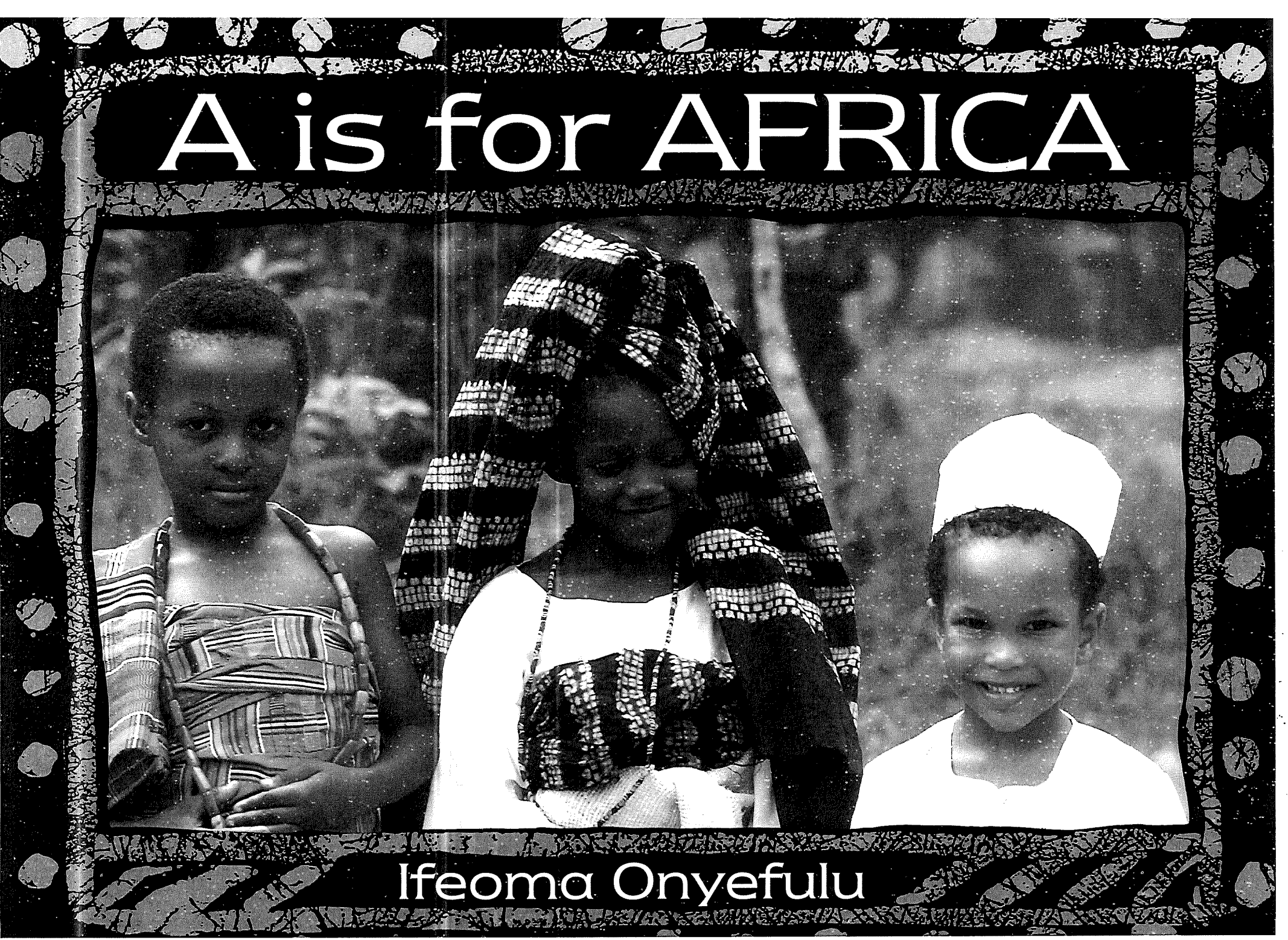
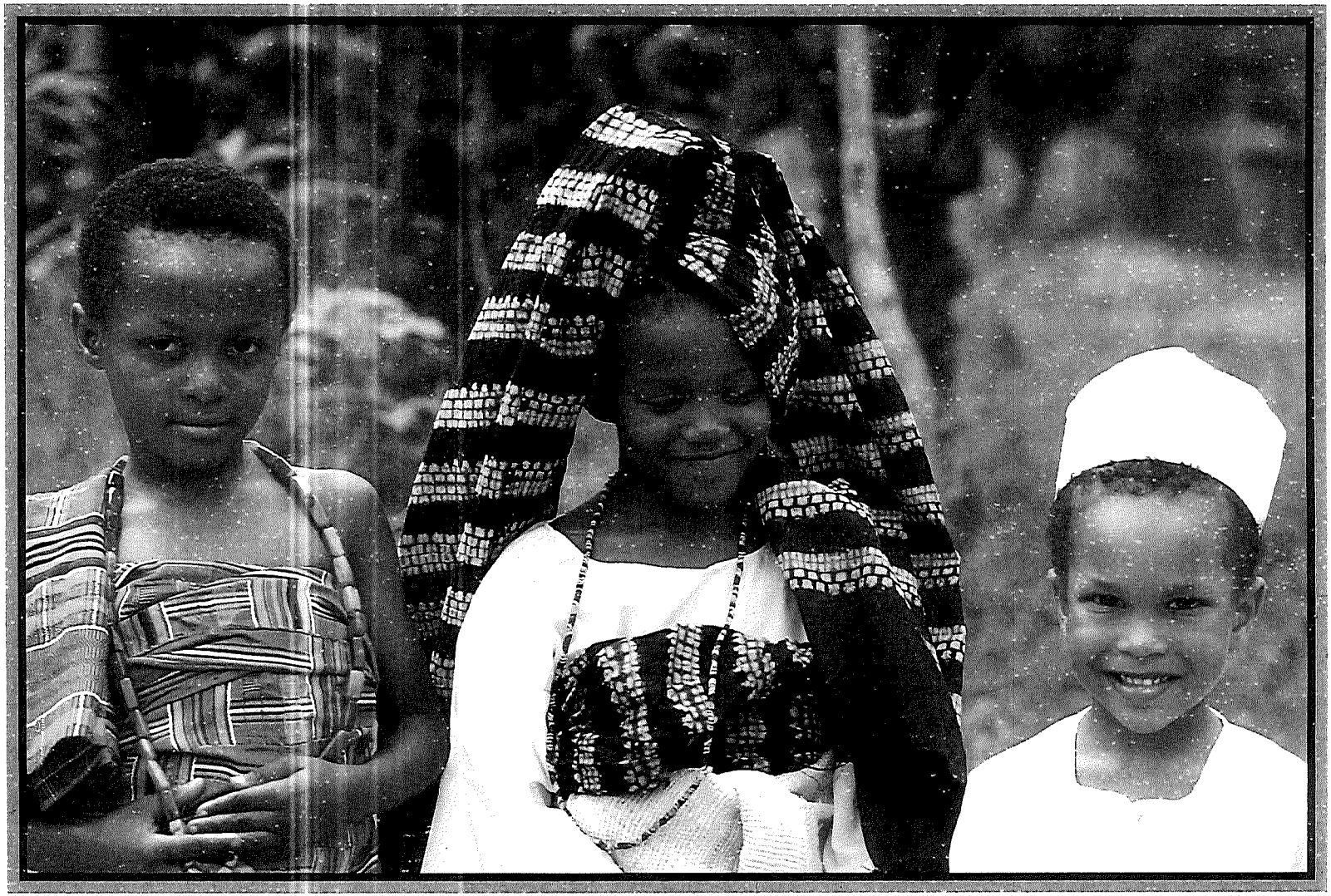
A is for AFRICA



