



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

*A Professional Summary Mill Summary of*

## *Left to Tell*

*Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*

**Book by: Immaculée Ilibagiza with Steve Erwin - Carlsbad, CA: Hayhouse, 2006.**

*Summarization by Summary Mill, Inc.\**

### **Forward by Inspirational Speaker Dr. Wayne W. Dyer**

In the forward, Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, self-help guru and author of numerous books and public television spokesman, gushes over Immaculée Ilibagiza's loving nature. He speaks of how he sought her out to publish her book after he met her at one of his lectures. He then asked her to write down her story, in book form, as a Tutsi woman in the Rwandan Holocaust of 1994. Immaculée, one of the few survivors of the holocaust, after her ordeal, had already written down her traumatic experience; however, English was her third language and she was having a hard time recounting her story to others. Dr. Dyer thus put her in touch with writer Steve Erwin who aided Immaculée in creating *Left to Tell*. Dr. Dyer tells us that, as we read this, we are in the presence of a deeply spiritual woman who had angels and Divine protection in Rwanda during the holocaust. As will be seen, in the aftermath of the holocaust, Immaculée actually learned to forgive and love those who killed her friends, family, and fellow Tutsis.

### **Preface**

Immaculée informs us that this is a personal story; not a history of the politics surrounding the holocaust. She tells us that in 1994, in 100 days, roughly 1 million people were slaughtered. This is her story of how she survived and learned to forgive cold-blooded killers. Throughout the book we watch her fight her inner demons...and defeat them.

### **Introduction: My Name is Immaculée**

The book opens with Immaculée crouching, *literally* scared to death, in a bathroom with seven other women as killers with machetes and spears yell they have come to kill her specifically. These killers, Immaculée informs us, were once her friends and neighbors, but now they just call her a "cockroach." As she fears for her life, she begins to wonder "what it would feel like when the machete slashed through my skin and cut deep into my bones" (p. xix-xx). In such a circumstance Immaculée returned to her lifelong habit when faced with danger – Immaculée began to pray. The killers soon left. Yet, this was only the first of many such "close calls." The killers would return.

In total, Immaculée, and the seven other women with her, spent ninety-one days in an extremely small bathroom scared for their lives. During that time, Immaculée says the most important lesson she learned was that "in the midst of mass murder, [I learned how] to love those who hated and hunted me – and how to forgive those who slaughtered my family" (p. xx). Immaculée discovered God in the midst of absolute evil.

### **Part I: The Gathering Storm**

#### **Chapter 1: The Eternal Spring**

The first chapter commences with Immaculée praising Rwanda's geographical beauty. She also claims that growing up she had never experienced prejudice. In fact, she didn't even know what a Tutsi or Hutu (the two tribes of Rwanda) was until she entered school. Immaculée was a smart girl from a good family. Both her parents were teachers and thought that a good education would protect her and her siblings from rampant poverty in Rwanda. Her family had two vehicles, and a fairly big house. Their neighbors thought they were rich and called her father "Muzunga" which means white man or rich man. She was raised as a Roman Catholic and throughout her life loved to pray. In fact, at the age of 10 she even wanted to be a nun.

Her parents were nice and fair people. Immaculée recounts a story of her mother making a wedding dress for a neighbor who could not afford one for her daughter. It is evident that her parents raised her to also live by the



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

## Golden Rule.

Immaculée had three brothers: Amiable, Damascene, and Vianney. Amiable, the eldest, was sent to a boarding school at age 7 and Immaculée writes of this, “[i]t was the first time I felt the physical pain of losing someone” (p. 9). Her other brother, Damascene was her “soul mate”, and Immaculée says that to this day she can’t help but to laugh and cry when she thinks of him. Vianney, her youngest brother, was her “little puppy” who followed Immaculée everywhere.

In childhood, Immaculée’s parents were very strict on her since she was the only girl. Her parents knew that in Rwanda a good reputation counted for nearly everything, especially for a girl. She was thus pushed to succeed academically and be prudent. Immaculée concludes the first chapter by stating “In a very conservative society, I was still expected to be seen and not heard. How ironic that I was the one left to tell our family story” (p. 12).

