Things Fall Apart Book Summary, by Chinua Achebe

by Allen Cheng


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1-Page Summary of Things Fall Apart

Okonkwo is a wealthy and respected warrior from the Umuofia clan. He has many responsibilities, including being a farmer and providing for his family. Okonkwo's father was not successful at handling these responsibilities, but this did not stop him from trying to be as good of a provider as possible. His son Nwoye is twelve years old and he worries that Nwoye will end up like his father because he does not seem to have any ambition or drive in life.

A neighboring tribe and Umuofia come to an agreement that involves a young girl. They also get a fifteen-year-old boy, who Okonkwo takes in as his son. He grows fond of Ikemefuna, calling him “son” but refuses to show any affection for the boy because he knows it will be taken away from him one day.

During a sacred week in the Igbo culture, Okonkwo accuses his youngest wife of being negligent and beats her. He has broken the peace of that week by beating her.

Okonkwo takes in a war orphan named Ikemefuna. Everyone looks up to him and his influence inspires Nwoye, Okonkwo's son. The locusts come every year for seven years until they disappear again for another generation.

Okonkwo is informed by a respected elder that the oracle has said that Ikemefuna must be killed. The elder tells him to take no part in it because he calls Okonkwo "father." Nwoye bursts into tears when he hears this news.
As he walks with the men of Umuofia, Ikemefuna thinks about seeing his mother. After several hours of walking, some men attack him with machetes. He runs to Okonkwo for help but Okonkwo cuts him down despite the Oracle's admonishment. When Okonkwo returns home Nwoye deduces that his friend is dead.

Okonkwo has a hard time sleeping and eating. He goes to Obierika's house, who tells him that he can help him with his problems. Ezinma gets sick, but she recovers after Okonkwo gathers some leaves for her medicine.

The death of Okonkwo's friend is announced by the beating of drums. The last time they saw each other was to discuss the death of Ikemefuna, and now he has died as well. He feels guilty about what happened with Ikemefuna. At Ogbuefi Ezeudu’s funeral, there are many people who fire guns in his honor. Then tragedy strikes when one of Okonkwo’s guns explodes and kills a young boy from Ogbuefi Ezeudu’s family.

Okonkwo's crime is so severe that he must take his family into exile to atone for it. He gathers all of his valuables and leaves the village with his family. The men in Ezeudu's quarter burn Okonkwo's buildings and kill his animals as an act of cleansing the village from sin.

Okonkwo's relatives, especially his uncle, Uchendu, welcome him to the village and help him build a new compound of huts. The villagers also lend Okonkwo yam seeds so that he can start farming for himself. Although he is disappointed about how things turned out in Umuofia, Okonkwo accepts this as part of life and starts anew in his motherland.

Okonkwo's friend, Obierika, brings him cowries (shells used as currency) he made from selling the yams that Okonkwo gave him. He plans to continue doing so until Okonkwo returns to Umuofia. The bad news is that Abame has been destroyed by white men. Later, six missionaries come and speak with the villagers through an interpreter named Mr. Kiaga. They tell them their gods are false and they should not worship more than one God because it's idolatry or worshipping idols. However, they do not understand how Christians can accept three different Gods as one God without arguing about who is greater than whom among those Gods—the Holy Trinity concept of Christianity doesn't make sense in their culture either way. Although his goal was to convert people into Christianity, Mr. Brown does not allow his followers to antagonize the clan; instead he focuses on teaching others what they believe in a peaceful manner so everyone can learn from each other rather than fight over differences between cultures.

Mr. Brown gets sick and is replaced by Reverend James Smith, a strict man who believes in the literal interpretation of the Bible. The more zealous converts are happy to get rid of Mr. Brown's policy that was less strict than Reverend Smith's. One such convert named Enoch dares to unmask an egwugwu during a ceremony honoring the earth deity, which is equivalent to killing an ancestral spirit. That night, the egwugwu burn down his house and Reverend Smith's church as well.

The District Commissioner is upset by the burning of the church and wants to talk with Umuofia's leaders. He asks them to come see him, but when they get there, he arrests them and puts them in jail. The leaders are insulted and beaten up while in jail.

Okonkwo and his fellow clansmen are imprisoned for beating the albinos. After they're released, a court messenger tells them to stop fighting or else they will be killed. However, Okonkwo kills the leader of the
messengers with his machete because he thinks that his clan will support him in an uprising. When no one joins him in killing more messengers, Okonkwo realizes that his clan is not going to fight back against their oppressors.

Okonkwo is found to have hanged himself, and his clansmen are present. The commissioner arrives at the scene and asks Obierika why Okonkwo has committed suicide. He learns that it is a sin according to their custom, so no one may touch him. The commissioner wants to write about this in his book on Africa because he thinks it will be an interesting story for a paragraph or two.

### Full Summary of Things Fall Apart

#### Overview

The novel takes place in Umuofia, a cluster of nine villages on the lower Niger. The people are skilled warriors and have great population with proud traditions and advanced social institutions.

Okonkwo has risen from nothing to a high position, and he's become very successful. He rules his family with an iron fist. One day, the neighboring clan commits an offense against Umuofia, but they avoid war by giving the offended party one virgin and one young boy. The girl is to become the offending clan's new wife, and Ikemefuna will be sacrificed later on. During his time in Umuofia, he becomes like a part of Okonkwo's family; Nwoye loves him like a brother. But eventually, the Oracle calls for Ikemefuna's death because he was given as tribute to them. A group of men take him away to kill him in the forest, despite advice from elders not to do so. Okonkwo participates in this killing despite warnings that it would make others think less of him if they find out about it. Nwoye is spiritually broken by this event.

Okonkwo is deeply shaken by his encounter with the white man, but he tries to continue on as a great warrior. He loves his daughter Ezinma, who was born from his second wife Ekwefi. The child has been sickly and Ekwefi fears that she might die like her other children did. One night Okonkwo follows the Oracle of Umuofia to an earth goddess worshiping ceremony for Ezinma because he's concerned about her health. His first wife Nwoye accompanies him so that they can protect their daughter together.

Okonkwo was once a great man, but he killed a member of his clan in anger. As punishment for that crime, Okonkwo and his family were exiled from their home village for seven years.

Okonkwo was exiled from his village. He had always believed that a man can control his own destiny, but the exile proved this to be untrue. Okonkwo and his family moved to Mbanto, where they were welcomed by Uchendu's family (Okonkwo's uncle). They were treated very well there.

Okonkwo's exile and return are significant because of his encounters with the white man. The missionaries come to Umuofia and Mbanto first, preaching their religion that seems strange to the Igbo people. However, over time, more people convert to Christianity. Nwoye becomes a convert after he leaves home and goes to live with his father in Mbanto.