Ifeoma Onyefulu

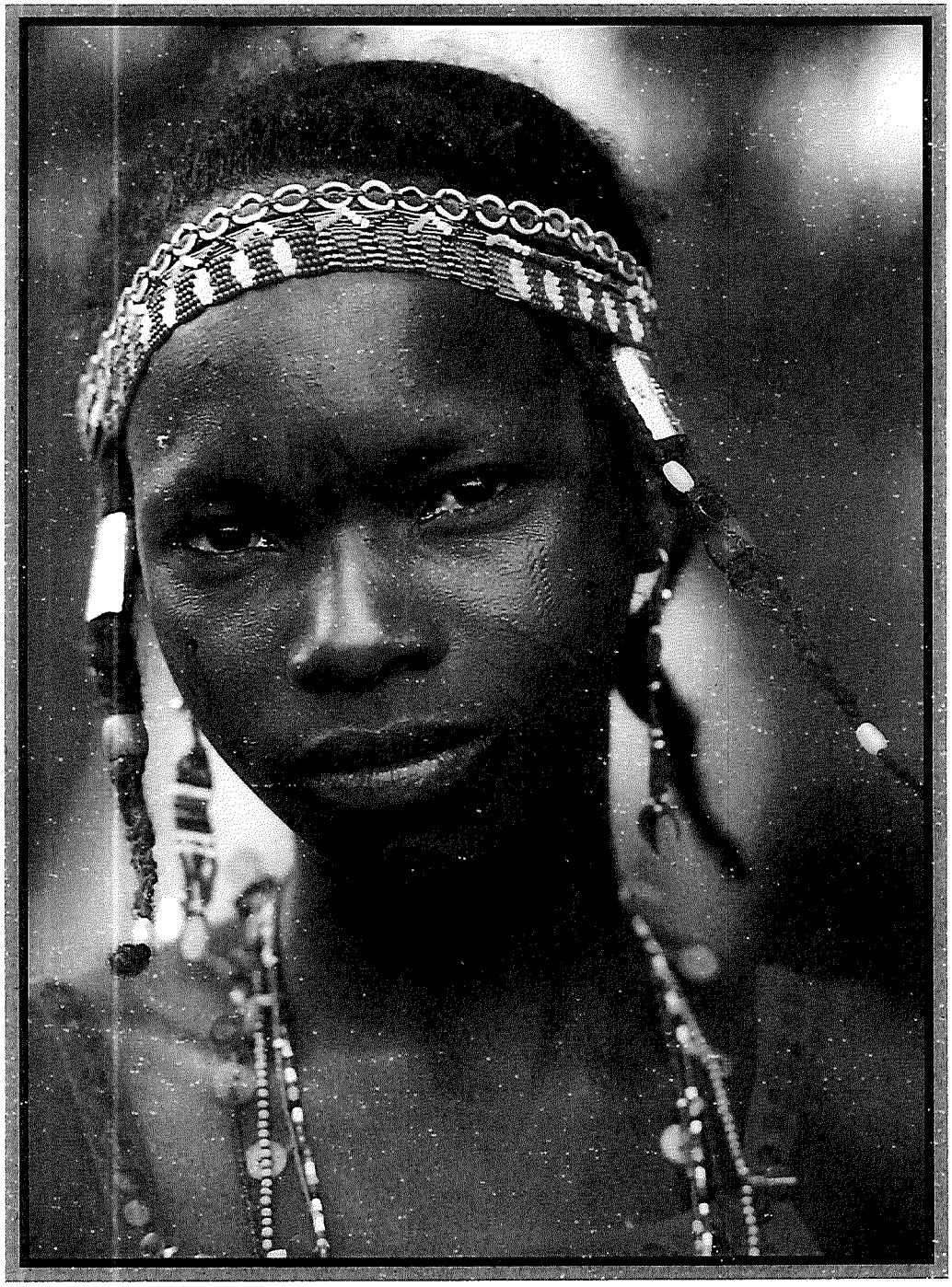


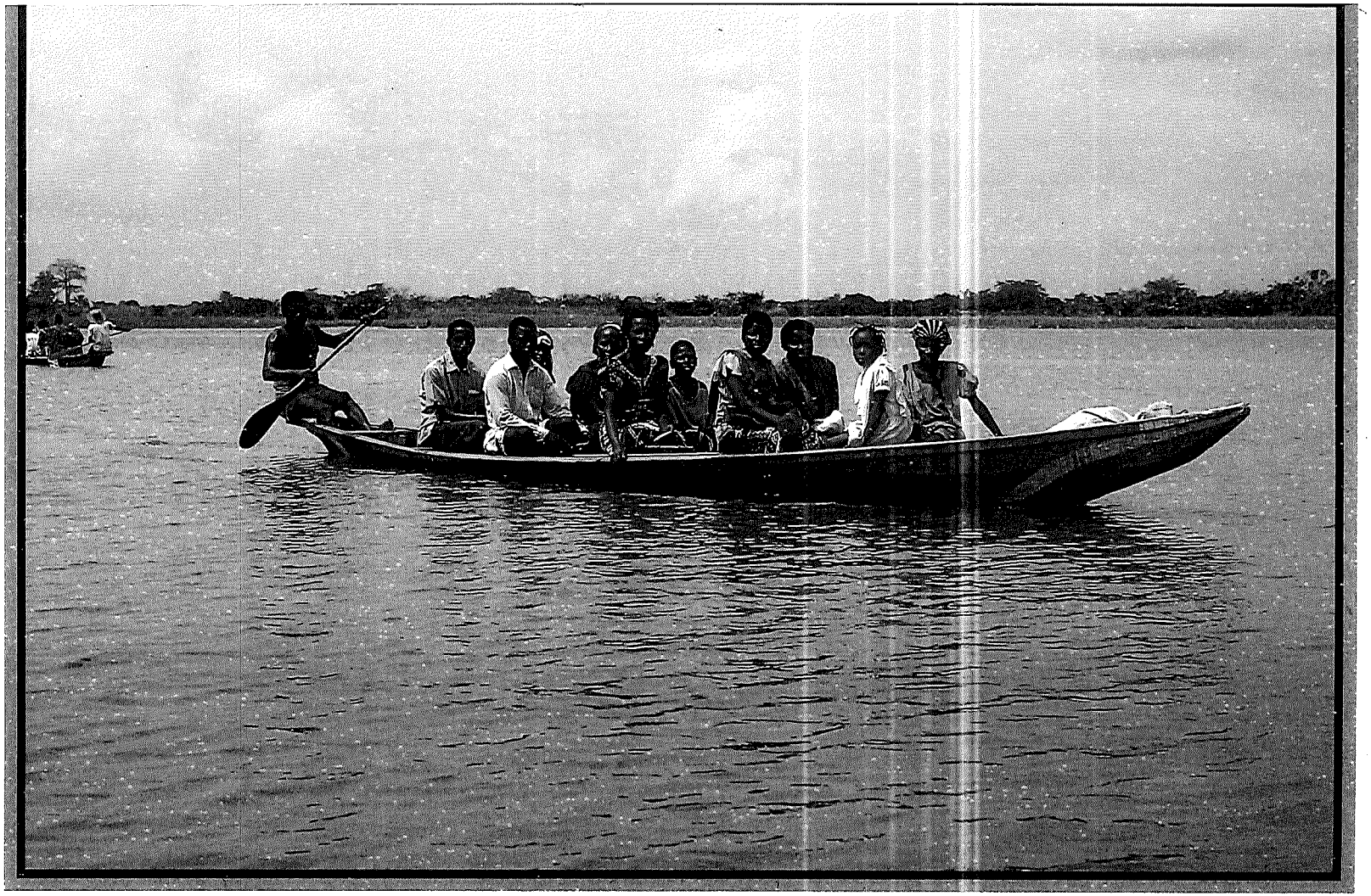
Aa

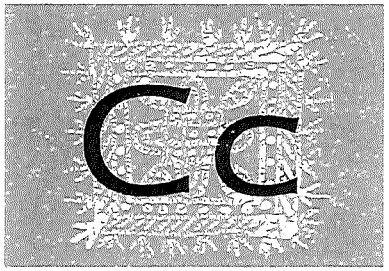
is for Africa, a great continent of many countries and peoples. The African people come from large families called tribes. They may dress differently and speak different languages, but Africa is home to them all.

