ARRIO F

0

running for his life through London

SARAH MUSSI



SARAH MUSSI



Copyright © 2008 Sarah Mussi

First published in Great Britain in 2008 by Hodder Children's Books

The right of Sarah Mussi to be identified as the Author of the Work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

All effort has been made on behalf of the publishers to seek permission for quotes included in this book.

The quote from *Philosophy & Opinions of Marcus Garvey* by Amy Jacques Garvey courtesy The Majority Press Inc., 46 Development Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420. www.themajoritypress.com

The quote from Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements Copyright © 1965, 1989 by Betty Shabazz and Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

1

All rights reserved. Apart from any use permitted under UK copyright law, this publication may only be reproduced, stored or transmitted, in any form, or by any means with prior permission in writing from the publishers or in the case of reprographic production in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency and may not be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

All characters in this publication are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

A Catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978 0 340 90322 3

Typeset in Caslon by Avon DataSet Ltd, Bidford on Avon, Warwickshire

Printed and bound in Great Britain by CPI Bookmarque, Croydon, CR0 4TD

The paper and board used in this paperback by Hodder Children's Books are natural recyclable products made from wood grown in sustainable forests. The manufacturing processes conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

Hodder Children's Books a division of Hachette Children's Books 338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH An Hachette Livre UK Company

Praise for Sarah Mussi's The Door of No Return

Winner of the 2007 Glen Dimplex Children's Book Award

Nominated for the Branford Boase Award

"... a modern adventure novel rooted in the terrible actuality and legacy of the African slave trade... bravely engages with the most serious issues – friendship, trust, betrayal, greed, degradation, survival, the presence of the past... Sarah Mussi's narrator, a 16-year-old hoodie, Zac, is wholly disarming and her writing is consistently robust, vivid and tensile.' Kevin Crossley-Holland, Judge of the Glen Dimplex New Writers Award

'Consistently engaging . . . This is a really excellent and original thriller . . . its premise and Zac's wry, streetwise voice make it fresh, funny and compelling.' Amanda Craig, *The Times*

"... original, page-turning... filled with action, adventure, emotions, a well crafted plot and a delicately handled theme regarding the roles of Britain and Ghana during the slaving era... A contemporary adventure story." Writeaway. qrg

'A rollicking good mystery story' TES

Other titles by Sarah Mussi The Door of No Return

Other titles from Hodder Children's Books

Cherry Heaven
The Diary of Pelly D
L. J. Adlington

Red Moon
Pizza on Saturday
The Flight of the Emu
MOVING TIMES SEQUENCE:
Bloom of Youth
Grandmother's Footsteps
Stronger than Mountains
Rachel Anderson

Jupiter Williams
S. I. Martin

This book is dedicated to the late MP for Tottenham, Bernie Grant, who campaigned for the return of the Benin Bronzes.

CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE

R

V

MAXIMILLIAN WOLF

INDICTMENT

IN THE CROWN COURT AT INNER LONDON THE QUEEN - V - MAXIMILLIAN WOLF MAXIMILLIAN WOLF is charged as follows:

STATEMENT OF OFFENCE BURGLARY, CONTRARY TO section 9(1)(b) of the Theft Act 1968.

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE

MAXIMILLIAN WOLF on the eighteenth day of February having entered as a trespasser a building, namely The British Museum at Bloomsbury, London, stole therein a quantity of priceless items.

Officer of the Court

URN: 09 MM 4536 05

Record of Tape-recorded Interview

Person interviewed	Maximillian Wolf	POLICE exhibit No: UY/3T
Place of interview	Div. 5 Police Station	Number of pages 1
Date of interview	7th May	
Time commenced	2.59 p.m.	Signature of interviewing
Duration of interview	Tape ref no: T6754398A	officer producing exhibit: Julius K Blantyre
Interviewing officer(s) Other persons	DC Guillane PC Coode Ms Cassius (Solicitor)	
Topa Paras		· ····

Таре	Person		
Counter	Speaking	Text	
Times			

Introductions. Cautioned, fully explained and understood.

5.09 p.m. DC GUILLANE A record is being made of this interview and can be played later.

Whatever you say will be transcribed as future evidence. Do you understand that?

WOLF

Yes. But I'll write it down myself thanks. I don't want your scribe to edit out the important bits. [Statement sheet provided for WOLF to write on.]

DC GUILLANE Reads out statement written by WOLF reproduced below.

