

About the Author: Chinua Achebe (1930-2013)

Chinua Achebe, who has died aged 82, was Africa's best known novelist and the founder father of African fiction. The publication of his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, in 1958 not only contested European narratives about Africans but also challenged traditional assumptions about the form and function of the novel.

Born Albert Chinualumogo Achebe, Chinua Achebe was raised by Christian evangelical parents in the large village Ogidi, in Igboland, Eastern Nigeria. He received early education in English, but grew up surrounded by the complex fusion of Igbo traditions and the colonial legacy. He studied literature and medicine at the University of Ibadan; after graduating, he went to work for the Nigerian Broadcasting Company in Lagos. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) was his first novel. It has been translated into at least forty-five languages, and has sold eight million copies worldwide.

Starting in the 1950s, Achebe was central to a new Nigerian literary movement that drew on the oral traditions of Nigeria's indigenous tribes. Although Achebe writes in English, he attempts to incorporate Igbo vocabulary and narratives. Other novels include: *No Longer At Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), and *A Man of the People* (1966).

Achebe left his career in radio in 1966, during the national unrest and violence that led to the Biafran War. He narrowly escaped harm at the hands of soldiers who believed that his novel, *A Man of the People*, implicated him in the country's first military coup. He began an academic career the next year, taking a position as Senior Research Fellow at the University of Nigeria. That same year, he co-founded a publishing company with Nigerian poet Christopher Okigbo. In 1971, he became an editor for *Okike*, a prestigious Nigerian literary magazine. He founded *Iwandi Ibo* in 1984; this bilingual publication was dedicated to Igbo cultural life. He was made Emeritus Professor at the University of Nigeria in 1985. He has taught at the University of Massachusetts and the University of Connecticut, and he has received over twenty honorary doctorates from universities around the world. He received Nigeria's highest honor for intellectual achievement, the Nigerian National Merit Award, in 1987. His novel *Anthills of the Savannah* was short listed for the Booker McConnell Prize that same year. Achebe has been active in Nigerian politics since the 1960s. Many of his novels deal with the social and political problems facing his country, including the difficulty of the post-colonial legacy.

He is survived by Christie, their daughters, Chinelo and Nwando, and their sons, Ikechukwu and Chidi. Chinua Achebe was born on November 16, 1930 and died March 21, 2013.

About the Novel - Things Fall Apart

Chinua Achebe's college work sharpened his interest in indigenous Nigerian cultures. He had grown up in Ogidi, a large village in Nigeria. His father taught at the missionary school, and Achebe witnessed firsthand the complex mix of benefit and catastrophe that the Christian religion had brought to the Igbo people. In the 1950s, an exciting new literary movement grew in strength. Drawing on indigenous Nigerian oral traditions, this movement enriched European literary forms in hopes of creating a new literature, in English but unmistakably African. Published in 1958, *Things Fall Apart* is one of the masterpieces of 20th century African fiction.

Things Fall Apart is set in the 1890s, during the coming of the white man to Nigeria. In part, the novel is a response and antidote to a large tradition of European literature in which Africans are depicted as primitive and mindless savages. The attitudes present in colonial literature are so ingrained into our perception of Africa that the District Commissioner, who appears at the end of the novel, strikes a chord of familiarity with most readers. He is arrogant, dismissive of African "savages," and totally ignorant of the complexity and richness of Igbo life. Yet his attitude echoes so much of the depiction of Africa; this attitude, following Achebe's depiction of the Igbo, seems hollow and savage.

Digression is one of Achebe's most important tools. Although the novel's central story is the tragedy of Okonkwo, Achebe takes any opportunity he can to digress and relate anecdotes and tertiary incidents. The novel is part documentary, but the liveliness of Achebe's narrative protects the book from reading like an anthropology text. We are allowed to see the Igbo through their own eyes, as they celebrate the various rituals and holidays that mark important moments in the year and in the people's life.

Achebe depicts the Igbo as a people with great social institutions. Their culture is rich and impressively civilized, with traditions and laws that place great emphasis on justice and fairness. The people are ruled not by a king or chief but by a kind of simple democracy, in which all males gather and make decisions by consensus. Ironically, it is the Europeans, who often boast of bringing democratic institutions to the rest of the world, who try to suppress these clan meetings in Umuofia. The Igbo also boast a high degree of social mobility. Men are not judged by the wealth of their fathers, and Achebe emphasizes that high rank is attainable for all freeborn Igbo.

He does not shy from depicting the injustices of Igbo society. No more or less than Victorian England of the same era, the Igbo are deeply patriarchal. They also have a great fear of twins, who are abandoned immediately after birth to a death by exposure. Violence is not unknown to them, although warfare on a European scale is something of which they have no comprehension. The novel attempts to repair some of the damage done by earlier European depictions of Africans. But this recuperation must necessarily come in the form of memory; by the time Achebe was born, the coming of the white man had already destroyed many aspects of indigenous culture.

Plot summary of Things Fall Apart



Although Okonkwo's father was a lazy man who earned no titles in the Ibo tribe, Okonkwo was a great man in his home of Umuofia, a group of nine villages in Nigeria. Okonkwo despised his father and does everything he can to be nothing like him. As a young man, Okonkwo began building his social status by defeating a great wrestler, propelling him into society's eye. He is hard-working and shows no weakness—emotional or otherwise—to anyone. Although brusque with his family and neighbors, he is wealthy, courageous, and powerful among his village. He is a leader of his village, and this place in society is what he has striven for his entire life.

Because of his great esteem in the village, Okonkwo is selected by the elders to be the guardian of Ikemefuna, a boy taken prisoner by the tribe as a peace settlement between two villages. Ikemefuna is to stay with Okonkwo until the Oracle instructs the elders on what to do with the boy. For three years the boy lives with Okonkwo's family and they grow fond of him, he even considers Okonkwo his father. Then the elders decide that the boy must be killed, and the oldest man in the village warns Okonkwo to have nothing to do with the murder because it would be like killing his own child. Rather than seem weak and feminine to the other men of the tribe, Okonkwo helps to kill the boy despite the warning from the old man.

Shortly after Ikemefuna's death, things begin to go wrong for Okonkwo and when he accidentally kills someone at a ritual funeral ceremony, he and his family are sent into exile for seven years to appease the gods he has offended with the murder. While Okonkwo is away in exile, white men begin coming to Umuofia and they peacefully introduce their religion. As the number of converts increases, the foothold of the white people grows beyond their religion and a new government is introduced.

Okonkwo returns to his village after his exile to find it a changed place because of the presence of the white man. He and other tribal leaders try to reclaim their hold on their native land by destroying a local Christian church that has insulted their gods and religion. In return, the leader of the white government takes them prisoner and holds them for ransom for a short while, further humiliating and insulting the native leaders. The people of Umuofia finally gather for what could be a great uprising, and when some messengers of the white government try to stop their meeting, Okonkwo kills one of them. He realizes with despair that the people of Umuofia are not going to fight to protect themselves because they let the other messengers escape and so all is lost for the Ibo tribe. He also decides never to let the whites imprison him. When the local leader of the white government comes to Okonkwo's house to take him to court, he finds that Okonkwo has hanged himself, ruining his great reputation as it is strictly against the custom of the tribe to kill oneself.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1 – Okonkwo’s Childhood

Okonkwo is a self-made man, known for his personal achievements and his heroic feat at age 18 of throwing Amalinze the Cat, a famous wrestler from another village who had gone unbeaten for seven years. Okonkwo is a sleek, powerful man who gets violent when angry. He has a constant desire to prove himself because he is the son of an unsuccessful man: Unoka, a lazy and improvident palm-wine drinker and flute-payer in debt to most of the village. Unoka's band was famous in the area, and he found a spiritual joy in music, but very poor and his wife and children had barely enough to eat. When a friend named Okoye once came to ask back money that Unoka had borrowed, Unoka laughed and refused, shamelessly showing him his huge pile of debt. When Unoka finally died, Unoka was heavily in debt and had taken no titles (people pay for the honor of getting certain titles in this village, which is called Umuofia.) His son Okonkwo therefore had to prove his own worth, which he did by becoming the greatest wrestler in nine villages, marrying three wives, farming successfully, showing prowess in war and taking two tribal titles. Okonkwo is now one of the greatest men of his time, due entirely to his own achievement: **“As the elders said, if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings.”**

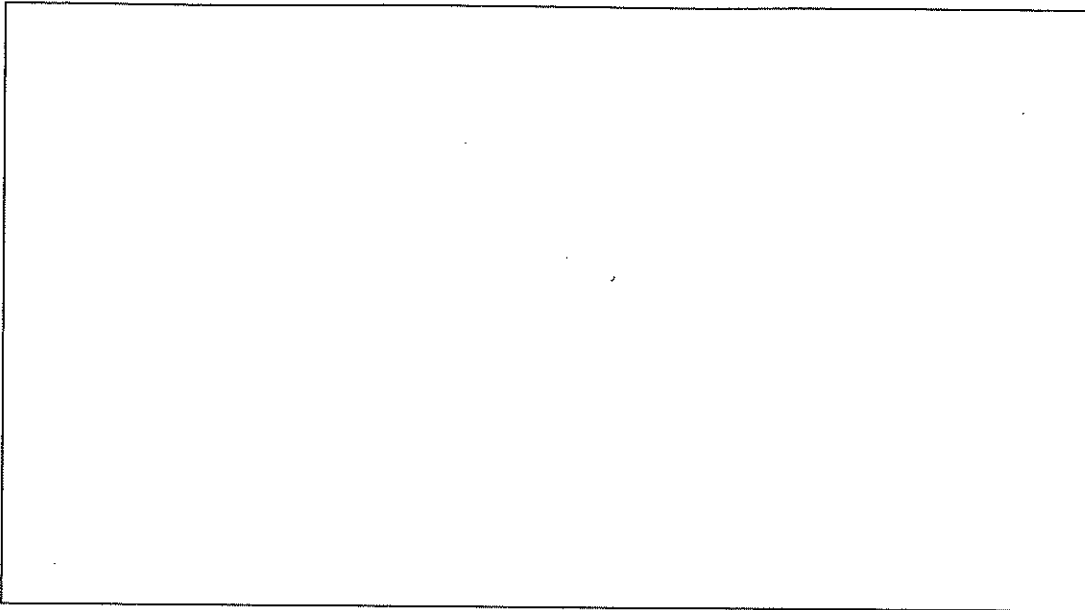
Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words:

- fame : _____
- achievements: _____
- honour : _____
- wrestler : _____
- fiercest : _____
- pounce : _____
- mournful : _____
- dazzling : _____
- proverbs : _____
- cowries : _____
- debt : _____
- prowess : _____
- bloodshed : _____
- ill-fated : _____
- doomed : _____
- egwugwu* : _____
- ekwe* : _____
- udu* : _____
- ogene* : _____

Questions

1. Draw a sketch of Okonkwo as described in this chapter.



2. What were two achievements of Okonkwo that gained him status in Umuofia?

3. What were the ways in which Okonkwo differed in the ways of his father?

4. Who is :

a. Amalinze : _____

b. Unoka : _____

5. Why was Unoka not given a proper burial?

CHAPTER 2 – Coming of Ikemefuna

Okonkwo is about to fall asleep when he hears the town crier call a meeting. After the call, the night is dark and silent and feels dangerous, unlike other moonlit nights when children play and lovers find a secluded spot. Okonkwo wonders if there has been a challenge from another village—he is a fearless warrior who has brought back five human heads from wars and drinks palm wine from his first skull on great occasions. At the town meeting the next day, it turns out that people from the neighboring village of Mbaino killed a Umuofia woman when she went to market at their town. Okonkwo's village democratically decides to send an ultimatum to Mbaino offering them a choice between war or giving up a young man and a virgin as compensation. The village of Umuofia is feared in the region because it has a powerful war-medicine, called *agadi-nwayi*, whose active principle is (the spirit of) an old woman with one leg. Since Umuofia is proposing a just war—one that the Oracle of the Hills and Caves would regard as just—this dreaded *agadi-nwayi* would fight for them and most surrounding villages would not want to risk such a war. Okonkwo is chosen as the emissary to Mbaino and returns with the compensation: a youth (fifteen year old Ikemefuna) and a virgin. The village elders give the virgin to the husband of the murdered woman, Ogbuefi Udo, to replace his wife, and ask Okonkwo to look after the boy (Ikemefuna) in his household until they decide what his fate should be.