## Chapter 2: Standing Up

Immaculée explained that at one point in Rwandan history the country was colonized by Germany and Belgium who favored the aristocracy of the Tutsi, and thus the Hutus hated the favored Tutsis and felt oppressed. This laid the seeds for genocide. In 1962, the Hutus, then backed by Belgium, took over the country and 100,000 Tutsi were killed. Obviously, the history of Rwanda had been somewhat turbulent, yet things seemed calm as Immaculée was growing up.

There were signs of trouble ahead however. At age 10, Immaculée recalls, that in school roll-call was taken by ethnicity, not name. Immaculée was a Tutsi but at age 10, as stated, she had never even heard of the two tribes and didn’t know what she was. When she asked her older brother what she was, that is Tutsi or Hutu, he just told her to stand up with her friends as roll was called.

Immaculée explained that she finished middle school second in her class, but then she found that the roll-call was really used as an ethnic balancing system. The population was 85% Hutu and 14% Tutsi, and the Hutu aimed to keep the majority of higher educational openings for Hutus only. Thus, Immaculée, despite being second in her class, didn’t get accepted to any public schools because of her Tutsi ethnicity. Her father had to sell two cows (a major financial move) to get her into private school. Because of her father’s gesture, Immaculée promised she would excel at school, and subsequently, enrolled into the hardest subjects she could find which were math and science. Her hard work paid off, for when she took the state exam she got accepted to an even better school called Lycée. A school which was four hours from her home town of Mataba.

## Chapter 3: Higher Learning

In 1990, (Immaculée was 19 at this time), war broke out. At school, Tutsi rebels, known as Rwandese Patriot Force (RPF), were fighting to get land back from the Hutus. RPF weren’t rebels, Immaculée stated, but were exiled refugees fighting for their country.

Hutus identified the Tutsis racially. Anyone who was taller, lighter-skinned, and/or had a narrower nose, which was assumed to be qualities of Tutsis, was targeted. Immaculée had all of these qualities. One day, outside of the school’s safe borders, a Hutu soldier said to Immaculée, “Look how tall this one is... I will kill you first” (p. 26). Such direct threats were rare but very scary. A Tutsi girlfriend of hers at the high school told Immaculée that they would stick their hands in a high voltage box if the Hutu soldiers showed up. They both agreed that ending their own life was better than being beaten and raped by the Hutus. Immaculée informs us that the Hutu’s made soldiers with HIV do the raping!

RPF continued fighting the militant Hutus, but the radio airwaves propagandized everything the RPF did as well as denigrated the Tutsi population in general, calling them “cockroaches.” The Hutu girls at Immaculée’s high school were the overwhelming majority, and such news reports caused these Hutu girls to hate Tutsis like Immaculée, evidence of the tendentiousness. In fact, the radio had accused the RPF of being in battles they were



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

not in. Many Tutsis were arrested and put in jail for no good reason during the war – labeled quislings or coconspirators. Immaculée’s father was one of them.

Her father’s arrest foreshadows what is possible in the times ahead, for her father is sent to jail by an old Hutu friend of his. Luckily, her father was released by the edict of the Hutu President who did so because of international pressure. When Immaculée asked her father about his incarceration, her father downplayed it as “political” and nothing personal. However, she was now credulous. She really had begun to understand the seriousness of the conflict and of the tribal divide. Indeed, she learned that even your friends will turn on you. During all the tumult, Immaculée’s mother worried that her sons would join the military to fight the Hutus. Amiable, Damascene and Vianney all promised they won’t. Unconvinced, Immaculée’s mother consulted a psychic who told her the worst was yet to come.

## Chapter 4: Off to University

In 1991, Immaculée wrote, “The impossible happened: I was awarded a scholarship to National University in Butare” (p. 31). Immaculée was the first girl from her family to go to university, and thus when her family heard the good news they gave her a large feast.

In the fall, Immaculée made her way to the university. As is typical of all young adults out on their own for the first time, Immaculée said she felt free. No longer did she have to wear her school uniform and her \$30 monthly stipend made her feel rich. She reported that she even ended up dating a Hutu man named John. Immaculée wrote, “Life was so good that it was sometimes easy to forget that a war was going on – while other times it was impossible to forget” (p. 33).