Okonkwo returns to Umuofia and finds that the clan has changed. The church has converted some members, who are disrespectful of the clan's customs. Worse, a white man's government is now in place.
there. It judges cases in ignorance and backs up its decisions with armed power.

During a religious gathering, one of the clan members reveals the identity of a spirit. The offense is serious and in response, the clan decides to tear down their church building. Soon afterward, they are summoned by the District Commissioner for an important meeting. They go with high hopes but are quickly arrested on false charges and beaten up severely until their clan pays a heavy fine as punishment.

After the clan is released from prison, they meet to decide what to do about the whites. Okonkwo wants war. Court messengers interrupt their meeting and order them to stop their gathering. The meetings are how Umuofia makes decisions; an interference with this institution means that Umuofia's independence will be lost forever. Enraged, Okonkwo kills a court messenger and escapes as others chase after him. Because no one else in his clan tries to take down the other court messengers, he knows that his people won't choose war either. He feels bitter because he can't follow through on his decision and also fears dying under white law so he hangs himself at home.

**Chapters 1-5**

Chapter 1 Summary: Okonkwo is introduced to us as a great man in his tribe. He defeated Amilinze the Cat, who was a fierce warrior and wrestler. When he's angry, he stammers because of his hot temper. His father had been lazy and died deep in debt; the narrator tells us about Unoka (Okonkwo's father).

A man named Okoye came to visit Unoka. He had lent money to Unoka in the past and wanted payment for it, but instead of paying up, he laughed at him and told him that he owed other people more money than what Okoye was asking from him.

Unoka dies in debt. Okonkwo, despite his youth, is already a great man with two barns full of yams and two titles under his belt. He has three wives and was trusted to watch over the doomed boy who was sacrificed to Umuofia in order to avoid war. The doomed boy's name was Ikemefuna.

Analysis of the

Things Fall Apart is a tragedy and a documentary. It tells the story of Okonkwo, who was destroyed by the white man's arrival, as well as documenting the world that was destroyed. The structure of tragedy requires that all inessential elements be removed from it; however, Achebe's work shows how Okonkwo's death is part of a greater tragedy: the defeat and transformation of his people. His novel is both tragedy and memory. He tends to digress so readers can understand how important Okonkwo's story really is within its context.

Chinua Achebe gives a detailed description of Igbo traditions, customs, and beliefs. Memory is an important theme, as it's used to describe the way people lived at that time. The book also shows how these traditions have changed over time and how they're not what they used to be. It also presents a balanced look at Igbo culture by describing both the good and bad aspects of their culture.

Achebe uses digressions to flesh out his portrait of tribal life. He takes every opportunity he can to tell us about a past incident which is only indirectly connected to the central story.
Ambition and greatness are closely connected. Okonkwo wants to be successful, but he doesn't want to work hard. He is determined not to become like his father, who was a lazy man. He has worked very hard for the sake of success and honor. His ambition leads him to make many mistakes because he's harsh with people without any humility or respect for others' feelings.

Chapter 2 Review

One night, Okonkwo hears the town crier. He's beating on his hollow instrument and calling all men to a meeting in the morning. It's dark outside, so it is frightening for anyone to be out at night. Okonkwo suspects that war might be brewing because he is a great warrior who can earn more respect by fighting in a war.

The next morning, ten thousand men from Umuofia gather in the marketplace. The chief gives a traditional opening and welcomes them to the meeting. He faces four different directions and raises his fist to show that they're all united together as one people. Then he speaks about an attack by the village of Mbaíno on Umuofia's people, which is why they are there today. They discuss what action should be taken against Mbaíno for their actions, but decide that it's best to follow tradition: issue an ultimatum demanding reparations for the crime committed against Umuofia. Because of its reputation for being fierce warriors with powerful magic (medicine), no other villages dare interfere with them when they go to war on behalf of another village or tribe who has been wronged or attacked by others without cause or provocation.

Okonkwo is chosen to be the emissary. He goes and returns with a young boy and a virgin girl. The girl goes to live with the man whose wife was murdered, while Okonkwo's family takes care of the boy named Ikemefuna.

The narrator describes the house and land of Okonkwo, as well as his family. The compound is surrounded by a large wall made of red clay, and has several huts including one for each wife. There's also a barn for storage of yams, which are their main crop. They have a shrine in the middle where they pray to ancestors. Okonkwo is quick to anger; he rules over his family like an absolute tyrant because he fears failure and hates the memory of his father who was lazy. His oldest son Nwoye shows signs of becoming like him, so Okonkwo treats him harshly because he doesn't want that to happen again with another generation in his family line. Ikemefuna is brought home with Okonkwo from war and given to Nwoye's mother because she cannot have children herself; this makes Ikemefuna homesick since he does not understand why he has been taken away from his own parents or what will become of him when it comes time for Nwoye's mother to give birth after all these years without bearing any children at all.

Achebe gives us a brief description of the Igbo society. The town is ruled by men, and not a chief. A large store of yams indicates prosperity in Umuofia, and they value justice more than war. Okonkwo rose to become a great man among his people despite being born into poverty.

Okonkwo is ambitious. He fears failure, and this fear makes him harsh with his family. Okonkwo tries to help Nwoye by being tough on him, but that's not working out very well for either of them.

In this chapter, the author talks about how Okonkwo's father went to Agbala and asked why he always had a miserable harvest. The Oracle told him that it wasn't because of the gods, but because of his
laziness. Unoka died from swelling and was left in the Evil Forest like others who die badly. This made Okonkwo afraid of failure as well as leaving a bad legacy for his children.

Okonkwo did not have a lot of money, so he had to start off as a sharecropper for Nwakibie. However, the first year was very bad because it was the worst planting season Umuofia (the village in which Okonkwo lived) had ever seen. Despite how difficult things were, Okonkwo survived and continued working hard. By this time his father was sick with syphilis and gave him some encouraging words before he died. Although they were meant to encourage him, they only made Okonkwo more upset because he felt like his father didn't understand how tough things were for him at that moment in time.

Okonkwo has overcome tremendous adversity in his life. His father's death and the shame of it left him without inheritance, but he was able to rise above that and become successful through sheer will. He began by doing sharecropping, which is difficult; moreover, it was a bad harvest year when he first started planting crops. However, Okonkwo was young and strong enough to survive. This experience helped shape his character for the rest of his life. Central to Okonkwo's beliefs are not only a work ethic but also a faith in himself that allows him to overcome any challenge or obstacle thrown at him. He believes 100% in his ability to control whatever environment he finds himself in; as such, he rules as a man among men with great pride for culture and tradition. Understanding these beliefs is key to understanding why Okonkwo reacts so violently after the coming of the white man into Ibo society later on down the road—he sees this new way of thinking as an affront against everything that makes up who they are as people: their customs and traditions, their values.

