

## Proverbs in *Things Fall Apart*

### PART ONE

#### *Chapter One:*

- Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.
- Our elders say that the sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them. I shall pay my big debts first.

#### *Chapter Two:*

- When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk.

#### *Chapter Three:*

- As our people say, a man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness.
- As the saying goes, an old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb.

#### *Chapter Four*

- 'Looking at a king's mouth,' said an old man, 'one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast'.
- But the Ibo people have a proverb that when a man says yes his chi says yes also.

#### *Chapter Eight:*

- A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches.
- A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam with its mother puts into its palm.
- When mother-cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth.

### PART TWO

#### *Chapter Fourteen:*

- The saying of the elders was not true – that if a man said yea his chi also affirmed. Here was a man whose chi said nay, despite his own affirmation.

### PART THREE

#### *Chapter Twenty Four:*

- My father used to say to me: "Whenever you see a toad jumping in broad daylight, then know that something is after its life."