With Immaculée’s personal ups there were also some national downs. At this time, the President of Rwanda organized a group called the Interahamwe (which means “to attack together”). Immaculée explained that this group was made up of homeless Hutu, street thugs and others. Immaculée saw these hooligans beat and rob a middle aged lady in the middle of the street in broad daylight. The bystanders were too timorous to do anything! Immaculée recalled how depraved this group of Interahamwe was. She ruefully stated also that the Interahamwe appeared just as it seemed peace was on the horizon. In fact, she told us, the RPF and the President had recently signed a peace treaty. But as this transpired the leader of the Interahamwe, a large and ugly man named Bagosora, stormed out of the meetings appalled by the President’s appeasement to the Tutsis and vowed an apocalypse. Sadly, Immaculée stated, he kept his word...

## Chapter 5: Returning Home

During Immaculée’s sophomore year at university she decided to return home for a family Easter party – that day everything changed forever. Immaculée’s brother, Damascene, caught wind that the Interahamwe were out and had a list of all Tutsi families! Contrary to his quiet character, Damascene burst out in the middle of the party and said the Interahamwe even had grenades! Immaculée believed her brother, and she and Damascene begged their father to abscond, but he refused. Her father thought it would all pass, as it had for many decades now. Things would get violent, but then quiet down. He was wrong, for this would be their last family party together.

That night the President was assassinated – he was shot down. In retaliation, the President’s army quickly killed twenty Tutsi families – thinking they did it. Immaculée heard them read the names of the culprits on the radio – one of the names she heard was her peaceful uncle! In fact, the Hutu’s had killed the President. The radio then made the announcement that no one could leave their house. This was April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1994 – the genocide had begun.

## Chapter 6: No Going Back

The radio encouraged Hutus to kill their Tutsi neighbors. The Hutu even executed the moderate Hutu prime minister who was being protected by UN troops from Belgium. Immaculée and her family were definitely not



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

safe. Immaculée had to pull her family together, even her strong father and brother.

On the morning of the second day of the genocide “the screaming began” (p. 47). Since Immaculée’s family was very well respected, 2,000 people came to her house looking to her father for guidance. By the next morning there were 10,000 people. Immaculée’s father gave a speech to raise the pluck of the crowd – it helped: a few hours later, Immaculée’s father and others repelled an attack of Interahamwe. However, their victory was short-lived, they knew that soon enough the Interahamwe would be back with more soldiers. Thus, her father made her leave, and go to Father Murizi’s, a Hutu friend of the family. This was the last time she would see her father alive.

## **Chapter 7: The Pastor’s House**

Immaculée found an old Hutu elementary teacher of hers at the Pastor’s house that wouldn’t shake her hand because she was Tutsi. She also found the Pastor’s daughter, Janet, at the house. Janet was a childhood friend; however, Janet also refused to be nice to Immaculée, and told Immaculée not to get too comfortable because they would not help her.

A boy named Lechin, the boy who gave Immaculée her first kiss, was also there and was the only one who came to her aide and comforted her. Lechin took Immaculée to a room to lie down. Immaculée settled in, but just as she dosed off, her two brothers Damascene and Vianney came in the room. While Immaculée was excited to see them, she realized that they had been separated from her mom and dad. Her brothers informed that their house had been burnt down. The reunion was short lived as Damascene was not allowed to hide in the Pastor’s house, so he left to stay with a friend. It was the last time she would ever see her brother Damascene alive.

## **Chapter 8: Farewell to the Boys**

The cruel realities of the holocaust continued. Nzima, a family friend, showed up at the Pastor’s house. Immaculée looked to him for comfort but he was petrified. The Pastor wouldn’t let Nzima stay and forced him out. Immaculée later found out that Nzima was hacked to pieces shortly after he left, just down the street.

Next, five Tusti women came to the house. The Pastor obviously more caring toward the women let them hide. Immaculée and the five women were being quiet in the bedroom when the killers had burst into the house. They were yelling “Kill them, kill them!” To avoid capture Immaculée and the others went into a crawl space for two hours!

At this point, one thing was obvious: they had to hide. The Pastor came and said he would hide them. By doing so, he was putting his own life at risk. In his master bedroom was an adjacent bathroom that no one knew of. But before they went in, the Pastor told Immaculée that her other brother Vianney, would have to leave also. This, Immaculée knew, would be almost certain death for him. Immaculée was scared to death at this point, for her, and her youngest brother.

