

GROWS
WHEN THE ORPHAN SPROUTS TEETH
by Bertram I. N. Osuagwu

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B. I. N. Osuagwu.

WHEN THE ORPHAN SPROUTS TEETH HE BITES TO DEATH THE ONE
WHO TRAINS HIM

CAST OF CHARACTERS

1. Uwandu -- The one who introduces the play
2. Chukwukadibia)
3. Nwanyikadiya)
4. Chukwuma) Children of Nwokoro
5. Amadi)

6. Ugochi -- Wife of Chukwuma
7. Ułumma -- Wife of Amadi
8. One who crosses over [passerby?]
9. Old woman
10. Adaego -- ~~Mother-in-law~~ ^{mistress} of Ułumma and maternal grandmother of Amadi
11. Oringaohuruokwu -- A deranged person, a mad person who lives in the village
12. Aririatura Nwigbe -- Fellow student of Uwadiegwu.
13. Uwadiegwu -- Son of Chukwuma who later became an orphan
14. Holyoak -- A teacher of Uwadiegwu
15. Taagboo Okeke -- The headmaster where Uwadiegwu taught.

16. Chike and Uwaoma -- Friends of Uwadiegwu
17. Class monitor.
18. Nwakọ and Ozio:ma -- Children of Amadi and Ułumma
19. Obiageri -- Wife of Uwadiegwu
20. Women
21. Kinsmen of Amadi, Akubueze, Uwakwe Akunne and others
22. A voice.

WHEN THE ORPHAN SPROUTS TEETH

When the orphan sprouts teeth it bites to death the one who trained it. This is a story about a child whose parents died when he was too young to know who they were. His parents had great hopes for the life and training of this child. His father had a brother whom he trusted. He had hopes that what he was unable to do well where his son was concerned, this brother who had a lot of money would do for the son, whose name was UWADJEGWU ODINKEMERE NWOKORO. This insured that this child he had brought into the world in this way would be independent concerning money and the world would not be difficult for him.

One thing that was regrettable was that Uwadjegwu was an only child (the one palm fruit that the squirrel held in its mouth). When his mother was pregnant the second time his father took her out in a fine new car. They were returning from the hospital and had trouble that day. The weather was foggy that morning, so that one could not see the road well. The highway was slippery, which caused the car to collide with a large parked vehicle and be ruined beyond repair. The man died on the spot but his wife died shortly after she was taken to the hospital.

Uwadjegwu then was orphaned from the time he was four years old. His father's brother, whose name was Amadi Nwokoro, was not married but began quickly to take a wife. His wife's name was Ułumma. This woman was not educated. She was not well brought up. She saw this wealth in the household and was delighted [her heart was as though a bag of salt had been broken]. She began then, without a backward glance, to squander the wealth in that household. And this made it look as if it were she who had married her husband in that house.

This orphan became a child without anyone to look after him. Ułumma did not take good care of him. Her husband Amadi Nwokoro was not watchful of the child. The child was not given enough food or proper clothing. Rather than take good care of him, what he received was beatings from this woman. Uwadjegwu was not allowed to play with the other children. What they did was to give him work all the time even though he was a child. If his uncle had not decreed that he should join his peers in going to school, his mistress Ułumma would not have allowed him to set foot in school. It was fortunate that his god gave him intelligence and wisdom.

Every time Amadi wanted to do something nice for Uwadjegwu, his wife Ułumma told him to remember that "when the orphan sprouts teeth he bites to death the one who trains him." These words made the man stop what he wanted to do for Uwadjegwu. Ułumma then gave birth to three children, two boys and a girl. It was Uwadjegwu who baby-sat them. When he finished baby-sitting one, he began to baby-sit the next one. The last child was a boy who died because of the carelessness of a friend of Uwadjegwu. Now Ułumma's tongue became the

sharpest. She said that her predictions had come to pass. It was true that it was not Uwadiegwu who caused the child to die, but Ułumma blamed everything on him. There was nothing the boy could say. Things then became bad for Uwadiegwu in the house; however, what saved him was that he was brilliant in his studies. There was money to support Uwadiegwu in college, but his uncle Nwokoro did not want to send him because his wife told him, "This child is very brainy; he knows more than you now, if he is sent to college it will drive him mad. He will not respect us, therefore, it would be better to find him work in another place."

Uwadiegwu was taken as a teacher in a place called Nguru. Eventually Uwadiegwu was dismissed from teaching because of a quarrel between him and the headmaster. Not long afterward, Uwadiegwu left and went to America where he studied hard and became a machine engineer. He stayed for ten years and then returned home unexpectedly so that no one was there to welcome him. During all this time that Uwadiegwu was not at home, his mistress Ułumma continued her squandering, which made her deplete the wealth of that household. They were then in abject poverty with a scarcity of money and food when Uwadiegwu Ođinkemere Nwokoro returned. Education made Uwadiegwu know many things and have a lot of common sense. Now his father's brothers were very poor (did not see anything to pick up and eat). Now their situation was very bad. Their children did not go to school farther than the sixth grade.

Not much noise was made over the return of Uwadiegwu. Uwadiegwu himself had no money at all, although he did have a camera and his radio and some other small items. A friend of his then wrote him a letter to come and take a job in Jos. He was given work in the tin mines in Jos. Before long, he had a lot of money. He then was able to support himself. Uwadiegwu did not forget his home. He did not forget his uncle and his household. Ułumma now started talking, telling her people, "What did I say about Uwadiegwu? This really shows you that when the orphan sprouts teeth, he bites to death the one who trains him." Now some people agreed with what she had been saying all along. They said that Uwadiegwu was hard-hearted (his heart had dried up), that he did not help people and that he did not remember what was done for him. But Uwadiegwu was thinking about what he would do for the household he had come out of. He wanted to return home very soon. He wanted to do this in a big way. He wrote a letter and sent it to his uncle telling them that he wanted to come and help him in his time of need. This letter vexed Ułumma and she told her husband to send the letter back as though it had not been read. She said to herself that if he returned, she would tell the people of their village to warn him that he should first pay the debts incurred in training him in grade school, and then leave the house for them. All these things saddened Amadi, but he did nothing. Uwadiegwu was judged in absentia and judgment passed that he would be chased away if he returned.

The day then came. Uwadiegwu brought out his new car with all the luggage and things to share and gifts he was going to give to his uncle's wife and their children and then returned home. All these things dumbfounded everyone.

He then embraced his uncle happily. He then organized feasts for one and all to come and eat. He stayed there and advised about how the children should be trained and told them how to build an upstairs on their house.

He distributed the money he had brought; it reached men and women and showed them that what they said, that "when the orphan sprouts teeth, he bites to death the one who trained him," was not always true.

ACT 1
Scene 1
Opening Speech

UWANDU: Everybody takes the world as he sees it. The world is not as it is at birth. As life goes along normally, it seems as though a person will not die. The child who is carried on the back does not know that the road is long. The old woman uses her left hand to throw out the raggedy basket that is in her house, and on the day of her death the right hand is used to bring that basket inside. The way the bitter kola sounds in the mouth is not the way it tastes. One who has no place to go goes to his grandmother's house seven times a day. Listen so that you may hear the great story about Uwadiegwu Ođinkemere Nwokoro. (*Uwandu goes out.*)

(In the house of their grandfather, the children of Nwokoro are gathered together, including their oldest sister, Nwanyikadiya.)

CHUKWUKADIBIA: Before our father died he told me but I did not understand at all. I did not understand the value of education. I will not remain in blindness ~~again~~ ^{any more}. See, those in my group are in various positions while I stay here suffering. Chukwukadibia is called everywhere. Quickly, Chukwukadibia has stayed at home and become old. Alas! Rain has beaten down on the chicken. (*He takes his snuff box, takes snuff and puts it in his nose, and sneezes.*)

NWANYIKADIYA: Close your mouth. Be quiet Chukwukadibia. What are you going to do now that you have grown old? Will you go back to school? Are you a child? Please take another look at things. You should not think about the past. One who does that is foolish. Do you hear?

AMADI: Chukwudibia, take the world as you see it. Didn't I tell you that the world is very changeable? It turns this way and that. One cannot know it

completely. Look at Uzokwe of Amawom, who used to be a palm-wine tapper, is it not he who is driving a car now because his son returned from overseas? Nwanyika has had her say, you don't contradict her. Let us see what the world will bring.

