

# Double Rainbow at Full Moon

A Novel by  
B.A.K. Sim

Agio   
PUBLISHING HOUSE



151 Howe Street, Victoria BC Canada V8V 4K5

© 2013, B.A.K. Sim. All rights reserved.

Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the publisher of this book.

*For rights information and bulk orders,  
please contact the publishers through  
[www.agiopublishing.com](http://www.agiopublishing.com)*

***Double Rainbow at Full Moon***  
ISBN 978-1-897435-90-8 (trade paperback)  
ISBN 978-1-897435-91-8 (ebook)

Cataloguing information available from  
Library and Archives Canada.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Agió Publishing House is a socially responsible  
company, measuring success on a  
triple-bottom-line basis.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 d

This novel is a dramatization based on a true story of what happened in Zimbabwe and brought this beautiful country down during the period 2007 and 2008 with flashbacks to events years earlier. Although all political figures and geographical sites are presented under their real names, many characters have been disguised under veiled appearances and fictive names for their own protection.

#### DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my husband, Edward,  
who inspired me tremendously in his struggle  
for survival, and for his determination and willpower  
in a desperate situation. I value his vast knowledge of Africa  
and his tremendous insight, without which  
this book could not have been written.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would not have come about without the deep friendships in Zimbabwe that only grew stronger concurrently with the deepening political crisis. Special thanks to the Sisters of the Convent and to the Fathers and Brothers of the Dominican and the Franciscan Order for their everlasting support.

I am also grateful to the persons who went through my first tentative literary steps and encouraged me to continue. First of all, to my sister Sonja in Denmark, who knew Zimbabwe from her own life there for three years, and to Lina Kantor, who wisely advised me to first write the story in my mother tongue.

To the people of Zimbabwe who suffered so much, never lost hope and always believed in change and kept their dignity. They taught me a basic lesson in life: that good manners have nothing to do with degrees and wealth, but are the connection to your ancestors and your past; and that is what you must value in life. Also they taught me forgiveness. Thank you to Chris Chetsanga, Professor Emeritus in Biochemistry, and his wife Carolyn for explaining certain phrases in the Shona language.

It took me four years to write this book. I first wrote it in Danish. I spent another year translating it into English. In this regard I am deeply indebted to my nephew Esben and his wife Vibeke for sending me the two huge dictionaries by Hermann Vinterberg and C.A. Bodelsen.

When I first came to Canada I had no computer, but Dr. Zig Hancyk without hesitation gave me his old one, and that gesture certainly speeded up the process. Through it all, our faithful black poodle, Simba, always lying next to me in my office when I wrote, developed from being a small puppy into a full-grown dog.

Margaret Spark did the preliminary proofreading, and gave me encouragement to get the book published. Just when I thought everything was perfect, Suzanne Baker James discovered that I had far too many commas, as I was using the Danish grammar rules.

A final vote of thanks to Bruce Batchelor for doing thorough editing and advising to write a prologue and an epilogue. Marsha Batchelor designed a lovely cover, capturing exactly the image I'd seen in my dreams.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|            |                                |     |
|------------|--------------------------------|-----|
|            | <i>Prologue</i>                | i   |
| CHAPTER 1  | Home, Sweet Home               | 1   |
| CHAPTER 2  | By Hook or By Crook            | 14  |
| CHAPTER 3  | Candlelight and Moonlight      | 28  |
| CHAPTER 4  | Fight for Bread                | 40  |
| CHAPTER 5  | The Party Must Go On!          | 46  |
| CHAPTER 6  | Help Thy Neighbour             | 53  |
| CHAPTER 7  | Rest in Peace                  | 66  |
| CHAPTER 8  | The Chinoyi Dentist            | 75  |
| CHAPTER 9  | Charity                        | 80  |
| CHAPTER 10 | The Piano Teacher              | 86  |
| CHAPTER 11 | Double Rainbow                 | 94  |
| CHAPTER 12 | Living in Fear                 | 101 |
| CHAPTER 13 | A Season Without Money         | 116 |
| CHAPTER 14 | The End of an Era              | 129 |
| CHAPTER 15 | Hardship and Injustice         | 136 |
| CHAPTER 16 | Exploited                      | 151 |
| CHAPTER 17 | Frustrations                   | 166 |
| CHAPTER 18 | The Legend                     | 178 |
| CHAPTER 19 | Priests and Politics           | 192 |
| CHAPTER 20 | Millions, Billions & Trillions | 200 |
| CHAPTER 21 | Canadian Evacuation            | 208 |
| CHAPTER 22 | All Kinds of Crooks            | 215 |
| CHAPTER 23 | Election                       | 228 |
| CHAPTER 24 | Revenge of the Vote            | 237 |
| CHAPTER 25 | Bad News                       | 250 |
| CHAPTER 26 | The Flight                     | 258 |
|            | <i>Epilogue</i>                | 268 |
|            | <i>About the Author</i>        | 275 |

There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven:

*A time for giving birth, a time for dying; a time for planting, a time for uprooting what has been planted.*

*A time for killing, a time for healing; a time for knocking down, a time for building.*

*A time for tears, a time for laughter, a time for mourning, a time for dancing.*

*A time for throwing stones away, a time for gathering them up; a time for embracing, a time to refrain from embracing.*

*A time for searching, a time for losing; a time for keeping, a time for throwing away.*

*A time for tearing, a time for sewing; a time for keeping silent, a time for speaking.*

*A time for loving, a time for hating; a time for war, a time for peace.*

—ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8

## PROLOGUE

She had walked for miles on the winding path from the village, hips swinging and pivoting in a regular rhythm like a pendulum. A barefooted *pickanin* followed in her footsteps, sometimes playfully in front and sometimes lagging behind. The woman had a worn pair of running shoes on her wide feet and moved with the smoothness of a gazelle strutting steadily along. Every move was programmed from her strong thigh muscles. On top of her short curly hair she balanced a suitcase keeping her head steady as a rock. She was full of grace and beauty despite her strong bones and muscular body frame. With no wind blowing one could only hear the sound of the grasshoppers and the cicadas singing in concert.