Okonkwo is a man who shows little emotion. He has been insulted and reprimanded for his actions, but he doesn't seem to care. He has worked hard to achieve all that he has in life, so why should he be humble? Okonkwo treats Ikemefuna like one of his own sons. The boy often makes flutes and traps for rodents, which impresses the villagers. During the Week of Peace, Okonkwo beats his wife when she forgets to cook him dinner. This act goes against their traditions because no one is allowed to speak unkindly during this week; it could ruin the harvest for everyone else in the village. A priest from their religion arrives at dusk and demands payment before leaving again with a fine of goods and money from Okonkwo's house (the equivalent of $3). Afterward, others begin to say that Okonkwo is too proud; they believe he will never change or learn humility as long as they live there with him.

It is time to plant the yams. Okonkwo, who has been very harsh with Nwoye and Ikemefuna, prepares the seed for planting. Yams are a man's crop because they require a lot of work and attention. The rainy season begins as children huddle around fires indoors to rest from their chores during planting season. After that comes harvest time, when people enjoy a resting period before beginning another round of labor-intensive work in preparation for next year's crops.

Ikemefuna and Nwoye have become close. They are like brothers, and Nwoye looks up to Ikemefuna. Ikemefuna has many stories, which he tells Nwoye, who finds them interesting. Okonkwo is very proud of his culture; he thinks being a man means not having any emotions or feelings that could be seen as feminine. He sees the world in black-and-white terms: you're either a man or a woman—there's no middle ground for him. Although this may seem acceptable in his culture at the time, it leads to problems later on because Okonkwo doesn't know how to control himself when he gets angry and lashes out violently against others.
Okonkwo is a strong man, but he's not like the other men in his village. He wants to make his son Nwoye great, even if it means hurting him. Okonkwo has been an example of strength for his people and especially for Nwoye, who doesn't have any other role models. But now Ikemefuna is there as a better model for Nwoye because he's kinder than Okonkwo. Even though Okonkwo was harsh with him before, we can see that Nwoye was still imaginative when he responded to stories told by Ikemefuna about the lion and the tortoise.

Chapter 5 Summary: The Feast of the New Yam approaches. It marks the beginning of harvest season, when people eat yams and celebrate a new year. People also throw away all old yams to make room for fresh ones.

Okonkwo, like most wealthy men, was a host of many parties. However, he wasn't very fond of them and would rather be farming his land. He became agitated when he saw that some people had cut leaves from the banana tree for their own use on other days. Okonkwo's second wife admitted to cutting the leaves because she thought they were going to waste if they weren't used soon enough. So Okonkwo beat her brutally as punishment for this action. After this incident, he decided to go hunting even though he wasn't very good at it and never shot anything while hunting before (because guns can never shoot). The same woman who was just beaten said something about guns not being able to shoot which made him want to shoot her but missed due to inexperience with shooting a gun and poor eyesight (the man is old). Despite these disturbances, the festival went well in spite of everything else.

On the second day of the new year, wrestling matches are held. Ekwefi fell in love with Okonkwo when he defeated the Cat at a wrestling match thirty years prior. She ran away from her first husband and came to live with Okonkwo after that. Nowadays, she's one of his many wives and is also considered his favorite child by him because she's very pretty and clever. We see Ezinma helping out her mother around their house as well as bringing food to her father every day.

Chapter 5 provides more information about the family life of Okonkwo. His three wives get along well and seem to like one another, as do his children. Ezinma is particularly loved by them all, including Ikemefuna, who has been adopted into the family.

Okonkwo rules the village with fear. He beats people for no reason, and he doesn't care about his family.

In Igbo society, men are dominant. However, this book focuses on women's roles and characters. Ekwefi is strong despite her husband beating her. We also meet Ezinma who is one of the most likable characters in the novel. Okonkwo treats Ezinma differently because she's a girl; he has different expectations for his son Nwoye which causes him to be more harsh towards him than his daughter. Even though Okonkwo wishes that Ezinma were a boy, we see that he can treat her with at least a little gentleness because he doesn't have as many high expectations of girls as boys (like being able to carry on his family name).

**Chapters 6-10**

The author describes a wrestling match in the village. A lot of people gather to watch it, and Ekwefi is among them. She finds herself next to Chielo, who is also watching the match with her children. The author then tells us that Chielo has two children and is very fond of Ezinma. It's clear that Ekwefi had
many other children before Ezinma was born, but they died when they were young.

The wrestling match is exciting, and the two best wrestlers in town square off. Okafo wins, and his supporters carry him home on their shoulders while singing songs of praise for him.

Analysis: We learn Ekwefi's sadness is due to the death of her other children. Chielo, a powerful woman in the Igbo society, orders people around and has more power than any man on the council. However, she tells Ekwefi about Okonkwo's attack against her. This shows that even women who seem to have power are still vulnerable to men's rages and violence.

The wrestling matches in Things Fall Apart are a documentation of Igbo life. Achebe presents the reader with a lot of exposition and commentary, which shows that he is not writing for an Igbo audience. The novel ends sadly, but it also shows us how beautiful and strong the Igbo people are.

Chapter 7 Summary: Three years pass, and Ikemefuna matures into an adolescent in Okonkwo's household. He eats with Okonkwo and Nwoye, who are as close to one another as ever. Because Ikemefuna treats Nwoye with respect, he is developing into a more confident young man. Okonkwo is pleased by the change in his son because it's due to Ikemefuna.

Chapter 8 Summary: Things begin to fall apart when Ogbuefi Ezeudu comes from Umuofia for a visit. The women of Umuofia have never seen such finery in all their lives—the silver anklets that jingle when Ezeudu walks; the brass belt buckle with its intricate design carved out of ivory; the black ostrich-feather cloak (in place of the usual white egret) that hangs down over his shoulders like a royal mantle; and most importantly, his walking stick made from elephant tusk—a sign of great wealth among men. It was not just any old elephant tusk either but rather one taken from an alusi (spirit). This walking stick had been given him by none other than Chielo herself—the goddess who protects her people against evil forces and acts as their patroness during times of war...

Locusts come to Umuofia every seven years. The locusts do not damage the crops, because they arrive after harvest and during a cold season. Locusts are delicious and bring joy to the Igbo people.