Okonkwo's household is a harsh place because Okonkwo is desperately afraid of failure and avoids all qualities (such as gentleness and idleness) which once characterized his father. Okonkwo still remembers when a playmate first told him that the word *agbala* means both "woman" and "a man without any title," like his father. He makes everyone in his own family work painfully long hours at farming, particularly his first son Nwoye, who he fears might be lazy. Okonkwo hands the hostage, Ikemefuna, over to his most senior wife that night and orders her to look after him. Ikemefuna is terribly afraid and does not know why he has been taken away or what is happening.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- hollow : _____
instrument : _____
amiss : _____
terror : _____
evil : _____
sinister : _____
uncanny : _____
trill : _____
celebrity : _____

- clenched : _____
- murmur : _____
- shrine : _____
- virgin : _____
- fate : _____
- interim : _____
- failure : _____
- weakness : _____
- intimate : _____
- gentleness : _____
- idleness : _____
- anxiety : _____
- prosperity : _____
- barn : _____
- ancestral : _____
- sacrifices : _____
- stammered : _____
- weep : _____
- agbala* : _____
- obi* : _____
- ndichie* : _____
- agadi-nwayi* : _____

Questions

1. Why was Umuofia respected and feared by all its neighbours?

2. What roles did the oracles and the hills and the names play in the affairs of war?

3. What picture did Achebe create on Okonkwo's family life?

4. What was Okonkwo's attitude towards his son Nwoye?

5. Why did Ikemefuna come to live with Okonkwo and his family?

6. Explain the following as used in this chapter.
"When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk".

7. Describe the village of Umuofia as compared to other villages.

8. Explain the following statement.
"Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand".

9. Who is :

a. Nwoye : _____

b. Ikemefuna : _____

c. Ogbuefi Ezeugo : _____

CHAPTER 3 – Okonkwo’s Struggles

A story is told in Umuofia about Okonkwo’s father, Unoka, and his visit to the Oracle to find out why he always had a miserable harvest. The Oracle is named Agbala and is always consulted in misfortunes. This Oracle lives in a shrine in a cave with an opening just big enough to crawl into on one’s belly, and his priestess stands by the sacred fire and interprets the will of the god. When Unoka arrived there, he began to tell of his bad luck despite sacrificing to the gods, but the priestess interrupted him to scream that he didn’t prosper simply because he was lazy and did not work like a man. Unoka had a bad *chi* or personal god and was ill-fated. He died of “the swelling which is an abomination to the earth goddess”; victims of this disease

were not allowed to die at home and instead were abandoned in the forest, unburied. Unoka took his flute with him when he was led out to die.

Okonkwo was possessed by the fear of his father's shameful life and death. He contracted to work for a wealthy man named Nwakibie, after going through a ritual of breaking a kola nut and drinking palm wine with the man's family. Okonkwo receives 800 yam seeds from Nwakibie in exchange for giving him two thirds of the harvest, and eventually manages to rebuild his father's barn and feed his mother and sisters while share-cropping for Nwakibie. That first year, however, there is first a drought and then a flood, and no farmer has a good crop. Okonkwo nearly despairs, and Unoki offers him words of consoling wisdom which aggravate Okonkwo still more.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- inherit : _____
- misfortune : _____
- consult: _____
- priestess: _____
- proclaimed : _____
- vaguely : _____
- tendrils: _____
- matchet : _____
- hoe : _____
- ill-fated : _____
- abomination : _____
- grave : _____
- goddess: _____
- swelling : _____
- stubborn : _____
- victim : _____
- flute : _____
- prosperous : _____
- contemptible: _____
- shameful : _____
- wealthy : _____
- harvest : _____
- horns : _____
- authority : _____
- womenfolk: _____
- anklet : _____
- moustache : _____
- palm tree : _____
- dregs : _____
- yams : _____
- meagre: _____
- blazing : _____

scorched : _____
withering : _____
tendrils : _____
foresight : _____
consolation: _____
violent : _____
torrents : _____
gorges : _____
luxuriant : _____
miserable : _____
fierce: _____
ailing : _____
chi : _____

Questions

1. What explanation did the priestess of Agbala give to Unoka for his unsuccessful farming?

2. How did Nwakibie help Okonkwo get his start in farming?

3. What was Okonkwo's experience in his first year of independent farming?

4. What does Okonkwo's reaction and attitudes to these experiences tell us about his character?

5. Who is Nwakibie? _____

6. Describe "share-cropping".



Describe The Above Picture

CHAPTER 4 – Week of Peace

Okonkwo can be very harsh to unsuccessful men because he has worked so hard. At an ancestral feast, he is reproved by the entire gathering and encouraged to apologize because he called a man without any titles “*agbala*”—the insulting word which a playmate had once called Okonkwo’s father. Everyone respects the hard work of Okonkwo, however, and give him positions of trust.

The village’s hostage, Ikemefuna, stays in Okonkwo’s household for three years while the elders apparently forget about him. Okonkwo’s wife is very kind to him, but he still misses his family: during the first few weeks, Okonkwo has to threaten him with a stick before he will eat in his new home. Ikemefuna is lively and has clever skills, and becomes very popular, even with Okonkwo, who tries to hide his affection.

That year Okonkwo breaks a holiday called the Week of Peace, which occurs in the carefree season between harvest and planting. His youngest wife, Ojiugo, doesn’t prepare dinner on time and so he beats her when she returns home, forgetting it is the sacred Week of Peace. The neighbors hear, and Ezeani, the priest of the Earth goddess Ani, warns Okonkwo that his sacrilege could harm the harvest and orders him to make a large sacrifice in penitence. Okonkwo sacrifices and repents, but is too proud inwardly to admit to his neighbors that he was wrong, which makes the other villagers think he has no respect for the gods. His offence is a rare and serious one, so they mutter that he was not punished enough.

Okonkwo, his son Nwoye, and Ikemefuna prepare yam seeds for planting. Okonkwo berates them for not being more skilled at the job, especially since yams are a symbol of manliness, even though he knows they are too young to be perfectly skilled at the task. After they plant the rainy season begins, and everyone stays indoors waiting for the crops to grow and the rains to stop. Nwoye and Ikemefuna become extremely close, and Ikemefuna tells Nwoye many stories and vivid folk tales from his home clan.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- poverty : _____
- misfortune : _____
- brusqueness: _____
- kindred : _____
- benevolent : _____
- affection : _____
- strength : _____
- communal : _____
- justifiable : _____
- gigantic : _____

- sacred : _____
- preserve : _____
- clan : _____
- custom : _____
- valediction : _____
- season : _____
- thunder : _____
- maize : _____
- depression : _____
- poignant : _____
- splendour : _____

Questions

1. What did Okonkwo do in a meeting that gained the displeasure of other men?

2. What does this show about his character?

3. How does Okonkwo behave towards Ikemefuna and what causes this attitude to develop?

4. Why did Okonkwo beat his youngest wife?

5. What was the main reason that had brought criticism of Okonkwo from all the people of Umuofia ? _____

6. What does the change in punishment for breaking the week of peace tell us about the people of Umuofia? _____

7. Describe the Week of Peace ? _____

8. Explain the following statement.

"Looking at a king's mouth one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast".

9. Who is :

a. Ezeani : _____

b. Ojiugo : _____

c. Ani : _____

CHAPTER 5 – Feast of the New Yam

The Feast of the New Yam approaches, an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the Earth goddess. Ani is the most important local deity because she is a source of fertility, arbiter of morality, and in close contact with dead ancestors of the clan. The New Yam Festival is the beginning of the new year, and a time of feasting with many guests. Okonkwo has never felt enthusiastic about feasts, however. He would prefer to be working and beats a wife for cutting off leaves from a banana tree then goes hunting to vent his frustration. The beaten wife mutters something about guns that never go off and Okonkwo runs into the room and discharges the gun in her face. Luckily, no-one is hurt and the Yam Festival proceeds.

Ekwefi, the second wife that Okonkwo nearly shot, originally fell in love with him and ran away from her husband to marry him because she adores wrestling. She prepares the evening meal very quickly the next day because the second day of the Yam Festival is a wrestling ceremony, and she and Okonkwo don't want to miss it. She sends her daughter, Ezinma, who is a favorite with her father, to give fire to the most senior wife and to bring her yams for cooking. The other children including little Obiageli who has broken her pot, return from fetching water and everyone eats the evening meal. Each wife brings a separate dish to Okonkwo.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words:

fertility : _____

ultimate : _____

morality: _____

communion : _____

fibrous : _____

calabashes : _____

mortar : _____

patterns : _____

suppressed : _____

anger : _____

architect - person who settles character

- murmured : _____
- dwarf : _____
- twitching : _____
- dutifully : _____
- wrestling : _____
- mournful : _____
- unmistakable : _____
- troublesome : _____
- sway : _____
- pulsation : _____
- persistent: _____
- throbbed : _____
- fond : _____
- drums : _____
- Ibo:* _____
- ilo:* _____

Questions

1. What was Okonkwo's attitude to the joyful preparation for the feast of the new yam?

2. What does this show us about his character? _____

3. What were the circumstances of Ekwefi's attraction to Okonkwo and their subsequent marriage? _____

4. What does the warning and advise that Nwoye's mother gave to Ezinma tell us about the relationship in Okonkwo's family between the various wives and their relationships? _____

