



# Genocide Lives in Us: Women, Memory, and Silence in Rwanda (Women in Africa and the Diaspora)

*Jennie E. Burnet*

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In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, Rwandan women faced the impossible—resurrecting their lives amidst unthinkable devastation. Haunted by memories of lost loved ones and of their own experiences of violence, women rebuilt their lives from “less than nothing.” Neither passive victims nor innate peacemakers, they traversed dangerous emotional and political terrain to emerge as leaders in Rwanda today. This clear and engaging ethnography of survival tackles three interrelated phenomena—memory, silence, and justice—and probes the contradictory roles women played in postgenocide reconciliation.

Based on more than a decade of intensive fieldwork, *Genocide Lives in Us* provides a unique grassroots perspective on a postconflict society. Anthropologist Jennie E. Burnet relates with sensitivity the heart-wrenching survival stories of ordinary Rwandan women and uncovers political and historical themes in their personal narratives. She shows that women’s leading role in Rwanda’s renaissance resulted from several factors: the dire postgenocide situation that forced women into new roles; advocacy by the Rwandan women’s movement; and the inclusion of women in the postgenocide government.

Honorable Mention, Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize, Women’s Caucus of the African Studies Association



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