Okonkwo is excited to eat the locusts he caught. He hears a knock at his door and opens it to see Ogbuefi Ezeudu, one of the village elders. The elder asks Okonkwo if he would like something to eat before they begin their conversation. Soon after, more elders come into Okonkwo's house because they want him to participate in Ikemefuna's execution.

A group of men brings Ikemefuna into the forest. The boy is excited to see his family again, but also said to be leaving his new family. They walk for hours and then attack him with hatchets. He runs to Okonkwo, calling him father, begging for help. Afraid of being thought weak or afraid, Okonkwo uses his matchet to strike the boy down.

When Okonkwo returns home, Nwoye knows that Ikemefuna has been killed. He feels a terrible sadness in his heart. It's the same feeling he had when they found an abandoned twin baby during the harvest season. The women were afraid of twins and left them to die in the forest, but Nwoye felt sorrow for them and didn't understand why anyone would do such a thing. Now he understands how it must feel to lose your child like that because he is experiencing it himself right now with Ikemefuna's death.
Ikemefuna is depicted as a perfect son and brother. He succeeds where Okonkwo cannot: he helps Nwoye to be more self-assured and confident. The exaggerated shows of masculinity that Nwoye begins to make are contrived and for the pleasure of his father, but Nwoye is becoming more comfortable and confident. Ikemefuna's, with his gentleness and love of folktales, has provided Nwoye with the positive male role model that he needed. Ikemefuna is also something of a Christ figure because he dies as a sacrifice for the good of many; it is no coincidence that later in life, Nwoye converts to Christianity.

The arrival of the locusts might initially worry the reader, but they are not a threat to the Igbo people. The locusts only foreshadow another swarm that will arrive later and cause more damage. We see Okonkwo's great fear again, which includes his fear of being thought weak. He goes with the men when they kill Ikemefuna. Okonkwo delivers the killing blow even though he is told by elders to stay home because it is considered a terrible offense against their culture if one kills kin. In proving himself unshakeable, he damages himself and creates a rift between him and Nwoye that can never be healed.

Okonkwo does not eat for two days after the death of Ikemefuna. He drinks and sleeps, but he is weak and listless. On the third day, he asks his second wife to prepare some food for him. Ezinma brings it out encouraging him to eat while she takes care of him. Okonkwo thinks repeatedly that she should have been born a boy because she reminds him so much of Ikemefuna in her kindness and compassion toward others.

Okonkwo goes to speak with his friend, Obeirika. Okonkwo tells him that he wants to kill Ikemefuna and take his daughter as a wife. Obeirika invites Okonkwo to spend the night with him while they negotiate the bride price for his daughter. He also says that it was wrong of Okonkwo to go back on his decision not to kill Ikemefuna because things like this are what anger the gods and cause them to punish people.

Okonkwo is present for the negotiation of a bride price. Both families are polite and try to reach an agreement that will be honorable for both sides. Many men from both families are present, and Okonkwo enjoys himself talking with them about different customs. They discuss rumors of strange traditions in distant lands, such as white-skinned visitors coming to tribes far away.

Analysis: Okonkwo is disturbed by the death of his friend, but he's even more concerned that he feels bad about it. He needs to be tough and strong. Any sign of weakness must be avoided at all costs.

Okonkwo is a tragic hero. He's an extreme example of his people and carries their traits to excess. Obeirika, on the other hand, is rich, sensitive and not present at Ikemefuna's death or Okonkwo's participation in it.

This chapter digresses from the main plot line to talk about Igbo customs. The men drink palm wine and are courteous with each other, showing that they're not ready for war-like Europeans who want material gain. This isn't an Igbo problem because their culture is based on honor rather than a desire for power or wealth. Europe's military technology is also far beyond anything the Africans have experienced, which makes it seem like a myth when they hear stories of white men coming to conquer them.

Chapter 9 Summary: Okonkwo has finally gotten a good night's sleep. He is awakened by Ekwefi banging on his door to tell him that Ezinma is dying. Ekwefi has had nine children, and all of them have died except for Ezinma, who was always sickly and often seemed near death. A year ago, the medicine
man found out that she was an ogbanje—a child with a link to the world of spirits who should not die again if her iyi-uwa (spiritual connection) is properly taken care of.

Ekwefi is afraid of losing her daughter, Ezinma. Okonkwo believes that she has a sickness called iba and prepares medicine for her. He forces Ezinma to breathe in the steam from the herbs and water mixture.

Analysis: The Igbo people have a religion that is one of the forces holding their society together. Infant mortality is very high in this culture, but they try to find meaning in it through their religious beliefs. In Things Fall Apart, Okonkwo searches for his daughter's iyi-uwa, which means spirit or soul. During her trance-like state, she seemed to know where the object was and led him there (even though he didn't see anything). This shows how some elements of Igbo religion can seem uncanny because they often contain insights about life that are true. Later in the novel when an Oracle predicts what will happen to the Igbos at the hands of white men with uncanny accuracy, it shows how sometimes those superstitions actually make sense and are not simply made up stories.

Chapter of the Book

Summary: A great clan meeting takes place in Umuofia. Nine men represent the nine founders of the villages in Umuofia during a ceremony, and they are considered to be spiritual beings for that time period. The transformation is similar to Catholics believing that bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ.

This case involves a man and his wife with two children. The husband wants her to marry him again, while the woman's family claims he has been abusive. It is up to the soul diviner EGwuugwu (spirit representative) Evil Forest to decide what happens next. The decision is that the husband must take gifts to apologize for his wrongdoings, pay fines, and receive forgiveness from his in-laws so they can remarry.

Analyze:

The ceremony of the egwugwu is clearly dominated by men. Only men are in the cult of the egwugwu, and so only men are involved in administering justice. However, Achebe deviates from this tradition with his first case involving a woman's well-being. In addition to showing that women have limited rights compared to their male counterparts, he also shows that they're protected by their brothers and respected by society as a whole when it comes to issues of abuse. Although there is an interest in justice within Igbo culture, women still lag behind in terms of equality because they don't have many rights or freedoms like those enjoyed by other cultures around the world at the time (such as England).

Chapters 11-15

Chapter 11 Summary: Ezinma and Ekwefi are telling folktales to each other. They're interrupted by Agbala, the Oracle, who's come for Ezinma. She takes Ezinma onto her back and carries her away, forbidding the girl's parents from following. Ekwefi hesitates only a moment before secretly following anyway. The Oracle takes a long walk around nine villages at an astonishing speed; despite carrying Ezinma on her back she moves fast enough that even Ekwefi has trouble keeping up with them. Finally they arrive at Agbala's sacred cave where she disappears inside it while still holding on to Ezinma;
terrified, Ekwefi waits outside in case she hears her daughter crying so that she can go in after her if necessary. Okonkwo arrives too late to stop the Oracle but he comes out of curiosity about what will happen next and stands out there with Ekwefi waiting for something to happen as well since he had also been curious when he first came upon this place years ago because his father was one of those who brought him here when he was young like many others were brought here before their initiation into manhood or womanhood depending on which gender you were becoming during your coming-of-age ceremony as part of your transition into adulthood among all Igbo people groups during pre-colonial times throughout Nigeria within Africa during colonial times before British colonization took place that ended up leading to Nigerian independence afterwards along with gaining its own sovereignty afterwards decades later under postcolonialism.

