

it's all coming back to me.

KATE. So you'll soon begin saying Mass again?

JACK. Yes, indeed.

MAGGIE. Here in the house?

JACK. Why not? Perhaps I'll start next Monday. The neighbours would join us, wouldn't they?

KATE. They surely would. A lot of them have been asking me already.

JACK. How will we let them know?

MAGGIE. I wouldn't worry about that. Word gets about very quickly.

JACK. What Okawa does — you know Okawa, don't you?

MAGGIE. Your house boy?

JACK. My friend — my mentor — my counsellor — and yes, my house boy as well; anyhow Okawa summons our people by striking a huge iron gong. Did you hear that wedding bell this morning, Kate?

KATE. Yes.

JACK. Well, Okawa's gong would carry four times as far as that. But if it's one of the bigger ceremonies, he'll spend a whole day going round all the neighbouring villages, blowing on this enormous flute he made himself.

MAGGIE. And they all meet in your church?

JACK. When I had a church. Now we gather in the common in the middle of the village. If it's an important ceremony, you would have up to three or four hundred people.

KATE. All gathered together for Mass?

JACK. Maybe. Or maybe to offer sacrifice to Obi, our Great Goddess of the Earth, so that the crops will flourish. Or maybe to get in touch with our departed fathers for their advice and wisdom. Or maybe to thank the spirits of our tribe if they have been good to us; or to appease them if they're angry. I complain to Okawa that our calendar of ceremonies gets fuller every year. Now at this time of year over there — at the Ugandan harvest time — we have two very wonderful ceremonies: the Festival of the New Yam and the Festival of the Sweet Casava; and they're both dedicated to our Great Goddess, Obi —

KATE. But these aren't Christian ceremonies, Jack, are they?

JACK. Oh, no. The Ryangans have always been faithful to their own beliefs — like these two Festivals I'm telling you about; and they are very special, really magnificent ceremonies. I haven't described those two Festivals to you before, have I?

KATE. Not to me.

JACK. Well, they begin very formally, very solemnly with the ritual sacrifice of a fowl or a goat or a calf down at the bank of the river. Then the ceremonial cutting and anointing of the first yams and the first casava; and we pass these round in huge wooden bowls. Then the incantation — a chant, really — that expresses our gratitude and that also acts as a rhythm or percussion for the ritual dance. And then, when the thanksgiving is over, the dance continues. And the interesting thing is that it grows naturally into a secular celebration; so that almost imperceptibly the religious ceremony ends and the community celebration takes over. And that part of the ceremony is a real spectacle. We light fires round the periphery of the circle; and we paint our faces with coloured powders; and we sing local songs; and we drink palm wine. And then we dance — and dance — and dance — children, men, women, most of them lepers, many of them with misshapen limbs, with missing limbs — dancing, believe it or not, for days on end! It is the most wonderful sight you have ever seen! *(Laughs.)* That palm wine! They dole it out in horns! You lose all sense of time...!

Oh, yes, the Ryangans are a remarkable people: there is no distinction between the religious and the secular in their culture. And of course their capacity for fun, for laughing, for practical jokes — they've such open hearts! In some respects they're not unlike us. You'd love them, Maggie. You should come back with me!

How did I get into all that? You must stop me telling these long stories. Exercise time! I'll be back in ten minutes; and only last week it took me half an hour to do number four. You've done a great job with me, Kate. So please do keep nagging at me.

*(He moves off — then stops.)*