



# BOOKS FROM

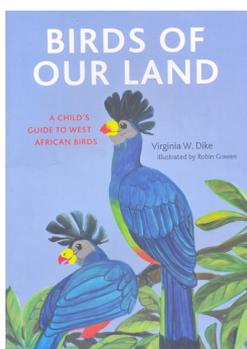
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# Nigeria

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Books from Nigeria were selected by Virginia W Dike against the criteria set for the project.

These are exacting criteria for picture books in a country like Nigeria, which has published few picture books and fewer of good quality. Moreover, there is little tradition of keeping books in print. For this reason, it was difficult to completely meet some criteria. It is difficult to talk of classics, and those one might consider are unlikely to still be in print. I have included three older books (at the end) that to my knowledge are still in print. The content (text, illustration, message) of these are of high quality, though the physical quality in some cases is less so. The others are very recent titles and are by one of two new Nigerian publishers producing picture books of high quality, including high physical quality: Cassava Republic and Farafina. The selection may seem lopsided, but this is what is currently available. It may also be surprising that all titles are in English, but this is another Nigerian reality. Very few children's books are published in Nigerian languages. I have listed the titles in order of year of publication, beginning with the most recent.

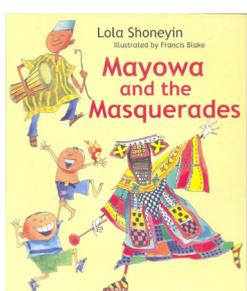


## 1 Virginia W. Dike • Robin Gowen, ill. **Birds of Our Land: A Child's Guide to West African Birds**

Cassava Republic, 2011 (Rev. ed.) • ISBN 978-978-9060-900

Poetic descriptions and vivid illustrations introduce children to 25 notable birds of West Africa, both common ones and more unusual species. The book is designed to encourage careful observation, scientific inquiry and appreciation of the natural world. It begins with an introduction to birds that brings out basic features and hints on how to observe birds and ends with activities intended

to lead children beyond the content of the book to a lifetime of scientific awareness and discovery. The book is envisaged as the first title in a nature series focusing on West Africa. Originally published in 1986 by Fourth Dimension Publishers of Enugu, an early leader in picture book publication, with different illustrations by the same artist

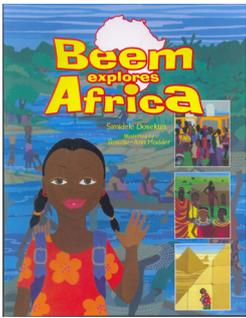


## 2 Lola Shoneyin • Francis Blake, ill. **Mayowa and the Masquerades**

Cassava Republic, 2010 • ISBN 978-978-48518-8-6

Mayowa is reluctant to leave his computer games to join his parents on a trip to visit Granny in a village in Western Nigeria. However, Granny teams him up with a neighbor boy who shows Mayowa the sights, including a festival of colorful masquerades. The two are so carried away with

the dancing that they temporarily lose their way, but all ends well. Finally a tired but happy Mayowa is on his way home, now convinced that the village offers even more excitement than his room in the city.



### 3 Simidele Dosekun • Rosalie-Ann Modder, ill. **Beem Explores Africa**

Farafina, 2009 • ISBN 978-978-079-003-9

In this vividly illustrated introduction to the African continent, a young girl, Beem, guides readers in exploring a varied geography of cities and cultures, wildlife and landscapes.

She explores ancient places in Egypt, Mali and Zimbabwe; the modern cities of Cairo, Lagos and Johannesburg; rivers, lakes and mountains; rain forests, savannah and deserts.

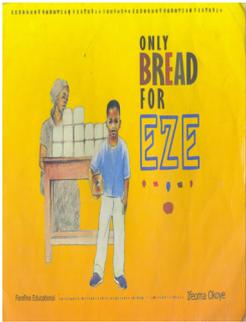
### 4 Ifeoma Okoye • Segun Adejumo, ill. **Only Bread for Eze**

Farafina, 2009 • ISBN 978-978-48012-1-8

Eze is so enamored with bread that he wants to eat nothing else. After repeated refusal to eat the nutritious and varied dishes prepared by his mother, Eze's parents determine to teach him a lesson, putting him on a diet of nothing but bread. He quickly weakens and tires of the monotonous diet, thereby learning his lesson and starting to enjoy other food as well. This book is

similar in theme to the American picture book, *Bread and Jam for Frances*.

Originally published by Fourth Dimension Publishers of Enugu in 1980, with different illustrations, this is the best known of three Eze books, all originally published by Fourth Dimension in 1980 and in a revised edition by Farafina in 2009.

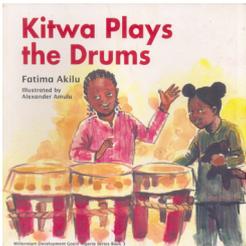


### 5 Fatima Akilu • Alexander Amulu, ill. **Kitwa Plays the Drums**

Cassava Republic, 2009 • ISBN 978-978-903-751-3

This and the next three titles are in a series of eight books highlighting the Millennium Development Goals. In this title Kitwa is a girl thoroughly fed up with the favored treatment received by her brother. Kitwa's mother and grandmother pronounce her dream of playing the drums unladylike and say differential

treatment is just the way things are. However, things change when the family visits cousins who take a very different view. There, everyone joins in the housework and plays musical instruments. A family band is formed, with Kitwa playing the drums and her grandmother realizing her childhood dream of playing the flute.

