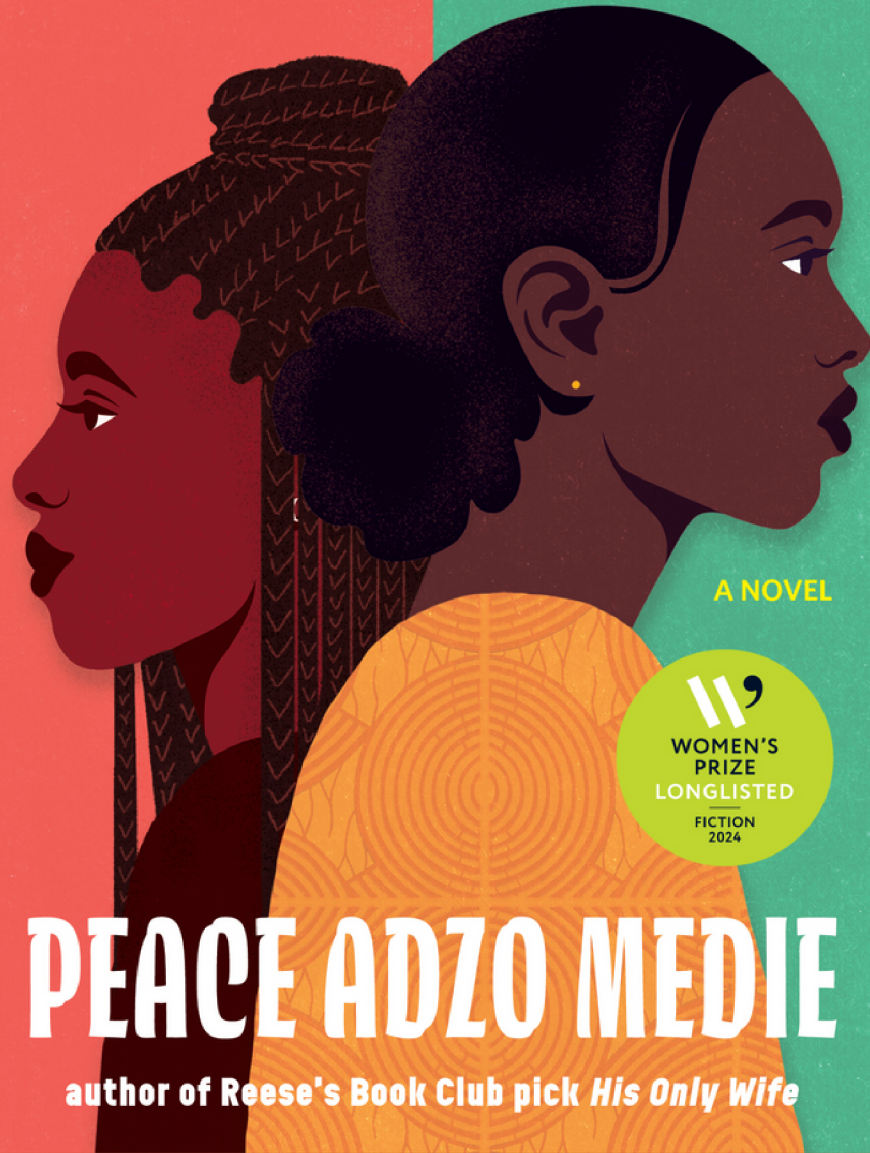




# NIGHTBLOOM

"BLISTERING . . . Medie offers an unflinching indictment of patriarchal power structures and corrupting complacency." —*The Sunday Times* (London)



A NOVEL



# PEACE ADZO MEDIE

author of Reese's Book Club pick *His Only Wife*

# BOOK CLUB KIT

# A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Reader,

I started writing *Nightbloom* in 2018 but began thinking about it in 2012, when I returned home to Ghana after many years in the USA. I returned to find that many of my friends had moved on, created new lives where I was seemingly welcome but couldn't find the door to enter. This made me want to write about friendships and how they change over time—sometimes becoming cold when they were once warm, painful when once mostly pleasurable.

*Nightbloom* is about the friendship of two cousins in Ghana, Akorfa and Selasi, how and why it frays over time, and how they make sense of this change. Their friendship is a lens through which we see family pressure, class, and race at work. And their story is about the struggle to remain whole in the face of experiences designed to crush even the strongest among us.

I hope that despite the conflicting truths in the book, and the distance between the cousins, you see that they might as well be standing side by side. That despite the secrets and silence, you hear their voices clearly. And that their story, and the way in which it is received, sends a strong signal to girls and women that there are people who will listen.

