

# London Evening Standard



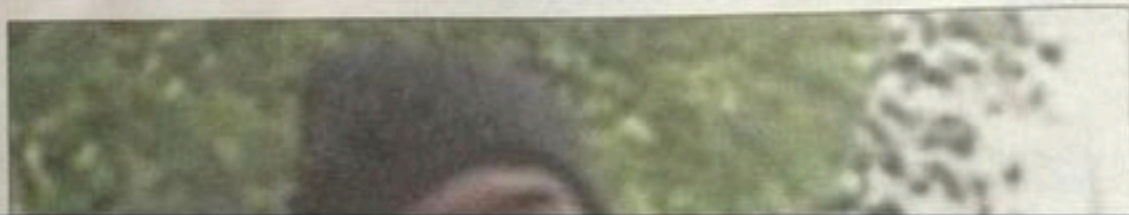
**Grown Woman**  
The mystery surrounding Beyoncé's new feminist anthem  
Pages 34 & 35

Thursday 23 May 2013

**FREE** READ BY 169 MILLION LONDONERS EVERY DAY

## CONVERT OF NIGERIAN DESCENT WAS RADICALISED AS A SCHOOLBOY

# BRITISH



Tarttelin had just attended last year's London Book Fair with her literary agent, Jo Unwin. Browsing a chocolate shop before heading home, she took a call from Unwin saying that Arzu Tahsin, editor of the Orange Prize-winning *The Tiger's Wife*, had been on the phone. "She had called my agent and said, 'Name a price. I will pay it. I want it off, so there is no auction or anything'," explains Tarttelin. "I'd only ever earned six pound an hour so I thought, 'What do you do when someone says that?' My agent went back and said to Arzu, 'It has to be something where Abi can stop waitressing and write'. That was what we agreed on."

That something was £100,000 and the book it bought is *Golden Boy*, published last week. It's Tarttelin's second novel, about a teenager, Max, who is intersex.

Tarttelin hasn't been waitressing for a year. At the Drink, Shop & Do café in King's Cross, she has the relaxed demeanour of someone who no longer has to worry about paying the rent on her flat in Camden Town.

"There have been two books fairly recently about intersex people but *Golden Boy* is quite different because it places the outsider inside a community and a family. It's straight-up literary fiction and you would see it on the shelf at

Waterstones, not tucked away in a dark corner as an indie book."

*Golden Boy* is written from the point of view of Max himself, as well as through the eyes of each member of his family and his girlfriend. It changes perspective from chapter to chapter to highlight the issues of gender and sexuality faced by everyone involved in the life of a teenager who has some female and some male genitalia, one ovary and a uterus.

"I thought it would be really interesting to explore gender through the eyes of someone who didn't have to be a certain gender and would feel the pressure to be one thing or the other as completely outside themselves and unreasonable,"

Two production companies are currently discussing buying the film rights and "I also have a US deal and a number of foreign publishers so there is more [money] involved now," Tarttelin explains. "That was absolutely mental. I had barely earned money, ever."

Tarttelin speaks with a gentle northern accent. She grew up living in Grimsby with her father, an environmentalist and her mother, a now-retired charity worker, but moved to London aged 19 for a film studies degree at King's College. "I went for a month, but it didn't work out," she says. "I spent the month in the pub and handed in one essay. The

celebrity clients. He'll do home visits or you can drop in to see him at the W Hotel. From £40, W Hotel, 10 Wardour Street, W1, 020 7758 1071, jamesharknett@hotmail.co.uk, jamesharknett.co.uk

Jasmine Gardner



Continued on Page 40

*A Marvellous Adventure*

THE OLD VIC TUNNELS

25 May 2013

SUBLIME BOUDOIR

*Sublime of Sins*

www.sublime-boudoir.com | info@sublime-boudoir.com