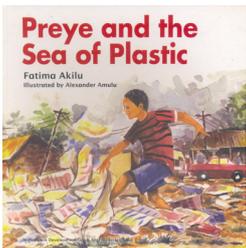


### 6 Fatima Akilu • Alexander Amulu, ill. **Preye and the Sea of Plastic**

Cassava Republic, 2009 • ISBN 978-978-48943-8-8

Preye is completely upset over the rubbish taking over the environment around him, especially discarded plastic bags. He determines to do something about it and together he and his friends mobilize to raise awareness. Together

they research and produce a film that is shown all over the country and begins to effect changes in their community and beyond. It even takes them to meet the President and to realize that they too might one day lead the country.

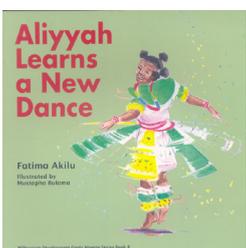


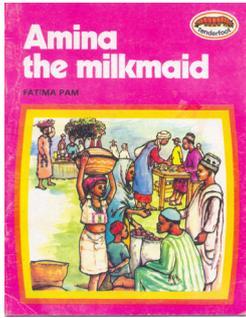
### 7 Fatima Akilu • Mustapha Bulama, ill. **Aliyyah Learns a New Dance**

Cassava Republic, 2009 • ISBN 978-978-48943-9-5

In this title centering on developing global partnerships, Aliyyah enters a regional dance competition. With helpful hints and encouragement from her brother, she perfects her steps and wins at the African regional level in Tanzania. This leads

to participation in an international competition in Sweden. With the support of her brother and classmates, and indeed the entire nation, she ties with a Serbian girl for first place and the two are rewarded with exchange visits to each other's countries.

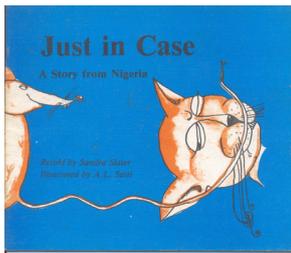




**8** Fatima Pam • K. Ofori Pani, ill.  
**Amina the Milkmaid**  
 Longman Nigeria, 1988 • ISBN 978-139-793-4

This is a romantic fairy tale set in ancient northern Nigeria. During an everyday trip to market, Amina is kidnapped and begins a long journey into slavery farther north across the desert. Bought by a king, Amina is so good in caring for her mistress that she is given her

freedom. The tale does not end there, for on the way home she meets the prince—and they fall in love and marry. The attractive illustrations portray many aspects of life—from markets, to clothing and means of transport, to architecture and marriage customs.



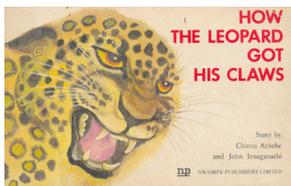
**9** Sandra Slater • A. L. Satti, ill.  
**Just in Case**  
 University Press Limited, 1983 • ISBN 978-154135-0 • Outside Nigeria ISBN 0-19-575569-3

In this cat and mouse story, a hungry cat comes up with the stratagem of playing dead. The mice fall for it, arranging a feast around the cat's body to celebrate the demise of their enemy. Unfortunately, at the height of the festivities, the cat suddenly comes to life

and pounces on the chief mouse, carrying him off and eating him. And this is why mice will always run away from cats, even those that appear quite dead. The simple, repetitive text lends itself to reading aloud and the amusing cartoon drawings equally tell the tale.

**10** Chinua Achebe and John Iroaganachi, with *The Lament Of The Deer* by Christopher Okigbo • Adrienne Kennaway (1979, Nwamife Ed. and 1989 East African Educational Publishers), Mary Grandpre (2011, Candlewick Press in US), ill.  
**How the Leopard Got its Claws**

Nwamife, 1972, 1979 • ISBN 978-124-007-5 • East African Publishing House, 1976 • East African Educational Publishers, 1989 • Candlewick Press, 2011 • ISBN 978-9966463647 and 9780763648053



Previous edition: Originally published by Nwamife, Enugu, one of the first indigenous Nigerian publishers, in 1972 with black and white illustrations by Per Christiansen and in 1979 with coloured illustrations by Adrienne Kennaway. This edition is available only in occasional old stock, but there have been later editions, in Nigeria, Kenya and the United States, that are still in print. In this tragic mythic tale of a world gone wrong, kind king leopard rules without force and the animals cooperate with each other

until the dog spoils this peaceable kingdom. With his sharp teeth, he seizes control, drives out king leopard and soon has the fickle animals singing his praises. Disillusioned, the leopard goes in search of weapons that will enable him to regain his kingdom—sharp teeth and claws and a terrifying roar. He succeeds but ever after rules by force, while the dog becomes the servant of man. The 1979 edition had evocative impressionistic illustrations, but those in the new edition appear computer-generated.