CHUKWUKADIBIA: All right, let me take it that way. The tortoise says that when he pulls his hands and feet into his shell, it looks as though he has died, but people do not know that he is sleeping because a dead person smells. Let it be thus. What the world brings, let it take, what the day brings, let it eat. To each his own. *(He sneezes again.)*

CHUKWUMA: I have a lot of money. I have land and also several market stalls. We have one son and hope for more children. Shall I be too wealthy [put on sackcloth and ashes?]? Let school burn! As for school, my son Uwadiegwu will go far. The school I will attend is to train Uwadiegwu. He will go to elementary school and high school. And after that I will send him across the ocean to study to the very top. The ear that will be equal in this way, will it be used to cover the house? [Let the matter stay that way.] It is the man who falls down laughing, and not the laughter that pushes the man down. Ehe m! My condition is not bad.

AMADI: Chukwuma, it is not like that. We do not know the things of the world fully. One who is still alive will do what he wants. We should be careful.

UGOCHI: Please my husband, have you heard? When you get old, you [akaa uhie]. The world does not go easily. No one knows tomorrow but I agree with everything you said. If our son becomes educated it will be valuable to us and be very valuable to him and to all the people of our town. But let's take it easy as your brother said.

CHUKWUMA: Ahaa! My wife, I know that, but I don't know the world very well. Only the chief who knows the world completely will go naked, saying that he wears clothing which can compare with no one else's. The reason I say this is that if I am unable to train this oldest son of mine, my brother Amadi will help us since he is a young man without responsibilities now. O, come woman, remember that tomorrow you will go to the hospital as the doctor told you. He said that he would examine only pregnant women tomorrow. Have you heard that I am reminding you about it now? You women are too forgetful. Keep it in mind.

UGOCHI: O, my husband, you have done well. Turtledoves go in pairs. What belongs to a wife belongs to her husband. Pick out three bottles for me, clean out my bag, and get out my medicine card, since we must travel early. *(They go out.)*

Scene2

(Chukwukadibia and Amadi enter. Chukwukadibia sits on a chair and rests his cheek on his hand. Amadi enters and looks at him. He is not satisfied.)

AMADI: Dede, the expression on your face, are you all right? Did someone disturb your sleep this morning, or are you not feeling well?

CHUKWUKADIBIA: Come, my brother, it is not my body that is killing me. No one disturbed my sleep; I have not quarreled with anyone. But I feel weak. My heart is sad. What I saw this evening does not allow me to be happy; nor does it allow me to feel comfortable.

AMADI: Please, Dede, what is it? Tell me, tell me what it is.

CHUKWUKADIBIA: I had a bad dream today.

AMADI: A dream, is that all?

CHUKWUKADIBIA: Don't say that's all, because you don't know how I feel.

AMADI: Tell me the dream. Don't you know that dreams have no meaning? Do you know that a dream is a foolish thing? You can find a bag of money in a dream. When you wake up, you will not see it again. You can take an airplane and go to America, go across the ocean; when you wake up in the morning, you are still in the same place. Dreams have no heads; dreams have no tails. I have dreamt enough and saw that it was something useless. One who follows a dream is lost; but please, tell me the dream.

CHUKWUKADIBIA: O, dream! this dream! I was dreaming and saw our father Nwokoro, who died when I was still a child, come up out of the grave. He came to our house today and told me to call Chukwuma and his wife for him. When I called them, he asked them what they were doing that they had not yet arrived. This amazed me. I asked him where they were going. He said the place where he lived. I said to him, father, where do you live? He told me not to ask him, that he came from his house. When I was about to ask him again, I didn't see him. He had flown out of sight. After this happened, I woke up. My brother, since that time I have had a fever; sleep has left me; I have been filled with fear.

AMADI: Is that all or is there more? Is that all that makes you be like this this morning? Don't you know that if you greet people, you feel good? Don't you know that you look at a child's face before you consume what he holds in his hand? Don't you know that a dream is a fearful thing? A dream is not the way it is dreamed. Don't you know that just as you dreamed about our father and our brother, everything will be well? You know that a

pregnant woman will give birth. You know that Chukwuma's wife is about to give birth. Perhaps, she will give birth tomorrow, it may be a boy. The way this dream of yours is today, take care, you will see, you will use this to realize the effectiveness of my words.

CHUKWUKADIBIA: All right, brother, I will be watching out, may it be as you say. One who stays in his house to wait for someone, his waist does not pain him. Let it be then, but

AMADI: But what? I have told you. It will be something good for us.

CHUKWUKADIBIA: O, I agree, let it be: but my dream, my dream, it is not in vain. (*A bad bird that cries out when something bad happens cries out.*) Ahaa! Just as I said. A bad dream and a bad bird! This bird, you cry to heaven and earth, do not cry us to death! If one does not carry anything, there is nothing he can break. My brother, let it be done. (*They go out, the fire dies.*) (*Enter an old woman, Adaego, and a certain passerby.*)

PASSERBY: They say that that woman has one child and the pregnancy now for which she is going to the hospital is her second pregnancy. They say that she and her husband died immediately at the same time.

OLD WOMAN: Alas! Has one ever seen anything like this happen before? A vehicle killed a pregnant woman and her child; and also killed her husband oo! My fellow women, look at this, it is an outrage. You have not seen that the family of the children of Nwokoro has come to an end! Alas! This thing is a bad omen. It is a very bad omen. Alas!

ADAEGO: Alas, alas, alas. Ololooo! What am I going to do? Alas! Alas! Tell me, tell me, tell me. Shall I die or shall I carry on? The earth has broken in two o! The sky has fallen on the world, my world, the bad world has killed me. oo, the world is meaningless, you stay a while and then leave. (*The passerby holds her and comforts her.*) Leave me, leave me to follow them to the land of the spirits! What am I staying in the world for? The night has fallen before me and behind me! Alas! Ehiii!!

OLD WOMAN: You have cried enough. There is nothing that has not happened before. Do not think that your trouble is the worst, my child! Take heart and take care of the one they left to you, Uwadiegwu. When the he-goat does not die, is not lost, it will become a mature goat. (*Ikenga ewu=mature goat.*) The way you have cried, my child, is enough. God gives, God takes away. Amadioha (god of thunder) their father, we are righteous and innocent!

ADAEGO: Since my parents bore me, I have never seen a thing like this happen. The stream swallowed up the doctor and carried off his bag. The rat ate up the child's corn and put something in his eyes (to confuse him). Alas oo! I am righteous and innocent. What one says on the trip to the farm is not what he says on returning from it. This world. We come to you empty-handed! World, you are useless. A husband dies and a wife has no one to marry her. Uwadiegwu the child of his father who lives at the mouth of the river has suffered greatly (used saliva to sharpen a knife). When one tires of the world you call it old age. I have gone to a place to eat something but went home hungry. Go and call Uwadiegwu for me, please, please go!
(They leave and the fire goes out.)

Scene 3

(In the house, Ułumma Ijego is angry that she and the one who is training her are still living together. Ułumma is talking to herself. When the curtain opens, only Ułumma is at home.)

UŁUMMA: Ułumma here, Ułumma there! Daytime, Ułumma, nighttime, Ułumma. Ułumma is the only one when there are errands to be done. My mistress does not know that tomorrow I will live in my own place. I will not be her maid any more. I will live in my own house. I will wake up when I please and go to bed when I please. My husband, Amadi, and I will marry tomorrow, I will leave this woman and go to my husband's place. I will do as I please in my house, in my husband's house. If I tie my headtie, she calls it mother-in-law's headtie [excessively large]. If I cook quickly, she says that I am haphazard. If I do it slowly, she calls me sluggish [sleepy snake]. She is like a white man's corpse, you carry it high, no! you carry it low, no! Woman, this slavery of mine in your house is almost over. *(She starts to sing a hymn.)* If you keep on harming me, you harm me up to this time tomorrow! If I want egusi soup, I will cook it in my husband's house! If I want rice stew, I will cook it in my husband's house. Let the world do as it pleases. If one is quiet, her god is quiet. What the dawn brings, let it consume. At this time tomorrow, I will be in my husband's place. When I die, I will die in my husband's place. *(Enter Adaego. She stands pointing at Ułumma.)*

ADAEGO: Mischievous child, I heard you. I shall see how you turn out. See that the training I gave you is beneficial to you. Don't be a fashionable dresser but trust in God who will help you, because a woman may do everything everywhere, but it all ends in the kitchen. This is all I have to say. Tomorrow you and your husband will complete the wedding arrangements. You will take your problems and leave my house. I am tired of you. *(They leave.)*

(*Ulumma Ijego and Amadi Nwokoro then get married. They are very happy. They are enjoying their wealth. A certain foolish man called Oringaohuruoku then enters, dressed in his ancient garments, and says what pleases him, does a dance and leaves.*)

(*In the house of Amadi, Ulumma Ijego and her husband Amadi Nwokoro.*)

AMADI: Ufulu! Ufulu! Ulumma!

