

FRANCES MENSAH WILLIAMS Readers'

BOOK CLUB

NEWSLETTER



ISSUE NO 7 | May 2020 |

WELCOME DEAR READER!

Well, *what* a year it's proving to be!

A huge welcome to all the new members of our Readers' Club - I'm so pleased to see our numbers growing. Do write in and share your stories - and your own strategy for coping with lockdown.

We are all readers, so tell me about the book you are currently enjoying and I will feature it in our newsletter. I hope you enjoyed the free books (African American Romance) I sent out last week. With only a few days before the offer closes, download them NOW.

[Contact me to](#) share your news with the readers' Club.

In the meantime, stay safe!

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Meet the Author

The following is part of a longer Q & A feature that you can read on my website [here](#)



Q: What made you decide to write fiction?

A: Reading has always been my first love and my passion. I decided when I was about 8 years old that I'd be a writer and I've been scribbling stories ever since. Quite a few were never finished (thankfully) but over the years, between studying, work and the demands of life, I kept reminding myself that I had to write that novel!

Even so, it took quite a few years to really do it and after I wrote the first draft of [From Pasta to Pigfoot](#), it took even longer to finally show it to someone and eventually find the right publishing home with Jacaranda Books.

Q: Where do you get your ideas for your stories?

A: The great thing about ideas is that they're so random! Sometimes I'll overhear a snatch of conversation and I'll wonder what the full story is. Sometimes the lyrics of a song can inspire a plot. Simple things like taking a walk can jolt a creative idea that builds into a novel.

I've had several great ideas for lines or dialogue when I'm in the shower, although rushing to scribble them down wearing nothing but a damp towel can be a little awkward, to say the least!

Q: How has your Ghanaian heritage and love for Africa influenced your writing?

A: It's been huge. I was born in Ghana, but I've spent most of my life in the UK. At one point, I moved back to Ghana for a few years.

Living in Ghana inspired the story of under-achieving pasta addict, Faye Bonsu, in [From Pasta to Pigfoot](#). Faye's story is one that explores the African diaspora experience as she tries to find love – and herself. Faye's story continues in the sequel [From Pasta to Pigfoot: Second Helpings](#).

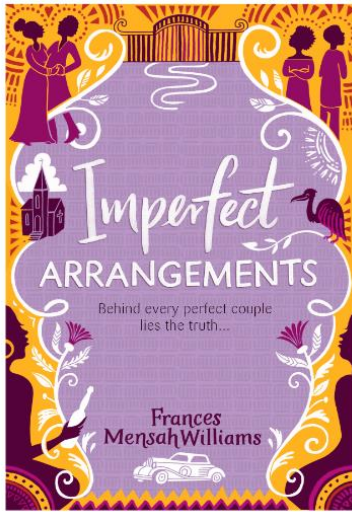
I enjoy writing stories set in Ghana and giving readers a different perspective on life in Africa, and I know one reader was so inspired by [From Pasta to Pigfoot](#) that he visited Ghana and absolutely loved it!

I want my readers to appreciate the fun, excitement, and diversity of Africa – to quote the South African musician Hugh Masekela, "My biggest obsession is to show Africans and the world who the people of Africa really are."

Read the full Q&A [HERE](#)



Introducing Maku...



My latest novel, [*Imperfect Arrangements*](#), tells the story of three sister-friends: Theresa, Maku and Lyla, navigating life, relationships, culture and ambition.

When we first meet... **Maku**

‘Samuel! Who’s at the door?’

With one hand clasping the squirming child balanced on her broad hip while the other shook the feeding bottle to cool the overheated milk, Maku felt as impatient as she sounded. She sucked her teeth loudly and nudged the boy out of the way.

‘Theresa! Come in, come in... sorry for the mess.’

She elbowed the door wide open and glared at her son. ‘Samuel! Why did you keep Auntie waiting at the door like that?’

Without waiting for an answer, she ushered Theresa inside and led her down a short narrow corridor, her hips swinging freely beneath a loose cotton dress splashed with purple flowers that rose and fell over her ample curves. Maku marched into the living room and, ignoring the indignant wail of the hungry baby, deposited the milk bottle on a side table and unceremoniously swept a pile of freshly laundered clothes off a brown leather sofa that had seen better days.

