

# Things fall apart: chapters 15-25

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



## Chapter 15

The chapter is set during the second year of Okonkwo's exile. Obierika goes to visit him, bringing bags of cowries. Okonkwo, Uchendu, and Obierika converse in Okonkwo's hut and Obierika brings news of a tribe's downfall, Abame. The tribe had been completely wiped out by white men.

The clan came across a single white man on an iron horse and were stunned to hear him speaking a different language than them. When they consulted their oracle about the man, the oracle stated to kill the man as the white man would destroy their village. After killing him, they tied up his iron horse to a tree, for they feared it would run away and tell more what happened. A group of three white men then discovered the clan later and saw the tied up iron horse, they quickly fled.

The next morning, the town was surrounded and slaughtered, so the oracle's vision came true. Okonkwo is furious they would kill a man who said nothing. The fear of white men has grown in the characters. Obierika tell Okonkwo about the events in their village and says he is going to keep harvesting and selling yams off of Okonkwo's farm and give him the cowries from it, and that is why he carries the bags of them.

## Chapter 16

The chapter takes place another two years after the last, a total of four years of his exile have now passed, where Obierika again visits Okonkwo with more unpleasant news. White missionaries have settled in Umuofia and are actively trying to convert the clansmen to their religion. He then informs

Okonkwo that Nwoye is one of the ones listening to their words. Obierika is taken back to when it first happened, Nwoye tells him he listens to them because he finds their songs soothing to listen to.

The white men use a translator from a different dialect to spread their religion, so many of their words get twisted. The men of Mbanta completely disregarded their word after the white men said all of their gods were fake and not the one true god. Okonkwo believes the missionaries are crazed by Obierika's stories and hopes the rest of the village thinks so as well, as he would like to chase them out with the men of Mbanta.

## Chapter 17

The white men don't intend to leave, as they seem to constantly preach about their God. They eventually ask land to build their church on, and the rulers of Mbanta give them a section of the Evil Forest as a joke. The men aren't phased by the evil spirits in the forest and start clearing land to build on. The villagers expect them to die within 28 days, as that is always the max amount of time the gods will allow men to do as they please before killing them.

When the men don't die, more people convert. Nwoye only ever lingers outside the church and never goes inside for fear his father will find out. Every Sunday, Mr. Kiaga, the interpreter, invites the village to worship. Okonkwo hears of his son befriend many of the white men, and beats him badly. Uchendu arrives in the middle of the beating and makes Okonkwo stop.

Nwoye then leaves and moves to Umuofia to join the white's school, but vows to return for his mother, brothers, and sisters. Okonkwo blames his chi and bad fortune for all of this, while telling himself Nwoye wasn't worth helping. Okonkwo seems to think Christianity weak and effeminate, so with his morals and personality, he finds it egregious.

## Chapter 18

The two groups, Mbanta and Christians, start to have confrontations and some fights break out as the influence of the Christians grow. Converts and villagers threaten each other back and forth, the converts get beaten badly. The white men also start applying their government systems to the people, they prosecute Igbo for killing converts and missionaries. The church starts accepting outcasts and quickly become some of the most powerful.

The most unimaginable crime, killing the royal python, is found dead. The elders make all Christians outlaws to the land. Okoli, the suspected killer, is found dead to an illness. The clansmen believe this is their gods fighting back, so they don't take any further actions against them, as they believe the gods will settle this whole conflict for them.

## Chapter 19

As Okonkwo's banishment years are coming to an end, he regrets how he spent his time. As Okonkwo nears the last month of his banishment, he celebrates with the people of Mbanta. Okonkwo brings huge amounts of food, so much that it's comparable to a wedding celebration. Okonkwo also

sends money to Obierika to begin building huts for him in Umuofia so he has a place to stay when he returns.

Okonkwo says the feast is just for everyone to meet, but it is mainly just for a show of gratitude for taking him in for seven years. Nearing the end of the gathering, an elder warns the young ones, as he notices kinship is becoming rarer and much less prominent. This allows for Christianity to overcome them and destroy their religion. He then thanks Okonkwo for his show of generosity.