As she approached the intersection with the asphalted road, she noticed a shiny blue car pulling over with two white people in it. She stopped in awe and soon became aware that something had changed. The silence had been broken by screeching tires on the hot asphalt. The noise of sirens and ululation of police cars, building rapidly in intensity, had drowned out the singing of the insects. Abruptly, six outriders thundered up at very high speed and the rider on the front motorcycle braked to a skidding, swerving halt, positioning himself to prevent any cross traffic passing through the intersection. That same routine would be repeated; come to a halt and then catch up later. Like a pride of lions they rode on their thunderous bikes creating a deafening noise in the quiet setting. A high-speed black car appeared after the bikers carrying men in grey who disguised themselves behind dark sunglasses. They were all trained bodyguards and part of the security team. They paved the way for the bulletproof and armoured vehicle designed to protect the dignitaries that followed close behind them. A military truck followed, with soldiers in the back holding their machine guns at ready; finger on the trigger, aiming at a few bystanders near the intersection. At the tail of the procession was

an ambulance fully equipped in case of emergency should a fatality occur or even an assassination attempt.

The woman who came in from the bush did not wait to see the whole procession. Her heart had started pumping out extra blood to give her muscles more oxygen when her glance locked with one of the soldiers. The reaction was instant and she could not break away; she became as mesmerized as if she was staring into the eyes of a lion. With an enormous determination she managed to unfix her gaze and then break free. She grabbed the pickanin by the hand so violently that the child came right off the ground and then disappeared into the same direction they had come from without ever dropping the suitcase from her head. Soon the tall elephant grass camouflaged her colourful clothing as her sweat ran cold and merged with the smell of burnt wood and the dry yellow vegetation in the bush around her. She paid no heed to the concert of the grasshoppers and the cicadas.

Little did she understand that this rapid display of brute power was a common day occurrence; the regular motorcade of President Mugabe executing his duties.

## HOME, SWEET HOME

I am back in Africa and full of ecstasy. This is my home. I breathe in deeply and slowly and it tickles my nostrils, as the air enters the secret places deep down in the lungs and the stomach. Finally I breathe it all out again. The desire to preserve this moment in time is so strong that first everything is deleted. To make sense of it all in its precursory state is what has left me in this chaos. It is like time and space are at a standstill, and only at a slow pace are the voices of nature allowed to fill the air with all its fragrances. This moment of solitude is so precious. Like the slow journey, where the soul is not left behind. The African winter is almost over; it is late August of 2007 and we are approaching spring and the rainy season. The air is bone-dry from the winter drought that has left us with parched land.

Inside the house, the tiled floors are icy cold. Although we are living at an altitude of 1500 metres, you hardly notice it, as our capital Harare is placed on a big plateau and the strong sun is always shining from a cloudless sky. The coolness of the air is only felt a few hours after sunset, when darkness falls. Our days are short during the dry season, but now they begin to get longer, but only by about one hour. The light northern nights of my native Denmark are unknown here; darkness comes suddenly and without warning. The evenings and the nights are pitch-dark, but numerous stars are scattered across and light up the heavens, which seem closer to us.

The Jacaranda trees are longing to burst, but are waiting for a little more humidity in the air. The fine fernlike leaves are still mostly green, but high up in the treetops there are clusters of flower buds and soon its headgear will look like a huge purple umbrella. The lawn looks dry and the big flowerpots in the courtyard with petunia and vivid purplish-red geraniums are thirsty for water. As I no longer have permanent staff I grab the hosepipe myself and immediately feel rewarded to be the plants' saviour. The pots are placed in groups, after Rolanda told me that it is out with lonely soldiers in a row in South

Africa, and we do try to follow up on the trends from there. In one corner of the garden, under the golden evergreen called *Joburg Gold*, I see thick clusters of clivia along the edge of the grass. The elephant ears have crestfallen huge leaves the size of rhubarb, but the minute they get water, they straighten up right away and turn their palm-like leaves towards the sky. The poinsettia bush, where a little grey song-bird sits on one of its branches swinging back and forth, definitely needs pruning. The bird is not grey all over, but has a black head with a crown. I decide not to disturb it, but to postpone the pruning. Jetlag and melancholy disappear as the duties call.

Back inside, I begin to sort out the washing and feel quite relieved there is no power cut. It's a simple task to wash in the automatic Speed Queen and dry the clothes in the dryer. Clyde's shirts take only 20 minutes, as they don't need ironing if they are only semi-dry. Far worse when you have power cuts and do the whole wash in the bathtub and hang it out to dry in the sun, then you have to iron everything because of the putze flies. When you have servants, they iron every item with knife-edge creases.

Clyde and I moved to this romantic little townhouse in Belgravia a few months before our odyssey to America and Canada. As it is in close proximity to the Parirenyatwa Hospital and the Trauma Centre, we hardly have any power cuts. The neighbourhood consists of weathered old manor houses, which have had several facelifts in the latter years, as many of them are now used as offices by embassies and other international organizations. Their uniformed guards stand outside the big pillars of stately entry gates, saluting every time the big SUVs and Pajeros drive in and out. The new African farmers have also acquired these Pajeros, to such an extent that they are now called Pajero-farmers.

Washing dishes is no work at all in the new shiny metallic dishwasher, Defy's Dishmaid, which I have named *Mercy* after Clyde's first maid on Montgomery Road, where he was living when we met 16 years ago. Mercy is so super-silent that I sometimes have to double check if she is working, and already she is an endangered species, no longer found on the market. Surely we bought the last automatic dishwasher in Zimbabwe. The old Whirlpool that I inherited when

my sister left Africa broke down after many years of hard labour, when we were packing our suitcases for Manhattan's snowy winter. Being totally addicted to this mechanical wonder Clyde and I immediately went to Makro to replace it. They had everything from fridges to stoves to microwaves, but we failed to see any dishwashers.

There was this Makro-guy sitting high up in his crane offloading supplies to the various shelves. Clyde asked him, "Where do I find dishwashers?"

"Row No. 7," answered the crane driver competently and we moved on and found the right section, but there were no dishwashers. All the shelves were small and full of textiles. Finally the crane driver came out of his crane and pointed his index finger like a missile towards a stack of dish cloths and hanging table wipers.

Clyde held both hands together like a loudspeaker repeating, "I want a machine to wash dishes, like a machine for washing clothes!"

"Ah," sniffed the Makro stock worker, officious in his impeccable green uniform. "There is no such machine." And whilst he shook his head and his short-trimmed Afro hair, you could almost read his denigrating thoughts about aliens who can't even wash plates with a cloth.