## **Part II: In Hiding**

### **Chapter 9: Into the Bathroom**

The bathroom was 4 feet by 3 feet (Editor’s note: the picture in the book makes one wonder how all six of the women fit in there). There was one shower, one toilet and no sink. In the bathroom they literally couldn’t make any noise. They had to wait for another toilet in another bathroom to flush before they could flush theirs. Of course, they definitely couldn’t take a shower. It was vital that no one, even those in the house, heard them!

It was so cramped that they couldn’t even sit. With nothing else to do, Immaculée started praying. She was angry at the Pastor for letting her brother go, so she prayed for the power to forgive him. She also prayed for her and the other women’s safety.

The group of women ranged from the ages of 14 to 55. The Pastor fed them scraps when he could, and lied to the Hutu’s about hiding them.



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

\*\*\*

On the second day in the bathroom, hundreds of Immaculée's old neighbors, now killers surrounded the Pastor's house. They were dressed like "devils" says Immaculée. Their intention was to raze all Tutsis from Rwanda. They entered the house.

\*\*\*

This, Immaculée explains, was the first time the devil asked her to doubt God. This caused Immaculée to pray more intensely for the killers to not see or find them. Despite her prayers the devil was still saying: "You are no one – God won't save you! Tutsi mothers pray that their babies won't be chopped up but God didn't listen to them – why will he listen to you?" (p. 69). These battles between God and the devil never ceased while Immaculée was in the bathroom.

\*\*\*

Seven hours later, the Pastor found all six women in prayer. The killers had left seven hours ago – the women hadn't even heard them leave. Immaculée explained that that was the first time she ever felt real evil. The Pastor told the six girls that when the Hutu's were in the house they looked everywhere and even stuck knives into his suitcases just in case Tutsi babies were hiding in them.

On the third day, the Pastor found out that killers would be back because rumors were circulating that he was hiding people. Immaculée asked the Pastor to push a large wardrobe in front of the door so the killers wouldn't see it. Immaculée had to get on her knees and begged the Pastor to do it. He didn't want to do it because he knew it would make the killers more violent if they found them.

## Chapter 10: Confronting My Anger

Several days passed with little problem. The Pastor would let Immaculée and the other girls out to stretch for two minutes every 12 hours or so. Nevertheless, each moment was terrifying – except that was, when Immaculée was in prayer. She had set herself a routine to pray everyday at 4 or 5 AM. She would pray with her rosary for four hours. The rosary was the last thing her father gave her before she left for the Pastor's house. Any time she stopped praying, the evil came back. Immaculée wrote "Prayer became my armor" (p. 85). Despite her prayer Immaculée had to fight her anger! She recalled that after the Jewish Holocaust the words "never again" resounded throughout the world – she wondered how it was happening in Rwanda!

Occasionally, the Pastor would give Immaculée and the others updates. One day he told them that they might be the only Tutsi's left alive in Rwanda and that the Hutu's may have killed a hundred thousand Tutsi's! While the other girls were crying, Immaculée said she felt only anger at this news – she wanted to kill every Hutu she saw! She said she wanted to drop an atomic bomb on all of Rwanda!

## Chapter 11: Struggling to Forgive

Immaculée "was in deep prayer when the killers came to search the house a second time" (p. 91). Immaculée couldn't find it in her to forgive the killers.

\*\*\*

The killers busted into the room which contained the bathroom in which they were hiding! The killers were soon in front of the wardrobe! Immaculée had noticed that they were laughing as they killed people (she could, at times, hear the slaughter outside the house) – Immaculée wished them to hell.

But she fought this urge and prayed harder. Nonetheless, the devil kept sneaking in her mind. There were 50 Hutus in the room now, just outside the wardrobe. But eventually the killers dispersed. Henceforth, Immaculée worked even harder to assuage her anger, and prayed as intensely as possible to quell her hatred. It seemed when she got over her anger, she was protected. Indeed, God answered her saying, "You are *all* my children" (p. 94). Immaculée then knew that she could forgive the Hutus for they were children – their needs were vile, but not their



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

soul. “In that moment [she] prayed for the killers, for their sins to be forgiven” (p. 94). That night was the first night Immaculée slept in peace since the horrors began.