Bb

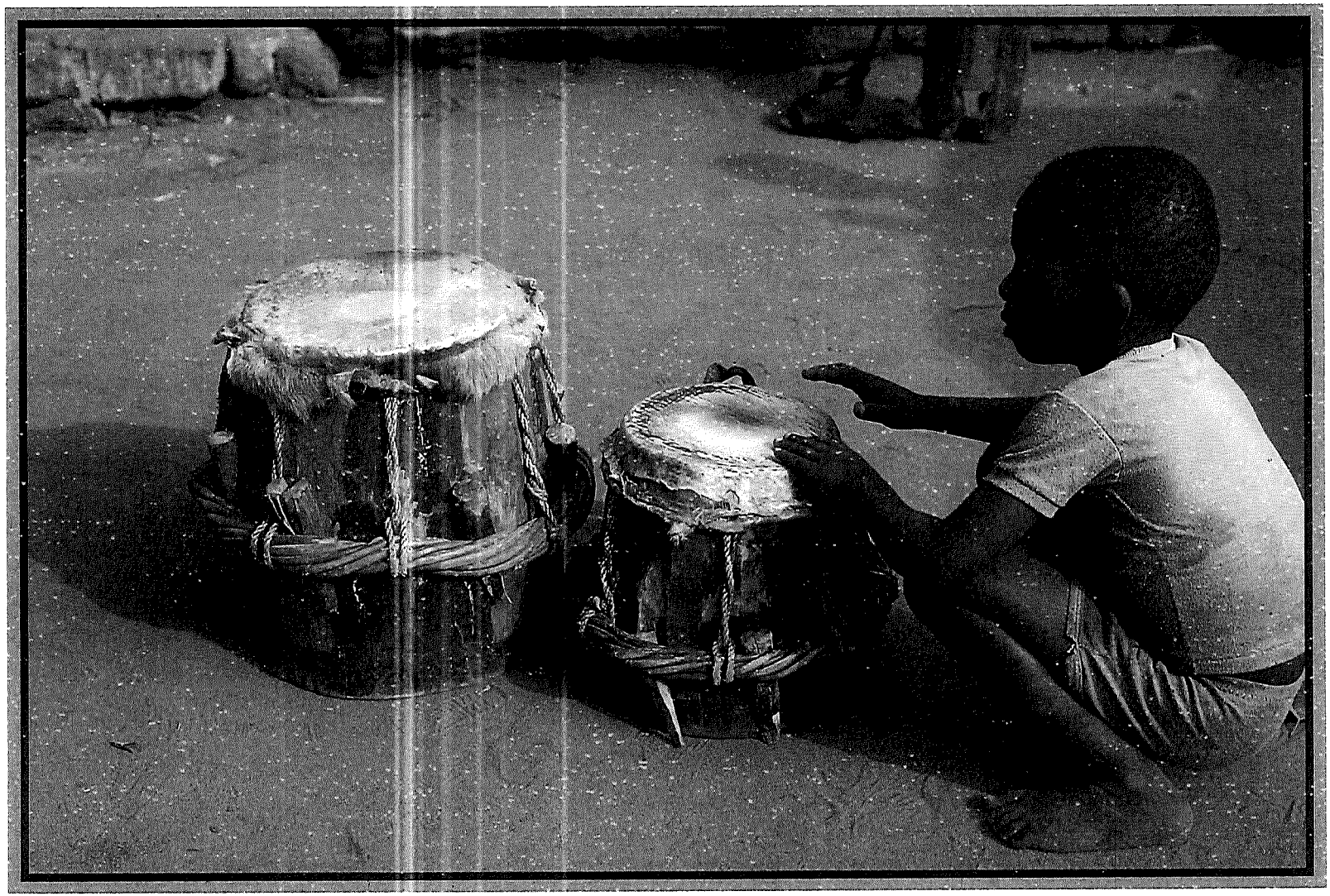
is for the Beads a girl may wear on her head, ears, or neck. They come in lots of different shapes, sizes and colours - red, green, blue and yellow.







is for Canoe, to paddle down the river. Canoes are used for fishing and carrying goods to market. People may visit their friends or take their children to school by canoe.



