



## The Children of Wasafa: A Message to Gang Bangers

*Jacqueline Pitts*

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## **The Children of Wasafa: A Message to Gang Bangers Jacqueline Pitts**

The Children of Wasafa: A Message to Gang Bangers, addresses the problem of gang violence in the African American community by using historical facts, archaeology and fiction to illustrate commonality. That is, who we think is our enemy or inconsequential to us, may be our relative. An embellished Chokwe symbol created by an Angolan man named Wasafa during the 17th Century reunites his diasporic descendants who happen to be members of rival street gangs in the year 2010 on the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens, New York.

## **The Children of Wasafa: A Message to Gang Bangers Details**

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Author : Jacqueline Pitts

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## **From Reader Review The Children of Wasafa: A Message to Gang Bangers for online ebook**

### **Wendy says**

"The Children of Wasafa" which I won from Goodreads Giveaways and begins in 2010 in Rockaway Beach, New York presents a fascinating and thought-provoking image of gang violence in an American community that stems from peer pressure, lack of a strong male influence, powerful family bonds and lack of personal and cultural identity. In this story Jacqueline Pitts sends a blatant message that an enemy may be a relative because of the historical backdrop forged by slave labour. She does this artfully, using a Chokwe symbol that Wasafa an Angolan man had tattooed on the bodies of his wife and family before journeying to his wife's village. After their capture and separation by 17th century slavers, it's this marking that transcends time and distance, but whose meaning has been blurred by future generations. But it's this symbol that after a chance encounter identifies three men from different gangs and separate cultures as Wasafa's descendants.

The story has been well-researched from an historical and archaeological perspective, and is a timely look at the pervasive influence of gang violence. It is well-written, but in some instances seems more like a documentary than a fictional story. However, the plotline is mesmerizing as Carl Beckels , a highly intelligent young man bullied at school because he's different is pressured by a cousin into joining the Collaborators, a Jamaican gang; Tony Daniels a teenager attracted by adventure, glamour, power and excitement joins its African-American counterpart, and Javier Moreno the only financial support for his Mexican family is blackmailed into joining the Masculinos. All three enemies by design never realize that they are related until a Brazilian, Luciana (Lucy) Barito Ryan sets up a meeting with them in the prison where they're being held. In a story filled with superstition, violence, rebellion, and heartbreak there are strong elements of family love, forgiveness and deliverance. Jacqueline Pitts sends powerful messages about making choices, about reforming, the safeguarding of children from bad influences, enforcing moral principals at home, and about the unjust and unsavory representation of black Americans in the media.

Although I couldn't put this book down, the characters although realistic need more development, more depth to fully understand their natures. Of the gang members, Thomas (Big-T) Ellis, leader of the Loyals is a bright but unscrupulous drug and arms dealer who after learning about his lineage makes a dramatic change. Samuel" Izzie "Allen, boss of the Collaborators is a clever master manipulator who's never done jail time because of a smart criminal defense attorney. Of Wasafa's descendants Lucy Ryan is a highly intelligent scholar whose family through generations of intermarriage have whitened their skin tone. It is her search for the meaning behind the symbols on her ancestor's cross that will lead to an important and life-changing meeting.

Even though I offer a few criticisms I did enjoy this powerful and relevant story. I hope to read more novels by this talented author in the future.

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### **Marie Guillaume says**

The Children of Wasafa blended many themes such as race, respect, identity, peer pressure, survival, genetics, colonization, gangs, identity , immigration, laws, and slavery in a complex and masterful way to draw a compelling story of how the lack of identity whether through cultural identity, family, identity,

fatherless identity have a profound impact on how young men who often intersect in many communities of colors discourse. The Children of Wasafa is rich in history giving a wonderful back drop on how the transcontinental slave trade has helped in dividing and conquering communities of color from Mexico to Jamaica. However, the book also imparts a strong message to the young and the fatherless, such as the importance of making the right choices regardless of circumstance. It also reminds parents that they have a responsibility to safeguard their children from elements in the street that prey on them. Despite what young men might be taught at home, parents must understand many of the young are affected by codes of the street, and the negative images that the media reinforces about men of color. Well done to the author Jacqueline Pitts for giving us a cultural backdrop to what ails our young men. I can not wait for your next book as you weaved a love of anthropology in telling a contemporary and timely story.

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### **John Naylor says**

I received this book for free via Goodreads First Reads.

The first thing I noticed about the book was the title. Gang bangers is not a term I had heard for subject matter in the book before.

The book is an interesting story of how people from different backgrounds can be connected in some way and it does that brilliantly. It is well researched, well written and it even taught me a little about archaeology too.

It has a powerful message and 'If you don't have a father, father yourself' is a phrase that means a lot to me now and will stick with me.

I think in the current climate in America this book would be a good education piece for schools to use.

I would recommend this book to any person who (as I often do) feels disconnected from the human race as it shows that there can be a bigger story behind it all and why you are here as well.

I would like to thank the author for the giveaway as this is one of those books I am really glad to have read.

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### **Marietje says**

I like the idea of the book that we all could be somehow family, and that when we harm someone we might be hurting a relative. Unfortunately the different relationships may be too confusing for the inexperienced reader. Most of the gangbangers this book is aimed at will get bored with the complicated family ties.

The characters in the gangs were not fleshed out in the sense that you understood their psychology. The whole story felt superficial; too much telling and very little showing.

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### **David Duncan says**

The Children of Wasafa, this is the fifty-eighth book that I have received and read from Goodreads. It is an in-depth story that follows the descendants of Wasafa, an African from Chokwe tribe. It is a story of New York city gang members, and gang violence. It is a story of of young black males with a lack of strong male influences. At the end of this story Jacqueline Pitts shows how the enemy gangs that fight among themselves, just might be related. I was really surprised how one family that was separated by slavery was able to hold

onto a symbol, when all the family members were separated to all parts of the world, with only luck or an act of God, the families found that they were related. The senseless killings of male gang members that were or could be related. This is not what their forefathers would want, that they gave their lives for future generations to have it better than they had it.

I am a white male and by no means know what it has to be like to lose all your family to slavery. I am a father, brother, and son and I could not think of a worse thing to happen to you, by being separated and not knowing what happens to your family and where they are. I hope that this book would be read in all schools, that it might help with the problems a young black man faces. This book and this author has opened my eyes even more. Great read for all. I hope to read more from this author.

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### **Sandra Proto says**

Jacqueline Pitts has proven herself a folklorist and griot with her debut work. Just like Zora Neale Hurston explored the African-American culture with archeology and storytelling, so has Mrs. Pitts.

Children of Wasafa: A Message to Gangbangers is an in-depth story that follows the descendants of Wasafa, an African from the Chokwe tribe. It starts in modern- contemporary time with the stories of gang members Thomas “Big T” Ellis, Sameul “Izzie” Allen, Javier Moreno, Tony Daniels, and Carl Beckles from three different gangs that inhabits Rockaway, New York and Lucy Barito, a young activist from Brazil. Then it travels back to colonial times and the Transatlantic Passage that begins the Wasafa family saga.

Mrs. Pitts does a good job weaving the intricate stories together and taking care of the reader by reinforcing information.

There are several themes that are established in the story but the one theme that is consistently throughout the story is “family bond.”

Children of Wasafa: A Message to Gangbangers is a story that should not only benefit gang members but the whole African-American community.

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