## Chapter 12: No Friends to Turn To

The Pastor went into the bathroom one day, at the end of the first month in hiding and told Immaculée that her father was a terrible Tutsi and he had 600 guns and grenades in their home. This infuriated Immaculée because it was obviously a lie! Immaculée burst into anger saying that if her father had had so many guns why didn’t he give them to the thousands of Tutsi that came to his house for help? The other women in the bathroom with Immaculée couldn’t believe she challenged the Pastor!

\*\*\*

A short while later, Immaculée heard through the small window in the bathroom, her Old Hutu friend Janet saying she didn’t care if any Tutsi lived. Next, Immaculée heard over the radio that 500 Tutsi’s were killed at her university!

## Chapter 13: A Gathering of Orphans

Another month had passed and the radio was a full-fledged propaganda machine, calling Tutsi’s snakes and cockroaches. The government even handed out guns and machetes. On top of that, the UN withdrew soldiers except for a Canadian named Romeo Dallaire – he refused orders and kept his men in Rwanda. The United States didn’t know this genocide was happening, and plus the Hutu’s were destroying all Tutsi documentation to make it look like a genocide never happened! On top of all this, two more Tutsi women joined them in the bathroom – they survived by dressing like the killers!

## Chapter 14: The Gift of Tongues

By seven weeks in they were gaunt – the good thing was that there was more room! Yet, there were many bugs and no medication when they got sick. All Immaculée could do was pray. But then a vision came to her that said “Learn English” so she could share her story with the world. The Pastor got Immaculée two books and a French-English dictionary. Immaculée studied hard and asked God to keep the devil away while she did so.

\*\*\*

In early June, Immaculée’s boyfriend John showed up, the Pastor let him see Immaculée. But John was rude and didn’t want to touch her. She could hear him downstairs playing while she was trapped like an animal! He even said, “I know one thing – there are no other men looking at you” (p. 121). This killed any love she had for him – this was yet another loss Immaculée had to endure.

## Chapter 15: Unlikely Saviors

Eventually, Immaculée heard that the French had joined in and were helping the Tutsis. Yet, she remained skeptical as the French had actually helped train the Interahamwe. Immaculée reckoned that even if the French were in it for ulterior motives, it was better to be killed by a French soldier than a Hutu killer.

\*\*\*

Later that night, the Pastor, in an act of sympathy, let the girls out of the bathroom to watch a movie. The move surprised Immaculée and the others. Yet, the joy was short-lived as someone saw them and reported the Pastor hiding them. The Interahamwe were on their way and they may even have learned about the secret bathroom!

## Chapter 16: Keeping the Faith

The killers burst into the house yelling Immaculée’s name! They knew she was there! They were in the room



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

next to the bathroom. Immaculée writes that as they called her name “I covered my ears, wishing that I had one of their machetes so that I could cut them off to stop hearing” (p. 130).

\*\*\*

In her exhaustion Immaculée slipped into sleep. She had a dream about Jesus who said to her “Mountains are moved with faith... but if faith were easy all mountains would be gone” (p. 131). Suddenly Immaculée was conscious! On the door to the bathroom she saw a bright cross on the doors- a cross of light! She spoke up and told the others they would not be hurt. The killers left!

\*\*\*

The Pastor returned with good news. He had spoken to the French who would come to get them early in the morning. At 2 AM the Pastor snuck them out of the house.

## **Part III: A New Path**

### **Chapter 17: The Pain of Freedom**

Immaculée tasted fresh air for the first time in three months! As they walked down the road to the French Camp they are surrounded by 60 Interahamwe! Yet, they passed without incident. Immaculée reckoned they probably couldn't believe any Tutsis were left! But being this close to the Interahamwe scared the Pastor and he told the girls they had to go the rest of the way, one-half mile, alone! Immaculée told the others to stay behind, and ran the 500 yards to the French camp! Immaculée reached a French soldier, and he came with her to get the rest of the girls. He told them “It's all right ladies, it's all right... You don't have to worry anymore... your nightmare is over. We won't let anyone hurt you” (p. 141).