‘Sorry, Theresa. Here – take a seat. I was just about to fold the laundry away when Abra woke up and started yelling. Don’t worry, she’ll shut up once she’s had her milk.’

Maku plopped down into a chair, the leather on its arms faded from years of wear inflicted by restless elbows. Reaching for the bottle, she thrust it into the wailing child’s open mouth while Theresa obediently took the proffered seat on the sofa.

Still sniffing, Abra sucked greedily on the teat, keeping a tight grip on the bottle with a chubby hand in case her mother dared to remove it again, and Maku shook her head with an apologetic sigh.

‘I thought she’d be asleep for at least another hour – one of boys must have disturbed her. *Samuel!*’ She glared at her son who was standing in the doorway, his skinny legs protruding from a pair of creased shorts. ‘Was it you? Did you wake your sister up?’

He shook his head and glanced over his shoulder before replying, his voice almost a whisper. ‘It wasn’t me; it was Elijah. He wanted to play with her... I *told* him not to!’

Maku’s eyes flashed with irritation. Without warning, she raised her head and roared, ‘*Elijah!* Come here, *right now!*’

Samuel slipped away and a minute later a smaller version of him appeared in the doorway. Elijah's shorts were even more rumpled than his brother's, and he had dispensed with a top altogether, exposing a round, brown tummy with a small protruding belly button. His face clouded with apprehension as Maku glared at him, and then gestured towards the little girl on her lap.

'Why did you wake up your sister? Didn't I tell you and Samuel to watch TV quietly and let her sleep, hmm? You are not a baby any more – you are six years old and big enough to obey instructions.'

Elijah flinched at the harshness of her tone but was spared a further tongue-lashing by the toot of a car horn followed by the dull thud of metal hitting concrete as the opened gates came to rest against the wall. Diverted by the sound of a new arrival, Maku shrieked again, this time in the general direction of the front door.

'Sam-u-el! Go and open the front door – it's Auntie Lyla!'

Don't miss out! Buy your copy of *Imperfect Arrangements* or download it now!

[Available now in ebook and paperback!](#)

A favour, please?

If you have read and enjoyed *Imperfect Arrangements*, I would really appreciate you posting a short review on Amazon.

[Here's a helpful link to post your review on Amazon!](#)

WINNER OF NAME MY LEAD CHARACTER COMPETITION

Thank you for your suggestions for the name of the lead character of the next *Marula Heights* novella.

As a reminder, I asked you to suggest a name and consider:

- The lead character is a woman
- Keep her name short-ish (easier to type loads of times!)
- Tell me what you like about the name, and the qualities you associate with it (a great name will inspire a fantastic storyline!)

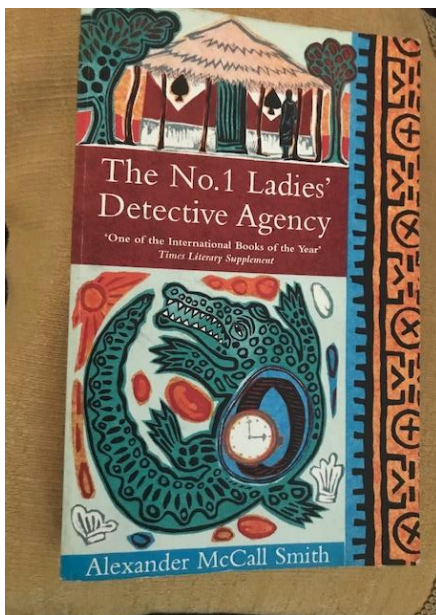


I'm delighted to announce that our winner is JASMINE who came up with the amazing name 'River'.

"My suggestion for the name of your lead character is River. I like this name for several reasons. Firstly, it is not a common name and so it stands out, like the character hopefully would. Secondly, the qualities of a river are those that I think make a good woman. A river can be calm and soothing. It provides water to people so they can clean and cook and drink. But it can also have immense power; it can flood and cause damage and even kill. I think there are a lot of connotations that you could work with which may inspire a fantastic plot."

Congratulations, Jasmine!!! I can't wait to get writing!

WHAT I'M READING...



The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith

I love this book so much, I'm reading it again!