ULUMMA: Yes, my husband!

AMADI: Please, my wife, come.

ULUMMA: (*She comes mincing in*) I am here, my husband.

AMADI: What about that wine, is there any left? And what about that meat from last night? Bring them so we can have a meal.

ULUMMA: Yes, my husband. (*She goes out and returns bringing a plate of meat and a pot of wine.*) They are here, my husband. The wine is excellent. It is very good.

AMADI: Have you tasted it yet? Pour some for me so I can taste it. (*He tastes it.*) It is really good. Pour some for me and pour your own but save it for me inside the room so we can be drinking it. Don't give it to anyone else. If anyone comes you can give him kola nut and that left over wine.

ULUMMA: What you said is good. As for me, it is also the type of wine that I like. (*She carries it into the house, comes out and sits down.*)

AMADI: (*He opens the plate of meat and they start to eat it.*) This meat is also good meat. See how there are no bones in it. (*There is a knock on the door.*) (*In a whisper: Take away this meat.*) Who is knocking?

ORINGAQHURUOKU: It is Oringa.

AMADI: What does that wild animal want here; does he know anything? One has not seen the like!

ULUMMA: Let him not bring bad luck today. Fortunately we have eaten this morning, and if it were not so, the one Oringa sees first in the morning, something will happen to him. So be it.

ORINGAQHURUOKU: Eviri wanawa peremperem. Eviri wanawa peremperem. When the orphan sprouts teeth, he bites to death the one who trained him.

Amadi, Ułumma will kill you. If you take good care of an old woman, she says that her kinsmen are long-lived. If one cooks egusi soup very well, he eats too much and eats himself to death. When a girl is first married, she is all smiles. Ułumma has become someone who because of her husband rekindles the fire and goes to the yam barn with the hearth knife. Ułumma the day has come! pi pii, pi pii pıtakwa. I go to Lokoja, Enugu, Makurdi, Kafachan and Legos. Pi pii, pi pii, Amadi, you bought a package where Ułumma is concerned. But hang on to your life so this bad woman will not kill you. OK, let no one believe that his mates are better than he; pere m pere m. *(He goes out.)*

AMADI: My wife, I have found that what we eat together in the house is very expensive. You know that money is not water. Remember that our children must be trained. If we do this kind of eating every day, it will be difficult. The things of the world are better taken slowly, rather than eating too much and then not having it, let some eating remain. Do you hear?

UŁUMMA: My master, what is this you say? These things that are cooked, is it only I eating them so that you nag me all the time? If you want me to starve, tell me and I will know. Newly-married people should be eating to fullness, especially as God had mercy and we had three healthy children. Father God I thank you. Ancestors, I raise my hands to you o. *(Enter Oringaohuruokū again.)*

ORINGAQHURUOKU: Don't allow him, my mistress, woman with big buttocks. Your husband spoke, challenge him. You and Amadi got married and you have become equals. One who speaks to his equal should not agree. The reason for amassing wealth is eating and eating. A person eats, his friends eat, when it is gone you rest. What is this?

AMADI: Oringaohuruokū, hey, get out of here! Who invited you? Did you see your mad friends here? Will you say what you know? Don't stay in my house here and blabber. If I see your feet in this house again, I will tell you where you came from. Wild animal! A goat like you! Madness is killing you. Hey, leave here! *(Enter Oringaohuruokū to mid-stage.)*

ORINGAQHURUOKU: He, he hei-Amadi, I told you a proverb and also spoke truly. Amadi, do you know that you are the mad man? If the back of the apple is good, let it fall to earth. I'm going home. Ułumma, you and your husband settle things. My words will come true in the end. The man who is governed by a woman in his house has a big problem. Pi piii perem perem? *(He goes out.)*

UŁUMMA: *(Turns and looks at Amadi.)* Amadi, do you say that I waste money when it is you who placed the orphan in the house and told me to train him?

Does one train a person in vain? You seem to have forgotten that when the orphan sprouts teeth, he bites to death the one who trains him. What this child eats in the house here, it is more than two grown men eat. You ask me where our money is going, look at Uwadiegwu and ask him.

AMADI: My wife, are you telling me to drive away the first son of my brother? Don't you know that it was his father's wealth that was used to marry you into my house? Please, take this child, Uwadiegwu Ođinkemere, as one of your own children. You will give him enough to eat. He will go to school and learn just as those of his age-group do.

ULUMMA: Have you finished talking? Is it the end or is there more? Who do you say will baby-sit these children if Uwadiegwu goes to school? Have you seen any orphan in your land going to school? Am I the slave of you and him? Let school go to blazes! Let it come and go. A person has seen something [I can't believe my eyes.] Tortoise says that he himself has not eaten enough, let alone his child who has many years ahead of him.
(Enter Uwadiegwu and kneels down.)

UWADIEGWU: Please, my mistress, I will go to school and learn how to write and read like the other children.

ULUMMA: Hey, child, shut up. Who called you? What do you and I have in common? You will go to school when the sheep grows horns! You will go to school when you finish baby-sitting all of my children, do you hear? And now, I have told my husband Amadi that you will not go to school until you have baby-sat all my children and they have reached the age for going to school themselves. You orphans are told, yet your hearts are still set on your own desires. The training I give you here, giving you my food, doesn't it satisfy you? Beast. Look at you! *(She hisses.)* Let it be!

UWADIEGWU: My mistress, I've heard. I agree with what you said, but keep trying to feed me enough. When all your children have grown up, you will try hard to see that I start school.

ULUMMA: Uwadiegwu, mischievous child, what did you say? May your running stomach kill you, beast! It's enough for you! Let it be enough from you! Get away from me! *(Uwadiegwu gets up and leaves.)*

AMADI: My wife, that's enough. Listen to me, Uwadiegwu will go to school like his peers. When one pinches himself and it hurts him, he knows that if he pinches someone else it will hurt that person too. I and my brother, the father of Uwadiegwu, decided that Uwadiegwu would go to school before the things that caused the war took place. Let it be enough. *(They go out.)*

ACT II
Scene 1

A VOICE: Uwadiegwu! Uwadiegwu Odinkemere? Uwadiegwu Odinkemere
Nwokoro!! Be vigilant.

UWADIEGWU: Who is calling me like this? This woman will not allow me to rest, she calls me during the day, she calls me at night, now she and her children have gone out, let me rest and think about how the world treats me. *(He talks to himself.)* My father died in a car accident. A car also killed my mother. I have no mother or father or a place to lay my head in this world. No one wants to take me in until the time that I will take care of myself. My thoughts are now with heaven. God help me. *(He starts to sing.)*

Child without a mother, Une, I have suffered, une!

If one goes for firewood, Une, one sends out the child orphan, une!

If one goes to the river, une, one sends out the child orphan, une!

If one starts to cook, une, one calls in the orphan, une!

If one finishes cooking, une, one calls out the orphan, une!

Child without a mother, une, I have suffered, une!

Child without a mother, une, olololoo!

I have suffered. I suffered, une, Suffering is worse than death, une?

Child without a mother, olololoo--

(Tears fall from his eyes, flooding like the waters of a stream. He then goes out.)

(Uwadiegwu later re-enters with a child his mistress has told him to take care of.)