Analysis: The priestess of Agbala is a mysterious and frightening figure. Remember that in normal life, she's a widow with a large child on her back who moves at an astonishing speed.

Ekwefi's love for Ezinma is touching. She wants to protect her and make sure she grows up happy. Ekwefi feels that they have a special bond, almost like equals. Unlike Okonkwo, who wishes he had a son instead of his daughter, Ekwefi seems grateful for the companionship she gets from her daughter. Igbo society may be patriarchal but Achebe shows how women are important in Igbo life as well (the wives of Okonkwo support each other).

The relationship between Chielo and Ekwefi seems important here. The Oracle's interest in Ezinma is benevolent; remember that she is a friend of Ekwefi, who has special affection for the child. Since Ezinma was sickly, we can infer that the priestess wanted spiritual protection for her. We learn later that after this strange night with the Oracle, Ezinma becomes healthy."

Ezinma also has a close relationship with her father. Okonkwo is determined to protect his daughter, just like Ekwefi. He's carrying a matchet because he thinks it will help him in the situation at hand. However, we see that he's limited by his own character and can't really do anything about this problem other than use brute force. Later on, this single-mindedness will lead to his downfall.

The next day is the celebration of Obeirika's daughter. It centers around the bride-to-be and her mother, but it is also a woman's celebration. Okonkwo's first wife prepares gifts for them, while his third wife waits for Ezinma to wake up so she can ask her about what happened at the Oracle cave. Ekwefi was waiting there when Okonkwo arrived at last after following the Oracle himself. He waited until he thought a man should wait before going straight to where Ekwefi was hiding in fear that someone might be watching from behind trees or rocks in case they were being followed by another person (which would mean their secret visit had been discovered). After that, he returned four times more because he couldn't stop worrying about Ezinma and whether or not she had visited the cave successfully.

As the women in Obierika's compound are preparing for a feast, they notice a cow wandering into another neighbor's crops. The owner immediately pays for this offense to avoid conflict with his neighbors.

The feast is lively. It's full of people giving gifts, dancing and singing. The new in-laws give a gift to Obierika's family, while also praising them for what they've done so far. They then pay respect to the houses of high ranking men like Okonkwo. He gives them two cocks as a gift and praises them for their hard work throughout the year.
Okonkwo is very manly and stoic. He does not show his emotions, but he cares deeply for his daughter Ezinma. However, he is reluctant to follow the Oracle's advice because it would be unmanly to do so.

The festival illustrates the bonds of Umuofia's community. The gift-giving is generous, on both sides. Even the interruptive incident of the loose cow is resolved quickly and peacefully. Achebe emphasizes that the social fabric of Umuofia is strong and wise, as it preserves peace between its people by resolving conflict rationally and fairly. The Igbo delight in festivals and generous gift-giving; holidays like uri involve everyone in their community.

Summary:

A village crier announces the death of Ezeudu, one of the elders in Okonkwo's clan. Ezeudu was responsible for advising Okonkwo to kill Ikemefuna, but he also advised against it.

Funerals are a big deal. People who embody the gods and spirits of their clans come out to participate in funerary rites. During the ceremony, Okonkwo's gun goes off by accident and kills one of Ezeudu's sons. The Igbo people think this is an abomination, so they exile Okonkwo for seven years. That night, Okonkwo packs his most valuable belongings and stores them at Obierika's barn before he leaves with his whole family for Mbanta, where his mother lives.

When the sun rises, men come and destroy Okonkwo's home. They kill his animals and set fire to it. The laws of the Igbo must be obeyed. Obierika is sad for his friend but doesn't know why he should suffer so much. He thinks about the twins his wife bore long ago, how he had abandoned them to certain death, and still can't figure out why or what happened to them.

Okonkwo's rise from poverty to prominence in Umuofia is an example of social mobility. His father was poor, but he worked hard and eventually became a leader in the clan. Okonkwo believes that people get what they deserve, so when his family is suddenly struck by misfortune, he begins to doubt whether or not hard work can lead to success. He has lost everything except his strong arm and will because of an accident; therefore it seems as if fate controls our lives rather than our own actions.

Although the incident at Ezeudu's funeral seems to be an accident, it is symbolic of Okonkwo's punishment for killing Ikemefuna. Obierika warned him that he would suffer a similar fate if he killed Ikemefuna, and this is what happened when his friend died in a terrible storm. It was poetic justice rather than an example of divine retribution, as the death occurred during a tribal ceremony and had nothing to do with Okonkwo himself.

Chapter 3

Summary: Okonkwo and his family are received by Uchendu, his mother's younger brother. The last time Okonkwo saw Uchendu was at the burial of Okonkwo's mother; he was a young boy then. Uchendu is kind and generous to them. Their kinsman also donate some land and yams for their new farm.

But starting over is hard. Okonkwo and his wives are no longer young, and beginning all over again without the strength of youth is no easy thing. Okonkwo works hard, but it no longer gives him pleasure. He has always dreamed of being one of the lords of Umuofia, and now it seems that this setback may
have shattered that dream for good. He works without joy and spends his days moping around because he
doesn't know what to do with himself anymore. Uchendu notices that Okonkwo has given himself over to
despair because he's upset about how things turned out for him after his fall from grace in the village
where he used to be a respected man before moving away years ago when they were exiled by their
enemies who attacked them as they tried to move back home from exile in Mbanta territory (Chapters
1-2).

Uchendu's youngest son is taking a new wife, and the family performs a ceremony marking her arrival.
All of the daughters of the family return for this day, and remain for a few days afterward. On the second
day, Uchendu calls everyone together. He addresses Okonkwo, telling him that he must not give in to
despair. A common name given to children is Nneka ("Mother is Supreme"). Although their society is
patriarchal, Uchendu points out that when a child is beaten by its father it returns to its mother for
comfort. In the same way Okonkwo has been exiled from his home land but has taken refuge in his
motherland (Igbo). He should not allow himself to be bowed down by despair; rather he should find hope
and keep on living so that his wives and sons will survive exile with him.