Wasting no more time, Clyde drove full speed in the blue Mercedes, flying over potholes and uneven asphalt. He went behind Mukuvisi Woodlands to take a shortcut to Jagers Wholesale along Chishawasha Road, making an almost hazardous parking, and running with Olympic speed ahead of me into the department with kitchen appliances. And there she was: Mercy, between the automatic washing machines, even advertised as one. Inside on the racks she had complete instruction manuals, but as far as I could see in these surroundings she might as well have had her C.V. in Chinese. She was in the wrong place at the wrong time and not in demand. Therefore she still carried the old price tag. Clyde quickly realized this wonderwoman was priceless and half of what we would have paid in South Africa, so he paid up front and made sure he got a receipt. The next day she was collected in the blue bakkie, safely tied with blankets and thick ropes.

Amidst these myriad thoughts I hear Anisha's voice over the noisy intercom. She is passing by with some frozen homemade samosas.

Her husband Mohamed has given her a new shiny Swedish Volvo as a birthday present. She is wearing a modern Punjab with sari borderlines and as she gets out the car, her bangles jingle. She wrinkles her sweet little nose pierced with a diamond and kisses me on both cheeks. Like many Indian women her bum is beginning to get wider and her upper arms are too tight inside the sleeves. Although she looks like one of them, Anisha is not a real Muslim Indian, not at all born like that. She is wife No. 2 to Mohamed and her real name was Joan, but with Mohamed's mother still in charge of her son's house, this infidel daughter-in-law has, in the strictest manner, been trained from scratch with an exotic result.

"You must have been shocked when you came back?" Although formed as a question, she says it as a statement.

"Perhaps not really shocked," I explain to Anisha, and then I go on to thank her a million times for the samosas, and return to the subject of the political instability. "You see, the economy has gone that direction since the down slope in 2000 when we had the first petrol crisis. When they removed the three zeroes from the money a year ago, we knew that we would soon be back to where we started. It never became normal again."

Anisha nods agreeingly, "Now you cannot live for less than 150 million a month, so all the time we are forced to make more money."

As I am preparing to brew the tea, we are interrupted by the intercom system. It is Hilton, who runs our plastic factory. As he drives in I am pleased to see that he has still got the silver-grey Mitsubishi Colt that we bought for him when his metal-blue Holden Trooper was stolen. It was an *inside job*, as they say here when our own servants and watchman are involved. They had sawn through the gear safety lock and the iron chains on the Trooper, so his new Mitsubishi has a South African anti-hijack system to stop the thieves from driving very far before the car stops by itself.

"Must have been a shock for you to come back," says Hilton. "We cannot even get meat anymore. It is like the petrol, everything you have to buy on the black market. Baby food for Josh, we go down south to buy it and nappies and all the other stuff." His low flat dialect has a distinct South African pronunciation from the Boers with the

strong emphasis on the E's, so when he says *left*, it sounds as if he says *lift*. His appearance and his face is as square as his pronunciation, a bit like a Russian.

I hear my own voice almost joyful: "But it is better with less meat. Clyde and I are semi-vegetarians." And that is true, because when Clyde last year was diagnosed with an almost incurable disease, our whole life changed dramatically and so did our lifestyle.

Every Wednesday our two garden boys come to our gate to clean out our place. They do gardening for all 14 houses in the complex and the common area. Rafael lives in the servant quarter with his wife and children, but Givemore comes every morning on his bicycle, as he lives somewhere else. Despite the fact that Rafael gets many titbits from many of the house owners, his face is not as round as before we left. Givemore is still skin and bones; most likely the *Big A*, as they call it here, when they talk about AIDS. We gave them half of the bonus before we left and the rest they should have now. As Clyde says, "If you give them the whole bonus to begin with, they do bugger-all while we are gone!"

"*Gogogoi!*" They knock on the garden gate, which I unlock.

"*Mangwanani, Madam.*" They exchange the polite morning greetings in the tribal Shona language, to which I answer back, "*Mangwanani. How are you?*" After we have shaken hands, they clap their palms and fingers together as men do; in reply I clap my hands and turn and cup one hand across the other as women do.

"We are here, if *Madam* is here," to which I answer, "I am here."

After a while with a few more polite remarks, I ask, "How much do you now earn per month?"

"One point eight, *Madam,*" says Givemore. After that I give each of them a stack of money, equal to one month's pay, well aware that neither of them can exist from the meagre salary that they get on a monthly basis.

"Bodie, where are your keys?" I hear the sound of Clyde's commandeering voice from the parking area. With assistance from Hilton he is putting a new battery in my light green Mercedes. It is a big model E260, which Clyde bought from Tim Coghlan when he left Africa. Clyde has always had an impeccable taste in cars – something

I never prioritized before, but Clyde has taught me that good cars are *safe* cars. So now I also drive these heavyweights.

The first car Clyde gave me was a crème coloured Mercedes SLC, a very heavy sports model that had an acceleration as if you were on your way into outer space. The gear was manual and gave me the first true sense of driving pleasure. Besides I liked that pretty metal curtain in the back windows. As the years went by I even started to remember some of the many models and their identification numbers, as Clyde kept repeating them endlessly and he was always very enthusiastic about the new models being marketed. One day he extended the car park with a convertible 1935 Rolls Royce in a *racing green* colour. It looked ever so pretty in the garage, but I never got the chance to be taken for a drive in it, despite having acquired flowing robes à *la Gatsby*. Clyde was just too busy with the production in the factory, golf tournaments and fishing trips to Lake Kariba.

Clyde drives a metallic blue Mercedes, a model SEL 400. Not that it means much to me, but after Princess Diana was killed in a SEL 400 limousine, now almost 10 years ago in Paris, I remember that particular model very well. He is so typically boyish with his love for cars, yachts, sport and poker. My own prestige is more centred around the home, the Persian rugs and the old paintings. I like to call it *discreet class*. But after we shipped a whole container off a year ago, with our most precious belongings, there is little to show off in the little townhouse. Only a single Persian rug warms the tile floor and the walls seem nude with a few reproductions. A small sofa ensemble in golden velvet is against one wall and two big peach-coloured leather recliners are against the other wall. The big German Hannover piano is squashed in between one of the recliners and the veranda door and makes the room look warm. Despite its simplicity I adore this little townhouse, so safely tucked away between other houses; in fact only the automatic gate leads out to the street, which is a cul-de-sac. The area around us is artistic with coffee bars and exhibits, and under the shady trees in the avenues the African girls sit and braid each other's hair.

It felt great to have my own car again, although at first I was totally confused returning to the left side of the road, but routine comes

back so quickly. It is that good feeling of knowing it all, although it cuts both ways, from the potholes to the traffic lights that don't work, or those you have to double check even when they work, because they are so dirty that you just cannot determine the colour. Also some of the lights don't work properly and there is a green – or a red light – on both sides! The general give-way where one yields to traffic from the right is another trap, so one must use the eyes in the back of your head to make sure that nothing will be a surprise, while being aware that hesitation will get you hijacked.