UWADIEGWU: My mistress says that I should stay with this child. This child, in a short time I will have baby-sat you until you are grown. After I have finished this, perhaps she will allow me to go to school. God help me, God of the poor help me; God of orphans I remain in your hands! What is good for others, my God please give it to me as well.

(Enter Chike who knocks kpọ!, kpọ!, kpọ!)

(In a low voice) Will this be my master or my mistress?

CHIKE: Uwji, are you there?

UWADIEGWU: Who?

CHIKÉ It is I!

UWADIEGWU: Chii!

CHIKE: Yes, how are you?

UWADIEGWU: All right.

CHIKE: How about your mistress and master?

UWADIEGWU: They have gone out.

CHIKE: What are you working at in the house now?

UWADIEGWU: I am not doing much today, because I am taking care of a child.

CHIKE: Your good day!

UWADIEGWU: Yes, my good day! Have you come?

CHIKE: Yes, I have come.

UWADIEGWU: You did well to come. Please watch this child for me and I will be right back. See him going into the woods. Keep your eye on him. I will be right back. *(He goes out.)*

CHIKE: Oo! All right. Let me take a rest myself. *(He falls on a bench and takes a little nap. The child goes straight into the woods. The child is heard crying. Chike awakens and jumps up, runs here and there, and cries out). O God of the spirits, o! Where is this child since he is crying like this? (He runs to the place where the child is, foam is coming out of his mouth, the child vomits and then dies.)* Alas! My God, oh spirits o! An abomination has occurred! An abomination has occurred! Whoever is at home, come quickly o, come o! Come o! Abomination o, abomination has occurred here o! *(Some people who are at home come in.)*

PEOPLE: What is it? Where did it happen? Where? *(Enter Uwadięgwu, he comes in running.)*

UWADIEGWU: What is it Chike? What is it? Where is my mistress' child? Where is he? *(He bends down and sees him and touches the child.)* Ewo! ewo, I am lost! My god has killed me, what am I going to do? Let the world come and take me o!

PEOPLE: Close your mouth, child, be quiet! Go and call the child's parents. This thing is a bad omen. A bad snake has bitten this child.

ONE PERSON: Look, the child's mother is coming. *(Cries then are heard everywhere.)*

ULUMMA: What is it? *(She looks and sees her child's corpse.)* Is it a child? *(She throws herself to the ground.)* My child! My child eee! My child!

God forbid it! My God! Olololo oo! I have died, I have died!
My God has killed me! This orphan, this mischievous child, this child
without mother or father has killed my child! What shall I do? Ewu u . . .

AN OLD MAN: Please hold it, woman, please control yourself, it is not you who
did it, it is not a human being who did it, it was god, it was a bad omen. A
snake has bitten this child to death! Let the matter alone.

(Ulumma's husband, Amadi, runs in, the crying increases.)

AMADI: Whose child is this? Is this my child's corpse? Or is it someone else's
corpse? Alas! I have suffered a great misfortune. What is this thing?

OLD MAN: Please, my son, don't cry. Control yourself. What is happening
now is too much. Do not cry at all. Sorry, sorry my son.

OTHERS: Sorry, so sorry o. It is a bad omen!

AMADI: Is that all, or is there more? My god, what is this? This time, this
time, when an arrow is shot and it strikes the tree trunk, is it the tree trunk
for which the arrow was carved? My god had killed me. Alas!

OLD MAN: A death like this, one does not cry about it, especially today which is
our market. No one should make a commotion or cry. Carry the child's
body early in the morning so that young men who know the way will go
and bury it; let it be that way. You all go home, night has fallen.

*(More cries are heard. The child's corpse is carried and placed behind the
house and the people go home. The fire goes out.)*

Scene 2

(Ulumma and her husband are alone in the house.)

ULUMMA: Amadi, you have seen what I was saying! Use your eyes and see the
chimpanzee. You have seen and have agreed. They have buried my child
today, the matter is finished. What shall I do now? This child who has
committed an abomination and his friend have killed my child. What am I
going to do? *(She starts to cry.)* Alas! What am I going to do e! The
world is difficult for me. A snake has bitten my child to death! Who will
cry for me? Who will tell me not to cry? What am I going to do?

Alas, God forbid! This child who has committed an abomination and his
friend have killed my child. Alas! What am I going to do e! The world is
difficult for me! A snake has bitten my child to death! Who will cry for
me? Who will tell me not to cry? Mercy do not kill me! Alas! Alas!

What am I going to do? What am I going to do? Uwadiegwu has killed me and killed my child! My husband you have seen; if I talked you would say something; if I whipped him you scolded me. If I did not feed him you said I was a bad spirit. You have seen! You have seen, what Uwadiegwu did to me!

AMADI: Ulumma, let this be enough from you, it is all right; accept the world as it is. The mouth does not say all that it sees. The world should be taken as it is seen. What has happened has happened. To continue crying is to kill the heart.

ULUMMA: Oo! my husband, I have borne an insult through my child. Now I have only two children left. I do not know what I will do tomorrow if you say that I said this or that, if you call me one who on account of her husband fanned the fire. Please hold Uwadiegwu so I may not roast his mouth in the fire. His behavior in this house will make me set this house on fire, and the fire will kill him and kill me. Chei; this world, my world, my world, my world.

AMADI: Woman, be quiet. What are you telling me to do? Are you telling me to kill this child or chase him away? The land forbids it. It would be committing murder or running away with the wealth that came to him. That would be bad in the eyes of men and in the eyes of God in heaven.

Remember that it is not good for the rat to eat up the child's corn and put something in his eyes (to confuse him). Uwadiegwu is the wealth we have today. Uwadiegwu is our reminder today of my brother Chukwuma and his wife. The hope we have today is Uwadiegwu. Please remember that if he packed up and left, we would not have no claim on him. On account of you I sold all my land. On account of you I borrowed money at great interest. You made me spend money because of the trouble you caused me last time. The money that was left was what I gave you for trading but there is nothing left to you, don't you know that if we send Uwadiegwu away now we will have nothing left? What are you telling me to do now? Please let us leave the child alone. Everything is in the hands of God in heaven.

Do not touch that child again. Let it be enough. The matter of the child's death is finished, he has been buried. Let that be enough for you.

ULUMMA: Oo, Uwadiegwu do as it pleases you. What pleases you in this house, do it. It pleases you to pull down the walls of this house so that I can stay here, because your father filled our house up with money.

UWADIEGWU: (*crying*) My mistress, sorry, very sorry, please! Please! Do not

quarrel on my account. My tasks in this house I am going to perform very well, but please my mistress, allow me to go to school like the others. When I have grown up I will help you all in turn if God helps me and gives me strength because the seed yam does not mature in two years.
(Uwadięgwu then remembers his mother and his father and starts to cry again.)

My mother called me Uwadięgwu. My father called me Odinkemere. Child without a mother, une! I have suffered, une! One goes to fetch firewood, une! He is accused, child without a mother, une! Child without a mother, une! I have suffered, une! I have suffered more than death, une! Child without a mother, une!

ULUMMA: Hey, this mischievous child, be quiet. Is that why you killed my child? May your stomach run you to death. You are reminding me of your mother and your father. Am I the one who killed them? You and I have nothing to say to each other. Your father's brother has given you support. Break the ground (do as you like). Haven't you seen the tortoise that will help us one by one? The orphan has not filled his stomach and he looks for someone to help.
(They go out.)

Scene 2A (Printed as EMUME NKE ABUO)
(Uwadięgwu starts school, comes from school and enters)

AMADI: Welcome, how was your school?

UWADIEGWU: Our school is very difficult. The teacher we have is difficult (has a sharp fist). She teaches well. The teachers gave me a big whipping because of the school fees I owe and my clothes that are torn in the back.

AMADI: Sorry, my son. It will be all right.

ULUMMA: They should have beaten you to death. I told you not to go to school and you stubbornly went ahead. May they continue to treat you badly. That's your problem. Give me a chance and I will see clearly. My child who died, where is he going to school?

UWADIEGWU: It is true that they beat me because of my school clothes and school fees, but I am trying my best in class. I am coming in first in every test. They say that if I finish Class 6, I will go to high school and learn advanced things. Good luck does not come every day.

