



One day, during a dry season, the usual after harvest feast and sacrificial ceremony was held at Ocola's place. All members of the Lwo family took their sacrifices and spears there to be blessed. In compliance with the customary law all the spears were placed before the ancestral shrine to be blessed. The spears so gathered remained heaped before the shrine for one night in accordance with the custom while rite after rite was performed before the shrine. This was how the spears were sanctified. On the following day, very early in the morning, Ocola decided to go out and check his snares placed around a pool where wild animals usually drank. He got up before the sanctified spears were distributed to their owners and he just picked up the first spear he found from the collection before the shrine. Apparently, the spear he took was one owned by his younger brother, Lwo Junior. He hurried away to the pool.

When Ocola got near the pool he found that a lonely bull elephant had trampled down his snares meant for small game and not elephants and ruined them. The elephant in question was still drinking water in the pool. Ocola was greatly enraged and decided to attack the unwary beast that was wallowing in the mud, He checked the wind and found that it was blowing westwards. As he was on the north of the pool, Ocola shifted his position westwards and approached the elephant carefully against the wind. Due to this Ocola was a bit late in arriving within spear-throwing distance. As he emerged from the bush into the path made by the animals, the elephant was just getting out of the water, going to the other side of the valley.



Ocola made a small foot-hold on the ground, ranged himself well and then threw the spear at the elephant with great force. The spear caught the elephant at the back of its hind-leg. The surprised beast jumped up in terror and the shaft of the spear fell off, leaving the blade sticking firmly in the flesh. The elephant ran away into the jungle. Ocola crossed to the other side of the pool and picked up the spear shaft. He hurried home and reported the incident to his brothers and the assembled elders. Immediately the crowd gathered under the family tree rushed to the shrine to pick up their spears in order to track down the elephant. They were led to the spot by Ocola, followed the elephant until very late in the day and returned home without recovering the lost spear-blade. When Ocola mentioned that the spear he had used did not belong to him, those who had brought their spears to the shrine for blessing checked. Ocola showed them the shaft and his brother, Lwo, quickly recognized it to be his shaft.

He was very much annoyed and began to quarrel with his older brother for having taken his spear. Ocola offered his own good spear to replace the one that had been carried away by the elephant, but Lwo would not accept it. The elders attempted to mediate between them but without success. Lwo was irreconcilable and would not listen to any explanation. The bickering got worse and continued until the evening. The disgusted elders dispersed with great anger, each of them sullenly walking away after failing to persuade Lwo to accept the spear offered by Ocola.

TONG'

THE FIGHT OVER A SPEAR

Ocola also became annoyed with himself for having used the spear of another man while his own spears were within easy reach. In a fit of self-reproach, he asked his wife to prepare a large quantity of safari food that would last for many days, so that he might follow the elephant to where the earth met the heavens". Early in the morning on the following day, Ocola left to go and track the elephant. He bade his old father, Olum, farewell and swore never to return home without Lwo's spear-blade. When his father, mother and wife pleaded with him to return home even if he should fail to recover the spear, Ocola reiterated that he would rather die of starvation in the jungle than return home without the missing spear-blade and be troubled by Lwo again. Both his father and mother blessed him before the ancestral shrine and he left home quietly. He was armed with five spears and some arrows. As the sun was beginning to appear like a big yellow mushroom on the horizon, Ocola was already at the spot where they had left off the chase the previous day. He picked up the plainly visible eastward trail of the huge beast.

He followed it hurriedly towards the mountains. After two days of long march, he began to find fresh droppings. He continued relentlessly and after more than ten days Ocola caught up with the elephant. As the spot where he first sighted the elephant was not bushy enough to hide him well. Ocola kept away from the animal but at a distance from which he could see it well.



The image shows a hand holding a spear, with a forest of trees in the background. The text 'TONG!' and 'THE FIGHT OVER A SPEAR' is overlaid on the image.

TONG!

THE FIGHT OVER A SPEAR

He moved with the wind to avoid being smelt. It was a very irksome business keeping a watch on a lonely elephant that was lazily treading about the field. Fortunately, towards evening the elephant began to move towards a pool, to drink water and wallow in the mud. Ocola approached the unwary beast in great excitement. He first threw small quantities of dust up to find out the direction of the wind; as usual he found that the wind was blowing westwards. This was very good because at that time the elephant was wallowing in the mud close to the western bank of the pool. He placed his food parcel down and selected his best spear. After saying a short prayer, he approached the beast carefully.

When within a few yards of the elephant, Ocola made a small hole in the ground to serve as a foot-hold. He ranged himself properly to try and see if the position was good enough for throwing the spear. After he was satisfied with his position, he amassed all his strength and threw the spear at the elephant with the fullest force he could command.