The road signs had already disappeared before we left, not just the metal ones but also the wooden ones that were painted in replacement. The first signs in metal were in extremely high demand when more and more coffin handles were needed due to the increasing number of AIDS-related deaths. The thieves found it easy to dispose of the metal signs to small home industries, which would melt the metal into coffin handles. I have one big advantage here: I know this town inside and out, as I have lived in several neighbourhoods. I do not need signs anymore. I am home again and I watch the early spring, as I did 20 years ago when I first set foot in Zimbabwe.

We have spring when the other world has autumn; our seasons are different. Back then we had no high walls in Harare, we lived in botanical gardens with swimming pools and servants' quarters in the back gardens. We used to laugh at our neighbours in Zambia who slept behind Berlin Walls covered with iron spikes and pieces of broken glass, or they had electric fencing like jails. The diplomats and NGOs went for small-arms courses prior to their expatriation. That was when Zimbabwe was heaven and Zambia was hell.

When Clyde and I renovated the house on Montgomery Road, it became a stately manor with a long avenue of Australian brush cherries, and as they grew tall they became more like trees than bushes, surrounded by four acres of parkland. Clyde named the house *Haven on Earth* and explained to me that it meant a safe harbour on Earth. At the electroplating plant at the factory he had a fine brass sign made, which he hung up on the heavy black iron gate, and when I found out what they were able to produce I asked them to copy the Danish Christmas angels and produce them in brass. So no wonder the name

was always misunderstood, as guests and people passing by all thought it was *Heaven on Earth* with all the flying angels. That was until they stole the brass sign and we all started to look like Zambia. In the end Clyde had to sleep with *Dirty Harry* next to his bed, a .38 *Special*.

AT AVONDALE SHOPPING CENTRE I have a choice between two supermarkets, OK and Bon Marché, but most of their shelves are empty. On each shelf is displayed a sign “*Only one per customer!*” Those shelves must have had the most essential goods, such as cooking oil, sugar or their staple grain called *mealie meal*. The vegetables are in a decomposed state; they are more fresh and crisp from the street vendors or the hawkers among the parked cars. I have no problem buying from them, especially if they bring home-grown veggies from their *kamusha*, but it is rare now with the petrol crisis. Usually their goods originate from the supermarkets; a telltale sign is the clingwrap around them, and it happens a lot that they work in tandem with the supermarket, or they simply buy up all the stock there, to walk a few hundred metres to resell it.

When I feel very courageous, I go out to Mbare Market, which is a poverty stricken area 10 km outside town, but one needs escort by a male companion. Mbare was the first centralised area connected with the industry, and the primitive shanties had the highest population density in town. But they have fresh vegetables and many other articles for sale at much lower prices.

All are trying to survive since the government ordered that all prices should be reduced to half. Every time inflation reaches a level where no one can cope, which is also when the computers are unable to follow suit, a couple of zeroes are deleted. This is the method that is being used here to adjust the financial market. In the process many retailers went broke as they did not have the means to buy new stock.

Many foreigners here call the local whites *Rhodies*, with a silent contempt because many of them still live in the past reflecting with arrogance on their past efficiency and importance. Although they were able to fill the corn silos and the shelves in the supermarkets,

there was the other side of the coin too. The Rhodies love their supermarkets, while I from my time in India do just fine with street vendors. With dried beans and with only a few vegetables I can create the most nourishing curry dishes. There is lots of fruit to choose from for Clyde. For many years I have actually avoided these supermarket products in the middle aisles, and when I go to a restaurant I can feel quite unwell when I see the Rhodies help themselves to 1200 grams of beef steak, served with chips that have been fried 4 or 5 times in the same oil. Both the Africans and the Rhodies love their barbecue over open fire, and they call it *Braai*. They sear the outside of the meat till it is almost black and serve it with their special sausage called *Boerwors*.

At Silver Glory in Kensington I find butter for 1.5 million dollars. I buy 2 packages straight away. In Green Park I find more butter for only 1.2 million. It dawns on me that the bonus of 1.8 million that I paid to the garden boys hardly covers anything, although they live differently from us and do not put butter on their bread. Like most Africans, they stick their long fingers deep down into the soft part of the bread and pull out the white parts, until only the shell is left. Now they also eat the shell.

I no longer dare to go downtown, at least not alone, as it has been taken over by gangs of robbers. It is now years since I have strolled in the inner city and visited the elegant *Barbour's* or *Meikles*, or sat at the Paris Café behind Beverley's for an outside coffee. A jeweller's shop was involved in the robbery of gold chains from passersby, who had their chains torn right off by street robbers – the store's role came to light when one victim later recognized her own jewellery behind the glass inside the jeweller's shop and alerted police to the conspiracy between shop and the robbers. Now none of the shops get any new items for sale.

The Italian *Sandros* has also closed his restaurant, which used to be a popular place for lunch and dinner, and was one of the few places at night that had entertainment. Now we frequent the places outside Harare, and the cultural life downtown has died, apart from the still-popular *Reps Theatre* on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Extension which, despite all odds, still delivers shows that were popular 30 years ago.

When Clyde arrives home from the factory in Ardbennie the phones immediately start ringing, both the mobile and the house telephones, the latter having a noticeably high-pitched tone which makes it difficult to hear the conversation. We are unable to phone abroad as we are cut off from the rest of the world, and British Airways will no longer be flying to Harare after next month.

Clyde says I must get used to the monetary system again, because without the black market we cannot exist. He has a heavy box in the trunk of the car, which I somewhat struggle to carry inside, as Clyde cannot lift. Now the whole lounge is full of bundles of money. Although some new notes have been printed with a higher value, it does not do much good, because the printing itself has contributed to new inflation, and very soon we shall again be carrying heavy suitcases, boxes and pillow covers, when we transport money. Forget plastic bags, if you were to find any, because they would not be strong enough. The inflation is now 10,000 per cent per month. I get so sick and tired of money, and the weight of it. One day I will surely suffer a slipped disc from this venture.

“Think about our sailboat!” says Clyde with bright eyes. His complexion is better and he is not as tired, but although his weight is almost back to where it was, the disease has left its marks. Clyde was never a heavyweight; he is very finely built and he never had any reserves, apart from his beer belly, when he was taken ill. His body became wasted by the disease and his face was ravaged with suffering. As his hair grew back, it became snow white. It was like he just lost his youth in a flash.