ULUMMA: My husband Amadi, do you say that we should stay here listening to this child? What he is saying, is it not meaningless? See the way to go to high school if you are one who bears a son before his father does. Will you

be happy to go to high school if there is no money to train you? If you finish Class 6 you will look for work. It is my children who will be able to go to high school. That is all I have to say.

ỤWADỊEGWU: Let it be as you have said. A slave does not surpass his master. One who is a recipient does not have any choice. But if God helps me, everything will go well. What daybreak brings, let it consume. The tortoise who stays in his hole until he is taken out tells his brothers to work quickly because the smell of his feces is killing him. So be it. Only our teacher is coming; he says that he will talk with you about me. There he is.

(Enter Ụwadięgwu's teacher, Holyoak.)

HOLYOAK: Good evening all.

ỤWADỊEGWU: He is greeting you, good evening.

ỤLỤMMA: Ụwadięgwu that is enough from you. Don't keep insulting us about this school of yours. Do you think that we are people who did not go to school, do you think that we do not know what goodi ivin is?

ỤWADỊEGWU: Please, my mistress, see my knees, forgive me. I did not know if you understood what our master was saying.

HOLYOAK: I hope everything is all right here. I have come to say hello to you and to tell you that my scholar, your son Ụwadięgwu, is very good at school and he is very brilliant.

ỤLỤMMA: Ụwadięgwu, what is your master saying? When he said goodi ivin before, I understood him, but what he is saying now, is he speaking only to you or is he speaking to all of us?

AMADI: Aha! I know all the ways of the world. Now this is too much for you. What do you want now?

ỤLỤMMA: Please my son, explain to us what he is saying fri fri fri fri. We are not white people who talk through the nose.

ỤWADỊEGWU: *(Talking to himself he calls the woman hard to please.)*

ỤLỤMMA: Ụwadięgwu, what did you say? Did you call my name? May Amadioha (god of thunder) strike and kill you. Oo, let that be. This beast of a child cursed me in front of his master.

ỤWADỊEGWU: My mistress, stop it. Don't disgrace me before my teacher now.

AMADI: Please my son, interpret for us the English words of your teacher.

UWADIEGWU: All right, those that he has spoken have gone. Let him start again, and I will translate.

HOLYOAK: Tell your parents that I have brought your report card to them.

UWADIEGWU: He says to tell you that he has brought you the explanation about how I am reading in school.

ULUMMA: Is that all, or is there more? I thought that he brought us money. Can we eat a little piece of paper? These things that fill our house here, are they not various little pieces of paper?

HOLYOAK: Your son Uwadięgwu is very intelligent and in their last test, he came first with a big margin in the class.

UWADIEGWU: He says that I, your son Uwadięgwu, know my lessons very well and that I came in first in the examinations held in class, ahead of everyone else.

AMADI: O o, you have tried, my brother. This shows that your behavior is good in school, which made your teacher visit you and bring us the thing that shows what school you go to. Now I want you to tell him that we are glad that he came to our house. This shows that one good deed follows another. Please, we have no kola.

UWADIEGWU: I am grateful to you for coming to see your scholar in his home and to bring us news of his well-being in the school. This shows that one good deed follows another. They have asked you not to mind their not giving you kola.

AMADI: Now, I have no money in hand to send him to high school, but you will try to include him (for us) in work next year when he finishes grade six.

UWADIEGWU: Now I have no money to send him to college, but you will try to help me find him a job when he finishes elementary six.

HOLYOAK: Thank you for receiving me. I shall do my best to find him something to do next year. Thank you for everything, goodbye.

UWADIEGWU: I thank you very much for the way you received me. I will try to include him in work next year. Stay well. *(The teacher, Holyoak, goes out. Uwadięgwu escorts him out and comes back in.)*

ULUMMA: Uwadiegwu, bad child, you invited your teacher so he could see how my husband and I live. Did you think that by inviting him, my husband would be ashamed and go and borrow money to give you for high school? It will be hard for you. Have you taken what you have in the house here and carried them out into the compound? When a child who is not yet grown tries to find out what killed his father, what killed his father will kill him. Let that be enough for you. Mischievous child who gets runny stomach from good things. *(They go out. The fire dies.)*

Scene 3

(At the beginning of the next year the examinations for grade 6 come out. Only Uwadiegwu Odinkemere passes those examinations. Soon he looks for a teaching job in a school near them. He and the headmaster of that school are new to the school. Because of a quarrel between him and Uwadiegwu, it is not long before the headmaster writes a letter for him to be terminated. Enter Aririatura Nwigbe, Taagboo Okeke, Amadi and Uwadiegwu.)

ARIRIATURA: Uwadiegwu, your results came out yesterday.

UWADIEGWU: Really? What about those who passed the examinations? I heard that the results were very bad. The things they examined on that test were very difficult and tough. Oh dear! Please, did you see mine? Do you know if my name was there? How many people passed? Oh dear! Please tell me.

ARIRIATURA: Ten of you took the examination but only you passed it. The others failed it badly. All of those people are there now. They are crying.

UWADIEGWU: Thanks be to God, but passing the examination for my part does me no good because there is no high school I can go to. My uncle has no money. My parents are dead. Alas, my god has killed me saying that the loincloth that fits others does not fit me. Let's see then. Thank you. *(Aririatura goes out. (Uwadiegwu talks to himself.)*

God of orphans, where are you? Lord in heaven, are you asleep or what? Please, my father, tell me what I should do now. The day will be hard for me. Suffering will kill me if you do not help me. Father, one who gives a child a yam, let him also give him a digger with which to dig it up. Alas, my father, I remain in your hands.

(Enter Amadi and Taagboo.)

AMADI: Uwadiegwu! Uwadiegwu!

UWADIEGWU: Sir!

AMADI: Your teacher Holyoak wrote a letter telling you to come and start teaching next month. Will you go? This is your headmaster.

UWADIEGWU: Master, have you come? Welcome!

TAAGBOO: Thank you.

UWADIEGWU: Sir, what did you say? Is it true? Are you asking me? If the blind person misses an apple and tramples on it, who will give him another one? I will go since there is no high school I can go to because of money.

TAAGBOO: Uwadięgwu, the school where you will teach is near here but you will live within the compound so that our work will go well. I myself am also the headmaster of that school. Goodbye until you come.

UWADIEGWU: Master, you have done well. Thank you.

AMADI: You have done well, headmaster. Thank you. *(They leave.)*

(In the school house in the office of the headmaster.)

TAAGBOO: Monitor of Uwadięgwu's class, come here. Go and call your teacher for me.

STUDENT: *(Runs up.)* Sir, I have called him. *(He goes out.)*

TAAGBOO: Good. *(Uwadięgwu enters with the student.)*

UWADIEGWU: Good morning, sir.

TAAGBOO: Good morning. What about the work you have been doing for three months? I know that it pleases you.

UWADIEGWU: Yes, sir. I am happy about it.

TAAGBOO: Persevere in coming on time to the schoolhouse as you have been coming because sometimes I do not have a chance at home [to come on time] at this time.

UWADIEGWU: All my life I have been going places on time, because I am an orphan. If I didn't complete errands on time, my mistress beat me badly.

TAGBOO: All right, what is important is to continue to see that you teach well.

UWADIEGWU: I have heard, but I have discovered that you are greatly deceiving the students because you never do things on time. Ever since I came here three weeks ago I have been seeing what you are doing. There has not been a day when you came to school on time. Is that how your fellow schoolmasters behave? I have not seen.

TAAGBOO: (*Stutters in anger.*) C-c-close your stupid mouth. Sh-sh-shut up idiot like me. Do you know yourself, you beast? God forbid! This child whom the government has not given a teaching certificate came to insult me. If you say that again, I will show you by my sharp pen if I don't beat you up. Beast! Get out of here so I can see my way. Idiot.

MONITOR: Do not kill my teacher Uwadiegwu over nothing, because he speaks the truth. If you were coming to school on time, he would not have said what he told you just now.

TAGBOO: Come my child, you and the students met secretly to insult me this morning. God forbid! Ugbumoo! If that is medicine, it has not worked.

UWADIEGWU: You are wicked in body and mind to be coming to school when it pleases you. You stay inside it speaking in bad English. Do as you want. Do they say that one who is not a teacher will not see things well?

