

The rain came analysis essay sample

[Environment](#), [Water](#)



A village chief, Labong'o, returns from a council to be greeted by his daughter Oganda, who asks for news about when it will rain. Labong'o is cryptically speechless. Notably, with Ogot's immediate presentation of this critical concern about whether or not rain will come, the reader may at once expect that this concern will be resolved favorably; the title—and there is no evidence that it is meant ironically—assures that “the rain came.” Thus, the tension raised by this concern shifts to a different question: the rain will presumably come, but at what cost? Labong'o's attitude signals that this will weigh heavily on him. In the village, all are confusedly astir. (Traditional Luo society is polygynous, with some men having multiple wives, so a “co-wife” would be another wife to the same man.) Drought appears to be causing great hardship, as the chief has grown thin, livestock are dying, and the people fret for their children. The chief has been able to do little more than pray daily. In his hut alone, Labong'o mourns that his daughter, who wears a glittering chain around her waist, must die.

While as a chief he has committed the lives of himself and his family to the good of the Luo people, as a father, he weeps and cannot bear the thought of losing his only daughter. But he feels the spirits of the ancestors with him in the hut, allowing him no choice. Among the twenty children his five wives have blessed him with, Oganda is Labong'o's favorite. Though the other mothers are jealous, they also shower her with love, especially because she is the only girl. But while Oganda's death would wreck Labong'o spiritually, he understands that to disobey the dictates of the ancestors could potentially mean the destruction of the entire tribe. The medicine man, Ndithi, a rainmaker, was visited in a dream by Podho, a Luo ancestor, who

identified a virgin girl with a chain around her waist as the one who must be sacrificed to the lake monster, at which time rain will pour down.

Beating a drum to assemble the clan members gathered there, Labong'o sends Oganda to her grandmother's hut. He then reports to everyone else the medicine man's stunning assertion that Oganda must die. After Oganda's mother, Minya, faints, the others begin to rejoice, celebrating Oganda as lucky to be the one to save the people. In her grandmother's hut, Oganda imagines that perhaps her impending marriage is being discussed. She would much prefer Osinda, who long ago gave her the chain around her waist and whom she loves, to either Kech or Dimo. When her grandmother appears, Oganda quickly gleans from the words being sung by the villagers and the dismayed look on the elder's face that she is in great danger; feeling like a cornered animal, she knocks her grandmother over to escape—but Labong'o awaits her.

He takes her to a hut with her mother and breaks the news. In the evening, Osinda's kin and other villagers come to congratulate her on her fate, which is considered a great honor; her name will always be remembered by the community. Minya, however, stirred to visceral remembrance of her maternal connections to her daughter, cannot rejoice. Oganda is her only child, while others have many. As the people dance before her through the night, Oganda feels like a stranger among them; if they loved her, how could they celebrate her impending death? Seeing her peers reminds her that they will all have the chance to marry and have families of their own, while she will not. She thinks of Osinda, who remains absent. A morning feast is

prepared, but she does not care to eat anything. Osinda is said to be away on a private visit; she expects to never see him again. That afternoon, Oganda bids tearful good-byes to her parents and finds she has nothing to say to everyone else.

Anointed with sacred oil, which will protect her during the forest journey, she sets off southward toward the lake, which she must reach by sunset of the following day. (This lake is presumably the vast body of water known to the Luo as Lolwe and now known internationally as Lake Victoria.) Along the way, she comforts herself by singing a song mourning her fate; people hear her song, and all give slight solace by assuring her that she is doing what must be done. At midnight, Oganda falls asleep beneath a tree. Waking late in the morning, Oganda walks for hours before reaching the sacred swath of land adjoining the lake, where only those in touch with the spirit world can cross. Among the crowd that gathers there—with none suggesting she save her own life, in light of the desperate need for rain—a child asks her to bring an earring to her sister, who died a week earlier and forgot to take it to the underworld. Oganda gives the girl what remains of her food and water.

Upon entering the sacred land, Oganda becomes acutely alert and inclined to flee. But she advances until reaching sand, to find that the water has retreated far from the usual shoreline. The lake monster, which her people never describe or talk about, becomes a vague but fearsome and haunting presence in her mind. Plodding ahead as the sun descends, she feels exhausted and parched, meanwhile sensing that she is being followed. When the sun threatens to set before Oganda reaches the water, she begins to

run—at which point she realizes some sort of moving bush is indeed following her. She races away, but the creature catches her, and she faints. Upon waking, she finds Osinda bent over her; at first speechless, she pleads with him to let her die in order to bring rain. But Osinda urges her to run away with him to “the unknown land” to escape the anger of the ancestors and the monster.

She insists that she is cursed, that misfortune would follow her forever, but he covers her in a leafy coat like his own and assures her that it will shield her from vengeful spirits. They flee. Crossing the sacred land, they look back to see the sun just touching the surface of the water. Oganda is fearful, but Osinda confidently urges faith. As they reach the barrier, the sun sets, and Oganda wails in dismay. But as they run, dark clouds gather, thunder resounds, and “the rain came down in torrents.”