5. What is Okonkwo's attitude towards his daughter Ezinma ? _____

6. Why does Okonkwo refuse Ezinma's request to carry his stool to the wrestling match ? _____

7. Who is :
a. Ekwefi : _____

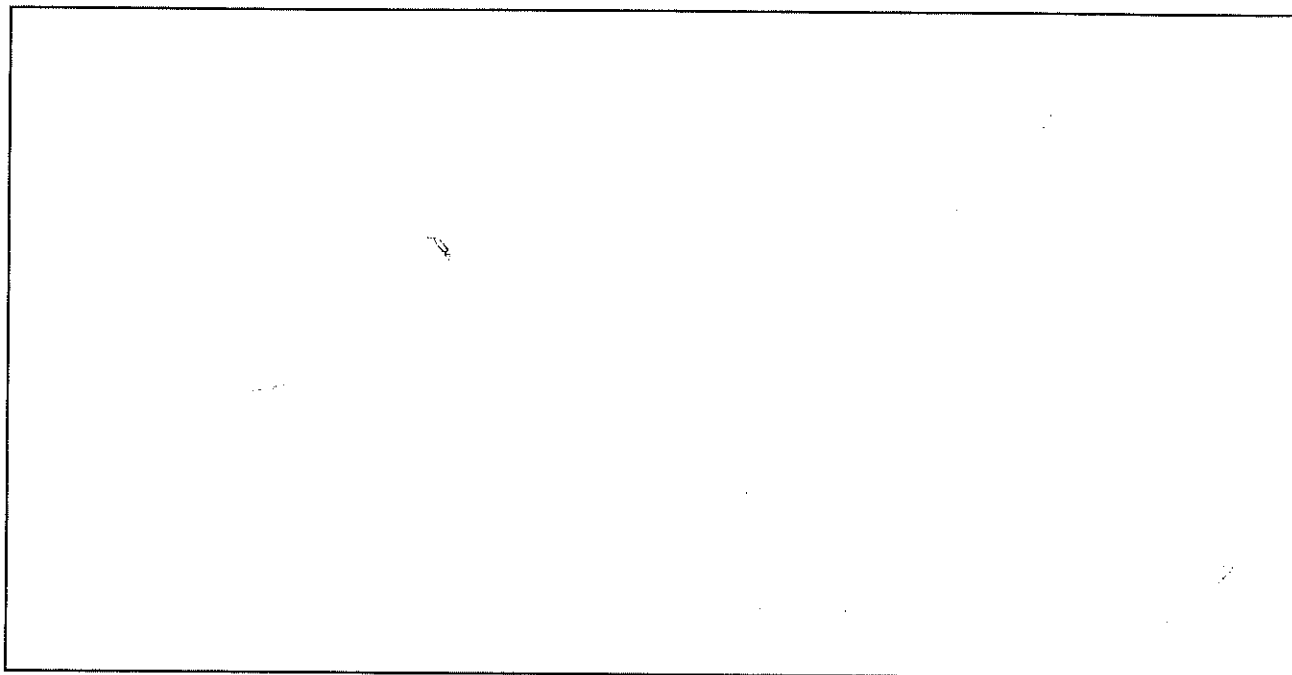
- b. Ezinma : _____

- c. Obiageli : _____

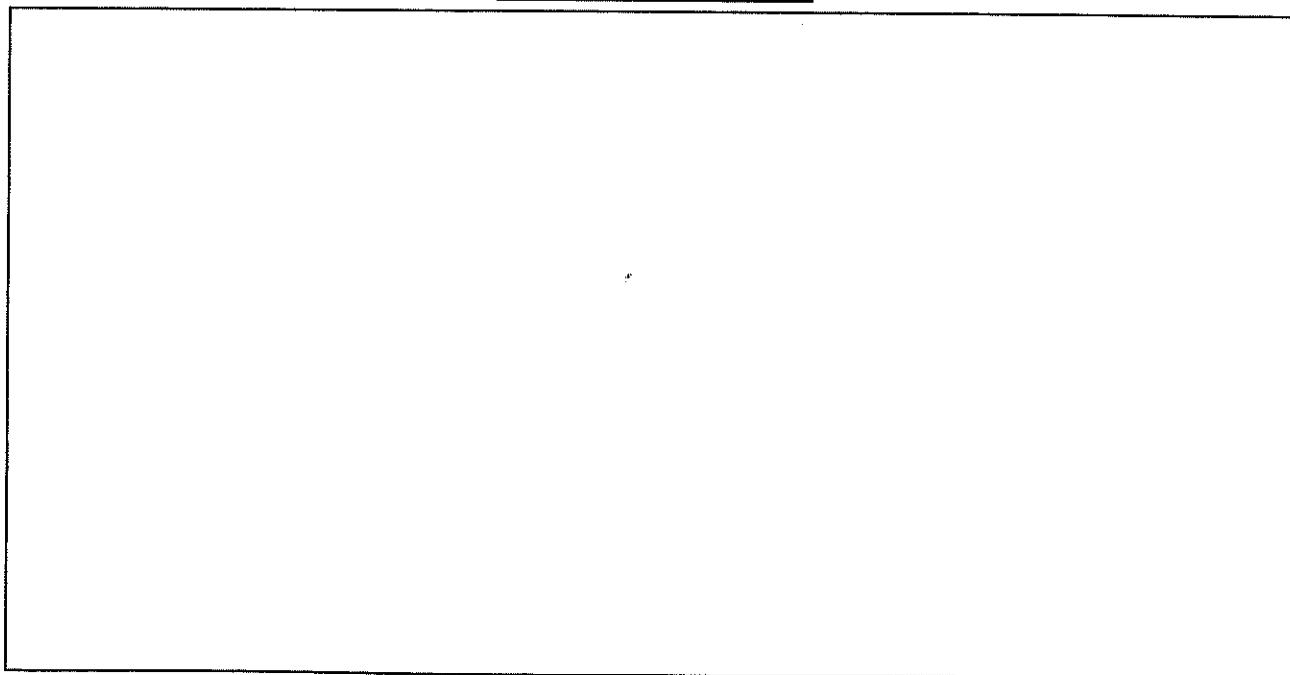
- d. Nkechi : _____

8. Imagine and give an artistic impression of the feasting day and the wrestling match of the New Yam festival.

FEASTING DAY



WRESTLING MATCH



CHAPTER 6 – The Wrestling Contest

The whole village shows up at the *ilo*, or playground, which has been transformed into a circular wrestling arena with a few wood bleachers. Most people stand and listen to the intoxicating rhythms of the drummers, who are possessed by the spirit of the drums. Eventually the two wrestling teams dance into the ring and opening bouts commence between young boys. On the sidelines, Ekwefi (Okonkwo's second wife) has a conversation with her friend Chielo, the priestess of the Oracle, who is fond of Ezinma and says she thinks Ezinma will survive to adulthood.

The wrestling teams face each other across the ring, twelve to a side. Young men dance out one-by-one to challenge a person from the other side, and wrestle. There are two judges. The last match is between the leader of the teams, who are very evenly matched. Their contest is fierce, until one miscalculates and the other, Okafo, wins. His supporters sing a song in his praise.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

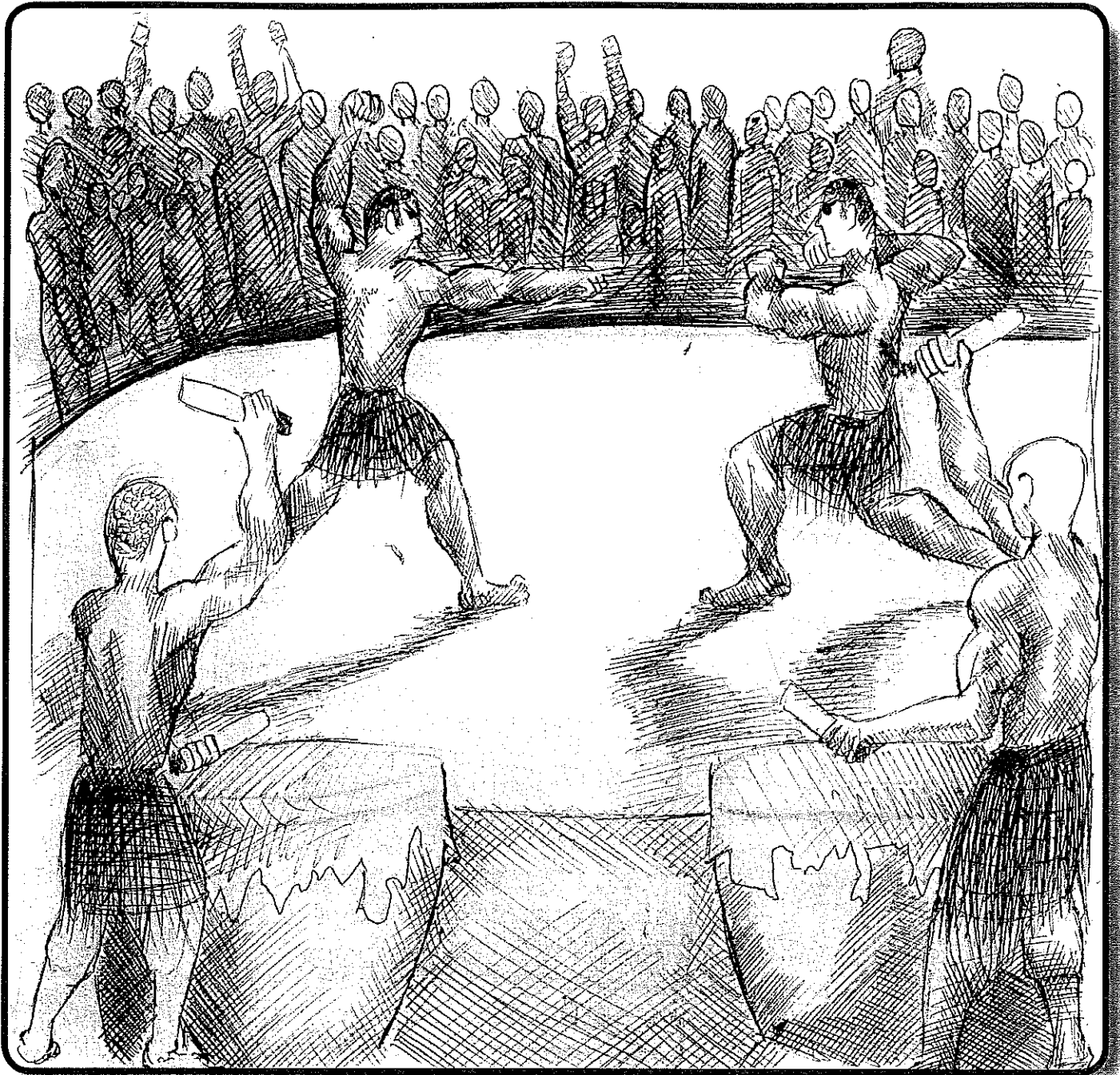
- grandees : _____
 drummers : _____
 feverishly : _____
 possessed: _____
 frenzy : _____
 intoxicating : _____
 sensation: _____
 victorious : _____
 ordinary : _____
 prophesied : _____
 tightened : _____
 frantic : _____
 disembodied: _____
 miscalculation : _____

Questions

1. What occurred during the young wrestlers match that surprised the audience? _____

2. What themes do Okonkwo's reaction to this and him being a member of the audience suggest? _____

3. What does Ekwefi mean when she says that she prays that her daughter will stay? _____



Describe The Above Picture

4. What does this suggest about Ekwefi's experience of motherhood? _____

5. Who is :
- a. Maduka : _____

- b. Chielo : _____

CHAPTER 7 – Sacrifice of Ikemefuna

Ikemefuna has lived in Okonkwo's household for three years, and has had a very positive influence on Nwoye—the younger boy is now much more masculine, and feigns grumbling but is inwardly delighted when asked to do difficult masculine tasks such as chop wood for one of Okonkwo's wives. Okonkwo is very pleased at the change, since he sees it as of key importance to be able to control women-folk. He encourages the boys to sit in his *obi* or hut as he tells them masculine stories of violence, bloodshed, and local history. Nwoye knows it is important to be a man but secretly prefers his mother's stories—particularly one of a quarrel between the Earth and Sky in which a Vulture is sent to plead for rain from the Sky with a song of suffering of the sons of men.

That year the locusts descend on the village while Okonkwo and the boys are working in the fields. Everyone feels joy because it is a sight full of power and beauty—only the oldest in the village can remember the last time the locusts came. When dew falls and wets the insects' wings, everyone goes out to catch locusts by the dozen and roast and eat them. Some days later, while Okonkwo is happily crunching a locust, the respected elder Ogbuefi Ezeudu comes to the hut and asks to have a word with Okonkwo outside. He warns Okonkwo that the Oracle has decided that Ikemefuna must be killed, and tells Okonkwo not to have a hand in it because the boy calls him father.

The next day a group of elders visit Okonkwo. He tells Ikemefuna he is to be taken home the next day, and Nwoye bursts into tears. Ikemefuna can barely remember his home, but has a bad premonition. A procession of finely dressed men with sheathed machetes arrive from the village, and Okonkwo and Ikemefuna join them. Ikemefuna carries a jar of palm-wine on his head; and the men have him walk in the middle. Ikemefuna's mind wanders to his original family. The men discourage him from glancing behind his shoulder, and he grows afraid. Finally, a villager cuts him down from behind with a machete. He runs to Okonkwo, shouting, "My father, they have killed me," and Okonkwo delivers the final blow, dazed and afraid of being thought weak.