The spear landed straight at a spot directly against the heart and penetrated the thick skin, perforating the main artery. The terrified elephant jumped up in great agony, but the mud was too deep for it to get out quickly.



TONG'

THE FIGHT OVER A SPEAR

As soon as he reached the simsim fields the sun suddenly corrected its position and he began to see everything normally. Coming close to the village he decided to wait until the sun went down and then enter his home under the cover of darkness. He did this because he wanted to surprise the people. On the following morning Ocola waited until the elders had gathered around his old father, in order to comfort the old man who was not able to eat because he thought his son would not return home, and then emerged from the house with the blade of the spear of his young brother.

The owner, Lwo Junior, was quickly summoned and the spear-blade was handed over to him in the presence of the many elders. After the brief handover ceremony, Ocola told the elders that in order to recover the spear he had faced death and had only been saved by Divine Providence. Therefore, he would regard himself as a foreigner among his own people. The elders thought this was a joke and took no notice of the remark. Because Ocola was known to be a good man, everyone thought this was the end of the bitter quarrel, but they were wrong.

The feud which was to break up the peaceful settlement had been created. The old Olum sensed the danger but did not make a fuss about it for fear of aggravating the matter. He could clearly see a marked change in the general behavior of Ocola and knew that his hitherto peaceful house was doomed to disintegrate. Being too old, there was nothing he could do to save his house from imminent danger.

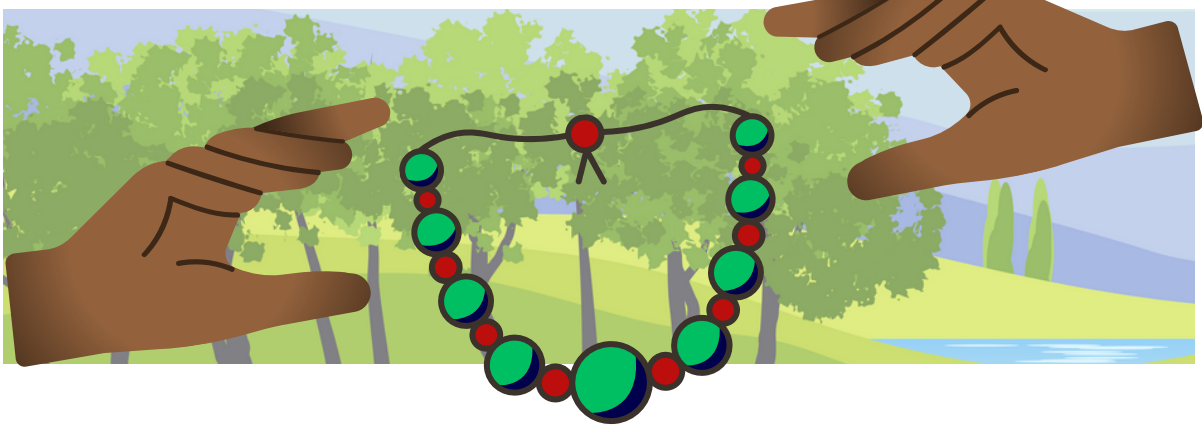
TIGO

THE FIGHT OVER THE BEADS



Trouble started again between the two brothers, Ochola and Luo when Ochola was threading his beads on a string while the children played nearby. The children were holding hands and dancing around in a circle. The son of Luo was among the group of playing children when he saw the bluish round objects in a clay pan before Ochola who was picking up one bead after another and putting a string through the hole.

The boy attracted to the beads broke off from the dancing and went to examine the beads at close quarters. He picked up a few beads to see closely. Ochola turned his head just on time to see the uninvited visitor taking the beads and on realizing, he had been seen, the boy quickly put the beads into his mouth. Ochola ordered him to drop the beads from his mouth but the boy refused and instead swallowed the beads.



Ochola was so enraged that he called Luo, his brother, and the father of the boy and demanded for his beads. The boy having admitted that he had swallowed the beads. Luo offered Ochola a bull for the beads but he refused and turned the offer down and demanded for the very bead that had been swallowed. Ochola's intention was not really to get the bead back but to pester Luo for the past episode about a spear hoping that Luo would learn a lesson about rigidity.

In great anger, Luo who failed to understand the brother's reasoning and in a state of great anger, seized his son, cut his stomach open, took out the beads and handed them angrily to Ochola who petrified with fear, realized the fallacy in thinking that Luo would learn a lesson about rigidity. This caused a great estrangement and because Luo refused to be reconciled, he packed and left his parents home and the community at large.