“That big brick is brown and is 200,000 each, which makes it 100 million,” Clyde rattles off, like some bank clerk, and throws a brick-sized bundle of bills onto the table.

“Wait, wait!” I shout, “What if I have to change less? How many bundles in each brick? Is it always the same?”

“There are 5 bundles in each brick.” Clyde moves the fingers the same way he operates a screwdriver.

“But that bundle there is not blue, it is green!” I exclaim while noticing Clyde getting irritated.

“It is *BLUE*, I tell you, the green one is that bundle here with

50,000 and that brick there is therefore 25 million.” I hear the Master’s voice. There is nothing to argue about and I am staring calmly at the piles of bricks, totally convinced that all men are colour blind. It is not worth arguing; they are always right.

“What about these small ones here for 10,000?” I ask, to move on.

Clyde is unable to sit longer and gets up to press the remote for the television. “It’s all the same principle with the bundles. So that brick is only 5 million each.”

“And the rate?” I ask. “Is it still 450,000 for yankee-doodles?”

Clyde shakes his head and suggests another code, “Bush money is *Us*, you and me. Pound sterling is *Jock*. You remember Jock, who went to Britain. And Euro is *You*. You shouldn’t need more than that. So if I say ‘1,000 to *US*,’ then you know what I mean!”

It takes me a little while before I understand his logic, but then it occurs to me that he thinks of President Bush, when he talks about American dollars – he is not talking about the African bush. To avoid more questions from my side he adds, “You get Jock by doubling up, and the Euro you get by multiplying with 1.35.”

In Zimbabwe we have used code language since way back, but talking about strawberries and potatoes like the Rhodies do is just too naïve. The last couple of years the code language has expanded remarkably and covers anything from pasta to vitamins. Or *plastic tubing*, as sister Nancy likes to say, when she imitates Clyde’s terminology from plastics. This I tried to explain to my Danish Uncle Gert, when I explained, “Let us call it something *relevant*, something to do with the factory, so if you need supplies, ask for *screws!*” Old Gert, who is now 84 years old, took a long look at me and made the typical gesture of lowering his head, so that his face would come quite close and made this remark, “*I like your screwing business!*” Then he laughed.

During his younger years Gert was both in Sri Lanka and later Nigeria, but I did not know him then. He is what you in Africa call *extended family* and not really related to me, but as his surname Hjorthede matched my place of birth, he is like family. Besides, he is born in Jutland like me. Being extended family, it is safe for us to help him when needed. It would actually be expected from us in Africa.

There was this other Dane who used code words. He was a major general and sent out by the Danish military. He always emphasized that he was sent out on a peace mission but quite early after he had settled down in Zimbabwe, he started feeling the political change.

The major general was a short man, but what he lacked in height, he made up for with a conspicuous Maharaja-beard and horn-rimmed spectacles, which presented a personality to be reckoned with. Unfortunately, he underestimated the velocity of progress in Africa and would perhaps have been less hasty had he known this continent better. Early on he warned the wife, "If I say *Karen Blixen*, you must immediately start packing!" This is now many years ago, when he saw it was a situation of emergency. No sooner said than done, he phones his wife at home, and when she answers the phone and hears the words *Karen Blixen*, the line goes dead. But she knew it was the voice of her husband and she began immediately to pack their belongings. One hour later the major general returned home and without explanation he took their two Ridgeback dogs into the jeep and drove off to the veterinary to have them put down. Their departure went off so quietly that for a long time the official invitations kept coming and many thought they were just overseas.

Since the oil crisis and the farm invasions, the black market grew like the hyacinth creepers in Lake Chivero, the artificial lake that supplies Harare with water. The national bank maintained their official rates, which today are 30,000 to 1 US dollar, so if you go to the bank and exchange money, as a tourist or a missionary or a diplomat, you will only get a fraction of the value, with deduction of bank expenses. The rate will neither cover food nor other living expenses, such as petrol. This artificial rate makes it easier for the government to "pay back" the foreign debt, and at the same time the affluent rich, such as government ministers and indigenous businessmen, can go to the bank and get foreign currency at this incredibly low rate of only 30,000. When they later sell the forex (foreign exchange), they quickly become millionaires in yankee-doodles. So regardless of the attack by the Governor of the Reserve Bank on the black market, it is purely rhetoric. Nobody believes that cock-and-bull story, because the government insiders themselves feed and nourish the black mar-

ket and become rich from it. Our inflation is the highest in the world and restaurants, doctors, vets, manufacturers, hairdressers, hotels and not to forget street vendors, must every week adjust the prices. The petrol stations no longer have any petrol, everything is bought black market, but we see more cars than ever before. We are going round and round in this eternal cycle, which we are unable to stop, as if on a runaway horse.

For years we have heard the warnings that we are on the way to the bottom, but it is like we are in a bottomless pit. Besides, we cannot just get off and *follow the law*, because then we cannot survive and pay for the food, nor produce anything at the factory. Some of the products we have to import, and many raw materials such as for the plastics, are not found in Zimbabwe. When I look back I remember we had milestones and clear boundaries; we knew how far we would go. Now we are forced to transcend barriers every day. It has become a way of life and we have forgotten where is the limit, because constantly we move our boundary posts. It happens so gradually that you get used to it without any drama, because when you are in the eye of the storm; the decisions are made without hesitation. Besides, there are so many decisions to make and you forget how far it was you would go.

The imagination is strong during times of war and survival. Never have I seen so many people wheelchair-bound or walking on crutches, and big babies with thick diapers. Surely they are stuffed with yankee-doodles, diamonds or gold! It's a world outside Clyde's and my reach, but we are taking part in the worship around the golden calf and the dance is on. One day we may win the big prize, because we are smarter than the farmers.

"The same will not happen to us," says Clyde. "This time something BIG will happen."

I take comfort in the thought that we have an emergency plan.

## BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

On our flight back to Africa we were spared the extra miles going via New York to London. The Air Canada flight was unable to take off from Montreal Airport. As we were all seated and ready for take-off, they announced over the loudspeaker that the engines had combustion problems. The air hostess spoke first, but then the Captain confirmed that everyone had to get off, and at that point Clyde and I looked at each other in low spirits, knowing that we would have no chance of catching our connecting flight with British Airways from London to Harare. However, when Air Canada took on the blame and put us on one of their direct flights to London, we felt extremely lucky. Due to the many empty seats, both Clyde and I could occupy three seats each and, when the armrests came up, they were easily constructed into a small bed. It was an unusual luxury to fly with so few passengers, it seldom happens anymore, and then not in the high season. We cancelled dinner as we'd already had a Chinese meal at the airport, paid for by Air Canada. *Just go to sleep and wake up for breakfast before landing.* I looked out and thought to myself, it is really true: *Every cloud has a silver lining.*

In London's Heathrow Airport we had booked a room at Novotel, a smartly designed hotel with skylights and the colour purple in abundance. The room was comfortable and I noticed with satisfaction that the bed was the big European Queen size, which is 10 cm wider than its equivalent in North America. The bathroom had modern wooden floors. Clyde wanted a real English breakfast, as the breakfast on the flight did not satisfy his extra appetite stemming from months on steroids.

"Shouldn't we check if the Baron has arrived?" I enquired. "Just in case?"

But suddenly Clyde was completely exhausted and just left the restaurant without even giving his room number. I went over to re-

ception and they confirmed that the Baron had arrived. Then I left a message that we would be resting and only meet for dinner later.

We call him the Baron, because his real name is in fact Baron Matepa. He had confirmed to Clyde that he was in possession of 500,000 American dollars, which was the reason this meeting in London would take place. With the new law that will soon be presented in Zimbabwe's Parliament, we will be forced to surrender 51% of our shares in the company – Africans must own a majority in all local companies. When this meeting had been proposed, Clyde and I just looked at each other and said with one voice, "*500,000 is better than nothing!*" But not a penny less, we pledged, because it might be all we were ever going to get.

In total agreement on our strategy, we greeted the Baron formally at dinner. He placed himself on the same side as Clyde and therefore sat facing me. He was impeccably dressed in a dark pin-striped suit and he greeted me with a rather sullen look, as is custom in the Shona culture, as he addressed me as *Ma'am*, like I was the British Queen. I saw him turning his knees out to both sides to have more space on the small chair. He is fat and has almost shaved off the kinky Afro-hair, which is common for them to do before the hot season starts in Zimbabwe.

I was wearing my black trouser suit and stood out with the thick gold chain that has a single diamond in it. All my Arabian bangles were jingling and on my fingers were several glittering diamond rings. I had taken up the bangle fashion years ago from my Arabic and Indian sisters, whereas the many rings had come later, when I copied the white South Africans. The Shona women normally don't wear jewellery, as their Gospel preaches against it here. I felt rather good with myself.

The Baron tried to avoid the issue and started giving a longer speech about how we had to trust each other in order to work for our mutual benefit. He had first-hand knowledge about a gigantic order from the Zimbabwean government for scotch carts for the new African farmers, and the profit from this production could then go towards buying our factory. Clyde explained that we were talking about

ox-drawn carts, and it was then that I realized that we were going back to the Middle Ages in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector!

"But what about our down payment of 500,000 US? Do you have the money here in London?" I asked him to get straight to the point.

"That is where we have a problem," explained the Baron. "But to begin with, I can pay 250,000 and then the rest in local money." He even presented this offer looking proud, as if it was a good proposal.

"Now listen very carefully, my dear Baron," I leaned discreetly towards him, avoiding raising my voice, "We wouldn't even dream about giving you travel expenses to London if the 500,000 were not guaranteed. Your new proposal has no basis for negotiation, and you know as well as I know that the Zimbabwe dollar is of no value. But not to worry, let us instead enjoy the evening and forget all about the sale of the business."

Clyde, who until now had been quiet, tried to pour oil on troubled waters and explained, "My wife should have had the down payment of 500,000, because she transferred that amount of money to invest in Zimbabwe. The next 500,000 should likewise be paid offshore, but here we can of course give a longer term. But I totally agree with my wife that we have nothing further to negotiate, if the first 500,000 doesn't even exist!"

All three of us only had water with the dinner, which was very light. None of us wanted coffee. We needed all the sleep we could get before the long flight tomorrow. I raised my hand towards the Baron and apologized, as Clyde was tired and needed to rest.

"*Ma'am*," the Baron looked at me like a beggar, "you must give me this chance and I shall never disappoint you. Before the end of November I shall finance the 500,000. Let this meeting be the start of our co-operation."

"No problem," said Clyde. "Now we are no longer in a hurry to sell the factory. I am declared free of cancer and will soon be back to my old self. See you at the Airport!" All three of us then exchanged the many handshakes that are custom in Zimbabwe.

But back in the hotel room Clyde showed his irritation, "I just knew it. He has no money and he thinks he can be given the factory."

Clyde has had a factory for many years, out on the sandy soils in

Ardbennie, where no farmer can grow any crops. First he rented a piece of land at Kelvin Road in Granite Side together with five other tenants. He started buying up every property as it came up for sale and after a couple of years he owned all five properties. However, they were all spread out and it was not practical for Clyde's new goals of large-scale production, so he sold it after seven years and bought instead the land in Ardbennie. He had the old rickety shack knocked down and built a double-story factory building and offices. As the years went by, he became surrounded by neighbouring industries. Soon the whole area was identified as the industrial area. Clyde's business grew and grew and he kept expanding with new companies.

BACK IN HARARE THE BARON returns, more keen than ever before and he takes Clyde with him to a meeting in the national bank that is here called Reserve Bank. He meets high-ranking representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and engineers from both the ministry and the bank. They asked many questions and Clyde has new hope.

"They want to order 2,000 ox-drawn carts to begin with, but they will need far more." He grabs the calculating machine and continues, "You need 3,000 sheets of angle iron 50 by 50. The first idiots are out because they only quoted for 71 million. That wouldn't cover anything and certainly not inflation, so they are now out of the picture. They all asked so many questions, especially the engineers, and they were very impressed. The Baron doesn't understand all those things."

Normally, I am an incurable optimist, but with Clyde's plans there have been many disappointments and it has left its mark. I remember when he was the obvious candidate to choose for producing the election boxes for the government. He had slaved all the Christmas holidays manufacturing a look-through sample box in plastic. Although there were only 27,000 constituencies, the order would be for 40,000. "I don't give a damn, we all know they stuff the papers in many of the ballot boxes in order to win. But I am a businessman, not a politician!" Clyde declared cynically. But as he had delivered the template to the government and was awaiting this big order, nothing happened,

because Clyde's template had been given to the Chinese who got the order for 40,000 election boxes and had them produced in China.

"I just hope that it is not the same as with the election boxes. Perhaps they just want you to design the scotch carts and then they end up producing them in China?" I put my doubts forward very carefully.