When Okonkwo walks in that night, Nwoye knows that Ikemefuna is dead, and something snaps inside him.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- absorbed : _____
- kindled: _____
- masculine : _____
- feign: _____
- annoyance : _____
- vulture : _____
- locusts : _____
- stunted : _____
- haze : _____
- horizon : _____
- tremendous : _____
- boundless : _____
- instinct : _____
- swarm : _____
- harmattan : _____
- sheathed : _____
- effeminate : _____
- elusive : _____
- chill : _____
- descended : _____
- Chukwu : _____

Questions

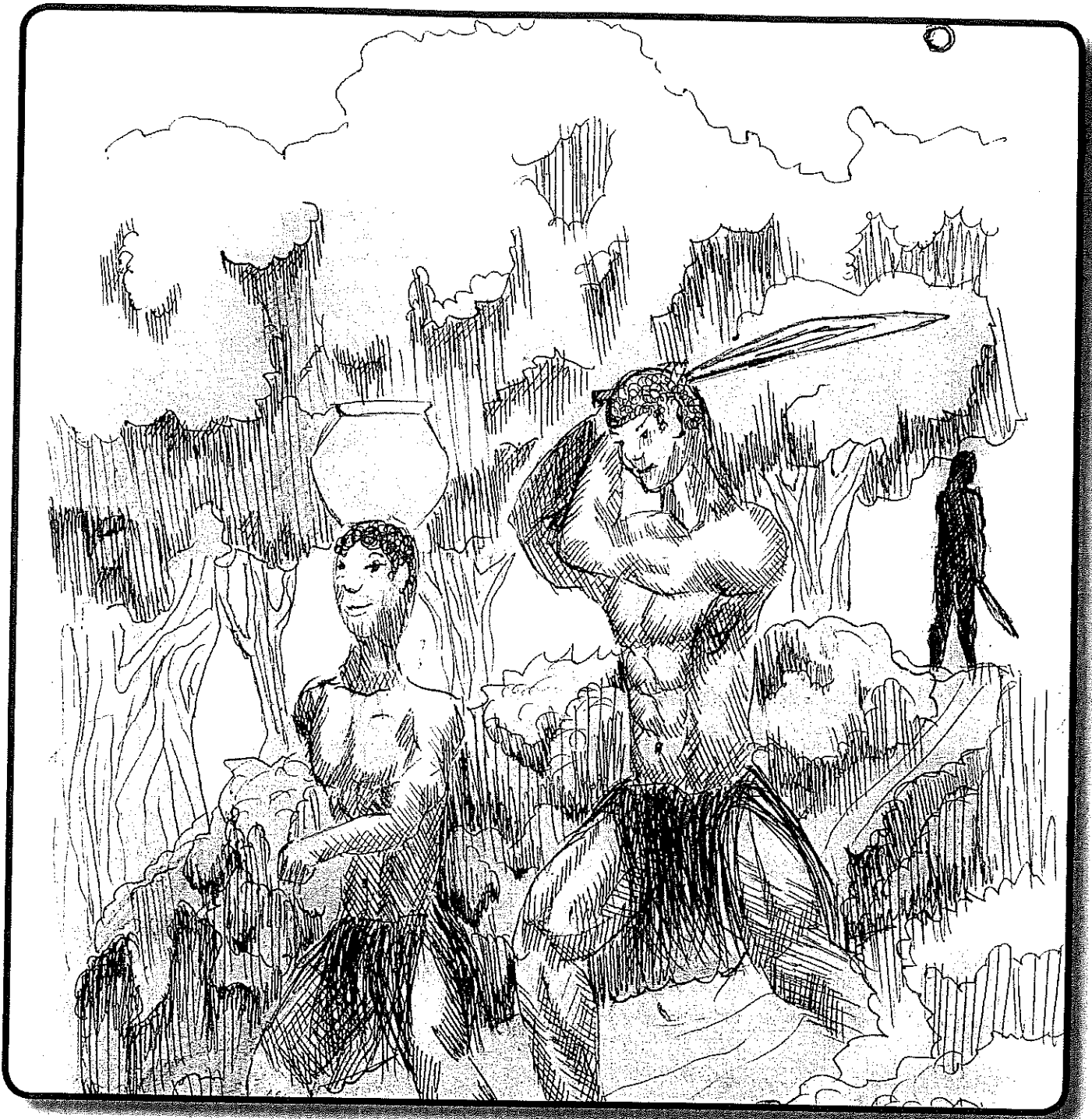
1. What hope did Okonkwo have for his son Nwoye? _____

2. What were the difference in subject matter and themes of the stories told by men and women? _____

3. What does the reaction of the Ibo people to the arrival of the locusts tell us about the attitude to life? _____

4. Why did Okonkwo go on the expedition with the men who killed Ikemefuna? _____

5. Describe the scene of the killing of Ikemefuna. _____



Describe The Above Picture

6. Explain the following statement.
"That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death".

7. Who is :
a. Ogbuefi Ezeudu : _____

CHAPTER 8 – Okonkwo’s grief and Bride price negotiation

Okonkwo does not eat for the next two days—all he does is drink palm wine. He can’t sleep at night, and Nwoye is scared of him and slips away from his father’s *obi*. Finally Ezinma brings him food and his snuff equipment. He thinks to himself several times that she should have been a boy. Okonkwo wishes he could work to distract himself, but it’s the wrong season so he goes to visit his friend Obierika instead. At first he talks about his worry that Nwoye is not manly enough, but then they reach the subject of Ikemefuna, and his friend tells him that killing the boy who called him father displeases the Earth. In the middle of their conversation, a third man rushes in to tell the of the death of an old man in the neighboring village, and the immediate, apparently self-willed, death of his oldest wife right after she paid her last respects to her husband.

Okonkwo begins to feel better thanks to the change of subject, and decides to go tap some of his palm trees. Obierika reminds him to come to the bride-price negotiations for his daughter that evening. When Okonkwo returns, the twenty-five year old suitor and his family are there, and Akueke, the ripe young sixteen year old bride, is summoned to bring kola nuts to the men. She shakes hands, then leaves to help her mother cook, and there is an erotic description of her removing her waist beads so that they don’t fall in the fire. Back in the men’s hut, the suitor’s father and Obierika use a bundle of broomsticks to negotiate a price of twenty cowries for Akueke. Then they tell jokes, including one that involves punning the word for “white man” with “leper.”

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- dozing : _____
drunken : _____
plantain : _____
nostrils : _____
suitor : _____
resemble : _____
impregnate : _____

- manliness : _____
- dispute : _____
- threshold : _____
- forbidden : _____
- coiffure : _____
- succulent : _____
- breasts : _____
- foam : _____
- manliness : _____
- leper : _____
- leprosy : _____
- bride-price : _____
- jigida : _____

Questions

1. What was Okonkwo's immediate reaction to his participation in Ikemefuna's death?

 2. What was the difference between Obierika's and Okonkwo's reaction to the oracle's demand that Ikemefuna should die?

 3. Why were the village drums not beaten immediately after Ndulu's death?

 4. What insight does the bride-price negotiations give us about Ibo culture and relationships?

- Who is :
- a. Obierika : _____

 - b. Akueke : _____

6. Explain the following statement as used in the chapter.
"A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches".

7. Explain the following statement as used in the chapter.
"When mother-cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth".

CHAPTER 9 – Ekwefi's struggles and fears

That night Okonkwo is able to sleep, and begins to wonder why he had been uneasy before. The next morning Ekwefi pounds on his door to say that Ezinma is dying. Okonkwo rushes out to visit her, then to collect medicinal grasses.

Ezinma is an only child and the center of her mother's world. She calls her mother by her first name and is secretly fed eggs, a delicacy that children are almost never given because it's believed it might encourage them to steal. Ekwefi has buried nine children, and her despair found expression in some of the names she gave them: *Onwumbiko* ("Death, I implore you"), *Ozoemena* ("May it not happen again"), *Onwuma* ("Death may please himself"). The medicine man even determined that she had an *ogbanje*, one of those wicked children who die so as to enter their mothers' wombs to be born again. He dragged one child's dead body to the Evil Forest to discourage the spirit. When other wives had children, Ekwefi would be depressed. When Ezinma was born, she was listless until Ezinma was four or five, and seemed to be a survivor. Then Ekwefi became loving and anxious.

When Ezinma is old enough, the medicine man digs up Ezinma's *iyi-uwa*, a charm associated with her *ogbanje* status, by putting her in a trance and making her lead him to it. The medicine man digs for a long time at the spot she indicates, and finally turns up a rag with a shiny round pebble in it, which Ezinma admits is hers. She has been well for a year since then; this is the first time she has become sick.

Okonkwo brings back the herbs, tells Ekwefi to start a boiling pot of water, throws the medicinal plants in, and puts Ezinma astride the pot on a stool. He covers her with a mat and makes her stay there until she is drenched in sweat and falls asleep in her mother's bed.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- uneasy : _____
- daylight : _____
- wailing : _____
- humiliated : _____
- roused : _____
- audacity : _____
- shivering: _____
- tragedy : _____
- tempted : _____

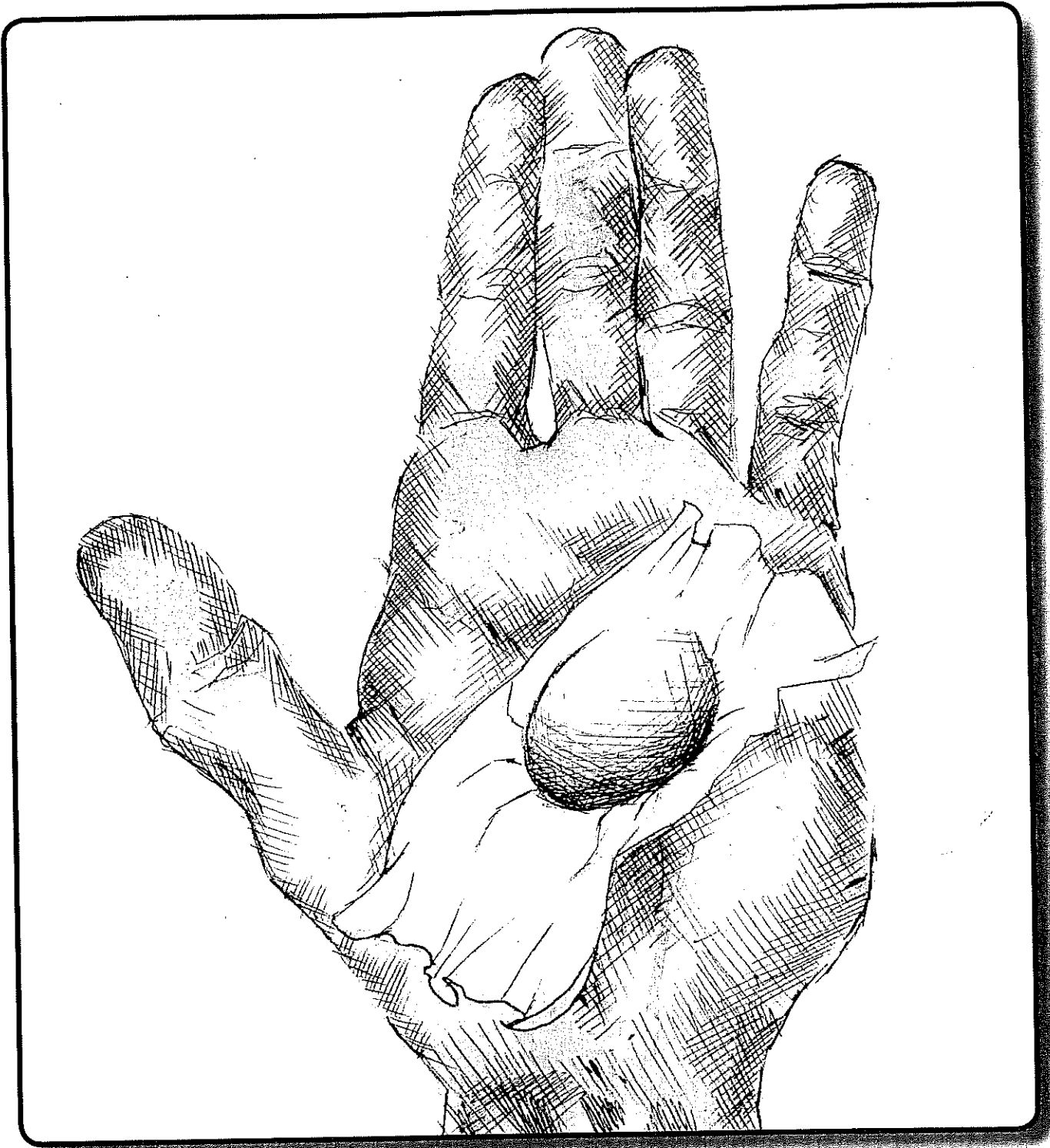
- keener : _____
- borne : _____
- infancy : _____
- resignation: _____
- agony : _____
- devoid : _____
- pathetic : _____
- implore : _____
- tormentor : _____
- complexion : _____
- gnashed: _____
- mourn: _____
- coincidence : _____
- mutilate : _____
- slaughtered : _____
- bitter : _____
- malevolence: _____
- resignation : _____
- bubbled: _____
- pebble: _____
- sprightly : _____
- rumbling : _____
- pit : _____
- agility : _____
- medicinal : _____
- proportions : _____
- choking: _____
- overpowering: _____
- perspiration: _____
- iba* : _____
- Nne* : _____
- ogbanje* : _____
- iyi-uwa* : _____