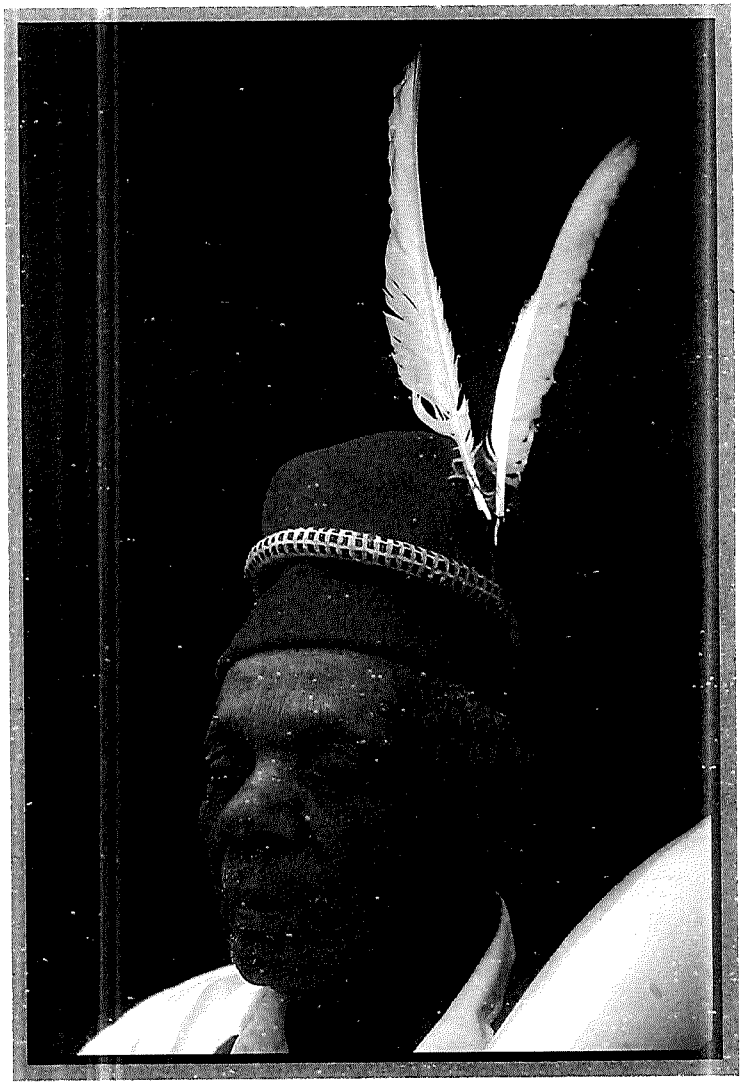
Dd

is for the Drums used to make music and announce special meetings and important news in many villages. When a newborn baby is named, relatives and friends may welcome him or her into the world with the sound of drums.

Ee

is the Embrace we give our loved ones. Africans are very warm people, and this is how they welcome relatives and friends. Dancers embrace at the end of a performance. They embrace to show their happiness and give each other support.





Ff

is for the Feathers an Igbo chief wears on his hat. Hats and feathers are handed down from father to son, when the son reaches middle age. This Igbo chief's feathers are from the eagle. In this tribe, women can be chiefs too, but they don't wear feathers.