"I don't think so." Clyde looks deep in thought for a moment. Then he continues, "I will make sure that they pay for 2,000 scotch carts beforehand. Then they can't just walk away, and every time they want more ox carts they will have to pay in advance. We charge 350 million Zimbabwean dollars for each cart and that should cover angle iron, steel plates, wheel tires and the shafts." Clyde punches in some numbers on the calculating machine and asks, "How many zeroes in trillions, love?" I write it down for him: 1 million has 6 zeroes, 1 billion has a thousand million and 1 trillion is one thousand billion. Thank God I noted it down from the pink financial Gazette.

"I think it is OK, they have given us carte blanche to exchange on the black market so that we can import the tires and the angle iron and they will make sure that ZESA doesn't stop our electricity supply to the factory." I can see that Clyde is feeling up to it and gets high as if from a Dry Martini.

Over the week-end Clyde flies to Johannesburg with the Baron, but when he returns I am shocked to hear that he almost had a heart attack. It happened when the cabin pressure suddenly dropped and he felt as if his chest was going to explode.

"You must not fly anymore, Clyde," I say it with a firm conviction and start planning ahead. "When we leave from here, it will be by ship and by train!" Clyde nods in approval.

All our many efforts to sell that factory: every time we believed in the lucky star – or wheel. Last time it was Gillian Sibanda, who managed to persuade us to drive 1,000 km down to Polokwane, the new African name for Pietersburg in South Africa. He had access to an offshore account which paid 200,000 US dollars, and furthermore he had signed a piece of paper that he would write that amount off, if the difference of 1,800,000 was not paid within 6 months. A white lawyer, who knew him from his time in Kwekwe, had written a con-

tract between Sibanda and us and he was convinced that all four parties (himself included) would end up very satisfied, because it goes without saying that the lawyer should have a commission of the sale, paid outside of Zimbabwe.

Our meeting took place at the Holiday Inn in the hotel lobby and as Clyde drives like a racer driver, we were there first. Looking out of the window I noticed a fiery red Twincab and saw presumably Sibanda get out together with an African woman in a colourful dress. Clyde had previously explained that Sibanda was running a regular service over the Beitbridge border post carrying several kilos of gold.

“I am dead certain about this one,” Clyde hissed, adding, “and don’t you forget our code phrase: *The Eagle has landed.*”

Sibanda looked very young and sporty wearing a white T-shirt and running shoes. He had muscles like a weightlifter and I thought: *You need to be strong to carry so much gold!* There was a bar in the lobby and Clyde asked after a few polite remarks what they wanted to drink. They both wanted coca-cola.

It was a couple of days before Christmas Eve and we knew the traffic could be a nightmare, so right after Clyde and Gillian Sibanda had gone through the proposal to a contract made out by the lawyers in Harare, we made ready for our departure. *But the meeting had been totally unproblematic.* I could not point out anything in particular, nothing had happened to make me worry, but maybe that was the whole reason. I felt doubtful about the whole venture and worried. Would you not have discussed more in detail, studied the running of the factory, the stocks, the valuable machinery and had some *negotiation* first? But perhaps it was all contained in the contract. Or as Clyde used to say, “It is different when you negotiate with Africans.”

CLYDE DID NOT WASTE ANY time, but found a bank in Polokwane where he could deposit some foreign cheques. He opened all the secret compartments which the vehicle had plenty of; full of inside pockets like a man’s jacket. Another reason for Clyde being so fond of Mercedes cars I suspect because inside they are equipped with se-

cret panels and endless possibilities for transporting smuggled goods or *money*. “Volvo cars are not bad either,” Clyde once confided in me.

Soon thereafter we saw a 2-kilometre-long line of cars moving slowly towards Beitbridge. Over the radio it was announced that we could expect a long delay as the custom staff on duty had been fired over a corruption case at the border post. Although we had nothing to declare we decided to drive instead back to Zimbabwe through Botswana, as I reminded Clyde that our friends, Avis and Zeb always chose that route when they went to Cape Town.

“Good thinking!” said Clyde and quickly found the road that would take us to Botswana. At first it was really exciting and we entered Botswana without any problems. I recognized all the road signs with the clear blue arrows and thought they must have been donated by Danish foreign aid, as they were the same signs as in Denmark.

We passed through the desert with dry palm trees and arrived finally at the border post between Botswana and Zimbabwe. At first we were surprised to see kilometres of cars and people lined up already long before the border crossing. Most of them were Africans and many women were among them. You could see they were traders, carrying huge bundles in bags or goods stuffed into the big chequered plastic bags with a zipper. Many of them held one child by the hand and had another smaller child traditionally wrapped in a towel behind the mother’s back. As we passed them in the big blue Mercedes towards the frontier post, we now saw that the entry was closed and we had to turn around when we came to a high lattice gate.

“What is happening here?” we asked the group of people waiting.

“There is only *one* person working, *Madam*,” they explained, “and we have been ordered to wait in line.”

In the beginning Clyde and I also lined up, but as we never got any closer, it became insufferable in the heat. Therefore we decided to take turns and rest in the air-conditioned car, but we made sure at all times that one of us was waiting in line. As the situation did not improve, the crowd of people started showing signs of impatience and the children were crying. Everybody was hungry and thirsty. We had no toilet facilities, but the men urinated in a long deep ditch with cement at the bottom. It was along that same ditch we were lining up.

Suddenly the army arrived in open trucks. “They are loaded with batons and AK 47s”, exclaimed Clyde with boyish admiration. Shortly after I went to get a rest in the Mercedes and when I exited, I failed to locate Clyde. I returned to a group of three Africans from Bulawayo, as we had been reserving space lining up for one another the whole day. The army commander started shouting at me that I could not stand there. I politely explained to him that I had been standing there since 10 o’clock in the morning. Now it was evening and now it was dark.

“So, why were you not on your spot?” the commander’s voice was quite threatening.

“Because I was resting in the Mercedes,” I answered him, and pointed towards the vehicle.

After he turned and looked, his whole expression changed. His threatening manner turned into anger and for a moment he looked just like Clyde when he gets a fit, and then he barked at me to take the last end of the line. The three Africans from Bulawayo tried to help me and confirmed that we all kept places for one another, which in fact we had done the whole day. This only made the soldier more aggressive and his complexion became almost grey as he exclaimed in a voice full of contempt, “*You just defend her because she is white!*”

Now I felt it was all too much, that he would turn his anger towards my new friends and I started to lecture him about human rights, then about the Vienna Convention and last about being racist, because nobody could deny it was racism to call me *WHITE!* Like the shorter catechism I gabbled off all the phrases.

