

Identity 2025 by Terry Miles

A dialogue between two guys, Mike and Tony.

The writer Tony, is returning home after participating in the writers workshop at the Hammersmith Library. 13th May 2025.

Tony turns to the audience and speaks.

TONY: Here I am, about to turn the corner into Brook Green, smiling into space, I am.

Suddenly, a voice, quite close to me, says in a Jamaican accent.

MIKE: Hello.

TONY: Hello.

MIKE: My name is Mike. Have you been somewhere interesting? You look a kinda happy with the world.

TONY: I live in Lillie Road and no, it's not a nice area. That is why I'm here, in Brook Green!

The two men shake hands, as though they have, just met, after so many years apart.

MIKE: You look, sun tanned.

TONY: I've been in my garden, watering away and sun-bathing.

MIKE: I'm a gardener. That is, when I have the work.

Mike takes a flask from his pocket.

MIKE: Go on take a drink.

TONY: No, but thank you. I have to spend some time to reflect.

MIKE: I'm going soon, across the Green to meet some guys. Don't quite know who, right now. Always, someone there who wants to chat about the here and now. Are you married?

TONY: No, I'm not

MIKE: Have you Kids?

TONY: No, I've no desire to bring another being into where we are today. Have you?

MIKE: No. I'm not a homosexual, though. Just hasn't happened. I haven't anything against gay men. Have you any sight at all?

TONY: Just a little peripheral. Have to use a cane otherwise I might well bump into a guy, someone. And get a mouthful of verbal, or worse, a mouthful of thumbs and fingers.

MIKE: Surely, not while walking with a white cane.

TONY: You'd be surprised. People walk as they are looking down to their mobiles.

MIKE: My father was almost killed. He got into an argument. A fight developed. Other men joined in. They took the other man's side. He arrived home all covered in blood. He was taken to the hospital. My dad almost lost his sight. Luckily he didn't.

TONY: I'm sorry your Dad experienced that.

*Tony pulls his work book from his shoulder bag.
He opens it and shows a page to Mike.*

MIKE: Who is that?

TONY: That's me. It's the photograph I put on my student card. I was a mature student at the Byam Shaw.

MIKE: Never heard of it! You look as though you have some northern European blood in you.

TONY: My grandfather was Scottish. A Johnson! They could have been Vikings way back!

MIKE: How old were you? That is, when the photograph was taken?

TONY: Thirty-one. You know In the renaissance people who mattered believed, they were at their most handsome as they became twenty-eight. Look at Dürer's self-portrait, painted in his twenty-eighth year. In all his finery too.

A stranger, walks towards them.

Michael grabs the book from Tony.

He shows it to the stranger.

MIKE: What do you think of this photograph? The face pictured within!
Tell me honestly!

STRANGER: Like a thug. I wouldn't like to bump into the guy, not after it gets dark. That's it. I've said it all!

MIKE: If that was you, would you have it framed and hang it on the wall?

STRANGER: Can you give me five pounds? I haven't any money. I'm hungry!

The stranger walks away.

Mike hands Tony back his work book.

MIKE: I like the Catholic Church. They help the poor. I don't believe in gods, or devils. Good and evil is within people. It's not an external force. How about you? What makes you tick?

TONY: I've just left a writers' workshop.
We read our work and people make comments, nothing very critical, you understand.

MIKE: Are you sure you wouldn't like a drink. I won't say how I got the stuff. Good whisky though.

TONY: I must get back. I need to take a dump.

MIKE: Better let you go, then.

Tony and Michael shake hands, and say their goodbyes.

Tony turns and walks away.

He turns the corner into the close he lives in and walks into Jane.

Jane to the audience.

JANE: Now, I don't exist in reality. I'm just a figure out of Tony's imagination. I think you need a more balanced representation in this, well, this whatever it is.

TONY: A playlet on Identity. What is more important than knowing, who you are, and who you are a talking to.

JANE: There it is then. A definition made by men.

TONY: We are a mixed group. It's been said around the world, people are having fewer children.

JANE: People! Women are the ones that have babies, not men.

TONY: So, do you want children?

JANE: There you are! All you think about is sex.

TONY: If I was, I would've had a child or two by now. So how about, you?

JANE: I want a career. What's the point of marriage if he, the other half in all this, is going to go for a younger woman when you turn forty. He'll have one job. What about me? I'll have two, one to pay the mortgage and one to make his meals. Forget it! I want a life. And recognition for what I do. And if you guys out there worked a little harder at college you'd get better grades and better paid jobs, too.

TONY: I don't have any connections. I paint, write and do the things that interest me. Work too, as a cleaner. The long illness and death of my partner, did affect me. How I felt it. So, Jane! For how much longer do you think, you'll stick around?

JANE: You tell me. I'm only an aspect of your imagination, remember. I'll stick around until you get annoyed or fed up with me.

TONY: That's it. I've had enough.

JANE: Whooooosh!

Jane disappears in a puff of smoke.

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