



Identities: A Short Story Collection

Yabome Gilpin-Jackson

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“...contemporary Africa has a hybrid cultural character that is the product of local and alien mentalities and lifestyles living together in the same communities and individuals. The cultural braid this duality engenders is, theoretically speaking, a more complex lived reality than has hitherto been articulated.” (A. Bame Nsamenang) Identities is a short story collection of global African experiences. The stories in this collection evoke the lived experiences of Africans of diverse backgrounds, races, ethnicities and identities. It explores everyday identity concerns of diasporan Africans such as experiences of being asked where are you from? immigrant and refugee integration, personal vs. ascribed social standing, remittance responsibilities, traditional vs. contemporary cultural values and many others. This collection is ultimately about the experiences of bridging, balancing and weaving together the multiple strands that form contemporary African Identities on and off the continent. Stories included in the collection are titled: 1. Where are you from? -A young African woman experiences and describes frequent encounters of being asked: Where are you from? 2. Too much water in the garri -First generation Canadian siblings take their first journey to Sierra Leone, West Africa, orchestrated by their parents. 3. Once upon a time at Fourah Bay College -A student describes the carefree campus life that is interrupted by war and unexpectedly propels a group of friends far and wide into the diaspora. 4. The Rainbow -A mother contends with explaining to her adopted daughter, who is an Ebola survivor, why bad things happen to children. 5. Back to the beginning -The story of the struggle of one of the young couples from Fourah Bay College affected by the Sierra Leone war, to adjust to life and immigration to Gambia and Canada afterwards, told through the lens of the wife's postpartum depression experience. 6. The day Aunty Amie died -A young man's experience in Canada on the day his once formidable Aunt dies back in Sierra Leone, that ends in a serendipitous encounter. 7. The Conference - A scholar and her best friend struggle to reconcile the ongoing discrepancies and complexities of a conference community working for social change in Africa. 8. Standing in the rain -A group of students of diverse African backgrounds and descent form a life-long community support group. 9. When I became a Black man -A young man describes his first police encounter with racial profiling. 10. The Wedding -The journey of a Canadian university administrator and an African graduate student to their wedding in Freetown, Sierra Leone that takes them back into the history and connection between the black American loyalists that settled in Nova Scotia, Canada and the Creole Peoples of Sierra Leone. Praise for Identities: “Watch out world! Yabome's short story collection exploring African identities will spark conversations like never before. Beautifully written, you will either find parts of your story in it or gain insights about friends, neighbours and strangers you hadn't thought of before. The book is both entertaining and thought-provoking! I thoroughly enjoyed every story.” “OMG Yabome!!!! I'm in love with Identities already! I ordered my copy and got a chance to sneak peak.... so relatable, so interesting and what a breath of fresh air.... now I can't wait for it to get here... thank you .” “I've just finished reading the first story and I enjoyed it immensely. I forced myself to take a break so I can savor the rest of the book during my long trips over the break. Thank you for blessing us.” Finished reading 'where are you from' in no time...almost late picking up the kids from school...brilliant. Love it so far, good job”

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