Things Fall Apart: Chapter summaries

Part 1

Chapter 1

* Okonkwo is introduced by his fame and reputation.
* His father, Unoka, is then presented as a lazy and worthless individual with some musical talent but barely able to support his family.
* Life in Umuofia is described by ritual and ceremonies and with an expansive language of proverbs.
* Ritual, ceremony, language
* Father and son

Chapter 2

* Gathering at market place
* Ideas that violence and strength = respect
* Murder of a daughter of Umofia
* Boy of 15 and a virgin given as payment for the death
* Okonkwo commanded to look after the boy
* Okonkwo fears to resemble his father
* Shows Okonkwo’s household and how he rules his household
* His prosperity as a result of this hard work
* Traditions and values, difference in cultures, respect

Chapter 3

* Find out Okonkwo didn’t inherit farm from family
* Find out that everyone thinks his father was lazy including the Oracle
* Okonkwo borrowed yams to from Nwakribie- grew the farm by himself
* Father and son relationship, money, friendship, ownership

Chapter 4

* Lots of cultural language
* Focus on the clan and their way of life
* There order and balance opposes the missionaries
* Positive description of Okonkwo’s power and authority
* Okonkwo given a boy to care for description lacks emotion he grows fond on the boy
* Men authority over women shown in argument with wives
* Peace week is described
* Introduced to Okonkwo’s family structure shows structure of the clan acts as a microcosm of society and culture

Chapter 5

* Preparations for the ‘feast of the new yam’
* Okonkwo loses his temper and beats his wife Ekwefi and fires a warning shot at her
* Ekwefi remembers the wrestling match where he won her heart
* Okonkwo shows how he represses his feelings by observing his fondness of Emzima but treating her badly
* Festival, tradition, religion, proverbs/stories, women, fear

Chapter 6

* Wrestling match held
* Silk cotton trees held spirits for good children to be born
* contest starts in age order
* elders don’t show excitement
* Okonkwo springs to his feet over one fight showing his passion
* Women discuss their children
* Priestess appears away from her role in the cave
* Ekwefi and priestess friends contrast when Emzima at risk
* Winner of wrestling carried by spectators and chant to him
* Ceremony, custom, strength and masculinity
* Sees sons negative development as a results of Ikemefuna’s influence foreshadows negative future
* Locus descend on the village, they all have a feats
* Oracle says to kill Ikemefuna Oracle says Okonkwo shouldn’t do it but he does.

Chapter 8

* Okonkwo didn’t eat food for two days
* Okonkwo’s clear favouritism for Emzima believes she should have been a boy
* Okonkwo envious of Obierika’s son
* Obierika expresses concerns regarding consequences of Okonkwo’s murder of Ikemefuna
* Oldest man in Ire and his wife die
* Meeting to discuss bride price for Emzima and Obierika’s son = twenty bags on cowries and to discuss other clan customs
* Customs and traditions, ceremony, family dynamic, friendship and religion

Chapter 9

* Emzima (daughter) is ill
* Her mother has lost nine children One believed to be an evil spirt who was killed in the evil forest
* Emzima has to dig her iyi-uwa to break the bond with the world and so she doesn’t get ill
* Religion and belief shown through evil spirits tradition and superstition
* Tradition medicine man uses traditional remedies

Chapter 10

* Trial of Uzowulu for beating his wife
* They summon spirits of ancestors to conduct trial the leader is called evil forest
* They hear both sides of argument
* Uzowulu commanded to bring a pot of wine and beg his wife’s return
* Culture, peaceful settlement, against violence towards women and laws

Chapter 11

* Shows African tradition of wives and cooking
* Tortoise story- tortoise disrespects birds help karma and tortoise falls from the sky
* Priestess takes Emzima Ekwefi follows priestess all night and her and Okonkwo wait together outside his cave
* Shows the history of their relationship
* Tradition, community, greed, family

Chapter 12

* The neighbourhood celebrate Obierikas daughters uri (a village celebration where her suiters bring palm wine to the kinsmen group and her friends and family)
* Okonkwo’s worried for his daughter as he fears she’s unwell
* Okonkwo’s daughter is returned to the house by the priestess
* The women prepare for the celebration by cooking dishes
* They have the celebration where they sing songs of praise about each other
* Respect, culture, community, revelry,

Chapter 13

* Ezueau has died and all of the clan are at the funeral as he was the greatest man
* Find out he had three of the four titles of the clan meaning he was buried after dark
* During the celebration after his funeral Okonkwo’s gun explodes and kills Ezueau’s son
* Okonkwo and his family have to flee the clan for 7 years and stay In another village
* Okonkwo’s compound is set on fire destroying everything to clean the space
* Tradition, celebration, ritual, law

Part 2

**Chapter 14**

Okonkwo takes refuge in his motherland in Mbanta. They help him by giving him land and the kinsmen help build his obi and huts. (Community). Amiku’s isa-ifi ceremony = wedding (tradition). Examples of suffering such as banishment and twins.