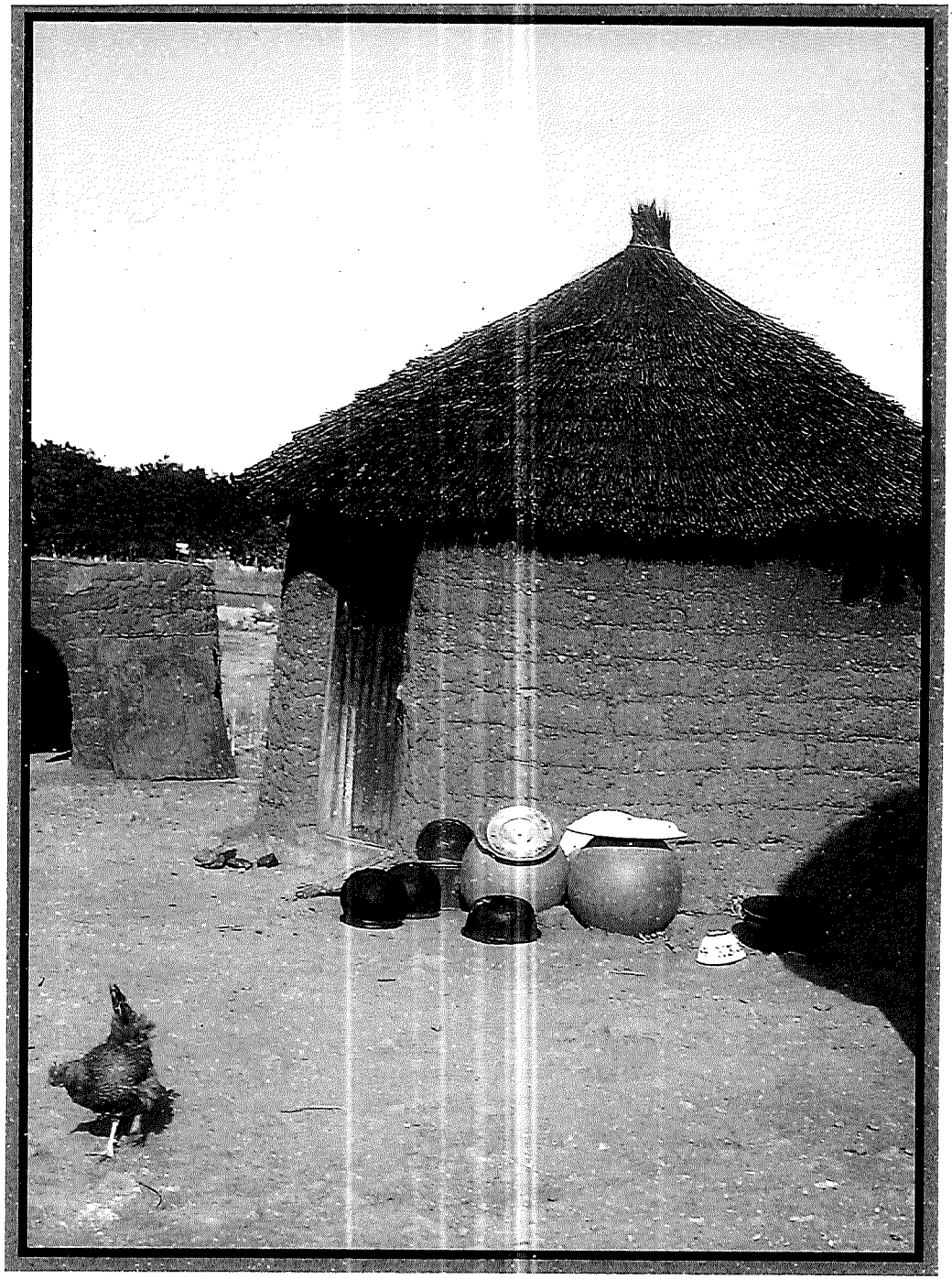


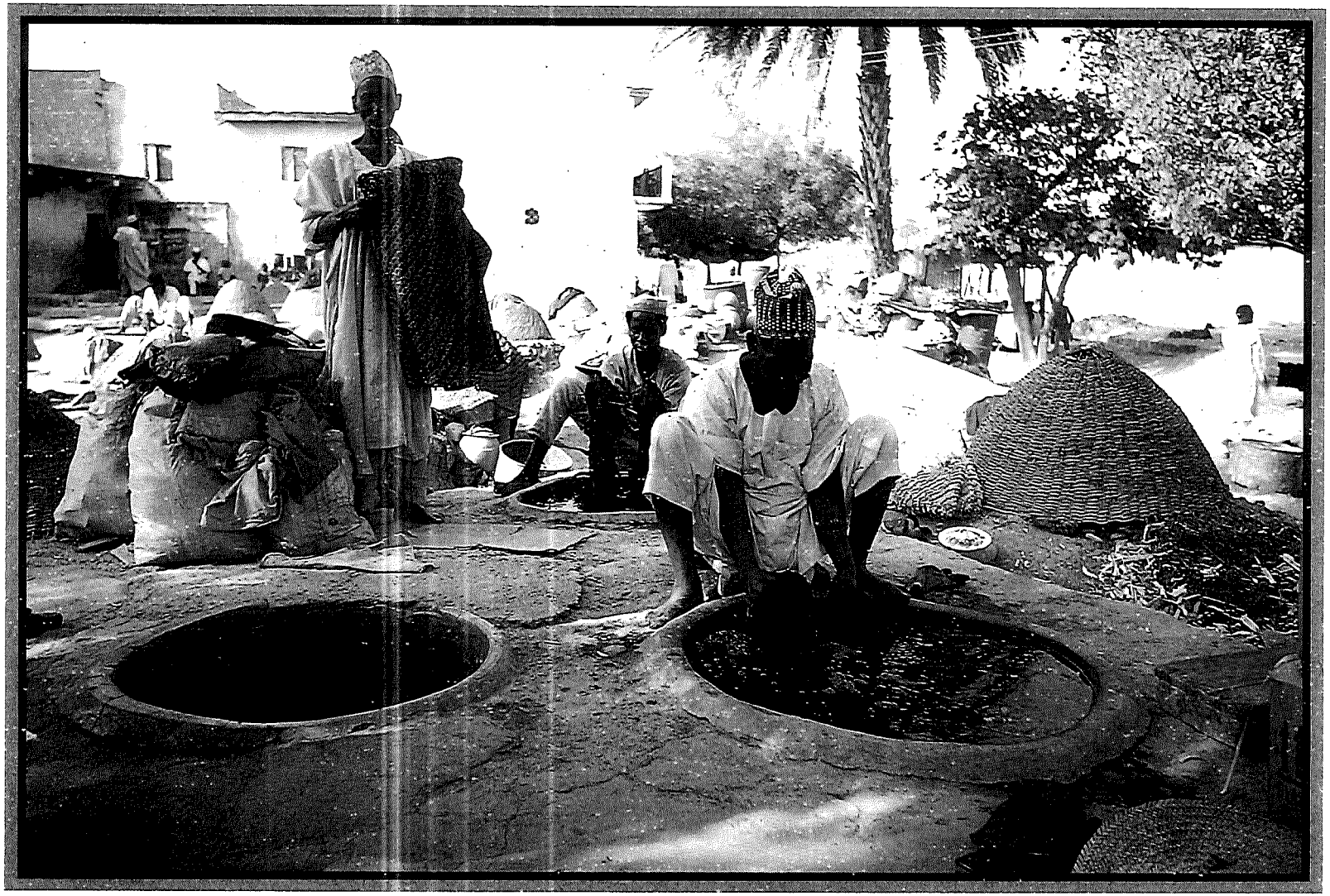
Gg

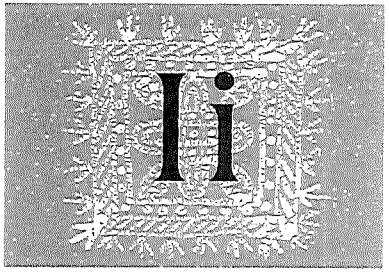
is for Grandmother, telling wonderful stories about animals and people who lived long ago. She is a very special person in family life.