Questions

1. What further details does Achebe give us about Ekwefi and her marriage? _____

2. What does Ekwefi's various attempts to overcome the problems tell us about Ibo culture and beliefs? _____

3. What do you learn from Ezinma during the search for her *iyi-uwa*? _____



Describe The Above Picture

4. What does Okonkwo's action in bringing leaves and herbs for Ekwefi to boil for Ezinma tell us about Okonkwo? _____

5. What is an *ogbanje*? _____

6. Who is :
a. Okagbue : _____

CHAPTER 10 – Settling of disputes

Crowds begin to gather on the village field for a ceremony. From the way they stand and sit, it's clearly a ceremony for men—and there are two parties involved: Mgbafo and her brothers in one group, and Mgbafo's husband and two relatives in the other. An iron gong sounds and drum and flute music begins. The voices of the *egwugwu*, or ritual dancers, are guttural and awesome: the spirits of the ancestors are emerging from the ground and into the *egwugwu* house, a sacred place where no woman has ever set foot. Nine *egwugwu* appear as masked spirits, representing the nine villages in the clan, and dance wildly. Okonkwo is probably the second dancer. Once the spirits have greeted the heads of the quarreling parties, a hearing begins. Mgbafo's husband apparently beat her without mercy and even when she was pregnant, so her family has removed her from her husband's house. Because she's gone, the husband, Uzowulu, now wants her bride price back. The *egwugwu*'s decision is that if Uzowulu brings wine to his in-laws' house as a peace offering, Mgbafo and her children should return to him and he should behave more moderately.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- communal : _____
- softened : _____
- respectable : _____
- relatives : _____
- gong : _____
- egwugwu* : _____
- guttural : _____
- awesome : _____
- pandemonium : _____
- quavering : _____
- emerged : _____
- esoteric : _____
- imagination : _____
- cult : _____

- shrill : _____
- chaos: _____
- rattling : _____
- agitating : _____
- metallic : _____
- seniority : _____
- springy : _____
- awesome : _____
- hollow : _____
- salute : _____
- restored : _____
- statues : _____
- thunderous : _____
- faggots : _____

Questions

1. Who were the egwugwu's and what did they represent? _____

2. What does the woman's reaction towards the egwugwu tells us about power relationship in Umuofia? _____

3. What dispute was resolved in this chapter in the village square? _____

4. What punishment was given to the husband? _____

5. What does this tell us about the man's attitude to their status and authority? _____

6. Who is :
 - a. Mgbafo : _____

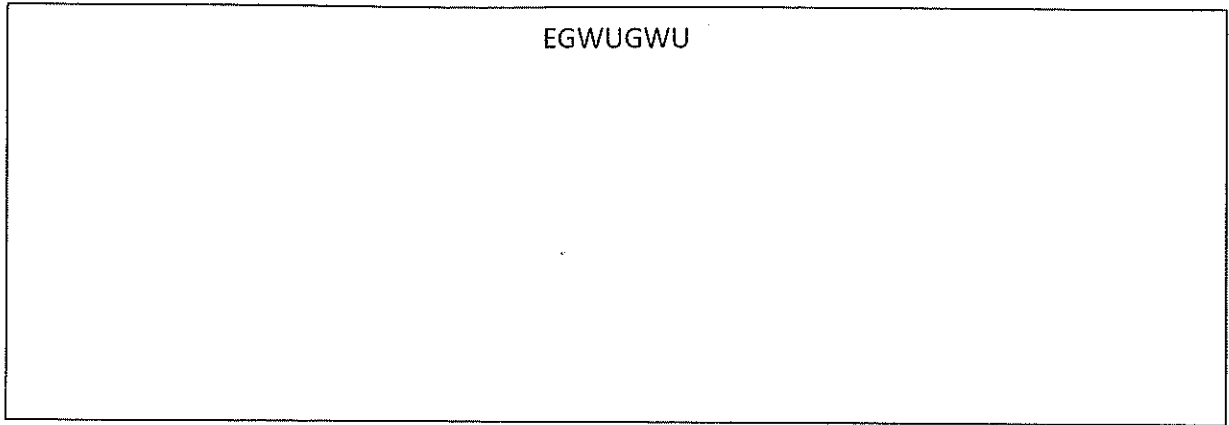
 - b. Uzowulu : _____

 - c. Evil Forest : _____

 - d. Odukwe : _____

7. Who is the second *egwugwu* and how did the women come to know ? _____

8. Draw an *egwugwu* as described in this chapter.



CHAPTER 11 – Fear of the Supernatural

The night is very dark and all four huts in Okonkwo’s compound have an oil lamp burning. Okonkwo is taking his snuff, and all the mothers are telling folk tales to their children. Ekwefi tells one about a tortoise who wished to join the feast of the birds in the sky, and tricks them into letting him eat all their food. Ezinma begins to tell another story, but is interrupted by the sound of Chielo, priestess of the Oracle, crying aloud in the night and demanding to talk to Ezinma. She tells Ekwefi to stay behind, and carries Ezinma on her back to the god’s cave. Ekwefi follows secretly anyway, running behind Chielo. She stays back, but the priestess senses she is being followed by an unknown being and curses her. Chielo takes Ezinma to the common playground of the farthest village, then turns around and heads for the caves. It is a very long journey. When the priestess enters the god’s cave, Ekwefi remains outside but vows to go in and die with Ezinma if her daughter cries out. Near dawn, a man approaches Ekwefi from behind, with a machete. She shrieks, but it is just Okonkwo, and they wait outside the cave together. Ekwefi remembers the day she ran away from her first husband to him, when she just stopped by the hut and he brought her inside to make love. He was as spare of words then as he is now.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- impenetrably : _____
- forsook : _____
- yellowish : _____
- massiveness : _____
- notorious : _____

neighbourhood : _____
saltpetre : _____
snuff : _____
uli : _____
itch : _____
famine : _____
cunning : _____
orator : _____
nodded : _____
delectable: _____
grumbled: _____
high-pitched : _____
prophesying : _____
jerked : _____
cupped : _____
emerged: _____
cracking: _____
chant : _____
gazing : _____
consolation: _____
flapping: _____
seized: _____
muttered : _____
retreat : _____
benumbed : _____
wisdom: _____
gushed: _____
vanished: _____
gratitude: _____
mocked : _____

Questions

1. What does the myth about the tortoise suggest about the woman's attitude to power? _____

2. What could this story symbolize about Okonkwo ? _____

3. What is a possible explanation for Chielo's journey that night with Ezinma? _____

4. What does Ekwefi's action in following Chielo suggests about her character? _____

5. What do we learn about Okonkwo from his actions that night? _____

6. Who is :
- a. Chielo : _____

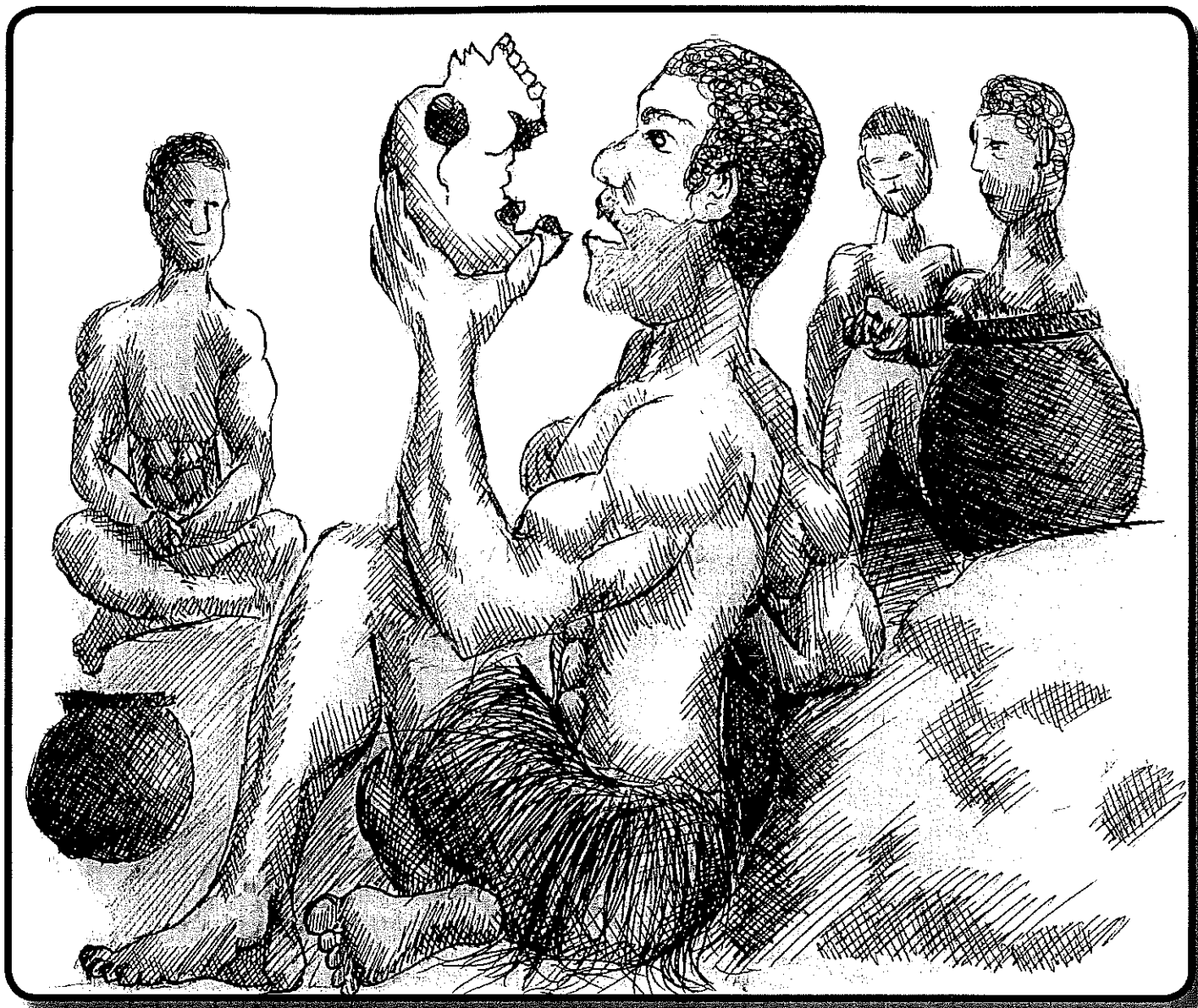
- b. Ezinma: _____

CHAPTER 12 – Ibo Marriage Rituals

The next morning in the village is festive because Okonkwo's friend, Obierika, is celebrating his daughter's *uri*—the day when her suitor brings palm wine for a wide and extensive group of kinsmen in celebration of the betrothal. Okonkwo's other two wives are astir for the festival, but Ekwefi is tired. She had waited with Okonkwo until the priestess crawled out of the hole with Ezinma on her back, walked back to the village, laid Ezinma on Ekwefi's bed, and then went away without saying a word to anyone. Okonkwo's other wives promise to tell Obierika's wife that Ekwefi will be late, as she wants to feed Ezinma. Okonkwo also feels tired—he visited the Oracle's cave four times that night before he found Ekwefi there, and had become gravely worried.