**Chapter 15**

2nd year into Okonkwo’s exile. Obierkoe brings couries and news of destroyed village Abamo (culture and supposition). A ‘white man’ arrived on an ‘iron horse’. Obiera sells yams to Okonkwo (hope and community).

**Chapter 16**

Religion- missionaries growing, his son Nwoye joins the converts. ‘White man’ comes to tell them to worship false gods and that they should convert, Nwoye felt captivated by the religious hymns they sang.

Father-son relationships- Nwoye claims Okonkwo is not his father and converts to Christianity as he never understood why Ikemefuna was killed.

**Chapter 17**

Nwoye leaves Okonkwo for the Christian missionary. Okonkwo hits Nwoye when he finds out. (fury over mind).

Clan gives missionaries the evil forest. Missionaries survive the gods and pregnant women of twins leaves the clan.

Okonkwo’s uncle stops him from beating Nwoye.

**Chapter 18**

Relationship between the church and the clan- churches acceptance of outcasts.

Outcasts are made to shave their heads (Religion)

Converts kills the royal python knowingly (Tradition)

Female converts banned from stream by violence, restrained by Mr Kiaga

**Chapter 19**

Okonkwo is about to leave the motherland so he prepares a big feast with his wives and kinsmen to eat before he leaves. Oldest member speaks at the feast praising the community spirit of the kinsmen, thanking Okonkwo and most importantly warning the younger generation of fears of the future (foreshadowing).

Fear of the new religion that is invading their community as well as the fear of the young people not standing up against invaders.

Community, religion, respect, impact of colonisation, civilised nature of the nature contrary to the beliefs of the colonist.

Part 3

**Chapter 20:**

O is hopeful about returning to Umuofia despite knowing that things will have changed but hopes to regain and even better his position in society, but there is a level of irony as he ends up dying in shame- tragic hero. “Church had come and led many astray”- ironic because using Christian language against itself, hypocrisy

-Obierika says that the white man “has put a knife on the things that held us together, and we have fallen apart” “Even now they have not found the mouth with which to tell of their suffering”- Voiceless and powerless

-Chapter has been divided into two- hopeful first part and then emerging reality in second part

**Chapter 21:**

-Both perks of the White Missionaries and their downfalls are evaluated: eg ‘much money flowed into Umuofia’, ‘lunatic religion’

-Discussion of religion: Explains Mr Brown’s succession- “In the end Mr Brown’s arguments began to have an effect. More people come to learn us school.”

O’s disappointing return to home “mourned for the clan”. O cannot recognise his people “unaccountably become soft like women”

**Chapter 22:**

Tensions rise between the natives and the white men, when a new missionary arrives Reverend James Smith.

“He saw things as black and white. And black was evil”. The church is burnt down.

**Chapter 23:**

O among the 6 leaders of Umuofia go to see the district commissioner who imprisons them. Handcuffing them and cutting their hair saying they will only be released when they pay 200 bags of cowries. The men of Umuofia eventually gather 250 cowries as the middlemen take a cut.

**Chapter 24:**

Okonkwo and prisoners are set free. This has changed the men they return angry and threatening. They were unable to listen to the district commissioner due to their treatment- Can no longer think of peace.

-O is unable to sleep and eat, he speaks about previous war which Umuofia’s noblest war against Isike. Talks of Okudo’s death and how there are no more worthy men left.

He believes Egonwanne is a coward. Wants revenge doesn’t believe he will have support of the clan. Speaks of rooting out evil. The messengers come to break up the meeting, O kills one and clan lets the rest leave alive. O believes that Umuofia won’t go to war.

Themes: violence, retribution, war, revenge, anger and blame

**Chapter 25:**

O is found dead after having hung himself.

The district commissioner shows little empathy or recognition of the significance of this. Demonstrates the arrogance and ignorance of the colonials. O has become, against his will, like parts of his father that he tried to avoid and is therefore a defeated hero remembered just in a patronising and inadequate, inaccurate comment about the ‘pacification of the tribes’.

Themes: Clash of cultures/customs/respect, father and son, death, tragedy, fallen hero