GRANNY CAME HERE ON THE EMPIRE WINDRUSH

A heart-warming account of the Windrush experience – an absolute must-have!
Dapo Adeola

PATRICE LAWRENCE
Illustrated by Camilla Sucre

nosy crow

GRANNY CAME HERE ON THE EMPIRE WINDRUSH

To those that come from across the world,
I hope you find love and peace. – P.L.

To my very own grandparents from Trinidad and St. Lucia,
Melita Sucre and Felicity Hypolite – C.S.

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Ava's granny was the best singer in the world. She was always teaching Ava old songs from Trinidad, the Caribbean island where she'd grown up. On Sundays, Ava and Granny sang together at the top of their voices. They even opened the windows so everyone outside could hear them too.

But today, Ava stopped halfway through their favourite song.

"What's wrong, honey?" Granny asked.

"I need to find a costume for school tomorrow," Ava said. "We have to dress up as someone we admire. I've been thinking about it all weekend, but I still don't know who I should be."

"Ah," Granny said. "Maybe I can help. Come with me."

Ava grinned. She knew exactly where they were going. To the trunk!

The special trunk full of old clothes! The trunk where you could dive inside and come out as someone completely different.

Granny lifted the heavy lid and rummaged inside.

At last, she held up a necklace of bright, sparkling beads.

"How about Winifred Atwell?" Granny said. "She was from Trinidad, like me."

"Did she come on that Empire Windrush boat too, Granny?"

"No," Granny said. "Winifred came to England a few years before the Empire Windrush. She was a famous musician and played the piano like a dream. When those stage lights hit her jewels, they shone like the stars back home."

Ava stared at the necklace and tried to imagine it glowing around her neck like stars. She'd never heard of Winifred Atwell, though, so how could Ava know if she admired her?

"Can we try someone else, Granny?"

This time, they both leaned into the trunk and dug through the clothes.

Granny pulled out a red scarf.

"What about Mary Seacole? She's so important that there's a painting of her in a famous art gallery in London. And she's wearing a scarf just like this."

Ava had heard of Mary Seacole.

"She was a nurse," she said. "Just like Mum and Dad!"

"Yes," Granny said. "It was during the Crimean War. Mary Seacole wanted to help Florence Nightingale care for the British soldiers, but she was told she couldn't go. She went anyway and set up a hotel to look after the wounded men instead. And then she used the medical skills her mother had taught her to save hundreds of lives."