\*\*\*

At the camp, Immaculée ran into an old friend, Jean Baptiste, who amazingly avoided capture because of his Hutu like appearance. Jean Baptiste knew about each of her family members and Immaculée wanted to know. He told her that her father had been shot after he went to the government to ask for food for some thousands of starving Tutsi. He died trying to help others. He told her that her mother was killed as well. She was chopped up to death. Luckily, if one can say that, her mother got a proper burial. Also, she learned that Vianney, the brother that was sent away by the Pastor, had been killed by machine guns and grenades. Damascene was also killed. She later learned that friends and family (grandparents, uncles and so on) had also been killed. Immaculée breaks down at this point. Ironically, with all the heartbreak, she got a letter from Damascene from Jean Baptiste.

### **Chapter 18: A Letter from Damascene**

The letter spoke of Damascene's fearlessness of death and when Immaculée learned how exactly Damascene died it turns out he really was: As Damascene was beaten he smiled and prayed for his killers. He robbed the killers of their pleasure! One of the killers yelled “You Tutsis have always acted so superior to us Hutus... you think you are so much smarter than we are with your master's degree? Well, I want to see what the brain of someone with a master's degree looks like” (p. 154-155). The last thing she was told was that the blade then dug into Damascene head.

### **Chapter 19: Camp Comfort**

The French Soldiers often apologized for the bad conditions but the camp to Immaculée was like a resort compared to the bathroom. Immaculée didn't spend much time with the ladies she was in the bathroom with – they all reminded her of the pain.

\*\*\*

Soon there were 150 Tutsi survivors in the camp. One survivor that showed up was named Aloise. Aloise was somewhat of a celebrity at the camp because she was smart and a well-known diplomat. However, she was



## Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

stuck in a wheelchair from Polio. Immaculée notes that she never saw Aloise get sad or upset – she was always smiling and laughing. In fact, Immaculée was a little skeptical of her because when she got to the camp Aloise was just laughing. However, when Aloise saw Immaculée she exclaimed “Oh my God, I can see your mother’s face in yours” (p. 166-167). Immaculée, needless to say was taken aback. Aloise told Immaculée that her mother had paid for her schooling when she contracted Polio – Aloise told Immaculée her mother was a saint! She then told Immaculée that she wanted to do something in honor of her mother – she offered Immaculée and eight other women to come live with her after the war!

### Chapter 20: Road to the Rebels

In late August the French abruptly left. Immaculée was told that she and 30 others had two hours before they would have to leave the camp. The French decided to take them to the RPF group to stay. Immaculée was excited about this.

\*\*\*

Half way to the RPF camp the driver of the truck, in which the Tutsi were being taken in, stopped. The French commander went around to the back and told Immaculée that they had to walk the rest of the way! The truck was surrounded by Hutus who looked ready to fight! Yet the French had orders not to engage! Immaculée begged them not to leave, but the French did anyway.

\*\*\*

Surrounded by killers, Immaculée took two of her friends and told the others to stay behind and wait for her to return. She told them that they would walk to the RPF camp to get Tutsi Soldiers for protection. Fearlessly, Immaculée walked right past the killers, praying heavily to God the whole time. As she walked, the killers did nothing: partly out of fear because the RPF was near, but mainly, Immaculée believes, because of the Grace of God. Once past the killers, Immaculée ran to the RPF gate – she was greeted with a gun to her face!

### Chapter 21: On to Kigali

The RPF thought that the Immaculée and the other girls, were Hutu spies since nearly all Tutsis were dead. A commander of RPF came – he too was concerned they were spies! Just as things were looking bleak, a RPF soldier astonishingly said “Immaculée? Immaculée Ilibagiza?” (p. 176).

\*\*\*

The voice was that of a Hutu named Bazil who went to fight with the RPF! It was an old neighbor of Immaculée. Bazil told the Commander that Immaculée was legit and the commander apologized. Immaculée told the general of the others she left behind. The RPF returned and safely got the rest of the Tutsis back with no incident.

\*\*\*

At the RPF camp was a church. Behind the church was a “deep pit at least 30 yards across and 20 feet deep. It was filled with bodies...” (p. 179).