## Chapter 20

Okonkwo realizes that he's been away from his clan for so long, he has most likely lost all his power and titles in the clan. Despite this, he has very high expectations of himself and is determined to regain all of it and more upon returning. Okonkwo gathers his children together and tells them if they want to be women, they can go follow in Nwoye's footsteps, but he will haunt, disown, and curse them. Okonkwo again wishes that Ezinma was a boy, with how well she listens and the potential he sees in her.

Ezinma has listened to his father and turned down many marriages in order to marry a man in Umuofia to make Okonkwo more powerful. She is nicknamed the Crystal of Beauty because of her looks. The Christians now have deeper and more powerful roots in Umuofia, with their influence now affecting leaders of the clan. Obierika mentions the name of the book, things fall apart, as that is what the white men have done to the clan, as they are no longer united as one.

## Chapter 21

Okonkwo battles the opinion of his people about the white men in this chapter. He despises them and wants to rid them of their clan, but many do not agree as they have brought a true economy to the people. Mr. Brown, one of the missionaries, is the most respected. He is the one to keep the peace between the clan and the converts.

To convert more people, he talks with Akunna, a religious man of Igbo, about religion. Brown realizes that directly attacking their gods will not yield any success, and instead gives positions to those that do convert. These people are to send their children to the school to convert. Okonkwo's daughters marry and his sons gain power and respect in the clan, but he is still hung up on how soft the Umuofians have become to allow the white men to completely change their way of living.

## Chapter 22

A new missionary, Mr. Smith, replaces Brown and is much harsher when it comes to opposing religions. He sees religion as Christianity or nothing, so he has no respect for any Igbo practices or beliefs. His approach to converting the clan is to not try and get more, but to give the ones they have a deeper understanding of the religion. Enoch, a convert, unmask one of the egwugwu while they were worshipping the earth goddess.

The Mother of the Spirits weeping is heard throughout the town, and the egwugwu sought to get revenge on Enoch for what he has done. That following day, they destroyed his huts and headed to the church to kill him.

Mr. Smith hides Enoch from the egwugwu as they approach. After a brief conversation and a deliberate mistranslation by Okeke, the interpreter, the egwugwu burn the church to the ground, but refuse to kill any of the Christians.

### Chapter 23

Okonkwo is extremely pleased by the actions of the egwugwu, with him being one of them again, as he feels like the clan is finally coming back to its old faith. The days following the burning of the church, all the men carry around weapons in case of a retaliation. Mr. Smith complains to the District Commissioner about what has happened and the egwugwu are immediately summoned to speak with him. They bring weapons with them, but are ambushed along the way and arrested.

The clan is now under England's system of government according to the District Commissioner. Their release is at two hundred bags of cowries, they do not respond and are thrown in jail. The kotma, or soldiers basically, are told to treat them with respect but do not. They shave the heads of the egwugwu and starve them. The bail is eventually paid by the village as they threaten to hang the men if they do not pay.

### Chapter 24

The egwugwu are sent home shortly after, and the village crier beats his gong. Okonkwo swears vengeance for the way he is treated, even if the rest of Umuofia does not believe he should. In the town meeting, Okonkwo spots Egonwanne, a man notorious for stopping the Umuofians from going to war.

Obierika asks if he is scared of him stopping them again, to which Okonkwo responds vehemently that he doesn't care about Egonwanne and will fight no matter what the clan decides.

Okika, one of the egwugwu, speaks to the people and asks the men of Umuofia to fight against the white men, even though they would also be fighting their own men who joined them. Five kotma appear and order their meeting to stop. Okonkwo approaches them teeming with rage and in a split second, pulls out his machete and completely decapitates the kotma who ordered the stop. The men of Umuofia go into a spree, but no one tries to run after the four remaining kotma. Okonkwo realizes that because the men have escaped, Umuofia is not going to be waging war against the white men.

## Chapter 25

The District Commissioner and some kotma demand to see Okonkwo, but he is nowhere to be found. The District Commissioner gets more and more outraged the more he looks, as he cannot find Okonkwo. Okonkwo is then spotted hanging from a tree, he killed himself. It is considered evil for a man to take down the body of someone who committed suicide, so they pay the missionaries to take down and bury the body.

During the burial ceremony, Obierika has an outburst of rage and shouts at the men for driving Okonkwo to kill himself, he is ignored by all of them. The District Commissioner thinks to himself about putting the events of Okonkwo into a book he is writing, he first wants to set aside a whole chapter about him, but instead decides to just put him into a single paragraph.