujisikia kama mtu wake wa zamani tena. Alichohitaji ni kitu cha kukaza akili yake. Ikiwa angemuaa Ikemefuna wakati wa msimu wa kupanda wenye shughuli nyingi au kuvuna isingekuwa mbaya sana, akili yake ingalizingatia kazi yake. Okonkwo hakuwa mtu wa

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of thought but of action. But in absence of work, talking was the next best.

Soon after Ofoedu left, Okonkwo took up his goatskin bag to go. "I must go home to tap my palm trees for the afternoon," he said. "Who taps your tall trees for you?" asked Obierika. "Umezulike," replied Okonkwo.

"Sometimes I wish I had not taken the ozo title," said Obierika. "It wounds my heart to see these young men killing palm trees in the name of tapping."

"It is so indeed," Okonkwo agreed. "But the law of the land must be obeyed."

"I don't know how we got that law," said Obierika. "In many other clans a man of title is not forbidden to climb the palm tree. Here we say he cannot climb the tall tree but he can tap the short ones standing on the ground. It is like Dimaragana, who would not lend his knife for cutting up dogmeat because the dog was taboo to him, but offered to use his teeth."

mawazo bali wa vitendo. Lakini kwa kukosekana kwa kazi, kuzungumza ndio ilikuwa bora zaidi.

Punde baada ya Ofoedu kuondoka, Okonkwo alichukua begi lake la ngozi ya mbuzi kwenda. "Lazima niende nyumbani kugonga mitende yangu kwa mchana," alisema. "Ni nani anayekupigia miti yako mirefu?" aliuliza Obierika. "Umezulike," alijibu Okonkwo.

"Wakati mwingine natamani nisingetwaa taji la ozo," alisema Obierika. "Inaumiza moyo wangu kuona vijana hawa wakiua mitende kwa jina la kugonga."

"Ni kweli," Okonkwo alikubali. "Lakini sheria ya nchi lazima ifuatwe."

"Sijui tuliipataje sheria hiyo," alisema Obierika. "Kwenye koo nyingi mtu mwenye cheo hakatazwi kupanda mchikichi, hapa tunasema hawezi kupanda mti mrefu bali anaweza kugonga wafupi waliosimama chini ni sawa na Dimaragana ambaye hangeazima kisu chake. kwa kukata mbwa kwa sababu mbwa alikuwa mwiko kwake, lakini alijitolea kutumia meno yake."

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"I think it is good that our clan holds the ozo title in high esteem," said Okonkwo. "In those other clans you speak of, ozo is so low that every beggar takes it."

"I was only speaking in jest," said Obierika. "In Abame and Aninta the title is worth less than two cowries. Every man wears the thread of title on his ankle, and does not lose it even if he steals."

"They have indeed soiled the name of ozo," said Okonkwo as he rose to go.

"It will not be very long now before my in-laws come," said Obierika.

"I shall return very soon," said Okonkwo, looking at the position of the sun.

There were seven men in Obierika's hut when Okonkwo returned. The suitor was a young man of about twenty-five, and with him were his father and uncle. On Obierika's side were his two elder brothers and Maduka, his sixteen-year-old son.

"Nafikiri ni vyema ukoo wetu kushikilia cheo cha ozozo kwa heshima kubwa," Okonkwo alisema. "Katika hizo koo zingine unazozungumza, ozo ni chini sana kwamba kila ombaomba huichukua."

"Nilikuwa nikiongea kwa mzaha tu," Obierika alisema. "Katika Abame na Aninta cheo kina thamani ya chini ya ng'ombe wawili. Kila mwanamume huvaa uzi wa cheo kwenye kifundo cha mguu wake, na hapotezi hata akiiba."

"Kwa kweli wamechafua jina la ozo," Okonkwo alisema huku akinyanyuka kwenda.

"Si muda mrefu sasa wakwe zangu waje," alisema Obierika.

"Nitarudi haraka sana," Okonkwo alisema, akitazama mahali jua lilipo.

Kulikuwa na wanaume saba kwenye kibanda cha Obierika wakati Okonkwo aliporudi. Mchumba alikuwa kijana wa miaka ishirini na tano, na baba yake na mjomba wake. Upande wa Obierika walikuwepo kaka zake wawili wakubwa na Maduka, mtoto wake wa kiume mwenye

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"Ask Akueke's mother to send us some kola nuts," said Obierika to his son. Maduka vanished into the compound like lightning. The conversation at once centred on him, and everybody agreed that he was as sharp as a razor.