In the end he backed off although snorting with scorn, “You sleep in a Mercedes when you should be standing in line and you say it is your *right!*” Shaking his head he walked away looking slightly confused.

At that moment I found Clyde very close to me and he was deathly pale. “Bodie, you are crazy. He could have shot you! That’s what they normally do in such a situation. Didn’t you see the AK-47 slung over his shoulder?”

His voice sounded admonitory. But I was too upset over the soldier’s audacity, and besides I was certainly not going to admit to

Clyde that I had no idea what such weapons look like. The valid reason for not ever panicking: why panic over something you don't even know about. Like getting scared over a spider if you don't know it is a poisonous one. Only long after did I fully grasp that my life had been in real danger.

In the end we crossed the frontier post and entered Zimbabwe, but on the other side there was the same chaos and crowd of people. However, there was a totally different atmosphere, the customs staff were friendly and had set up extra tables outside the building to cope with the situation. Also there were no soldiers. After midnight we got through and around 2 o'clock that same night we arrived in pitch darkness at Churchill Arms Hotel in Bulawayo. Never had I been so happy to see that beautiful hotel in Tudor style. That nightmare was over.

THREE DAYS LATER, I CUT out some newspaper articles from our daily, *The Herald*. They were all about Sibanda.

"Bodie, can I see those cuttings?" asked Clyde and began reading aloud: "Look, he was arrested with 11 kilograms of gold worth over 19 billion, and he was raided at a Harare hotel where he was staying when police detectives from the CID Gold Squad found him in possession of one bar of gold in his briefcase. Another seven bars and two buttons were allegedly recovered underneath the front seat of his car." Reading this, Clyde was shaking his head with a gesture of despair, but he continued with hardly any lip movement, "I guarantee you, that is our money!"

"Really? Does it mean we forget all about selling the factory to him?" I asked and had already accepted the outcome.

"No, that's not what I mean. Besides it won't be him rotting in jail. It will be his cousin Elvis."

But be there gold bars or no gold bars, Sibanda never lived up to his promises and in the end we returned his deposit to an offshore account. It was simply too risky for us to remind him about the contract.

Sibanda was only one of many in the line of buyers interested in buying the factory. Clyde had also a lot of faith in Oscar Kaukonde,

a clever sculptor, who had several exhibitions abroad. On Cripps Road, which is the road leading to Harare International Airport, he had a whole park with many variants of small and big stone sculptures. Clyde told me we were talking about big sums of money here, as Oscar sold sculptures to many countries in Europe, especially to Germany and Holland, and he was paid in Euro. Apart from this he still carried on trading in diamonds originating from a river close to his *kamusha*. That is what they call the village where they are born and where many relatives of several generations live together. Oscar Kaukonde was born in the area near the Birchenough Bridge and he always used to walk around and collect stone, which he would later sculpt.

One day he found some black rocklike formations of stone and at first he was unsure if it was really diamonds, but in Holland they had paid him quite a fortune for the find, despite the fact that he had not yet sculpted or polished it. Now the sculpture park was a camouflage for the diamond trade and there was a big demand for his work of art. He constantly freighted huge stone sculptures and black stones to Holland. For them it was attractive that his gem stones had nothing to do with blood diamonds, as they came from his place of birth and not from the war in Congo. Members in his clan had received such stones from participating in the war there as soldiers, and those stones were hard to sell.

Although I have not accompanied Clyde to the Birchenough Bridge and not with my own eyes seen the black stones, I am quite certain of this, because Clyde is a shrewd businessman and he regards Oscar Kaukonde a reliable person and does not leave out the prospect of him wanting to buy the factory in order to have a totally legal business on the outside, for the benefit of the whole family.

Clyde has also made acquaintance with several aristocrats, although some of them are more gentry than nobility, with long German names such as van Hoogstraten, Rautenbach and Bredenkampf, but he says it is a clan surrounding President Mugabe and they are dangerous to deal with, also not trustworthy. I have advised Clyde to keep a long distance to them, being aware of at least Mr. Bredenkampf be-

ing into dirty business such as arms dealing. Despite all of this, Clyde still has to try all options; it is in his nature.

“Of course it is by hook or by crook,” Clyde assures me with his poker smile and reminds me, “If one day I say *The Eagle has landed*, you must immediately start packing!”

Paradise Lost started about seven years ago around millennium, when we returned from our holiday home in Cape Town and the oil crisis hit us. As the crisis became permanent, we started to look then at the possibilities of selling the factory. A couple of years later we received this letter in Cape Town, sent to our fax machine:

*Sir;*

*Allow me to introduce myself and my brother, Patrick and Paul Mwale of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Our Father was the Congolese Governor to France. He died 6 months ago, before the recent peace talks that were held in South Africa. Our Father worked for the Government since the Mobuto-regime. He was in possession of US dollars 1,500,000 in cash together with other wealth, which he kept hidden in his personal vault. It is a kind of safe built as a tool box and totally fireproof. This vault was built into the wall in one of our Father's houses and he used to store in it a considerable amount of money.*

*My brother Paul and I collected the safe in question with the wealth mentioned at the hiding place before our Father died. Both the people of Congo and especially the Government wanted to lay hands on it, but due to our Father's international connections and his high status he succeeded in fleeing to Zimbabwe as a refugee under the United Nations together with his family. He chose Zimbabwe because he had a white partner there, which he always called “Mr. Client.” He used to deal with our Father in diamonds, that is how we knew him, because he regularly travelled to Congo for his official business. Unfortunately, he had to leave for England because of the land reform programme that is currently taking place in Zimbabwe. He left last year in February, 2001.*

*But allow me to come to the heart of the matter, how we got the contact to you. The contact originated from this guy called Jean*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**B.A.K. SIM** was born in Denmark, but has lived most of her adult life abroad. She has lived in 10 countries and was posted as a diplomat to Brazil, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, India and Zimbabwe. She knew the foreign service inside and out as she was trained as a Chancellor. During her tenure of office she often acted as Chargé d'affaires a.i., and whilst in India she established diplomatic relations between Bhutan and Denmark.

The author is known as Dila to her many friends and colleagues spanning all walks of life. She has rubbed shoulders with ministers and politicians, international dignitaries, royalty and celebrities from television and broadcasting. Her closest friends run the gamut from old diplomatic and business colleagues to eccentric people in art and show business.

B.A.K. Sim lived in Zimbabwe for 22 years, and now lives in Victoria, on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, with her Canadian husband.