

FRANCES MENSAH WILLIAMS Readers' BOOK CLUB

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 15 | July/August 2021



WELCOME DEAR READER!

Hello,

Thank you for all your lovely feedback on my newsletters.

2021 is proving to be just as hectic as last year and I'm thankful to you for staying in touch and keeping connected to our Readers' Club.

I love hearing from new Readers Club members, so do write in and tell us about yourself and what you're up to and, of course, share any great books you're reading and would recommend.

[Drop me a message with any news you'd like to share.](#)

Stay safe,

Frances x

In this issue...

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Celebrating West Africa's
favourite rice dish

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What's been happening?

Sincerely Booked:

Goodie baskets for the book lover



Imagine sharing a gift basket with Michelle Obama!

I was thrilled to see *Imperfect Arrangements* selected as one of two books for the May hamper put together by Ghana-based Sincerely Booked.

Sincerely Booked is a bookseller with a difference. As part of their book subscription service, they create beautiful packages including items like luxury candles, crafts, and – of course – books!

Each month they feature new books and gift items, and in May my literary baby was part of the gift basket, along with Michelle Obama's bestselling autobiography, *Becoming*.

Huge thanks to entrepreneurs Efua and Nadia, the co-founders of Sincerely Booked!

Find them on Instagram @_iamsincerelybooked

Q&A

Q: Where Can I Buy Your Books?

A: [Click here](#) for a list of retailers and booksellers.

Q: Where can I review your books?

A: If you have read and enjoyed my books, please do me a massive favour and post a short review on Amazon. [Here's a helpful link to](#) post your review of *Imperfect Arrangements* on Amazon! (For readers outside the USA, please use your country Amazon website)

Make Jollof Rice (not War)



Jollof rice is a dish that pops up in many of my novels. Originating in Senegal, this tasty dish of rice cooked in spicy tomato sauce is emblematic of West African cuisine and a firm favourite with my family. We love it accompanied by grilled chicken or meat or just by its delicious self, making it a great choice for vegetarians.

Jollof rice is so popular, it has even inspired festivals dedicated to sampling the dish. It's also the subject of good-natured ribbing (the infamous jollof wars!) among West Africans, particularly Ghanaians and Nigerians, about which country produces the best version (needless to say, it's Ghana 😊).

My dear friend and Readers Club member, the renowned African fusion cook and [writer](#), Patti Soley, recently wrote a [feature article](#) for the BBC on this subject and I've persuaded her to share her own jollof rice recipe with our Readers' Club so you can try this at home.

Cooking jollof rice is a two-step process: step one is making the sauce (Patti's Maa's Tomato Sauce) and step two is cooking the delicious jollof rice with, in this case, lamb.

STEP ONE – MAA'S TOMATO SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

Makes about ½ ltr/18floz

- 2 onions, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2cm/1 inch ginger, peeled and halved
- 2 tsp cayenne pepper or 1 scotch bonnet chilli, to taste
- 400g /14oz tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 3 guinea peppers, crushed, optional
- small handful of fresh basil leaves
- dash of Worcester sauce
- salt to taste
- oil to shallow fry

1. Heat a heavy-based pan, add the oil, then fry and stir the onions until golden.
2. Stir in the remaining ingredients and bring to the boil. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Leave to simmer until the sauce reduces and intensifies in flavour and the oil separates. This should take about 15 minutes.
3. Remove the guinea peppers and ginger.

Your sauce is ready and can be served hot or cold.



STEP TWO – LAMB JOLLOF RICE

HOW TO COOK PATTI'S LAMB JOLLOF RICE

- 1½ lb lamb, bone-in stewing and breast pieces, chopped
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, bashed
- Thyme (fresh or dried)
- 4 guinea peppers, optional
- 1 scotch bonnet chilli, pierced, or cayenne pepper to taste
- Salt to season
- Maa's tomato sauce (as above)
- Turmeric or curry powder to taste
- 5 cups of basmati rice (ramekin size)

Preheat oven to 200oC/fan180oC/400oF/gas 6

1 Place lamb breasts on an oven rack and roast for 25 minutes or till nicely browned.

2 While breasts are roasting, add stewing pieces, onion, garlic, thyme, guinea peppers (if using) scotch bonnet chilli and salt to a large saucepan. On a moderate heat, stir, cover and leave to steam in its own juices till meat juices run clear.