Uchendu sternly reprimands him telling him many men have suffered more than he did yet they still live
strong lives full of meaning despite their suffering because they had something worth living for while
others who have nothing left live miserable lives without any purpose or joy which makes them think life
isn't worth living anymore hence commit suicide!

Okonkwo realizes what Uchendu said was right as no matter how bad things get you can always find
strength within yourself if you know what your true values are even if your situation seems hopeless at
first glance!

Analysis: In addition to fleshing out Achebe's portrait of Igbo life, the parallels here between ceremony
and central action are strong. The ceremony welcoming the new bride is dominated by the women: it is
the husband's sisters who subject the new bride to scrutiny, with the eldest sister taking on a protective
role for her brother. Not coincidentally, Uchendu's lecture centers on maternal blood lines and how
important they are in raising children. Okonkwo has always associated such behavior with weakness; he
is being asked to accept a mother's comfort. He also has been criticized for associating strength with force
and violence; Uchendu reminds him that this isn't true either because his daughters will be as capable of
protecting themselves as any son would be.

Chapter Fifteen

In the second year of Okonkwo's exile, Obierika visits him. He brings two bags full of cowries and yams
that he made from the land Okonkwo left with him. They greet each other happily and eat kola with
Uchendu. There is some disturbing news: Abame has been destroyed by white men on iron horses. A
scout locust came to test out their town before more white men arrived to destroy them. When they did
arrive, three white men brought guns and slaughtered everyone in sight in the marketplace. The only
survivors were those who weren't there that day, but now they have scattered throughout Umuofia as
refugees.

Uchendu is angry and afraid. He says that the men of Abame were foolish for killing a white man out of
fear. In doing so, they brought destruction upon themselves. Okonkwo says that they should have
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prepared for an attack by getting more weapons or allies, instead of relying on their own strength alone.

The scene shifts to a pleasant conversation between Obierika and Odenkwo. Obierika thanks his friend for putting him in charge of defending the village, but treads carefully not to sound conceited with all his praise. The author says that even though Obierika was being too humble, he was actually very lucky just because his friend returned home safe and sound; hence it was clearly by chance since they always talk about these things usually ending up badly or whatever fits in there. Something links the discussion together from this book being discussed between friends saying how unjustly the whites are executing their power over them when causing trouble on them (the villagers) by using extreme force back at them (Abame), which shows that something is starting to be enforced upon Abame which seems like an avid control now entering into their land without remorse.

Okonkwo was wise not to prepare for war. He knew that the white man would eventually take over.

Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, will later try to defy the white man and be killed by him.

Fear is one of the primary sources of tragedy in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart. The novel shows how Okonkwo fears failure and effeminacy, which drives him to ill-considered acts. For example, when he hears a prophecy that says his clan will be destroyed, he panics and kills a messenger who brings news about it.

The author brings up the Igbo oracle from Achebe's Things Fall Apart. The Oracle of Abame predicted that the white men would bring destruction to them. She also accurately described how they would conquer and rule over others, which is different than their own methods of war. This shows us that tribal beliefs have often times been right about things in the past and can be trusted as a source for answers to questions we may have today. It also contributes to theme of fate, which is always an important part of tragedy. One could argue that it was self-fulfilling because if they didn't go looking for her she wouldn't have told them not to go but regardless it still happened no matter what anyone did or said so it wasn't really avoidable by any means necessary due to the predetermined forces involved in such a situation at hand

**Chapters 16-20**

Chapter 16 Summary: Obierika comes to visit Okonkwo again two years later. The circumstances are not good, however. White missionaries have come to Umuofia and even won converts in the village. Obierika visits Okonkwo because he saw Nwoye among the Christians at church when he visited Umuofia; when they spoke, Nwoye said that he had become a Christian. When asked about his father, Nwoye told him that his father was no longer his father anymore and refused to say more about it. This greatly disturbed Obierika so much that he went back to see Okonkwo who didn't want to talk about it either until Obierika heard from Okonkwo's mother what happened with her son Nwoye after she sent him away for being disrespectful toward an elder of the clan (Okonkwo).

When the missionaries arrived in Mbanta, everyone came to see them. The leader of these missionaries was a white man who spoke through interpreters. He told the people that their gods were false and only his god was real. Okonkwo decided that this man was clearly mad and left to go back to work. However,
when they started singing, Nwoye felt something stirring inside him. In the poetry of the new religion he found some kind of answer or comfort for Ikemefuna's death and for hearing twin children in the forest earlier on during his life.

Analysis: The disintegration of Igbo society is a central theme in Things Fall Apart. This idea can be seen as an image, which gives the book its title. When the Christians arrive and bring division to Igbo, it begins with Okonkwo's family; his son leaves him because of Christianity and becomes his enemy. They also try to attack Igbos' religion, but it ends up attacking their culture because religion is such an important part of life for them. One thing that causes this change is that people who don't have titles or land start converting to Christianity because they see it as a way out of poverty.

Chapter 17 Summary: The missionaries then asked the village leaders to give them a plot of land so they could build a church. The village leaders decided to give them a piece of land in the Evil Forest, where dead people and medicine men's fetishes are buried. Everyone thought it was going to be bad for the Christians because everyone believed that forest held powerful evil magic. However, when they didn't die, people started to think that maybe these white men were more powerful than their own medicine men.

A new church is built in Mbanto, and the white priest goes to Umuofia. Nwoye doesn't go into the church at first, but he listens to them preach in the market. He starts learning some of the Bible stories from them. One month passes by, and nothing happens; no one has died yet because they're Christians now. The first woman converts as well—she's pregnant with twins that she's supposed to abandon like everyone else does when they have twins in their family.

Nwoye's cousin, Amikwu, sees Nwoye among the Christians. He goes to tell Okonkwo about this immediately. When Nwoye comes home, Okonkwo viciously attacks him with his stick. Out of fear for their safety, the women do not go inside to stop it and only scream outside. Uchendu finally commands him to stop and tells Nwoye he must leave without a word or any belongings from that house except his clothes on him and his Christian book in hand.

Okonkwo is distraught that his son has converted to Christianity. He wonders what he did wrong and why God would punish him in this way. The religion also allows Nwoye to rebel against his father, which is a bad thing because it undermines the hierarchies of Igbo culture. It also provides hope for those who have suffered under Igbo law, as seen by Nneka's conversion; she has had four sets of twins and was forced to throw them all away. She's pregnant again and hopes her children will be saved from this fate since they carry the name "Mother Is Supreme."

But as the Igbo people have faith in their religion, Christianity also brings with it social and political attachments. Once land is given for a church to be built, white men move in with their laws and guns. They force the Igbo people to live under colonial rule.