Statement

My name is Maximillian Wolf, currently of no fixed address. I have listened to the Cautions and understand that anything I say, here, may be used in evidence against me. On January the sixteenth I was with my brother, Angelo Wolf. We were going to a youth club—

WOLF	Please	stop	the	tape.
· · · -				- I

5.35 p.m. DC GUILLANE This is a police interview. I am not at liberty to stop recording.

WOLF

Look, what happened is important
and I want to tell it my own way.
I can't just write it all down like

Please?

5.45 p.m. SIR CONRAD BEAUMONT

QC, Barrister for the defendant,

that. Can I have some extra time?

WOLF, enters the room.

5.55 p.m. DC GUILLANE DC GUILLANE is stopping the tape at the request of

BEAUMONT. A sworn affidavit will be filed later with the court for the minor, WOLF. This will give him sufficient time to state

his case.

Interview adjourned.

Sworn Æfidavit

Filed On Behalf of the Defendant.
In the Crown Court Case Number....4536 05......
BETWEEN:

....MAXIMILLIAN WOLF...... PLAINTIFF

And

....THE QUEEN......DEFENDANT

I MAKE OATH and say as follows:

- 1) I AM the Defendant herein
- 2) THE written contents annexed hereto are true
 - 3) I THEREFORE ask this Honourable Court to grant my request for judgement in the above case to be set aside.

SWORN at Chelsea this day

Before me, A solicitor empowered to administer oaths



GIIIIS OF ELECTION

SOUTH LONDON, WHERE I GREW UP

"... as it is with most civilizations, the Edo believe that if the gods are to intercede to save them from an impending calamity,

then blood must be spilt..."

Dr Remi Akowumi, Professor of African Studies, ASASIC

The fact that someone was following us didn't stop Angelo and me. We didn't care. We didn't care about much then. You see, we lived in a land where the good die young and there was no time to lose.

It was early evening. We'd come out of our street and were taking a short cut round the estate. Nobody was hanging about, apart from that man. It was cold, so we stuck our hands in our pockets and kept our hoodies up. Then we walked the gangsta walk. We thought we were so untouchable. Behind us, London was shadowy with snow clouds. Ahead, the horizon was a smudge of sulphur yellow. You know, when I think back now, there was something volcanic about it even then, as if something was waiting to happen.

Darkness was falling. I remember my breath hanging on the air like smoke. If I close my eyes now, I can still see it – as clear as anything. I can remember longing for excitement. And trying to trip Angelo up.

'See what you made me do?' he said (he's my twin – younger by seventeen minutes – but I'm the joker). The walked over three manhole covers and that's bad luck.'

'For you.' I laughed. And leapt to dodge the last one.

The man behind us crossed over, by the old pub. He began catching up. The pub clock read 5.32 p.m. exactly.

'That brother's from the Bang Bang Gang,' said Angelo, almost as if he'd been expecting him. 'That's Mogul "Rapper" King.'

I was surprised. The Bang Bang Gang didn't cross into our neighbourhoods. Well a few did – but they went back in coffins. Mogul King had released the Sez Me album, and was the Bang Bang General. He had the kind of stardom every kid south of the river longed for. Actually he'd known our mum. That's Mrs Richenda Everard Wolf. We'd begged Mum to let us meet him, but the nearest we'd ever got was his voice on the answer phone. Mum and him had worked on something, before the accident. I mean the accident that killed my mum.

Six months ago.

'D'you think we should stop and say something?' I said. I half turned and squinted. Out of the corner of my eye, I got a good look. He was in bad shape, really thin, and tired-out looking.

Angelo said, 'Why no limo?'

Mum had told us about his vast mansion and diamond-studded teeth. So he must have had at least ten limos. I was about to say, 'Bruv, we should really stop...' when I noticed something.

He wasn't alone.

Behind Mogul King, shapes were slipping through the shadows, staying almost out of sight. They moved together like wolves out hunting. That's when I noticed the street was eerily quiet too. You know, right then I felt scared. There was going to be trouble.

'What's with him?' I hissed, 'Doesn't he know not to come to our ends?' I glanced nervously around, hoping those shapes might just be on their way to pick up a snack at the patty shop or something.

'He's going to get it now,' said Angelo, quickening his step. 'You know some guys drove into his streets and burnt his mansion?'

'Hold up,' I said. 'Which guys?'

Angelo speeded up. 'Let's get the hell out.'

I skipped after him. 'Angelo,' I said, 'is that some kind of posse out behind us?'