TAGBOO: This is too much! What is this insult? I am going to take this matter and go to the head people. If you don't leave here, I will. Two bosses cannot stay in one vehicle. I do not like bad things. Uwadiegwu the tortoise who was given the job a few days ago came to show me. We shall see. Beast! God forbid!

UWADIEGWU: Do as you please. But tell your head people what I said and what you are doing. And let me tell you, if you dismiss me from your school, you will not dismiss me from this world; if you dismiss me from this world, we will meet in heaven. And it is said that the rat should not first chew the doctor's bag but the doctor should not knowingly roast the rat's mouth in the fire. One who has (is?) nothing has nothing to be afraid of. One who chases the chicken must fall; the baby chick must waddle. Do as you please, the land will not be lost.

(They go out. Not long afterward, Uwadiegwu receives a letter saying that he should leave his job immediately.)

(He takes out his letter, reads it thoroughly and nods his head.)

UWADIEGWU: What was expected has happened. Taagboo has done what he wanted to do. They say that someone who has a position has power, but

the one who has all power is God. *(He thinks for a moment.)* What can be done to fix this world? My mother is dead. My father is dead. My mother's children are dead too. My uncle is not a real man because his wife doesn't allow him to know what is what. I don't know where to look. I don't know what to do. I have no past, I have no future. There is no place I can rest and chew kola. I started in childhood to see troubles. I started teaching and taught my best. I broke no rules, but truth dismissed me from my job.

Headmaster Taagboo Okeke, may God watch you! You who are a person who out of anger and jealousy dismissed me from my job. If it was something bad that I did to cause my dismissal, God knows it. But if I used truth and good faith in hearing the call and doing my work, may God make me a good man so that the truth may be known. Truth, truth does not die. If it is buried in the earth it grows out like a tree. If it is thrown into the river it floats to the top. Truth is alive. God, Lord in heaven, watch over the orphan. In you I shelter. Alas, this world! *(He then goes out.)* No matter what happens, I will leave this land. I will try to hide away and go to America. Whatever the result, let it be.

(Things then happened the way it happens. Uwadiegwu hides away and goes to America, reaches there and starts to work until he finds a school that accepts him. Ułumma then begins again what she used to say, that this child Uwadiegwu was totally useless.)

(Enter Ułumma and Amadi)

UŁUMMA: That beast of a child who has left and gone there has forgotten home. It is said that he is in America.

AMADI: Uwadiegwu's departure is making me think a lot now. We do not hear a word at all. The child without clothes or food or money, who knows how the world will treat him? Who knows if he is still alive? Alas!

UŁUMMA: Let him die in that place where he is. Look at this, he is a child I suffered to bring up. This child, he is a child who stayed here eating up my food all the time! Amadi, you have seen! If I knew where he was, I would send him a bill to repay me for the money we used to train him. I told you that we were training in vain where that useless child Uwadiegwu Ođinkemere is concerned. You would not believe what I said. Now it has happened before your eyes like one who is awakened by the sun in the dry season.

AMADI: Don't talk like that. What we will pray to God in heaven is that he lead him where he is and that he will bring him back to us, even if only his skull. That is what is most important.

ULUMMA: Will you eat his skull? If you see his skull, what will you use it for?
Will you eat it?

(She sucks her teeth. There is a knock on the door.)

AMADI: Whoever is knocking, enter the house. *(Enter Uwaoma)*

UWAOMA: I brought this letter from the post office. It seems to be the handwriting of my friend, Uwadiegwu Odinkemere.

AMADI: Really? Please, open the letter quickly and read it to me. *(Uwaoma opens it, reads it to himself and then tells Amadi briefly what is in it.)*

UWAOMA: Uwadiegwu wrote it. He says please forgive what he did to you. You should try to send him money because he is in need and suffering now.

ULUMMA: One who does what he says! You have seen what I said about him. Have you heard? That child looks for what will come out of my mouth. Please fold up that letter and return it saying that we did not receive it. Let that be enough for him. This is not something a person has not seen before. Orphans! That is the way they are. They do not know how to behave, they do not know good things. That is how they are.

UWAOMA: Mistress, how am I going to do this? If it had not been opened, it would be known, but now you have opened it and read it. How can it be done? Please take your letter. I am leaving.

AMADI: Stop talking like that. It is too much thoughtless talk. This child who wrote the letter, you do not know if he is alive or dead. You do not know what kind of trouble he is in. Give me the letter my son and go in peace. *(He goes out.) (Enter Oringaohuruoku. He knocks kpọ, kpọ, kpọ!)*

AMADI: Enter.

ORINGAQHURUOKU: He has spoken his mind, spoken out powerfully. I said it would happen on Oriekwu. Ulumma, bad woman, wait and I will tell you what you do not know. On the day that Uwadiegwu returns you will not know him. What is upsetting you? See how wickedness and hunger have treated you and your children badly. See how you all are skinny like bony fish. I told you before to take it easy in consuming everything. The child who roasts all the morning yams does not know that yam will be finished but the morning will remain. If what I told the child does not happen to him, how can I be known as his senior? Come what may, Uwadiegwu Odinkemere is one who has gone away and will surely return.

(He sings a song.)

Owe nle ele owe ayaya, hamle! Owere has cheated us and told us to (gama hamle)! Judgment does not know the Amaike people. They build paths of fear (hamle)! The white man has defeated us and told us to go the way of the bad spirit (hamle)! *(He goes out.) (Enter Nwako)*

NWAKO: Mother, I've called those you told me to call. They're at the door waiting.

AMADI: Come, my child, what did you say? Who told you to call them?

NWAKO: My mother said to call them, that there is something she will tell them.

AMADI: Woman, you will kill yourself. What business do you have with the people you summoned? What will you tell them? Are you respecting your husband? Respecting! Exposing your husband.

ULUMMA: Leave me alone. I want to tell them everything. This way I am existing here, is it life? What you will do is that if I die today, you marry another woman and my children become orphans. Nwako, please invite them in. *(They enter)*

I called you to tell you to come and look for me. One who does not know, her peers will show her. Please, tell Amadi my husband to send a message to Uwadiegwu to pay us back all the money we used to train him. Another thing, I do not want to hear a word about Uwadiegwu in this compound again. See how my children and I are staying like brooms used to sweep the compound. Nwako! Ozioma! *(She calls her two children.)*

These are my children. Look at their bodies and see how they and I are. *(They suck their teeth.)* Uwadiegwu, one who was sent to school, he passed class six eleven years ago. Was there a time when he could lend my children and me even a small piece of soap for us to bathe with? Or was there a time when he bought me a dress or a cloth? If he had bought me a cloth, would I not have been glad? If he bought me a dress, would I not wear it? If my children and I bathed with his soap, would we offend the earth? When I speak, Amadi starts to defend him. One who raises an orphan, does he offend the land? My friends, it is something I thought I should tell you. I have suffered rather than our enjoying profit, and that child tells us to send him money. The way we are now, where is that money? Please, my friends, that is why I called you so you could direct us.

OLD WOMAN: Yes! dear woman, you are right. You have tried. There is no woman who can do what you are doing in all of our quarter. If that child gave you nothing for eleven years, he has offended the land and cut his

upper teeth (first). One who says that the dog's nose is good for him, let him cut and eat it. Whatever you want to do to that child, it is good. We support you. (Our hand is in it.)

ANOTHER WOMAN: Ułumma, your words are very good. Anything you want to do concerning Uwadiegwu, we will be behind you (our waist is with yours). Don't allow him to enter this compound again; he is a pot-breaker. Look at the orphan, he is well-treated, but he is unappreciative (his stomach runs).

(Oringaoħuruoku jumps in)

ORINGAOħURUOKU: The advisers have been advising you. One who is advised agrees. One who says kill the orphan should remember that his own children can become orphans at any time. *(He then starts to sing another song about orphans.)*

When cooking, when cooking, Une!
The motherless child is chased out, une!
One starts to see, une!
The motherless child is chased out, une!
When working, une!
One looks for the motherless child, une!
Motherless child, une!
I have suffered, une!
I have suffered more than death, une!
Motherless child olololoo
I have suffered

(They all go out and the fire is extinguished)

Scene 4

(Uwadiegwu returns suddenly without any notice, not giving any information. He then returns to their house like one who is just passing by without carrying anything. He enters with Uwakwe, Adaego and Akunne)

ADAEGO: This one, who is he? *(She looks at him closely.)* Come and see Uwadiegwu, he has returned. He has gotten older. Look at him and his beard!