Hh

is for mud Houses, just right for a hot climate. Most places in Africa are hot during the day and cool at night. In the daytime, the mud walls keep out the hot sunshine. At night, the mud bricks release the heat they have absorbed during the day and warm the inside of the house.





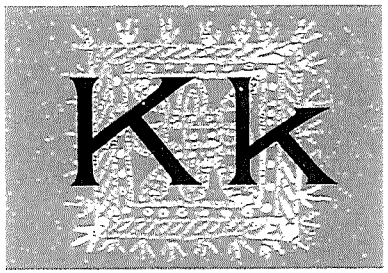


is for Indigo, a blue powder that comes from the indigo plant, which is used to dye clothes. A good way to dye cloth is to leave it to soak in a mixture of powder and water in a very deep hole in the ground. Letting the cloth dry in the open air helps set the colour.

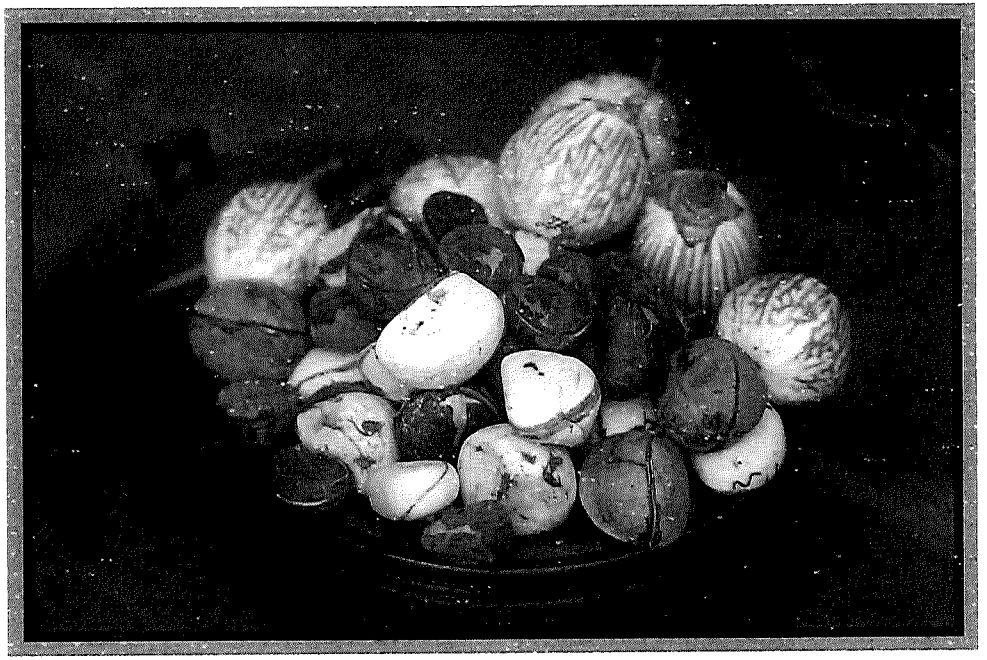


Jj

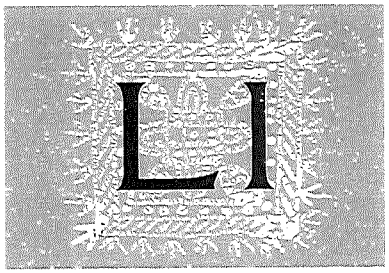
is for Jumping with the other children in the village. In the evenings when the sun is setting, children gather to play. Jumping over a stick is a favourite game.



is for the Kola nuts offered to guests to show warmth and friendship in many parts of Africa. On an important occasion, old men and women may say prayers and the oldest man present breaks the kola nuts. The nuts grow in pods on tall trees, and they keep well after they have been picked.







is for Lamps. Some home-made lamps are made of clay, but these are used milk-tins. They have wicks to burn oil, paraffin or kerosene.

Mm

is for Masquerade, a mask and costume made to honour the spirit of an ancestor. They are sacred objects, brought out only for special occasions. The artists chosen to make masquerades spend months designing them before they show them in public.