Obierika's compound is very busy because his wife is cooking for the whole village. Everyone chips in to help make the meal. Obierika has gone all the way to the famous market in Umuike to get an enormous goat to offer live to his in-laws, and tells tales about the marketplace. A cow gets loose in someone's field and the women rush off to catch it before it does damage, then return to cooking.

The first two pots of palm-wine arrive in the early afternoon and are presented to the women to enjoy while they cook, and to the bride who is being coiffed. As it gets later, the male relatives arrive and sit down. Finally, the in-laws arrive bearing fifty pots of palm-wine, an honorable amount. The bride, her mother, and a few other women emerge to shake hands with the circle of men, then retire. Obierika breaks a kola nut and proposes the first toast. People eat and drink all evening, and at night the young men sing songs of praise about each of the older men, including Okonkwo. Then the women come out to dance, the bride has a solo dance, and the tired guests troop home.



Describe The Above Picture

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- wore : _____
- hastily : _____
- exhausting : _____
- respectful : _____
- emerged : _____
- gravely : _____
- split : _____
- beckons : _____
- blended : _____
- interruption : _____
- abandoned : _____
- delicate : _____
- coiffure : _____
- suitors: _____
- fisted: _____
- admired : _____
- pot-bearers : _____
- midst: _____
- anklets: _____
- pottage: _____
- tripods: _____
- clan : _____
- prominent: _____

Questions

1. What do we learn about the Ibo marriage customs from this chapter? _____

2. What is humorous in the way Achebe depicts the Umuofia men's discussion as they await the arrival of the suitor and his family ? _____

3. What do we learn about relationship among women from this chapter? _____

4. What was Waiyaki's reaction to the decision that children of pagans cannot continue at Siriana Mission _____

CHAPTER 13 – Okonkwo’s Exile

The *ekwe*, or large drum, wakes everyone by booming out a message before dawn the next day. It is announcing the death of Ezeudu, the priest who had visited Okonkwo before Ikemefuna’s death. Ezeudu was a great man, so the whole clan comes to his funeral. There is wild, violent dancing and many appearances by ancestral spirits as they give him a warrior’s funeral. There is a lot of coming and going between the land of the *egwugwu* or spirits and the land of the living when an old man dies, and Ezeudu had been one of the oldest men in the clan. Since he had taken three titles in his life, an uncommonly high number, he was to be buried after dark with a glowing band to light the ceremony. Before this, however, the dancing reaches a fever pitch and the men fire their guns in a final salute. From the center of the fury there is a cry of agony—the dead man’s sixteen year old son is lying in a pool of his own blood, killed by a piece of iron from Okonkwo’s gun.

Okonkwo must now flee the village, because it is a crime to kill a clansman. Because he did it inadvertently, it is a “female crime,” not a “male crime,” and he can return to the clan after seven years. That night, he puts his most valuable possessions into head loads, Obierika and other friends help him move his yams into Obierika’s barn, and then he and his family flee to Okonkwo’s motherland, a place called Mbanta.

At daybreak, a large crowd of men dressed for war storm Okonkwo’s compound and destroy it. They don’t hate Okonkwo, but they must carry out the justice of the earth goddess and cleanse the land which Okonkwo has polluted. After it is done, Obierika, who participated in the destruction, reflects on why a man should suffer so much for an inadvertent act. He resigns himself to the fact that if they didn’t carry out the goddess’ justice she would loose her wrath on the entire clan.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- hollowed : _____
boomed : _____
shattered : _____
anxiously : _____
rend: _____
wailing: _____
sediment : _____
lamentation : _____
esoteric : _____
dwelt: _____
frenzy : _____
raffia : _____
ancestral: _____
tremulous : _____
restrained : _____
odour: _____
transfixed: _____
unsteadily: _____

corpse: _____
 domain : _____
 transition : _____
 tumult: _____
 befitted: _____
 noble: _____
 brandishing: _____
 tenfold : _____
 leaped : _____
 fearless: _____
 courage: _____
 delirious: _____
 fury: _____
 agony : _____
 horror : _____
 spell: _____
 violent: _____
 stormed: _____
 demolished: _____
 polluted : _____
 inadvertently : _____
 complexities: _____
 decreed: _____

Questions

1. What important community ritual is depicted in this chapter? _____

2. What does it tell you about people's status and power? _____

3. What tragedy happened to Okonkwo during an event in this chapter ? _____

4. Why did Obierika and the other men destroy Okonkwo's property, belonging and home? _____

5. What does Obierika's thoughts at the end of this chapter tell us about him? _____

6. Who is Ezeudu? _____

PART TWO

CHAPTER 14- Okonkwo In His Motherland

Okonkwo is well-received by his kinsmen in Mbanta, and in particular by Uchendu, his mother's younger brother and the current eldest surviving member of the family. Uchendu remembers Okonkwo as a small boy, bringing his mother's body to Uchendu to be buried with her people many years ago. Now Uchendu sees him bringing his three wives and family, and guesses what has happened, but lets Okonkwo wait until the next day to tell the story. Okonkwo is given ground for a new compound and some land to farm. He installs his personal god's shrine, borrows seed-yams from Uchendu's five sons, and once the first rain comes he begins to plant anew. He works hard, but his heart is not really in it because it had been his ambition to become one of the lords of the clan, and that does not seem possible now.

Uchendu sees Okonkwo's depression and decides to speak to him after the final confession ceremony for his youngest son's new marriage has been performed. All of Uchendu's daughters and nieces have showed up for the ceremony, and sit in a circle with the bride at the center. They make the bride swear she is a virgin, and Amikwu, the youngest son, takes her to his hut and makes her his wife.

The following day, Uchendu calls the entire family, including Okonkwo, and publicly explains to Okonkwo the meaning of the common name Nneka, or "Mother is supreme." He tells Okonkwo that every child's most intimate tie is to the mother, which is why women are brought back to their own kinsmen to be buried. He says this means that it is a sin to be sorrowful about living in one's motherland. He tells Okonkwo not to despair, because it is his duty to comfort and support his family, and also because everyone present has a deep sorrow—suffering is the common lot of human beings, and not unique to him.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- kinsmen : _____
- traditional : _____
- motherland : _____
- sacrifices: _____
- symbols : _____
- scorched : _____
- vibrating : _____
- thunder : _____
- combed : _____
- crests: _____
- fantastic: _____
- vague : _____
- chirped: _____
- merrily: _____

vigour: _____
 enthusiasm: _____
 panting : _____
 confession : _____
 expressed: _____
 gnashed: _____
 condemned: _____
 commonest: _____
 supreme : _____
 displeas : _____
 exile: _____
 banished: _____
 begot: _____

Questions

1. What was Uchendu's reaction to Okonkwo's arrival? _____

2. What does Achebe suggest about the culture of Ibo people looking at Uchendu's attitude and actions? _____

3. What do we learn about Okonkwo from his criticism? _____

4. Who is :
 a. Uchendu : _____

CHAPTER 15 – Massacre at Abame

Obierika visits Okonkwo in the second year of his exile, bringing two bags full of cowries. Okonkwo takes him to greet Uchendu, and they talk over a kola nut. Obierika tells them that a neighboring clan, Abame, has been wiped out. A white man visited them on an iron horse, and since their Oracle said he would break their clan and bring destruction, and would be the first of a swarm of white men, the Abame people decided to kill the white man. For a while nothing happened, and they left the iron horse tied to their sacred silk-cotton tree. Then three white men, led by a band of ordinary men, came and saw the iron horse. They came back on market day, surrounded the crowded marketplace, and shot everyone who was there.

The three men feel afraid; they have heard stories of white men who had powerful guns and strong drinks and shipped slaves across the sea, but thought that the stories weren't true.

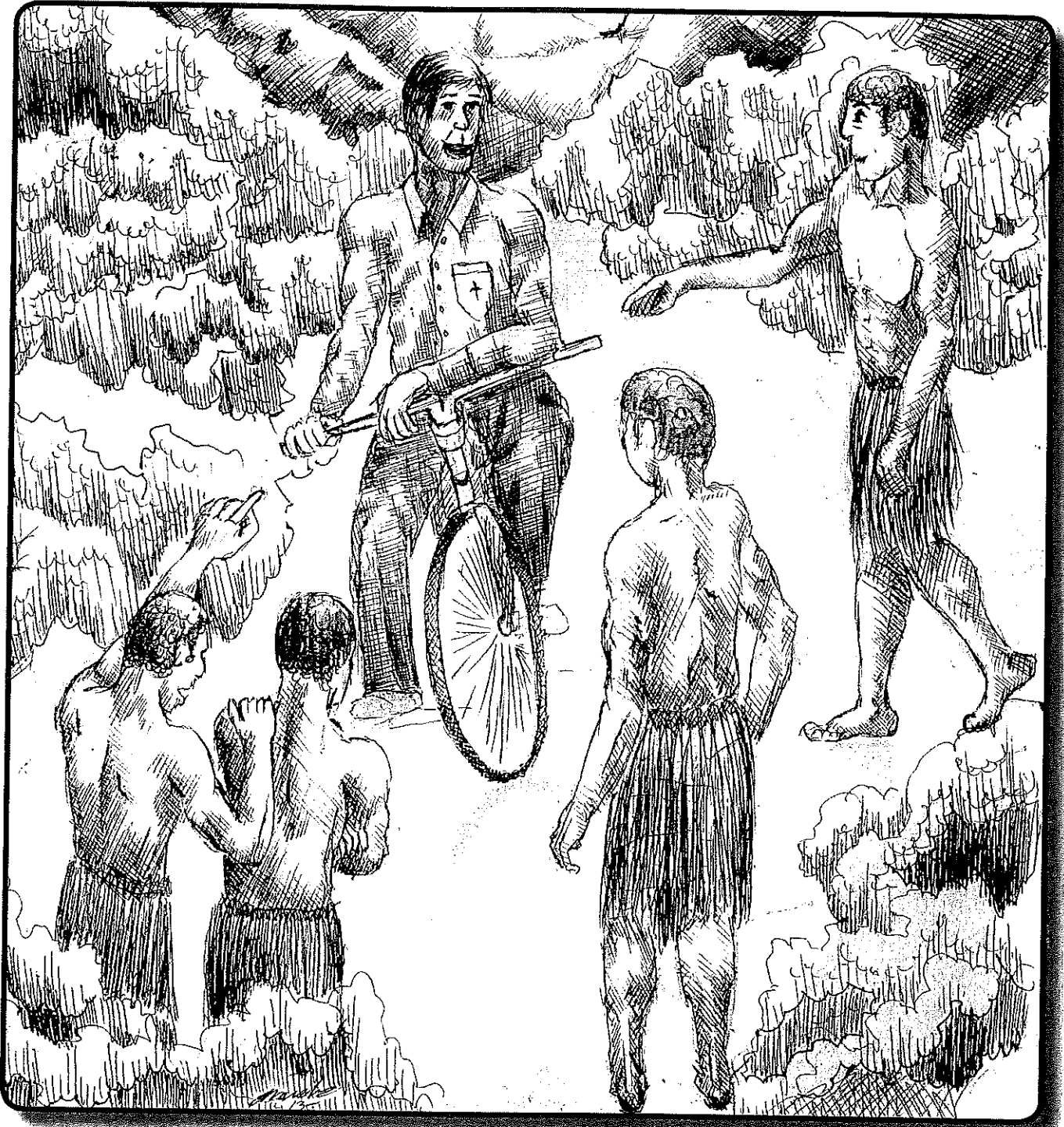
Uchendu says, "There is no story that is not true. The world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others. We have albinos among us. Do you not think that they came to our clan by mistake, that they have strayed from their way to a land where everybody is like them?"