The church is growing despite some difficulties. The Christians rescue twins from the forest, and Mr. Kiaga leads them with strength and unshakeable conviction. Trouble rises between the church in Mbanta and the clan when three converts go into the village and say that all of the Igbo gods are false. They announce their intention to burn all of the shrines, which infuriates everyone because they believe it's blasphemy. Furious, they beat them severely for insulting their culture (though this wasn't what was
Disturbing stories are also making their way to Mbanto. Rumor says that where the white man's religion goes, the white man's government follows. Churches arrive first, and soon after the targeted village is forced to bow under white authority. Controversy rises in the young church over whether or not to admit outcasts into membership. The outcasts shave their heads at Mr. Kiaga’s encouragement and become some of his most faithful followers as a result. Soon more trouble arises when one of these converts kills a python, which is sacred because it represents a god (the god of water).

The people of Mbanto, a village in Nigeria, are confronted with the new religion of Christianity. Some want to fight against it and others feel that they should do nothing about it. The clan decides to ostracize those who have converted to Christianity by not allowing them any rights as members of the community (drawing water from their well). However, when one man falls ill after being cursed out for mocking Christians, the clan realizes that their actions could anger their gods and so they relax their stance on Christians.

Analysis: Although Achebe's portrait of the Christians is fair and balanced, he portrays their intolerance as a problem. Kiaga's leadership was admirable, though.

It's also true that the Christians do great good by rescuing twins and providing comfort to outcasts. However, it's also true that they're bringing imperialism into the clan life of Africa. They are an early precursor for subjugation.

Okonkwo is known for his hotheadedness and fighting spirit. He believes that Umuofia should fight the new religion with their fists because they are not a forgiving people. Okonkwo's character has been established in previous chapters; he hates Christians, especially when one of them converts his son to Christianity.

Okonkwo is coming to the end of his seven-year exile. He sends money to Obierika, who will be building two huts for Okonkwo and his family. The rest of the compound will have to wait until he can build it himself. While in Mbanto, Okonkwo has prospered, but he knows that if he had been back home in Umuofia, his fortune would have been even greater. These last seven years have been bitter ones for him.

Before Okonkwo returns to Umuofia, he hosts a feast for his mother's clan. The food is plentiful and delicious; it rivals that of a wedding feast. He goes overboard with the food to show his gratitude to his mother's clan. One of the elders gives an ominous speech about the Igbo way of life being threatened by Christianity.

Okonkwo's feast is significant. He needs to be as generous as his family has been to him. The celebration is also a way for Okonkwo to return home after being away from Umuofia for so long. However, the elder's speech hints that his journey back will be difficult because of the threats in Igbo territory.

Okonkwo is hoping to return to Umuofia with great fanfare. He has two beautiful daughters, and he hopes they will find husbands in their home village. His daughter Ezinma has become one of the most popular women in the area because she's a healthy, lively young woman who understands her father well.
The church has become very popular in Umuofia. Several men of title have converted to the new religion, and a district commissioner enforces white law. The DC is served by kotma court messengers who come from far away and are hated for their arrogance and brutality. There is also a prison where even men of title can be found. The white man says that Igbo laws are foolish, so they impose their own law on the Igbo people.

Okonkwo is horrified. He and Obierika discuss what has happened to Abame, a village that refused to convert to Christianity. It was destroyed by the white man's army. Okonkwo wonders why Umuofia doesn't fight back; they are strong and proud people who can defeat the whites if they unite together. But Obierika fears that if they do, it will be like fighting against their own brothers in Umuofia who have converted to Christianity because of the white man's clever trickery (the missionaries came peacefully with their religion). If Umuofia fights back, it would mean going against its own people as well as those from other villages who have converted under duress because of fear of death at the hands of the soldiers sent by Britain's government. The author puts it succinctly: "The white man is very clever" (126-7).

Analysis: Note that since her night with the Oracle, Ezinma has grown into a healthy, beautiful child. Her sickliness has ended. Okonkwo had hoped to return to his fatherland with joy and celebration, but he finds Umuofia sadly changed. The Igbo are no longer free to dispense justice as they see fit; rather they must follow white law for the crime of manslaughter. White laws are not superior or more humane than those of Umuofia; yet whites insist their laws are better and demand the Igbo follow them instead of their own customs for punishment in murder cases (exile). In addition, this courthouse is built on land that was once part of Umuofia and thus represents an encroachment on its autonomy by white men who have taken over control from the Igbo people themselves.

The new government and religion are causing a lot of problems. People aren't getting along, and it's very unstable. There is no way to fight back because the old religion is being taken away from them.

Chapters 21-25

Chapter 21 Summary: The white man brings his religion and laws to Umuofia, but he also brings trade. Some people in Umuofia profit from selling local products, while others still resist the whites.

In Umuofia, the Christians are led by a white man named Mr. Brown who is patient and wise. He tries to moderate Enoch's excesses because he doesn't want him to cause trouble in the community. Mr. Brown learns about their religion through Akunna and realizes that missionary work should be subtle and indirect—confronting people directly will not work well with them. He also encourages parents to send their children to his school so they can learn how to read and write, which would help them get better jobs later on in life.

After Okonkwo returns from his travels, Mr. Brown visits him and tells him that he has sent Nwoye to the teacher's college at Umaru; he hopes this news will please Okonkwo. However, Okonkwo is furious with Mr. Brown for sending Nwoye away and threatens him with violence if he ever sets foot on his property again. The first rainy season after Okonkwo returned home, Mr. Brown left Umuofia because of health problems caused by overwork in the fields during planting season and harvest time.
Okonkwo returned home to find that his family and clan were not as happy with him as he had hoped. The people are troubled by the new religion, which is taking away from their traditional ways of life. They're also concerned about the changes in government, which seem to be going against them. Okonkwo suffers because of these problems; he's worried that his clan will die out if it doesn't change its ways soon.

Analysis: Mr. Brown's conversion method helps the early church in Umuofia get along without much conflict with their clan. He is still part of the forces that are destroying clan life, however. The British also bring benefits, which help to mask the long-term damage being done to Igbo people. Money from trade centers, promises of positions and wages from the DC (District Commissioner), as well as an education at Mr. Brown's church all have helped make things better for them temporarily. But they're losing their independence because of this contact with Westerners; education comes with indoctrination risks even though it may be a good thing for many Igbo citizens who want to leave behind old traditions and embrace something new or different. Okonkwo sees that his people are changing irrevocably, often for worse reasons than before; he feels grief over these changes since they affect him personally as well as society in general.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Summarise:

Mr. Brown’s replacement as the new pastor is James Smith, and he isn’t like Mr. Brown at all. He is a fanatic who sees things in black and white terms only; there are no shades of gray for him. Under his leadership, fanatics thrive, like Enoch here.