"I sometimes think he is too sharp," said Obierika, somewhat indulgently. "He hardly ever walks. He is always in a hurry. If you are sending him on an errand he flies away before he has heard half of the message."

"You were very much like that yourself," said his eldest brother. "As our people say, 'When mother-cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth.' Maduka has been watching your mouth."

As he was speaking the boy returned, followed by Akueke, his half-sister, carrying a wooden dish with three kola nuts and alligator pepper. She gave the dish to her father's eldest brother and then shook hands, very shyly, with her suitor and his relatives. She was about sixteen and just ripe for marriage. Her suitor and his relatives surveyed her young body

umri wa miaka kumi na sita.

"Mwambie mama Akueke atutumie karanga za kola," Obierika alimwambia mwanawe. Maduka yalitoweka ndani ya kiwanja kama radi. Mazungumzo mara moja yalimhusu, na kila mtu alikubali kwamba alikuwa mkali kama wembe.

"Wakati mwingine nadhani yeye ni mkali sana," alisema Obierika, kwa kiasi fulani kwa kujifurahisha. "Hatawahi kutembea. Yeye huwa na haraka. Ikiwa unamtuma kwa kazi fulani anaruka kabla hajasikia nusu ya ujumbe."

"Wewe ulikuwa hivyo sana," kaka yake mkubwa alisema. "Kama watu wetu wanavyosema, 'Ng'ombe mama anapotafuna nyasi watoto wake hutazama mdomo wake.' Maduka amekuwa akichunga mdomo wako."

Alipokuwa akiongea yule mvulana alirudi, akifuatiwa na Akueke, dada yake wa kambo, akiwa amebeba sahani ya mbao yenye kokwa tatu na pilipili mamba. Alimpa kaka mkubwa wa baba yake sahani na kisha kupeana mikono, kwa aibu sana, na mshenga wake na jamaa zake. Alikuwa na umri wa miaka kumi na sita na tayari ameiva. Mshenga

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with expert eyes as if to assure themselves that she was beautiful and ripe.

She wore a coiffure which was done up into a crest in the middle of the head. Cam wood was rubbed lightly into her skin, and all over her body were black patterns drawn with uli. She wore a black necklace which hung down in three coils just above her full, succulent breasts. On her arms were red and yellow bangles, and on her waist four or five rows of jigida, or waist beads.

When she had shaken hands, or rather held out her hand to be shaken, she returned to her mother's hut to help with the cooking.

"Remove your jigida first," her mother warned as she moved near the fireplace to bring the pestle resting against the wall. "Every day I tell you that jigida and fire are not friends. But you will never hear. You grew your ears for decoration, not for hearing. One of these days your jigida will catch fire on your waist, and then you

wake na jamaa zake
waliuchunguza mwili wake
mchanga kwa macho ya kitaalamu
kana kwamba wanajihakikishia
kuwa alikuwa mzuri na ameiva.

Alivaa vazi la coiffure ambalo
lilifanywa hadi katikati ya kichwa.
Cam wood ilipakwa kidogo
kwenye ngozi yake, na mwili
mzima kulikuwa na michoro
nyeusi iliyochorwa na uli. Alivalia
mkufu mweusi ambao ulining'inia
chini kwenye koili tatu juu ya
matiti yake yaliyojaa, yenye
kupendeza. Mikononi mwake
kulikuwa na bangili nyekundu na
njano, na kiunoni safu nne au tano
za jigida, au shanga kiunoni.

Aliposhikana mikono, au tuseme
kunyoosha mkono wake
kutikiswa, alirudi kwenye kibanda
cha mama yake kusaidia kupika.
"Ondoa kwanza jigida yako,"
mama yake alionya huku akisogea
karibu na mahali pa moto ili kuleta
mchi uliokuwa ukiegemea ukuta.
"Kila siku nakwambia jigida na
moto sio marafiki. Ila hutasikia
kamwe. Ulikua masikio yako kwa
ajili ya mapambo sio ya kusikia.
Siku moja jigida lako litawaka
moto kiunoni, halafu utajua. "

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will know."

Akueke moved to the other end of the hut and began to remove the waist-beads. It had to be done slowly and carefully, taking each string separately, else it would break and the thousand tiny rings would have to be strung together again. She rubbed each string downwards with her palms until it passed the buttocks and slipped down to the floor around her feet.