3 To create a stock, add enough water to just cover the stewing pieces and bring to a boil. Skim and discard any froth that rises. Reduce the heat and leave to simmer till meat is tender.

4 Using a slotted spoon, remove the stewing pieces, place on an oven tray and brown in the oven.

5 Add the browned stewing and breast pieces, the tomato sauce, along with a couple of heaped teaspoons of turmeric or curry powder to the stock, and return to the boil.

6 Stir in the rice and mix. Pour in just enough boiling water to cover the rice and sauce and give it a final stir.

7 Cover the saucepan with foil and replace the lid to trap in the steam.

8 Reduce the heat and simmer for 30 - 40 minutes or till the rice has absorbed all the liquid; is tender and a luscious orangey-red hue.

9 Serve with a medley of vegetables – try steamed baby spinach, green beans, fried plantain, and carrots.

Connect with Patti: Instagram: [Pattismenu](#) Twitter: [@PattiSloley](#)

[Try this at home and write in and share your pics!](#)

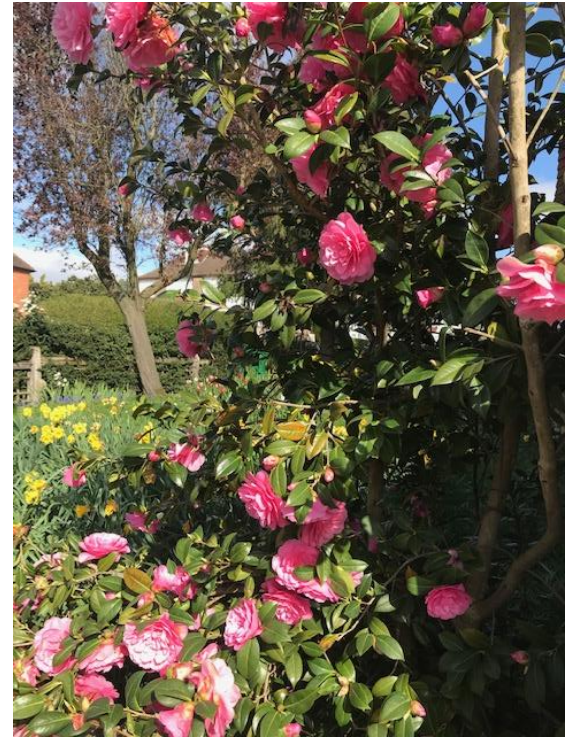


Summer in Bloom...

Walking has been a lifeline for me ever since the start of the pandemic last year.

Even in London, where I live, you can stumble across some beautiful examples of nature doing her wonderful best to bring us all some cheer.

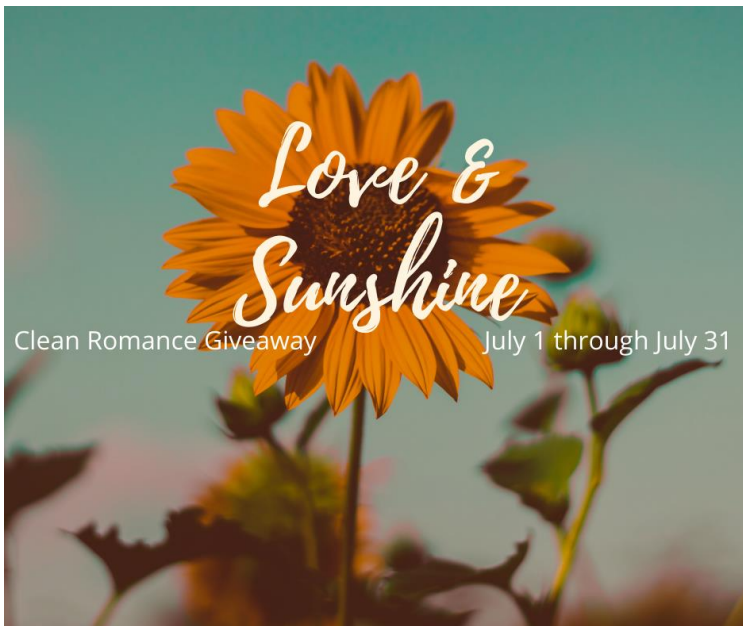
Here's a picture of some gorgeous flowers I walked past during a recent walk on a lovely summer's day.