Obierika shares a meal with the family. Obierika explains that the cowries are the money from Okonkwo's yams, and that he will continue to give out the seed-yams to young men and reap profits for Okonkwo, but he wanted to bring this to Okonkwo first just in case something happens to him. For example, he jokes, just in case green men come to the clan and shoot everyone. Okonkwo thanks him deeply.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- cowries : _____
- salute : _____
- turning : _____
- generation : _____
- companions: _____
- beckoning: _____
- fearless: _____
- consulted : _____
- sacred : _____
- locusts: _____
- harbinger : _____
- resembled : _____
- paused : _____
- audibly: _____
- burst: _____
- chi* : _____
- illustrate : _____
- matchets: _____
- albinos : _____
- strayed: _____
- pounded: _____
- greet: _____
- crow: _____
- share-croppers : _____



Describe The Above Picture

Questions

1. What was the practical reason for which Obierika paid a visit to Okonkwo? _____

2. What does this tell us about Obierika and Okonkwo relationship? _____

3. What was the news about Abame? _____

4. Why did Uchendu think that this action of Abame in killing the white men was foolish? _____

CHAPTER 16 – Church in Umuofia

Obierika pays his next visit to Okonkwo two years later. White missionaries have already arrived in Umuofia and have begun converting the *efulefu*, or worthless and weak men in the tribe. Obierika tells Okonkwo that his son Nwoye has been seen among the missionaries. Okonkwo doesn't want to tell the story, so Nwoye's mother does.

A white man showed up in Mbanta with six foreign Africans, including one Ibo man that they can understand even though his dialect is quite different from theirs. He proclaims that they worship false gods of wood and stone and must convert to the true God in order to reach heaven when they die. Then the Christians begin to sing a hymn, which entralls the villagers much more than the speech they had heard. Okonkwo throws the evangelists into confusion by asking them whether this God had a wife, since he had a son. Meanwhile, Nwoye's callow mind is struck by the hymn's image of brothers who sit in darkness and fear. He thinks of Ikemefuna and of abandoned twins crying in the forest, and has sympathy for the new religion.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- converts: _____
circumstances: _____
efulefu : _____
murmur : _____
judgment : _____
kingdom : _____
evangelists: _____
benevolently: _____
thunderbolt : _____
rollicking : _____
evangelism: _____
chords: _____
interpreter: _____
enthralled: _____
shepherd : _____

Questions

1. What developments have taken place in Umuofia in the next visit by Obierka?

2. What news does Obierka bring about Okonkwo's son?

3. Describe Ikemefuna's thoughts about the new religion?

4. Who is an *efulefu*?

CHAPTER 17 – Nwoye joins the church

The white man asks to talk to the king of the village. They explain that there is no king, and bring him before the council of elders and men with high title. The missionaries ask for a plot of land to build their church. The elders decide to offer them a portion of land in the Evil Forest where they bury people who died of foul diseases such as leprosy and smallpox. To everyone's amazement, the missionaries thank them, build their house, and do not immediately die from a confrontation with the evil spirits who inhabit the Forest. The missionaries win their first three converts soon after.

Nwoye is immediately attracted to the new faith, but at first stays away and tries to hide his interest from his father. The white man heads back to his headquarters in Umuofia, and leaves his interpreter, a Mr. Kiaga, in charge of the congregation at Mbanta. Mr. Kiaga holds services and singing every Sunday. The villagers get excited because they believe the gods sometimes take their time, but never allow anyone to defy them for longer than seven market weeks, and this divine deadline is coming up soon. However, the date passes uneventfully, and Mr. Kiaga wins new converts, including his first woman, Nneka, who had borne four sets of twins only to see them all immediately thrown into the bush, and who was now far gone in a new pregnancy.

Okonkwo's cousin Amikwu spots Nwoye among the Christians and tells Okonkwo. Okonkwo falls into a fury and beats Nwoye, who does not flinch, but leaves the compound and never returns. Nwoye asks Mr. Kiaga to send him to the white missionary's school in Umuofia. Okonkwo is very upset at losing his son, and even wonders if Nwoye is really his, because he seems such a weakling. He shudders at the idea of his sons and grandchildren deserting to the white man's religion, and no-one honoring him or his forefathers when their spirits crowd round the ancestral shrine after death. Okonkwo's nickname is "Roaring Flame," and he finally accepts Nwoye's defection by understanding that living fire, like himself, begets cold, impotent ash.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- gospel : _____
 persevered: _____
 leprosy: _____
 smallpox : _____
 shrine : _____
 amazement: _____

- inhabitants: _____
- converts: _____
- congregation _____
- headquarters: _____
- summoning: _____
- ancestors : _____
- allegiance : _____
- thatch : _____
- unduly: _____
- perturbed: _____
- riddance: _____
- critical : _____
- savage : _____
- roared : _____
- dwarf: _____
- choking: _____
- missionary: _____
- fury : _____
- misfortune : _____
- exile: _____
- despicable : _____
- enormity: _____
- effeminate: _____
- abomination: _____
- abandon : _____
- prospect: _____
- annihilation: _____
- bygone: _____
- resembled: _____
- impotent : _____
- smouldering : _____

Questions

1. Why did the leader of Mbanta give the missionaries the plot of land in the evil forest? _____

2. Why did this lead to first converts to Christianity ? _____

3. What was Okonkwo's reaction to conversion to Christianity? _____

4. What do Okonkwo's thoughts about Nwoye show us about his character? _____

5. Describe the 'evil forest'? _____

6. Who is Mr Kiaga? _____

CHAPTER 18 – Clash with the Christians

The clan is not overly worried by the new religion because its adherents are all *efulefu*, or worthless men. When the missionaries dare to venture into the village and claim in loud voices that the gods are dead and that they plan to burn their shrines, the clan seizes these men and beats the offenders until they stream with blood.

The villagers hear rumors that the missionaries have imported a government as well as a religion, but this seems like a fairy-tale which people ignore. Besides, the little church in Mbanta has internal troubles over the question of admitting outcasts, or *osu*, who decide to join when they hear twins and other such abominations have been admitted. An *osu* is a person dedicated to god, a thing set apart, who can never marry the free-born and who must live in a special area of the village, wearing the long matted dirty hair that is the mark of his forbidden caste. Some converts revert when the outcasts join, but the rest are convinced by Mr. Kiaga's firmness in accepting the outcasts. He also makes the outcasts shave their hair, even though they are afraid that such an action will cause them to die. Nearly all the other outcasts join once they see that the first two have been accepted.

One outcast brings the church into serious conflict with the clan when he apparently kills, on purpose, a royal python—the most revered animal in the region, believed to be an emanation of the god of water, and normally allowed to go wherever it chose, even into people's beds. After much discussion about the best course, the clan decides to ostracize the Christians. They prevent them from drawing water at the stream or going to market. However, when the man responsible for killing the python, Okoli, drops dead the previous night the clan decides the gods can still fight their own battles and see no more reason to molest the Christians.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

assume : _____
 gradually: _____
efulefu: _____
 evil : _____

- undesirable : _____
- rescuing: _____
- goddess : _____
- missionaries : _____
- innocent: _____
- genitals: _____
- judgment : _____
- christians: _____
- Osu* : _____
- rage : _____
- sitteth: _____
- free-borne : _____
- forbidden: _____
- tangled: _____
- confidence: _____
- heathen: _____
- admit : _____
- adherents: _____
- conflict : _____
- emanation: _____
- royal: _____
- revered: _____
- sacrifice: _____
- atonement: _____
- fury: _____
- abominable: _____
- prevailed: _____
- defecates: _____
- pouring: _____
- ostracise: _____
- proclaiming: _____
- privileges: _____
- Easter: _____

Questions

1. Why did the outcasts feel so welcome with the Christians? _____

2. Why did the killing of the sacred python pose potential crisis for the new Christian community? _____

3. Who is :
 a. Okoli : _____

CHAPTER 19 – Thanksgiving Feast At Mbanta

Okonkwo is finally able to return to Umuofia. He has prospered in his motherland, but knows he would have done even better in his bold and warlike fatherland. He asks Obierika to build two huts for him, and waits for the dry season when his seven years will be officially up. He then has his wives prepare a great feast to thank his mother's kinsmen for their help, and slaughters three goats. Uchendu breaks the kola nut and makes the first toast to the power of having kinsmen. It is so huge a feast that many kinsmen whistle in surprise. The people celebrate their community, and the power of family, particularly since it is under threat by the new religion. They say to Okonkwo, "Thank you for calling us together."

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- treading: _____
 trodden: _____
 prospered: _____
 utmost : _____
 supreme : _____
 begotten : _____
 wilderness : _____
 impatiently: _____
 slanting: _____
 stump: _____
 sizeable: _____
 fermenting : _____
 gratitude: _____
 kinsmen: _____
 foo-foo: _____
 tenfold: _____
 sires: _____
 kinship: _____

Questions

1. What did Okonkwo ask Obierika to do before he returned to Umuofia? _____

2. What does the lavish feast that Okonkwo organize tell us about him? _____

3. What was the main idea in the farewell speech that the eldest man gave to Okonkwo? _____

CHAPTER 20 – Okonkwo’s return to Umuofia

Okonkwo knows things will be different when he returns—he will have lost his place among the nine masked spirits who administered justice in the clan, the chance to take the highest titles in the clan, and the chance to lead his people against the new religion. But he plans to return with a flourish, to regain the seven wasted years: he will build a much more magnificent compound, build huts for two new wives, take the *ozo* title for his sons, and buy the highest title in the land for himself. When the tragedy of his first son occurred, he sent for his five other sons and warned them in the strongest terms not to follow Nwoye’s example. Now he also asks his daughters, including Ezinma, who has become astonishingly beautiful and bold and attuned to her father, not to marry until they return to Umuofia. He hopes his future sons-in-law will be men of authority in Umuofia.

When he returns, Okonkwo finds that a few worthy men have joined the Christians. He also finds that the white men have brought their own form of government to the village. They judge cases and have court messengers who bring people for trial, and force prisoners to perform degrading manual labor until released. Okonkwo doesn’t understand why his people do not fight back. Obierika explains that it is too late, because their own people have already joined the ranks of the strangers, and there are too many of them. The white men have cleverly divided them by first sending their religion into the territory, and only afterwards their government.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- administered _____
- justice: _____
- irreparable: _____
- determined: _____
- flourish : _____
- magnificent: _____
- amends : _____
- tragedy: _____
- sympathy: _____
- buoyant : _____
- maiden: _____
- apparent: _____
- prosperous: _____
- half-sister: _____
- sacrament: _____
- communion: _____
- Ibo*: _____
- commissioner: _____
- foreigners: _____
- guarded : _____

offended: _____
 grieved: _____
 indignity: _____
 mourned: _____
 neglected : _____
 bowed: _____

Questions

1. Why did Obierika called the white men clever? _____

2. In the first paragraph of the chapter Achebe writes in an impersonal mode. Identify an example of this and explain its effect on this chapter and for the novel as a whole? _____

3. In the second paragraph one word in particular is repeated. What is the purpose of this? _____

4. At the end of this chapter Okonkwo is wishing if Ezinma was a boy. What is the effect of this? _____

5. What irony is suggested in the sentence: "The church had come and lead many astray"? _____

CHAPTER 21 – School In Umuofia

Many men and women regard the white men’s religion as lunatic, but disagree with Okonkwo’s total opposition because they enjoy the wealth brought to them by the trading store established by the head missionary. This man, Mr. Brown, is respected by the clan because he restrains the excesses of his new converts and avoids confrontation with the traditional sector of the village. In fact, one of the great men in a neighboring village sends his son to learn what Mr. Brown has to teach, without being converted, and even gives Mr. Brown a carved elephant tusk, sign of dignity and rank. This man, Akunna, has sophisticated philosophical arguments with Mr. Brown, which convince Brown not to launch a frontal attack on the local religion. Instead, Brown begs people to learn to read and write by explaining that the future leaders of the land will need these skills. After a few months in his school, students become court clerks or messengers, and more people are convinced to come. Education and religion are taught hand-in-hand. Mr. Brown’s health begins to break down from so much work.