UWAKWE: Yes! Uwadiegwu, welcome. You have returned. God has done the best! We lay eyes on you again! Thanks be to God! Are there people living here, as it is so quiet everywhere?

UWADIEGWU: I have seen two children and one woman in the house. Let us knock hard so someone will come out.

ULUMMA: (*Inside the house, she frowns and scolds her children for coming to see their brother because she thought he came back empty-handed.*)

The person you are coming to see, who is he? That voice, is it not like that of that bad boy Uwadiegwu? Uwadiegwu, did he not die and has since come back to the world again? Close the door for me quickly, when Amadi returns you and he can take care of it. This thing, it is something not seen before or from (Uwadiegwu's) knowing too much!

AKUNNE: Come, let us go out and go to my house. See what one who has not seen a person for a long time does. Do you think that that woman is in her right mind?

UWADIEGWU: What is this?

AKUNNE: I am telling you that we should go to my house. But let me ask you, what did you bring back with you?

UWADIEGWU: You know that I have an automobile in America, but I could not bring it back with me, but I brought back my radio and a camera, some clothes and a few other things. After a while I will be able to buy the things I need.

AKUNNE: What did you study in America that you stayed eleven years in one place there?

UWADIEGWU: I studied engineering.

AKUNNE: They say that engineering is many things. What kind is it because where people work in Jos, different kinds of engineers are needed?

UWADIEGWU: I am a machine engineer, what is called in English *mechanical engineer*. I also came out of a big school where people study many different kinds of hand work, called Harvard University.

AKUNNE: That's how it is, you studied and learned good things. If the ear is not that big, will it be used to completely cover the house? Now we will write the people of Jos a letter to apply for work. I trust that they will give you work right away, and I think it will be better if we go to Jos immediately, rather than remain at home waiting for their letter.

UWADIEGWU: That will be good. One should not change good advice. What the dawn brings, let it consume. Let's go. (*They go out. The fire goes out.*)

(In Jọs, Ụwadięgwu gets a good job that pays him a good monthly salary. He looks for a young Igbo woman and they get married. Ụwadięgwu then prepares to return home in a big way, he and his wife. Ozioma and the others are like fishbones (skinny). They have not eaten enough or gone to school because of lack of money.)

Scene 5

(The return of Ụwadięgwu and his wife and their baggage.)

AMADI: See who are coming. (*Runs out into the yard.*) See my son! See Ụwadięgwu! My child welcome, welcome. God be thanked! Welcome, welcome my child.

ỤWADIĘGWU: (*Embraces him.*) Yes, my father. You have done well, you have done well. I have returned! Thanks be to God.

AMADI: (*Amadi then embraces Ụwadięgwu, welcomes him and finally says:*) Hei! Ụwadięgwu, where have you come from? And what did you do there?

ỤWADIĘGWU: First, I returned from America about a year ago, then came to see you, but when I came, your wife Ụlamma saw us and ran into the house and called her children and locked the door, not allowing us to enter.

AMADI: Is it true what you are saying?

ỤWADIĘGWU: Ask Akunne, he and I came entered together that day. Indeed, you were not at home that day, so my friend Akunne invited me to go to his house. Afterward, he and I went to Jọs where I arrived and began the office job that I am doing now.

AMADI: Alas! Alas my son! Is this what you are telling me? Up until today no one has told me. I did not hear, whether afternoon or evening. Welcome, welcome, my son.

ỤWADIĘGWU: Alas! Why did you not ask where I was for twelve years up until today?

ỌBIAĀGERI: What you are saying confuses me. Is this person that uncle you were telling me about? Is he the one?

ỤWADIĘGWU: It is he. It was my father who was next older than Amadi, of the same mother and same father, as I told you, his wife did not allow him to know well who I was; she did not allow him to know that he and I were of the same blood. They then forgot that blood is thicker than water and

that one can not ignore the head and smash the neck. They forgot that when the eye starts to cry, the nose starts to cry.

Indeed, I remember what she, the woman, did in those times, she did not allow me to eat anything. It makes me feel like crying and breaks my heart. I used to pray God in heaven to calm my heart, and to make her have a good heart, kindness and love toward her fellow men. Let us leave all of that.

Uncle Amadi, what about my mistress, your wife, and her children, Nwako and Ozioma? Did you have another child or children after I left? Please, call them so we may see them.

OBIAGERI: Please call them so I can see them too.

AMADI: Please, my brother; my good child, sweet brother, please forgive, but who is the person who is with you?

UWADIEGWU: I will tell you about her when my mistress, your wife, comes in.

AMADI: Ulumma, Ulumma!

ULUMMA: Yes!

AMADI: Come here. (*Ulumma then comes in slowly to find out why she is being called. When she enters she can not tell or know who Uwadiiegwu is.*)

UWADIEGWU: Aah! My mistress. Madam! How are you? And how about your children? Since you are looking at me like this, do you know who I am?

ULUMMA: (*In amazement*) My son, I don't know who you are. Amadi my husband, you know that if Uwadiiegwu that bad child of my husband had stayed here without deceit, he would have grown well like a young man. But please, my son, tell me who you are. You know that night has fallen. We have grown old.

AMADI: Humble yourself. Look at this young man well. Do you want me to bring your eyeglasses?

ULUMMA: (*She then looks carefully and realizes that it is Uwadiiegwu. She then embraces him and shouts.*) Hei! My goodness! The world has changed. This person, who is it? Uwadiiegwu! (*She holds him to her chest.*) Uwadiiegwu! Aaa! Let me look at you! Let no one kill himself. The world is mysterious. Amadi my husband, have you seen my son! Uwadiiegwu!

UWADIĘGWU: My mistress, it is not your fault, because I have become an adult and am no longer as I was in those times. Please, how are your children Nwakọ and Ozioma? Are they well? Please go and call them for me. I am longing to see them. I really need to see them.

ULUMMA: There they are coming. They have become thin like fish bones. The world has not treated us well since that time when you left them in the pain and suffering of the world. Sometimes we cannot find anything to eat. These things cause these children of mine to be like fish bones, but that does not mean that they are ill.

UWADIĘGWU: My mistress, forget that. Thanks be to God that they are alive for you. It is something to praise and thank God for. My relatives, I am happy to see you alive again. If a person forgets elders, the one who is eating newly should not give (any) to him. What makes the bird heavy is its feathers. *(He then gets up crying with joy and happiness and embraces his uncle and his wife and their children. He is overcome with joy. Ułumma cries a lot but Uwadiegwu holds her hand, pats her chest and tells her not to worry herself.)*

UWADIĘGWU: Please, I greet you. I also thank God in heaven because he allowed us to see each other again. This person you see here is my wife now; I am a white-collar worker, and my monthly salary is large. The name I answered to when I was in America was Babington Douglas Nwokoro, engineer. The vehicle whose horn you heard, which is parked behind the house, is mine. The name of that vehicle is Impala, and it was very expensive. *(He takes out a few things and starts to give them out one by one.)* My mistress, this is a box of garments and cloth and shoes. These small items are for you and your husband and your children. This thing I am holding here is what the white people call a "plan" that we will use to build a new house, a story house in this compound where we all will live together. Your children, Nwakọ and Ozioma will start to go to school. They will go overseas after they finish high school. All of the lands that you sold, I will redeem. Take this 50 naira and use it to buy wine and buy food to invite our kinsmen to our Nguru land so they may come and eat and drink and join us in thanking God for the good things he has done for us.

(After he says this, the women of that quarter gather around them, both children and adults. There is commotion everywhere. One of the leaders of the women then comes out and thanks them.)

LEADER OF THE WOMEN: Hei, hei, he he he

THE OTHERS: Hee, hee! *(They start to sing and dance.)*

If not for the son, who will give to me?
A length of George cloth, who will give to me?
Head of tobacco, who will give to me?
Stockfish, who will give to me?
Automobile, who will give to me?
If not for the son, who will give to me?