With love,

Peace

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Adje Meeuw". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Adje" and the last name "Meeuw" connected. A large, circular flourish is drawn around the "Meeuw" part of the signature.

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. On the first page of *Nightbloom*, Akorfa's mother makes a powerful prediction about Selasi. Do you agree with what she says? To what extent does this have to do with her preoccupation with social status? How do you think this prediction affects Akorfa's perception of Selasi?
2. When do you think Akorfa and Selasi's power dynamic first shifts? What in particular causes the shift?
3. How does Akorfa's move to Accra change her perception of herself? In what ways does this influence Selasi?
4. How does class difference affect the friendship between Akorfa and Selasi? How does Akorfa continue to navigate these differences once in college, with her friends Ayorkor and Isabelle?
5. How do Akorfa's family members determine her career ambitions? Have you ever felt pressure from your family to pursue a particular career path and rule out other choices? How did that make you feel?
6. In the second half of the novel, we shift to Selasi's perspective. How did your feelings about Akorfa change when you read Selasi's recounting of events? What did Akorfa not reveal in her versions of their history?
7. How does Selasi's family situation affect the choices she makes as an adult, both at work and at home? How is this different from the choices Akorfa makes?
8. In what ways does life in the United States differ from Akorfa's initial expectations? What surprises her? How does her relationship to Ghana change after her time in the States?
9. How is the girls' relationship affected when Selasi is made to act as housekeeper in Aunt Lucy's house? To what extent is this punishment determined by class difference?

10. In the novel, pride is shown to be both a vice and a virtue. What are some key moments in which both Selasi's and Akorfa's prideful natures influence their choices?

11. Why do you think Selasi chooses not to communicate her conflict with Aunt Lucy to Akorfa?

12. How would Selasi's path have changed if her mother's family were less resistant to acknowledging and condemning Uncle Michael's assault? How would Akorfa's have changed?

13. Ayorkor often claims that Akorfa has a responsibility to use her career success to give back to her community and other less affluent Black women in the US. Why doesn't Akorfa always agree with her? In what ways do you agree and/or disagree with the two sides of this conversation?

14. Despite pushback from her family and husband, Selasi refuses to apologize to Mr. McCarthy. Why do you think she chooses this moment to take a stand?

15. Much of *Nightbloom* revolves around the question of reconciliation, particularly between women. Do Akorfa and Selasi reach a point of resolution at the end of the novel?

16. Have you ever realized that you've profoundly misunderstood someone's situation, as Akorfa does Selasi's? How did it make you feel?

17. What similarities do you see in how the women are treated in Ghana and in America?



# FURTHER READING

## for Exploring Ghanaian Literature

### NOVELS

- *Changes: A Love Story* by Ama Ata Aidoo
- *Wife of the Gods* by Kwei Quartey
- *Daughter in Exile* by Bisi Adjapon
- *Hundred Wells of Salaga* by Ayesha Harruna Attah
- *Ghana Must Go* by Taiye Selasi

### SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS

- *Diplomatic Pounds & Other Stories* by Ama Ata Aidoo
- *Accra Noir* edited by Nana-Ama Danquah
- *The Prophet of Zongo Street: Stories* by Mohammed Naseehu Ali
- *No Sweetness Here and Other Stories* by Ama Ata Aidoo
- *Mr. Happy and the Hammer of God & Other Stories* by Martin Egblewogbe

### POETRY

- *The Place We Call Home and Other Poems* by Kofi Anyidoho
- *The Promise of Hope: New and Selected Poems, 1964-2013* by Kofi Awoonor

### NONFICTION

- *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* by Kwame Nkrumah
- *Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism* by Ato Quayson
- *Aftershocks* by Nadia Owusu

# THE NIGHTBLOOM PLAYLISTS

listen on  Spotify

## akorfa

"What About Your Friends" - TLC

"Pressure" - Koffee

"Umbrella" - Rihanna

"Lovely" - Billie Eilish & Khalid

"You Gotta Be" - Des'ree

"Rise Up" - Andra Day

"Numb" - Linkin Park

## selasi

"People" - Libianca

"Good Times" - Asa ft. The Caveman

"Bloody Samaritan" - Arya Starr

"Never Carry Last" - Dj Vyrusky ft. Kuami Eugene & Mayorkun

"Ayoo" - Shatta Wale

"Blessed" - KiDi ft Mavado

"Who is Your Guy?" - Spyro ft. Tiwa Savage