What do you do to relax?

Drop me a line at francesmensahwilliams@gmail.com

FREE Romance Books for July!



**Sweet romances at
your fingertips**

DOWNLOAD as many of these **FREE**
romance books as you wish.

Please note the deadline is 31 July!!

WHAT I'M READING ...

Symona's Still Single

By Lisa Bent

Symona Brown is a 37-year old Jamaican British woman living in South London and looking for her Mr Right while her biological clock loudly ticks on.

In her pursuit of love, she learns new lessons, but will these new revelations get her what she wants?

Have you read this book yet? If so, let me know what you thought of it.



[Write in and share](#) *what's at the top of your reading list!*

BOOK REVIEWS of *River Wild*



“ This was my first romance book that I read that was about an African contemporary romance based in Ghana.

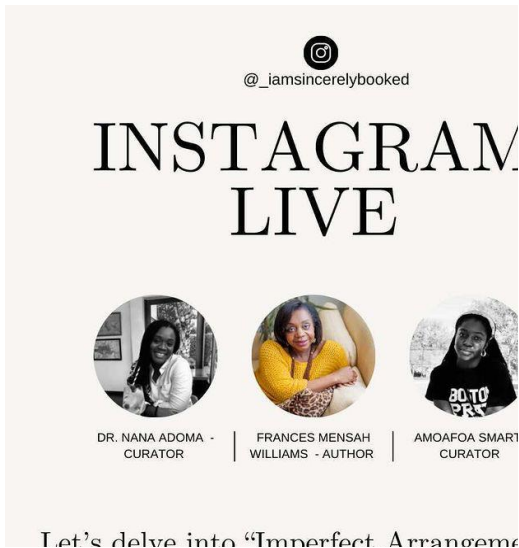
Loved it and the pace. A book you cannot put down until you have finished reading it.’



5 Star Review!

EVENTS

In conversation with SINCERELY BOOKED



My novel *Imperfect Arrangements* was selected by Ghana-based booksellers, Sincerely Booked, as their book of the month in May.

To round up the month, I had a lively chat on Instagram with readers who had bought the gift box and read the book. As ever, it was so much fun to engage with readers and to hear everyone's take on the characters.

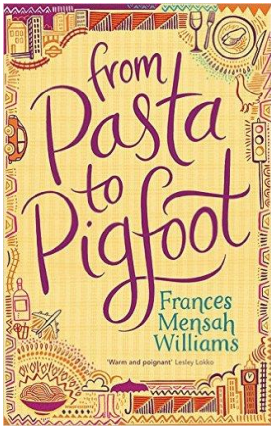
You can watch the replay of our chat on Instagram [@_iamsincerelybooked](https://www.instagram.com/_iamsincerelybooked)

Lead4Hope

I celebrated Africa Day on 25 May by chairing the launch of Lead4Hope, a unique 2-year leadership development project created by the Policy Centre for African Peoples (PCAP).

The poster for Africa Day is on a bright yellow background. It features a map of Africa on the right side, filled with a colorful, intricate African pattern. The text on the left reads: 'The Policy Centre for African Peoples (PCAP) cordially invites you to celebrate **Africa Day** by attending the launch of its **Lead4Hope** project'. Below this, the event details are listed: 'Date: Tuesday 25th May 2021', 'Time: 6 pm - 7 pm British Summer Time', and 'Location: Online, Zoom details to be given after registration'.

Have you read...?

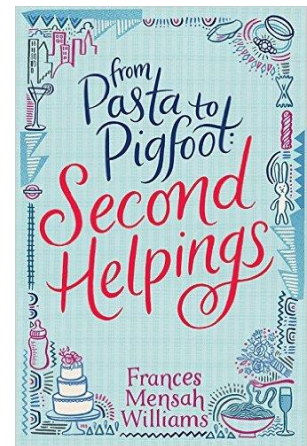


A novel set in London and Ghana following the mishaps of under-achieving PA, Faye Bonsu. On a mission to find love, a disastrous night out leaves pasta-fanatic Faye's romantic dreams in tatters and underscores her alienation from her African heritage. Leaving her cosy middle-class life in London's leafy 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

Facebook: facebook.com/francesmensahwilliams

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



A final thought...

"That's the thing about books. They let you travel without moving your feet."

— Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*