The festival of the earth goddess comes when masked spirits roam around villages. It falls on a Sunday, so women who go to church can't return home. Christian men beg for them to retreat briefly so that their wives and daughters can get back before dark. The masked spirits agree and depart temporarily while Enoch boasts arrogantly that they wouldn't dare touch a Christian man. One of the masked spirit strikes him with a cane; Enoch unmasks one of them by removing his mask, which is considered a terrible sin in Igbo culture because it kills the spirit (egwugwu).

That night, the mother of spirits (a vengeful spirit) roams to villages and cries for her dead son. She is terrifying. Mr. Smith hears it and fears that she could be coming after him too because he was responsible for the death of her son. The egwugwu approach the church where they destroy it since they believe that it's evil and should not exist anymore in their community any longer.

Under Mr. Smith, compromise is impossible because he's too strict and wants to start a holy war with the Igbo people. When Mr. Smith hides Enoch in the parsonage, Enoch is disappointed that he can't get revenge for his father's death by killing more white men or starting a war. He feels as if the egwugwu are being unfair because they're trying to make peace with this new religion instead of joining him in going against it (and therefore starting a war). The egwugwu have already made an exception when they allowed Mr. Smith to build a church on their land, but now they're making another one by allowing this man who killed Enoch's father live among them without getting punished for doing so? It seems like hypocrisy to him; preaching peace while supporting something that has caused so much conflict between their two cultures (the British government).
Umofia is a village that’s in trouble. The Mother of Spirits, who represents the spiritual side of Umofia, has been wandering around and crying for her son's death. She cries so much that it seems like she's crying for the death of the entire clan. Umofia is being destroyed because of this situation. In response to this crisis, they come up with an answer that doesn't involve killing anyone but removes the source of their problems—the building where Ikemefuna was killed will be torn down by villagers.

Chapter 23: Summary

Long Summary:

Okonkwo is pleased that the church was destroyed. At a clan meeting, he had urged for the destruction of the church and killing of white men. The clan decided to destroy only the church, but Okonkwo is pleased something was done at all. However, six men are arrested by district commissioner and fined two hundred cowries each for destroying a building on government property.

Ezinma, who is recently married, decides to return home after a visit with her husband. She goes to see Obierika and asks him what the men plan on doing about their situation. He tells her that he’s off at a secret meeting and she feels better knowing that someone is doing something.

In prison, Okonkwo and his colleagues are humiliated by the kotma (African messengers of the court). The clan agrees to pay a fine. Unfortunately, the fine will be increased by corrupt officials who will pocket the surplus. Justice is one of Achebe's themes in this novel. We've seen Igbo justice in action: it preserves order and punishes wrongdoers fairly. However, British rule has brought corruption into Igbo society—the DC does not even speak their language! In addition, he has no intention of learning about them; therefore there is conflict between traditional ideas of justice and those imposed by British rule. Okonkwo was "choked with hate" for white men after his beating at the hands of these African servants. The DC arrogantly speaks about needing 'good government' and 'justice' under an English queen; little by little, that is what they have become as subjects of Empire.

Chapter 24 Summary: After being released from prison, Okonkwo seethes with hatred toward whites. His back bears ugly stripes from a whip wielded by one such man. He takes out his ceremonial war garb, remembering how Umuofia killed 12 men while another clan only got two kills during one war.

At the meeting, Okonkwo is ready to speak. He is worried that Egonwanne, a pacifist and powerful orator, will sway the people into thinking of peace instead of war. He resolves to fight even if he must do it alone. The first man to speak is Okika who begins a speech about why they need action now more than ever before. They must resist before it's too late because there are already Christians in their land trying to convert them all away from their culture and religion.

Five court messengers arrive at Okonkwo's house. He blocks their way, furious with rage. The messenger tells him that the white man has commanded this meeting to stop.

Okonkwo strikes the men down with his matchet. The other four flee. Okonkwo knows that they will not choose war and instead mutter in confusion. He is disgusted by this reaction, so he walks away.

Okonkwo wants revenge. He lost his son, the glory of a proper homecoming, and his dignity at the hands
of white men. His people have lost their independence. They are no longer free to administer justice because they're being lectured on good government by hypocrites who revel in violence themselves.

While Okonkwo has no idea what the white man is capable of, he doesn't know how to fight them either. Igbo wars are small and not meant for conquest. The rage that Okonkwo feels is justified but it's useless because he can't mount a real defense against the white man.

Okonkwo is furious because the white man has taken away his justice and now he wants to take away Umuofia's right to assemble. Okonkwo reacts by striking a white man, but his people do not support him.

Summary of the Chapter

The district commissioner arrives at Okonkwo's compound with a band of soldiers and court messengers. He demands that Okonkwo step forward, but Obierika says he is not there. The DC threatens to throw them all in jail if they don't produce him immediately. They mutter amongst themselves, and Obierika agrees to lead the men to where Okonkwo is hanging himself from a tree behind his compound.

The villagers can't touch the body because suicide is a crime against their goddess. Obierika says that Okonkwo was one of the greatest men in Umuofia, but he will be buried like an animal because of white influence.

The District Commissioner is curious to learn about the customs of this tribe. Perhaps he could write an interesting story on them, with a possible subject title such as Pacification of Savages in Africa.

Analysis: Okonkwo's death seems inevitable. After the white man stops the meeting, he realizes that he will resist alone and even if it means being hanged. He knows that his people have been broken by colonialism and they no longer care about their own traditions or customs.

Okonkwo had high hopes and dreams for his life, but he was exiled from Ibo for a crime that wasn't even his fault. His son then betrayed him by committing suicide and bringing shame to the family. Now, Okonkwo's clan has been subjugated by the white man, which is an ironic tragedy because they are being pushed out of their traditions by someone who doesn't follow tradition himself with Christianity and guns.

The DC's intrusion at the end of the novel is a commentary on how European conceptions of Africa often ignore or downplay important aspects. The author also shows that it's sometimes necessary to cut out unnecessary details, especially if they don't seem relevant to the story. The book he imagines would be different from Things Fall Apart in many ways; it wouldn't focus on one great African man, but rather on an entire culture and its traditions. It would include several digressions about Igbo life, which are relevant because they provide background information about Okonkwo and his culture. In other words, those digressions pay off by helping us understand what happened to Okonkwo later in life. Imperialism changed many aspects of life in Africa for the worse; we see this through Okonkwo's tragic story as well as through Ezeulu's death (also caused by imperialism).