\*\*\*

Eventually, Immaculée and her 8 friends could leave the camp, and Aloise, as promised, allowed them to move into her house in Kigali. The town of Kigali was a ghost town; Aloise’s house needed major fixing up. Nevertheless, it was great to feel free.

### Chapter 22: The Lord’s Work

Immaculée wanted to work, but where? Everything was shut down from the war. This didn’t deter Immaculée however. She decided she would work in the U.N., and boldly, simply showed up early in the morning



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

and sat there all day. She filled out a ton of forms but no one ever came to see her. She went back again the next day and the next. As she walked home each night she prayed to God to help her get a job. (Ironically, Immaculée noted that she actually missed the bathroom where she had so much time with God). This strikes the reader – she actually missed the bathroom because she had felt close to God.

One day, she decided to take matters into her own hands and simply walk into the Personnel Director's office – and ask for a job. He turned her away summarily. Immaculée's will was broke and she burst into tears and ran out of the UN. But before she crossed the UN gate an old man yelled to her. Out of respect for her elders she stopped. He asked her why she was crying and she said she needed a job. He told her to come back tomorrow for an interview. It turns out that Immaculée reminded this old man of a Rwandan girl who used to work for him!

\*\*\*

With her new job, Immaculée sent money to Aloise.

## Chapter 23: Burying the Death

Through the UN Immaculée got an armed escort back to her hometown. Immaculée saw her old house; it was completely destroyed. This reopened her wounds just as they were about to heal. Anger and a thirst for revenge came over Immaculée. That night Immaculée prayed and prayed to God for release from her evil thoughts. Peace finally came into her soul. God placed this thought in her mind: "The people who'd hurt my family had hurt themselves even more, and they deserved my pity..." (p. 197). The next day, Immaculée returned to her home to give her mom and brother Damascene a proper burial together. Immaculée wanted to see Damascene's face for closure, but when they pulled his body out Immaculée fainted and hit her head on the ground. After she was revived, they buried her brother next to her mother. Immaculée agreed not to look at her mother – it was too much to bear.

## Chapter 24: Forgiving the Living

"I knew my family was at peace, but that didn't ease the pain of missing them" wrote Immaculée (p. 201). Immaculée suffered countless nightmares, but then she had an amazing dream in which her family appeared to her and told her to stop being so gloomy. Henceforth, Immaculée felt much better.

\*\*\*

Immaculée returned to her hometown yet again to visit the prison where the leader who chopped Damascene's head was incarcerated. A man named Feliceen appeared in front of her – it was a man that she knew! He was a man with impeccable manners as Immaculée recalled. Yet, it was also the same man who was calling her name in the house with the band of killers! The man was in shambles. Immaculée wrote "the devil [had] entered his heart" (p. 204). Immaculée, weeping, touched him and said "I forgive you" (p. 204). Immaculée's heart eased immediately. An officer observing this was angry at her for not spitting on him. Immaculée replied to him "Forgiveness is all I have to offer" (p. 204).

## Epilogue

Two years after the massacre Immaculée met her husband. He was a man who came from the US to help set up the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1998. Immaculée and her husband eventually moved to the US and had two children.

\*\*\*

In late 1995, Immaculée met up with her only surviving family member Amiable. He was out of the country at the time of the holocaust. Despite what one might think, when they met there was no outpouring of emotion and they couldn't even talk about the holocaust. Immaculée hoped this book will answer some questions that Amiable couldn't find the power to ask.



# Summary Mill | **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.**

\*\*\*

Immaculée is currently “setting up a foundation that will help victims of genocide and war everywhere to heal in body, mind and spirit” (p. 209). Immaculée is a story of courage and forgiveness. Children of people killed by the Nazis as well as some of the Rwandan holocaust survivors thank Immaculée often for telling her story, for it shows them the way to forgiveness. Immaculée is truly a saintly woman.



# Summary Mill | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

\*\*\*\*

We hope you enjoyed this Summary Mill summary!  
Send any comments or questions to [info@SummaryMill.com](mailto:info@SummaryMill.com)

[www.SummaryMill.com](http://www.SummaryMill.com)

\*\*\*

## NOTES:

You can find out more about Immaculée Ilibagiza at [www.LeftToTell.com](http://www.LeftToTell.com)