The men in the obi had already begun to drink the palm-wine which Akueke's suitor had brought. It was a very good wine and powerful, for in spite of the palm fruit hung across the mouth of the pot to restrain the lively liquor, white foam rose and spilled over.

"That wine is the work of a good tapper," said Okonkwo.

The young suitor, whose name was Ibe, smiled broadly and said to his father: "Do you hear that?" He then said to the others: "He will never admit that I am a good tapper."

"He tapped three of my best palm trees to death," said his father, Ukegbu. "That was about five

Akueke alisogea upande wa pili wa kibanda na kuanza kutoa shanga za kiunoni. Ilibidi ifanyike polepole na kwa uangalifu, ikichukua kila kamba kando, vinginevyo ingevunjika na pete elfu ndogo zingeunganishwa tena. Alisugua kila kamba kwenda chini kwa viganja vyake hadi ikapita matako na kuteleza hadi sakafuni kuzunguka miguu yake.

Wale watu waliokuwa kwenye obi tayari walikuwa wameanza kunywa mvinyo wa mtende ambao mshenga wa Akueke alikuwa ameleta. Ilikuwa divai nzuri sana na yenye nguvu, kwa kuwa licha ya matunda ya mawese yaliyoning'inia kwenye mdomo wa chungu ili kuzuia kileo changamfu, povu jeupe liliinuka na kumwagika.

"Hiyo mvinyo ni kazi ya tapper mzuri," Okonkwo alisema.

Mchumba mchanga, ambaye jina lake lilikuwa Ibe, alitabasamu sana na kumwambia baba yake: "Je! Kisha akawaambia wengine: "Kamwe hata kubali kuwa mimi ni mchongaji mzuri."

"Aligonga mitende yangu mizuri hadi kufa," babake, Ukegbu alisema. "Hiyo ilikuwa miaka

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years ago," said Ibe, who had begun to pour out the wine, "before I learned how to tap." He filled the first horn and gave to his father. Then he poured out for the others. Okonkwo brought out his big horn from the goatskin bag, blew into it to remove any dust that might be there, and gave it to Ibe to fill.

As the men drank, they talked about everything except the thing for which they had gathered. It was only after the pot had been emptied that the suitor's father cleared his voice and announced the object of their visit.

Obierika then presented to him a small bundle of short broomsticks. Ukegbu counted them. "They are thirty?" he asked. Obierika nodded in agreement.

"We are at last getting somewhere," Ukegbu said, and then turning to his brother and his son he said: "Let us go out and whisper together." The three rose and went outside. When they returned Ukegbu handed the bundle of sticks back to Obierika. He counted them,- instead of thirty

mitano hivi iliyopita," Ibe, ambaye alikuwa ameanza kumwaga divai hiyo, alisema, "kabla sijajifunza kugusa." Akaijaza pembe ya kwanza na kumpa baba yake. Kisha akawamiminia wengine. Okonkwo alitoa pembe yake kubwa kutoka kwenye mfuko wa ngozi ya mbuzi, akapuliza ndani yake ili kuondoa vumbi ambalo linaweza kuwa hapo, na akampa Ibe ajaze.

Watu hao walipokuwa wakinywa, walizungumza juu ya kila kitu isipokuwa kile ambacho walikuwa wamekusanya. Ni baada tu ya sufuria hiyo kumwagika ndipo baba wa mchumba aliondoa sauti yake na kutangaza lengo la ziara yao.

Obierika kisha akamkabidhi kifungu kidogo cha vijiti vifupi vya ufagio. Ukegbu alizihesabu. "Wao ni thelathini?" Aliuliza. Obierika alikubali kwa kichwa. "Mwishowe tunafika mahali fulani," Ukegbu alisema, kisha akamgeukia kaka yake na mtoto wake akasema: "Twendeni tukanong'one pamoja." Wale watatu walinyanyuka na kutoka nje. Waliporudi Ukegbu akamrudishia Obierika lile furushi la fimbo. Alizihesabu, - badala ya

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there were now only fifteen. He passed them over to his eldest brother, Machi, who also counted them and said: "We had not thought to go below thirty. But as the dog said, 'If I fall down for you and you fall down for me, it is play'. Marriage should be a play and not a fight so we are falling down again." He then added ten sticks to the fifteen and gave the bundle to Ukegbu.

In this way Akuke's bride-price was finally settled at twenty bags of cowries. It was already dusk when the two parties came to this agreement.