Precious Ramotswe is Botswana's version of Miss Marple, but with African warmth and wit.

After setting herself up as Botswana's only – and finest – female private detective, Precious sets about solving cases involving wayward daughters, missing husbands, and philandering partners.

Set in beautiful Botswana, this is the first of a series of books starring Mma Ramotswe. Descriptive settings, great dialogue, and packed with wisdom and humour - I definitely recommend them!

Write in and share what's at the top of your reading list!

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE BOOK NOW!

Have you downloaded your free companion novella called *Sweet Mercy* yet? It's exclusive to members of my readers' Club. Do [send me your thoughts](#) to share with our readers!



Sweetness comes at a price...

When sweet-natured Mercy married successful businessman and aspiring politician, Lucas Peterson, she abandoned her media career to focus on her husband and raising her son, Hakeem.

But with the country now hurtling towards elections, Lucas's eye is on the ministerial position he craves within the Party and when Mercy's best friend, Araba – the niece of the Party leader – returns to Ghana, Mercy refuses to see what's obvious to everyone...

Collect your free copy of *Sweet Mercy* [HERE](#)

EVENTS

Despite lockdown, it's been great to join in online conversations and events with different groups. Here are a couple of events that took place in May.

INSTAGRAM LIVE
MAY 21ST | 6.30PM

Q+A on the
world of writing
and publishing

In Conversation
with
Frances Mensah Williams
Acclaimed Author of
From Pasta to Pigfoot



BLACK BRITISH BLOGGERS

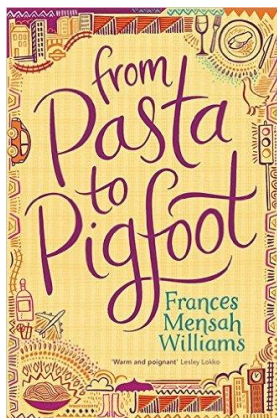
IN CONVERSATION WITH LANDÉ BELO:
Black Female Voices in Literature
and Theatre



Watch and listen to the replay on [IGTV](#)

Look out for Podcast Episode 5 which will be available soon on the Tower Theatre [website](#)

Have you read...?

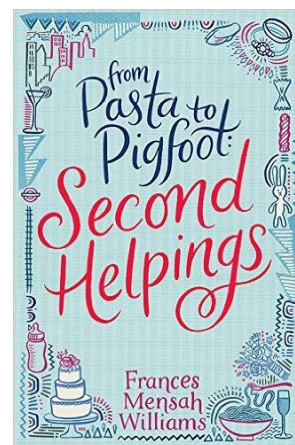


A novel set in London and Ghana following the mishaps of under-achieving PA, Faye Bonsu. On a mission to find love, a disastrous night out leaves pasta-fanatic Faye's romantic dreams in tatters and underscores her alienation from her African heritage. Leaving her cosy middle-class life in London's leafy Hampstead to find out what she's missing, Faye is whisked into the hectic social whirlpool of Ghana where she meets a host of characters. Transported into a world of food, fun and sun, and faced with choices she had never thought possible, Faye is forced to discover that no matter how far you travel, you can't find love until you find yourself.



'Brilliant characters...very true to life and you got a glimpse into Ghanaian life and its culture.'

Pasta fanatic Faye Bonsu seems to have it all; a drop-dead gorgeous and successful boyfriend, a burgeoning career as an interior designer and a rent-free mansion in leafy Hampstead to call home. But with all her friends shifting into yummy mummy mode, a man who seems to have no desire to put a ring on it, tricky clients, and an attractive and very single boss, things are not quite as straightforward as they might appear. Hoping to escape from her suddenly complicated life and revive her wilting romance, Faye returns to sunny Ghana for what she hopes will be the time of her life. But life doesn't always offer second chances and when disaster strikes, she is forced to confront the biggest question of her life and to make a choice that comes with consequences she will have to live with forever.



[Paperback and ebook versions available online](#)

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

Frances

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Twitter: @FrancesmensahW

FB: [facebook.com/francesmensahwilliams](https://www.facebook.com/francesmensahwilliams)

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



A final thought...Just Be You!

"Comparison is the thief of joy."

-Theodore Roosevelt