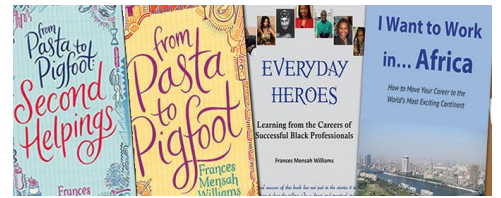


# FRANCES MENSAH WILLIAMS'

# BOOK CLUB

## NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 1 | October 2019 |



## WELCOME DEAR READER!

Thank you for signing up to my Book Club and joining me on my journey as an author.

This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know my readers and to share my projects and ideas with you.

I also look forward to getting your feedback on my books – past and future – and I'll be giving members a sneak preview of my newest novel in the next issue, so look out for that!

2019 has been a whirlwind of a year and I can't believe it's already drawing to a close. In this issue, I'll give you a peek into my 2019 adventures and the challenge of writing books with international settings. Enjoy!

## MY YEAR OF TRAVEL

2019 has been a year for visiting places new and old and finding inspiration. (p.2)

## DRINKING WINE IN AFRICA

**'But...they're in a wine bar! Is this really Africa?'**

Why we need more stories set in different places around the world. (p.3)

## WIN A COPY OF PASTA!

**Win a signed copy of *From Pasta to Pigfoot* by answering one simple question. (p.4)**

# 2019 – MY YEAR OF TRAVEL

It's always so inspiring to visit new places and learn about different cultures. Meeting people and hearing about their lives can also be a great prompt for new story ideas.

## 2019 started in...gorgeous green New Zealand!

While visiting family, I also got to surprise one of my readers with a phone call. Alison, quite coincidentally, had contacted me a couple of weeks earlier and said this:

*'I've just finished From Pasta To Pigfoot ... it's taken me, happily, down memory lane and I loved every page of it. I am 73 and I have lived in New Zealand since 1957...I could positively see and smell Accra markets, the dresses, the Kente cloths, the colours, the Hilife and drums. Your book was a very lucky random choice from my little local library.'*

We had a wonderful phone chat and I look forward to catching up with Alison again.



## June saw my first visit to beautiful Costa Rica!

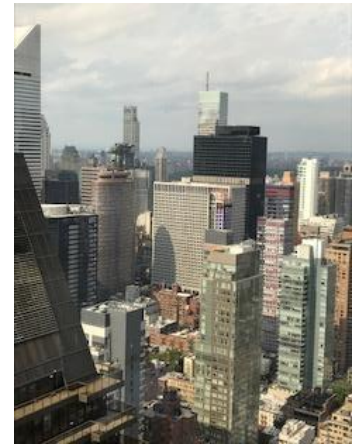


Plantains for breakfast, lunch and dinner...sheer heaven!!

Costa Rica was a delight. Our guide on our walking tour of the capital, San José, described it as a country that is really a small town. Progressive, peace loving and eco-friendly, it has beaches on both the Pacific and Atlantic (referred to as the Caribbean side).

Fun fact: Costa Rica is one of the few countries without an army – it was abolished in 1948, ironically through a military coup!

## September found me in The Big Apple!



Back on the American continent, it was time for a bit of city life. Some amazing views of the famous New York skyline and the East River running past the United Nations headquarters.

## DRINKING WINE IN AFRICA?



### **'But...they're in a wine bar! Is this really Africa?'**

My first reaction when I heard this comment – it came up during a friend's Book Club's discussion about *From Pasta to Pigfoot* – was to giggle. And then feel highly indignant. And then sigh.

In the novel, Rocky takes Faye on a date to a jazz club (and, yes, it's fair to say that Faye drinks more than her fair share of wine during her stay in Ghana!). But thinking about the comment later, it struck me that African movies are often restricted to boutique cinemas or specialist festivals and it's rare to see mainstream films that show people eating and drinking and having a jolly good time

in Africa. The truth, at least where I live in London, is that when it comes to portraying Africa, we're far more likely to see the image of a starving child or a safari park on TV than a story about the latest Mojito Bar in Nairobi!

### **Changing the Story**

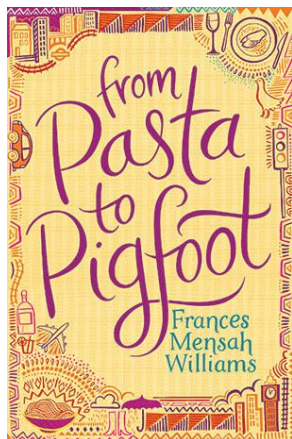
This is one of many reasons why we need more books set in other countries. Stories are a great way to shine a light on different settings and get away from the idea of a single story or stereotype of a place and people. We can't always get a chance to visit other countries, which is why I believe stories that transport us to different lands and introduce us to other customs and cultures are so important.

What I love about books is that they take you into new worlds and allow you to immerse yourself in someone else's life and see things in a different light. Which is why I loved the review of *From Pasta to Pigfoot* which said 'It gave me a new perspective on the "normal" daily life in an African country.'

For the record, there are some fantastic wine bars in Accra – Ghana's capital. Let me know if there's one you'd like to recommend and share a picture on [my Facebook page!](#)



# WIN A COPY OF *FROM PASTA TO PIGFOOT!*\*



I'm giving a signed copy of *From Pasta to Pigfoot* to the first person who correctly answers the question below. If you already have it, I'll happily send you a signed copy of the sequel, *From Pasta to Pigfoot: Second Helpings* instead!

**Q: Part of the novel is set in Ghana. What was the name of the country before its independence in 1957?**

[Send your reply to me via my website](#) NOW and win your free copy!

\*OR CHOOSE THE SEQUEL 'SECOND HELPINGS'

## EVENTS

FRIDAY, 18 OCTOBER - LONDON



From Shakespeare to James Baldwin to Toni Morrison to Courttia Newland, food is present in literature, either as a major or minor character, inspiring memories, evoking emotion and transforming lives.

Come and hear exciting authors, the award-winning Yvette Edwards, Yassmin Abdel-Magied and Frances Mensah Williams, read extracts from their work while you sample dishes featured in their writing (from Sudan to Montserrat to Ghana).

Book your ticket [here!](#)

**PLUS:** If you're a [TEDx](#) fan, tickets are now on sale for TEDxEuston which focuses on sharing ideas and exploring African talent, creativity and innovation. Find out more [here](#)

*A final word...*

[Get in touch](#) – I'd love to hear from you!

*Frances*

**"We want our dreams, not just our realities, to be represented."**

To unsubscribe from the Book Club, [contact me](#)

-Kwame Anthony Appiah 'What Does It Mean to Look Like Me?' New York Times