Okonkwo is disappointed in the lack of notice he stirs. His daughters do arouse a great deal of interest, but it's the wrong year for initiating sons into the *ozo* title, and the village has changed so much that it no longer really recognizes a warrior-type like Okonkwo. He mourns for the clan, which he sees as growing soft and breaking up.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- dispensation : _____
- flawed: _____
- overwhelming: _____
- wrath: _____
- provoking: _____
- created: _____
- supreme: _____
- conclusion: _____
- frontal: _____
- kotma*: _____
- slaves: _____
- vineyard: _____
- prestige: _____
- institutions: _____
- unaccountability: _____
- tusk: _____

Questions

1. What was the similarity between ideas in Christianity and in Ibo religion? _____

2. Why was Mr Brown respected even by the clansmen? _____

3. Name two factors that caused Okonkwo return to Umuofia to be not as memorable as he had wished? _____

4. Who is :
 - a. Akunna : _____

 - b. Mr Brown : _____

CHAPTER 22 – Burning of the Church

Mr. Brown's successor is the Reverend James Smith, who openly condemns the sort of accommodation and compromise that Brown practiced. Smith sees things as "black and white. And black was evil." He preaches of the world as a battlefield, and is distressed that Brown emphasized numbers over absolutely correct understanding of church doctrine. Smith eggs on the over-zealous converts, including one Enoch, the son of the snake-priest, and a man believed to have earned his father's curse by killing and eating the sacred python.

Enoch is small man with excessive energy that frequently erupts into quarrels. One day the *ewugwu* are abroad to celebrate the earth goddess on a Sunday, and the Christian women therefore cannot get home, because women aren't allowed to see the ceremony. Their men beg the *ewugwu* to retire for a short bit to let the women pass. The spirits agree, but Enoch taunts them by saying they would never dare touch a Christian. An *ewugwu* promptly hits him with a cane.

Then Enoch does the most terrible thing possible to enrage the clan—he unmask the *ewugwu* or masked spirit of the ancestor, killing the ancestral spirit. The other *ewugwu* surround their desecrated companion and lead him away. That night the Mother of Spirits walks the length and breadth of the clan, weeping, for her murdered son. It sounds as though the soul of the tribe is weeping for a great evil—its coming death.

The next day all the masked *ewugwu* of all the neighboring villages assemble in Umuofia's marketplace. They destroy Enoch's compound and head for the church. Smith hides Enoch in the parsonage, destroying Enoch's hopes of a holy war. Smith walks out to meet the approaching spirits, even though he is terrified for the first time. The spirits rush through the church gate and the oldest of them addresses Smith, calming the others. He tells Smith to go home, that they will not harm him for the sake of the memory of Mr. Brown, but that they must destroy the church to appease their anger. Smith tells them to go away, and he will deal with the problem according to his customs. But the leader, Ajofia, laughs bitterly and replies that he does not understand Smith's customs, just as Smith does not understand his, and therefore that is not possible and the church must be destroyed. It is reduced to ashes, but the people are spared, and for a time the spirit of the clan is pacified.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

successor : _____

condemned: _____

compromise: _____

mortal: _____

sermons: _____

tares: _____



Describe The Above Picture

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- slaying: _____
- prophets: _____
- distressed: _____
- idolatrous: _____
- clamouring: _____
- folly: _____
- sequence: _____
- mutilate: _____
- ogbanje*: _____
- plaguing: _____
- deterred: _____
- converts: _____
- devotion: _____
- bereaved: _____
- prestige: _____
- immortal: _____
- desecrated: _____
- parsonage: _____
- resistance: _____
- imminent: _____
- whirlwind: _____
- intoxicated: _____
- desolate: _____
- surged: _____
- discordant : _____
- interpreter: _____
- confronting: _____
- guttural: _____
- restraining : _____

Questions

1. How was Mr Smith different from Mr Brown? _____

2. What attitude of Mr Smith was Achebe demonstrating in the last sentences of the first paragraph? _____

3. In the second paragraph, Achebe used many sayings from the new testimony. Discuss what points are made by this inclusion? _____

4. What was the great desecration that Enoch committed? _____

5. Achebe depicts Enoch and the egwugwu as having similar attitude. What are they and what was Achebe's point in presenting them in this way? _____

6. Who is :
- a. Enoch : _____

 - b. Mr Smith : _____

 - c. Ajofia : _____

CHAPTER 23 – Village Leaders Imprisoned

Okonkwo has a feeling akin to happiness for the first time in many years. The village has acted like warriors. When the District Commissioner returns, however, village leaders are summoned to talk to him. They bring machetes but not guns, as that would be unseemly, and the Commissioner calls in interpreters to help them explain the situation. Ogbuefi Ekwueme begins to tell the story, but before he can armed guards rush through the door instead of interpreters, and the men are handcuffed and ill-treated at the hands of the court messengers. The chiefs are told they will be released if they pay two hundred bags of cowries, and when the court messengers spread the word to the people they announce that the fine is two hundred and fifty bags, so that they can keep the extra fifty. Rumor exaggerate the problem, claiming that the leaders will be hanged in Umuru if the fine is not paid.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- akin : _____
substantial: _____
palavers: _____
unseemingly: _____
unslung: _____
sheathed: _____
Ilo: _____
startled: _____
sonorous: _____
homestead: _____

Questions

1. How did the District Commissioner trick Okonkwo and five others? _____

2. Give an example of how the court messenger were using the whitemen's administration for his own benefit? _____

3. What point about the process of colonialism and human nature in general is Achebe making in the two situations above? _____

4. Describe how the leaders felt when they were ill-treated in prison? _____

CHAPTER 24 – Okonkwo Kills the Messenger

Okonkwo and his fellow prisoners are set free when the fine is paid. The Commissioner speaks to them about things like peace and the queen and good government when they are released. But a new town meeting is called the next morning. The released men wear fearsome looks, and their backs are scarred by the warders' whips. Okonkwo decides that night that if the village goes to war, all will be well, but if they don't he will go out alone to avenge himself. Okonkwo decides that one man, Egonwanne, is a coward whose words turn fire to ash and destroy the bold resolve of the village. He looks out for him in the marketplace when everyone assembles.

The orators address the crowd. They say it is time to fight, even if it means shedding the blood of clansmen, a taboo which held them back before. Five court messengers show up during the speech and order the meeting dispersed. Okonkwo kills the first messenger, and the others escape. He knows the village won't fight because the other court messengers got away.

Vocabulary Building Exercise

Find the meanings of the following words.

- fearsome: _____
- suppressed: _____
- noblest: _____
- obstacle: _____
- despised: _____
- treaded: _____
- sacrilege: _____
- murmur: _____
- twig: _____
- sprang: _____
- backcloth: _____
- tumult: _____
- discerned: _____

Questions

1. Describe the mood of the six men at the beginning of the chapter? _____

2. Why do you think Okonkwo examines his war dress? _____

3. Okonkwo is disappointed with the men of his clan. Why? _____

4. Why does Okonkwo despise Egonwanne? _____

5. Comment on Okika's speech. Where do you think its heading? For war or for a compromise? _____

6. Why does the head messenger appear? _____

7. Okonkwo uses his machet to kill the head messenger and thus brings disaster on his head. However, he could be viewed as a 'hero' defending his people's way of life. What do you think of this act? Why? _____

8. Who is :
 - a. Egonwanne: _____

CHAPTER 25 – Okonkwo Commits Suicide

When the Commissioner arrives at Okonkwo's compound with a band of armed men, there is a small group of men sitting in there already who say to them, "Perhaps you can help us." The Commissioner doesn't understand and is irritated until he goes back to the garden, where he sees Okonkwo's body dangling from a tree. The clansmen won't take it down or touch it because a suicide is considered evil. Obierika cries out angrily against the Commissioner after explaining that Okonkwo won't get a decent burial by his family, but chokes off before a court messenger can unnecessarily shout "Shut up!" at him. Then the narrative switches over totally to the Commissioner's point of view. This Commissioner is briefly interested, but quickly turns away and walks away. He thinks to himself that this is an interesting story that he could include



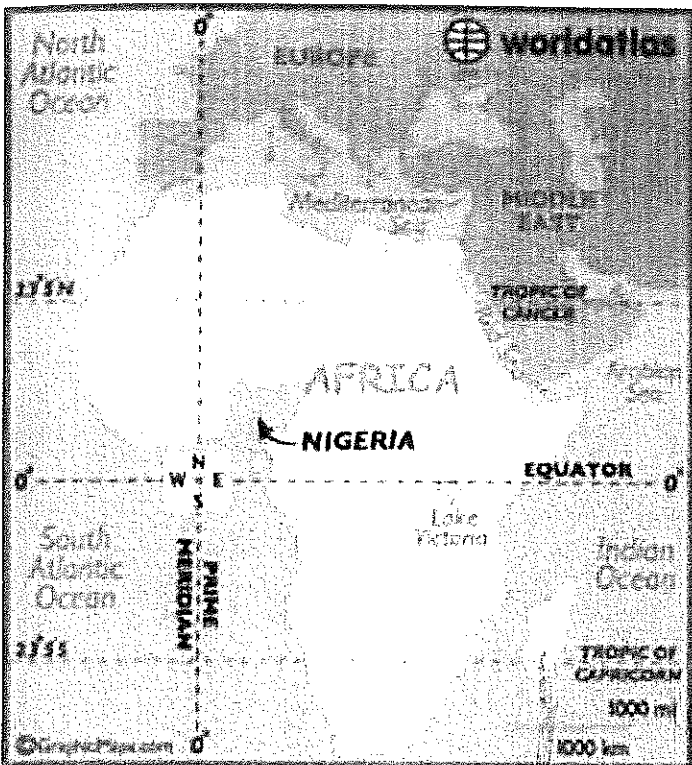
Describe The Above Picture

SETTING

The setting includes the time(period), background to that period and place (the physical location, often are major and several minor) and the social climate (social and economic conditions, attitudes and beliefs) inhabited by the characters.

Things Fall Apart is set in various villages of the Ibo tribe in Nigeria, in north-west Africa. It is a setting of harshness and beauty. Okonkwo may be too busy with work and ambition to notice the beauty, but his father is aware of it. 'Unoka loved this time of the year, when the rains had stopped and the sun rose every morning with dazzling beauty.'

Chinua Achebe is writing about the land where he was born and grew up. He does not write long descriptive passages, but he refers to the land and the villages with affection and expert knowledge. For example, he mentions 'the cold and dry harmattan wind...blowing down from the north', and the moonlight nights with



'the happy voices of children'. There is Okonkwo's 'large compound enclosed by a thick wall of red earth', with his own hut, a hut for each of his three wives, a barn, a goatshed and a shrine for wooden statues of the gods.

It is a setting which had changed little for centuries. When Europeans start building churches and courthouses, the changes affect not just the appearance of the village, but the people's whole world.

