

Delmar was two years above me at school but he always nodded when he saw me in the corridors. We were from the same ends, right? Everyone knew him. At fifteen he looked more like nineteen. He was a cool guy. A money-maker. He pumped up at the gym and I swear his arms were thicker than my thighs. His dad, Delroy, got life for murder when Delmar was still a baby. Everyone knew about Delroy, though word was that he was framed.

Delmar wouldn't be seen dead in anything from Primark. Labels all the way, ya get me? I always checked out what he wore. Everyone did. That day he had on a black t-shirt with WU TANG written across it in big white letters. A pair of True Religion jeans with a real Gucci belt. On his feet? Brand-new, black Prada sneakers so shiny it was like they'd been dipped in glue. Those shoes made me giddy just looking at them. His diamond and gold stud earrings were real too. I'd seen them in thugfashion.com when I was cruising the net. What you'd call window-shopping, Mum. No way would they be fake, like most kids round here. The real thing. No doubt!

If I wore any of that gear I'd be mugged every day. But Delmar had built a reputation cos he had soldier skills. He was stuck up in his game. He had respect.

He was lucky too cos his older brother Dexter was legend.

Dexter! The Dexter!

No one messes with a bruv who wears a platinum chain so thick and heavy it needs a crane just to put it round his neck in the morning. No one messes with a bruv who drives a blacked-out BMW, ya get me? What's more, everyone knew Dexter had a 40-calibre, gold-plated pistol with silver-plated bullets he wasn't afraid to use. Don't mess with The Dexter!

I saw him sometimes when he came to visit Delmar and his mum.

Dexter was 19 and everything he wore was black except for his bright-red Kanye West LV Don trainers! Rah! Those twin babies cost about £700 a pair, if you could get them. I heard some was going for nearly a £1000. Those babies was so bright I bet they glowed in the dark like those glow-bracelets I bought for Shontelle. If you touched them your hands would turn to crispy bacon. I wanted to fling myself onto the ground and worship them, yeah? Listen, nobody but the biggest and baddest man-on-road could walk around in those and, like, live?

First time I saw Dexter he was leaning against his BMW talking to Delmar. I could see he was checking me out, the new guy.

I used to dream Dexter was my brother. I imagined he lived in some massive Hollywood-style crib. I would arrive at the big gates and see a camera swivel as I approached. I would press the buzzer, be let in and would walk up a driveway that was a hundred yards long. A security guard would be waiting for me at the front door. He'd have a bald head and wear a black suit and black sunglasses, like in a Bond film. He'd say, 'The Chief is waiting for you, Mr Cole.'

That's what I'm talking about!

Bernardine Evaristo