(They sing again)

Many benefits come from the son!
Let it reach someone, let it reach me,
Many benefits come from the son!

(While this is going on, a certain leader of the men who are there, whose name is Akubueze, then gets up and greets the men and the people there.)

AKUBUEZE: Tii ii!

THE OTHERS: Ho!

AKUBUEZE: Tii ii!

THE OTHERS: Ho!

AKUBUEZE: Kinsmen, eat!

THE OTHERS: Aha!

AKUBUEZE: Drink!

THE OTHERS: Aha!

AKUBUEZE: We will live. God in heaven, we thank you. Our ancestors, we thank you. The cloth that is good for the waists of others, let it be good for our waists as well. What people consider to be good, may it not be lacking for us. Life for all of us! Amen.

You have seen what has happened now. That saying of people that if the goat does not die and does not get lost, it will turn out to be a he-goat. That saying has become clear today. It is also said that one who sees his brother not having a house should give him water and fill his stomach because no one knows what that person will become in the future. You have seen what those words mean today. Perhaps many of you knew this child, and some did not know him, because he left a long time ago. We thought that he had died but he is alive today. Now the staff of our ancestors has done well, he has returned in peace and has become a person on whose account we are gathering together in the middle of the afternoon today. Look at everything he brought with him, even if the son of

Otuihegeme traveled across the ocean and returned, did he bring things like this? Look at the attractive woman he married. You saw the automobile he came in. Look at everything he promised he was going to do for the kinsmen in our town. Friends, the ear is of that size, will it not be used to protect from the rain? That is why I tell you and tell you again most emphatically that one who sees something good and does it, does it for men, women, elders, children, the resident of the house, and the orphan, because no one knows tomorrow. The world is not sufficient. Thank you.

THE OTHERS: Thank you! You have done well. You said it right.

THE WOMEN: Hei! Hei! he, he he hee he!

AMADI: I don't have many words. Nor do I know what to say but I will beg the people here saying that whatever yam remains, may the piece of land remainder as well. Let it be this time tomorrow that we all meet together in larger numbers than this, so we can consume the money that this child has given us. Friends, is that satisfactory?

THE OTHERS: That's good. Let it be so. Goodbye. *(They then leave. At dawn, the time comes, and everyone comes in a crowd, both men and women.)*

AMADI: Our friends have come. Greetings. Kith and kin, hello to you.

THE OTHERS : Greetings. Hello!

AMADI: As I said yesterday, the decision that has been made is agreed to with a nod. If one does as one says, a thing will not surprise him. We will wait a bit until those who have gone to get wine come in.

A MAN: Good. If one licks the finger in haste, will one stuff it on top of something? [Haste is unseemly.]

AKUBUEZE: It is the way things happen.

WINE-CARRIERS: You are here, eh! [Form of greeting.]

THE OTHERS: You have returned. Welcome.

ONE OF THE WINE-CARRIERS: Today's wine is difficult to obtain, the market did not start on time because of the work everywhere.

AKUBUEZE: You have done well in returning now. The wine market today does not open early.

AMADI: Kinsmen kwenu!

CROWD: Haa!

AMADI: Eat,

CROWD: Haa!

AMADI: Agree together,

CROWD: Haa!

AMADI: Kinsmen, this is kola and alligator pepper. You have seen your wine.
Other things are also here.

AKUBUEZE: Do not die. You have done well.

THE OTHERS: You have done well. Thank you.

A MAN: Our father Akubueze, here is the kola.

AKUBUEZE: Thank you, my son, I have seen it. If a child is given something too much for him, he asks if it is for him and someone else. Anyhow, we will do things of the world as they are done. The fire given to the child does not burn him.

THE OTHERS: Do it well, do it well. That's it, do it well.

AKUBUEZE: (*Brings the kola dish and takes one small kola nut and lifts it up, saying a blessing.*)
Our fathers, come and eat kola.
Our lives and those of our children.

THE OTHERS: Amen!

AKUBUEZE: The lives of our kith and kin.

THE OTHERS: Amen!

AKUBUEZE: One who tells us to live, may he also live!

THE OTHERS: Amen!

AKUBUEZE: One who does good things, may good things also come to him!

THE OTHERS: Amen!

AKUBUEZE: And one who does bad things, may bad things also come to him!

THE OTHERS: Amen!

AKUBUEZE: If the child respects the adult, he will reach adulthood!

THE OTHERS: Amen!

AKUBUEZE: May the place this kola came from give back a hundredfold. We will live.

THE OTHERS: Amen! We will live.

(They then break and start to eat the kola, serving wine and drinking and dancing. While the drinking is going on, Amadi gets up and greets them and speaks.)

AMADI: Hey, Igbo kwenụ

CROWD: Haa!

AMADI: Kwenụ,

CROWD: Haa!

AMADI: Kwezuonụ:

CROWD: Haa!

AMADI: Haa! My brothers, and my people, I want to thank you and stand before all of you to thank my brother Uwadiegwu and his wife, and say a few words to them.

I was very happy to see that my brother returned in peace and also to see that he is a big man. I thank God in heaven, that is Chineke to whom we pray, and all the ancestors, that he did not die in that place. I very much regret that we ate and drank in poverty and suffering. I hope that he will forgive us everything in the past, that is all the bad things that my wife and I did to him. We regret it now. Please, people, we beg him to forgive us. Let that be all.

ULUMMA: Please, see my knees, and see my face bowed low. *(She faces Uwadiegwu while speaking.)* Please my son, do not kill me, do not blame me but forget everything I did to you. The chicken says that what is past is

past. Please forgive us all the bad things we did to you, especially that I myself did, and think that I did against you.

UWADIEGWU: It is enough, it has been good, my mistress and my brother. You my kinsmen have done well in coming now to answer the invitation that was issued to you. I also thank all of you for all the good things you said about me yesterday. I also promise all of you that if there is anything I can do for anyone, I will not fail to do it with the help of God in heaven. Thank you.

CROWD: Thank you.

UMUNWANYI: Hei, hei, he, he, hei, he!

AKUBUEZE: You have done well my son! You have done well. Good words like this do not need an answer. To each his own. But I think I should beg you, my son, about what Amadi your brother and his wife said, because our fathers had a proverb that said, "The snail uses a good tongue to go over a thorn." In the same vein, good words make sadness go away. Forgive them, my son, because forgiveness begets forgiveness. One good thing follows another. Have you heard, my son? I tell you these things with a clear mind and a happy face and mature insight. Let it be that way. Friends, isn't that it?

THE OTHERS: That is it, you have said it.

UWADIEGWU: My kinsmen and my father, Akubueze, I have heard what you said. There are no longer bad feelings in me, and I have no frowning face. I receive all that you said with an open heart and face. May God use his hands to remedy everything. You have done well. Thank you.

AMADI AND ULUMMA: Our kinsmen, you have done well. Our son Uwadiegwu and his wife, you have done well. We have heard the voices of all of you. From today forward, it will be for us a song of mother and child, one who falls on his friend, one who falls on his friend. Don't die.

ORINGAQHURUOKU: Those who came here, I greet you. You have seen how the world turns. What is said on the trip to the farm is not what is said on return from it. Babinton Douglas Nwokoro Uwadiegwu is an orphan who is wise.

He sprouted teeth, but he did not bite the one who trained him. They wronged him but he welcomed them with a pure heart; he built them a house, gave them food and clothing, and trained their children. Therefore, men and women here, whenever you see an orphan, try to welcome him.

Speak kindly to him, give him water, give him food, take care of him because not training an orphan well in a proper way causes it to be said that when the orphan sprouts teeth he bites the one who trained him. The world should tell the story of Uwadiegwu from now on.

(Everyone in the play then comes together. They all thank by bowing. Everyone then begins to sing this song while playing music.)

Child without a mother, Une!
Child without a mother, Une!
Child without a mother, Une!
I have suffered, Une!
If one went for firewood, Une!
He called the child without a mother, Une!
If one went to the stream, Une!
He brought along the child without a mother, Une!
If he started to cook food, Une!
He brought the child without a mother, Une!
When the food was cooked, Une!
The child without a mother was chased out, Une!
Child without a mother, Une, lololoo!
I have suffered!

(The play ends. The fire goes out. It is finished.)