

TV and radio personality Carol Ofori to launch children's book series

South African television and radio personality Carol Ofori has published a series of six children's books titled *The African Adventures of Sena and Katlego*. The book series, published by Lingua Franca Publishers, is a delightful and educational read for children which celebrates Africa and its various countries, landscapes, traditions and more.



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The book series, illustrated by Sasha Richards, tells the story of a little boy named Sena and his magical teddy bear Katlego who visits family members in different countries on the continent. Geared at readers aged 4 – 12, the books celebrate the magic of Africa as Sena embarks on adventures to South Africa, Uganda, Chad, Egypt, eSwatini, and Ghana.

Ahead of the book's official release next month, Ofori opens up on how the series came to life, what inspired the books and the importance of telling African stories.

■ **What do you hope both children and parents take away from this book series?**

I really hope that all those who read this series take away a true love for Africa and being African. I would love to see Africans proud of their diversity and working together to be the powerful continent that I know we are. I want African children to know more about the continent that they were born in and be proud of it.

▣ ***How did the idea about this book series come about?***

The idea for this series was inspired by the lack of books that speak to African children. I struggled to find books that told my kids more about the continent they were born on and all the exciting and fun things to do and visit here.

I wanted my kids to be proud of their heritage and stand tall knowing exactly who they are. This made it important for me to see more books on the shelves that represent the children on this continent – and I did something about it! Literature is forever, always.

▣ ***What inspired the stories behind the series?***

Honestly, I was just letting my creativity run. I envisioned myself as a child visiting these places with friends and having fun in the process.

▣ ***What inspired the characters we meet in the book?***

Sena was inspired by my son and the rest of the characters were a result of my imagination simply running wild. I did research on what the most common names were in the country Sena was visiting in that book and that's how I came up with the names of the characters Sena meets.

I also wanted a healthy split of male and female and uncles and aunties. Grandad had to be in Ghana and, coincidentally, he has since moved there so that just adds a cherry on top.

▣ ***Tell us about the process of creating a book series. How does it all come together?***

It was a lengthy project full of research, imagination, and pure fun - with loads of coffee and muffins. I spent a lot of my time writing in coffee shops and immersing myself in the story. It was great fun!

Honestly, there were moments when I got writer's block, but I would eventually get over that because the adventures were endless. The writing process was a beautiful journey of teaching myself more about this beautiful continent we live on and falling in love with it all over again.

▣ ***What stood out for you the most while writing the books?***

I think it is the amount of work that goes into writing children's books and the amount of creativity the books require. It was important for me to make the books easy to read and understand while keeping readers entertained throughout. As much as that was challenging - it was also so much fun.

▣ ***How important was it for you to make sure these African stories be told?***

This is so important for me. The divides that we see in Africa really breaks my heart. We are one people and the sooner we can see and appreciate that, the stronger we can be as a melting pot of nations. We have so much beauty on this continent, from the raw minerals, people, food, culture, landscapes, animals and so much more. We have so many stories to tell and seeing the massive gap on bookshelves is something that I really hope is a thing of the past very soon.

▣ ***What advice do you have for budding authors?***

Ink all your thoughts and have fun when doing it. Also, all will happen in the right time. God's timing really is the best timing. I was clearly not ready four years ago and look at me now!

I am totally ready and Jesus is definitely taking the wheel. I feel so blessed and I encourage you to chase your dreams. I am a mom of two that will never stop dreaming and working hard to see those dreams come true.

'The African Adventures of Sena and Katlego' series will be available in bookstores and online stores around the country from April 2022.

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