"Go and tell Akueke's mother that we have finished," Obierika said to his son, Maduka. Almost immediately the women came in with a big bowl of foo-foo. Obierika's second wife followed with a pot of soup, and Maduka brought in a pot of palm-wine. As the men ate and drank palm-wine they talked about the customs of their neighbours.

"It was only this morning," said Obierika, "that Okonkwo and I

thelathini kulikuwa na kumi na tano tu. Alizipitisha kwa kaka yake mkubwa, Machi, ambaye naye alizihesabu na akasema: "Hatukuwa tumefikiri kuwa chini ya thelathini. cheza' Ndoa inapaswa kuwa mchezo na sio kupigana kwa hivyo tunaanguka tena." Kisha akaongeza vijiti kumi kwa wale kumi na tano na akampa Ukegbu.

Kwa njia hii mahari ya Akuke hatimaye iliwekwa kwenye mifuko ishirini ya ng'ombe. Ilikuwa tayari jioni wakati pande hizo mbili zilifikia makubaliano haya.

"Nenda ukamwambie mama Akueke kuwa tumemaliza," Obierika alimwambia mtoto wake, Maduka. Mara moja wanawake waliingia na bakuli kubwa la foo-foo. Mke wa pili wa Obierika alifuata sufuria ya supu, na Maduka akaleta chungu cha mvinyo.

Watu hao walipokuwa wakila na kunywa divai ya mitende walizungumza kuhusu desturi za majirani zao.

"Ilikuwa ni asubuhi hii tu," alisema Obierika, "ambapo

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were talking about Abame and Aninta, where titled men climb trees and pound foo-foo for their wives."

"All their customs are upside-down. They do not decide bride-price as we do, with sticks. They haggle and bargain as if they were buying a goat or a cow in the market."

"That is very bad," said Obierika's eldest brother. "But what is good in one place is bad in another place. In Umunso they do not bargain at all, not even with broomsticks. The suitor just goes on bringing bags of cowries until his in-laws tell him to stop. It is a bad custom because it always leads to a quarrel."

"The world is large," said Okonkwo. "I have even heard that in some tribes a man's children belong to his wife and her family."

"That cannot be," said Machi.

"You might as well say that the woman lies on top of the man when they are making the children."

"It is like the story of white men who, they say, are white like this piece of chalk," said Obierika. He

Okonkwo na mimi tulikuwa tunazungumza kuhusu Abame na Aninta, ambapo wanaume wenye majina hupanda miti na kuwapiga foo-foo kwa ajili ya wake zao."

"Mila zao zote ni za juu chini. Hawaamui mahari kama sisi, kwa vijiti. Wanahaha na kujadiliana kana kwamba wananunua mbuzi au ng'ombe sokoni."

"Hiyo ni mbaya sana," kaka mkubwa wa Obierika alisema. "Lakini kilicho kizuri sehemu moja ni kibaya sehemu nyingine, huko Umunso hawapigii hata kidogo hata na mifagio. desturi mbaya kwa sababu daima husababisha ugomvi."

"Dunia ni kubwa," Okonkwo alisema. "Nimesikia hata katika baadhi ya makabila watoto wa mtu ni wa mke wake na familia yake."

"Hiyo haiwezi kuwa," Machi alisema. "Unaweza pia kusema kwamba mwanamke analala juu ya mwanamume wakati wanatengeneza watoto."

"Ni kama hadithi ya wazungu ambao, wanasema, ni weupe kama kipande hiki cha chaki," Obierika

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held up a piece of chalk, which every man kept in his obi and with which his guests drew lines on the floor before they ate kola nuts.

"And these white men, they say, have no toes."

"And have you never seen them?" asked Machi. "Have you?" asked Obierika.

"One of them passes here frequently," said Machi. "His name is Amadi."

Those who knew Amadi laughed. He was a leper, and the polite name for leprosy was "the white skin."

alisema. Aliinua kipande cha chaki, ambayo kila mtu aliweka kwenye obi yake na ambayo wageni wake walichora mistari kwenye sakafu kabla ya kula njugu za kola. "Na hawa wazungu, wanasema, hawana vidole."

"Na hujawahi kuwaona?" aliuliza Machi. "Je! aliuliza Obierika."

"Mmoja wao hupita hapa mara kwa mara," alisema Machi.

"Anaitwa Amadi."

Waliomjua Amadi wakacheka. Alikuwa mwenye ukoma, na jina la heshima la ukoma lilikuwa "ngozi nyeupe."

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