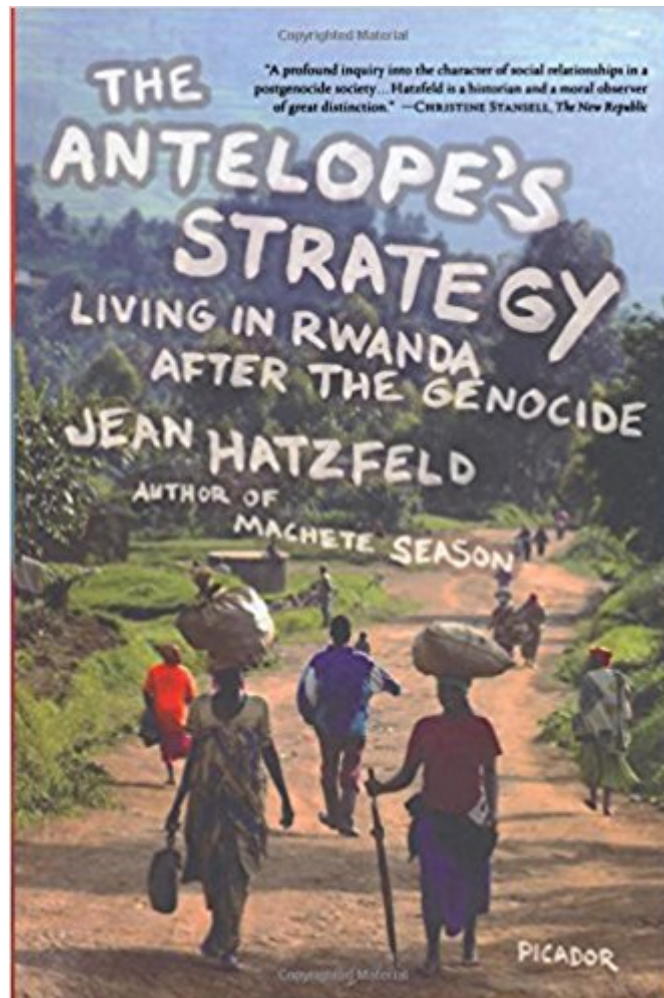




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# The Antelope's Strategy: Living In Rwanda After The Genocide



## Synopsis

One hot May morning in 2003, a crowd of Hutus who had participated in the genocidal killings of April 1994 in Rwanda filed out of prison and into the sunshine, singing hallelujahs, their freedom granted by presidential pardon. As they returned to their old villages, Tutsi survivors watched as the people who had killed their neighbors and families returned to the homes around them. In *The Antelope's Strategy*, Jean Hatzfeld returns to Rwanda to talk with both Hutus and Tutsis struggling to live side by side. We hear the voices of killers who have been released from prison or returned from exile, and Tutsi escapees who must now tolerate them as neighbors. How are they managing with the process of reconciliation? Is such a thing even possible? The enormously varied answers Hatzfeld gets suggest that little faith in true recovery survives among those who lived through the genocide. This is an astonishing exploration of the pain of memory, the nature of stoic hope, and the ineradicability of grief.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The horrors of communal violence give way to quieter torments in this harrowing collection of oral histories. Hatzfeld revisits Tutsi survivors and confessed Hutu killers he interviewed in *Life Laid Bare* and *Machete Season* after the latter were unexpectedly released from prison and returned to their homes.. The official Rwandan policy of reconciliation holds: Hutu-Tutsi relations are civil, and one genocidaire even marries a Tutsi woman whose relatives were slaughtered. But to Hatzfeld, the survivors reveal inner scars—their unappeasable sense of grief, dispossession and mistrust of their neighbors, the fillip of fear whenever they encounter Hutu farmers carrying their machetes, the

bitterness that justice has been sacrificed for national recovery. (Less anguished, the pardoned Hutu perpetrators express a diplomatic repentance and relief at having escaped retribution.) Hatzfeld includes nightmarish scenes from the genocide; survivors recall running for their lives for weeks on end, regressing to the status of game animals as Hutu hunting bands cut down their families and friends. Just as haunting is the spiritual aftermath: 'I believed in honorable effort, decent behavior, the straight and narrow path,' one Tutsi woman recalls, '[but] from now on, I'm suspicious of moral maxims.' (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• Daring...Hatzfeld captures ordinary Rwandans at their most contemplative, working out the dilemma that will define the rest of their lives: How can survivors and killers share hilltops again? • Jina Moore, *The Christian Science Monitor* • Artfully written . . . a book that illustrates vividly the thorny realities that accompany survival and appeasement. • Nora Krug, *The Washington Post* • Harrowing . . . Hatzfeld tackles the hardest questions of justice and reparations; of why some are broken or fall into despair while others are able to find anew some peace of mind and pleasure in life. • Anita Sethi, *The Independent (UK)* • An amazing look at the reconciliation of evil and forgiveness. • Vanessa Bush, *Booklist*

Jean Hatzfeld has accomplished a difficult and very touching trilogy on the Rwandan genocide, which reveals the perspectives of both the victims and the killers and the painful experience of living together again. Much recommended to anyone interested in the past and the future of Rwanda.

A revisit to the perpetrators and survivors of the Rwandan genocide in one particular district. Deeply absorbing and elucidating. You will emerge with great appreciation for human resilience and the thoughtfulness and introspective capacity of individual, ordinary Rwandans.

I loved the book. Yet - it's hard to rate a product like that. All three books by Jean Hatzfeld (this one is the third out of trilogy) are amazing, all three should be read.

This can be very infuriating as you read through if you care about our common humanity and can't stand injustice!

The first reviewer said things very well, so I will leave that as it is. But I live in Rwanda and am married to a Rwandan and I work here among many who were here and others who returned afterward. I find Hatzfield's book refreshing because it is so honest, and honesty about these events is difficult, not because Rwandans aren't truthful but because we all have to live next to one another, come what may. As some survivors point out, it would help them to release all their pent-up feelings, but it would be hard to continue our daily lives if they did so. So for national survival, they sacrifice, even again. Rwanda is truly an astounding story of survival against all odds: not one of the people I know who was here in the two or three years afterward really believed the country would find any way forward. The fact that it has and has even surpassed many of the conditions of its pre-war status and is looking forward to the future is an incredible testimony to Rwandans themselves. The people in this book are witness to that: this is as true a snapshot of rural Rwanda as can be found in English. Life in the city is a bit more complex than Hatzfield paints it, but he knows this particular community very well.

I thought this was fiction. It's not. Interviews with survivors and perpetrators. Not fun.

That there is only one other review to date on indicates a low readership for *The Antelope's Strategy*. It's true that more pressing current affairs require our attention between Iraq, Afghanistan, the worldwide financial situation...and this doesn't even include the growing drug trade in Mexico nor the uranium enrichment in North Korea. However, the genocide in Rwanda still strikes me as one of the more important historical events in my lifetime as it reveals the continuing need for discourse on how and why ethnicity is manipulated in politics as well as the longterm effects of such politics. In this accessible book which combines direct oral narrative with the author's literary shaping of events, the story post-genocide is told both by Tutsis and Hutus. In 2003, the mostly Tutsi government freed the Hutu prisoners who admitted their crimes in killing Tutsis. The freed Hutus were taught how to behave towards the survivor Tutsis and allowed to return home, to the silent shock of the survivor Tutsis who in turn were urged by the government to behave judiciously and neighborly towards the freed Hutus, even towards those who took part in killing their families and friends. With only a traditional and almost informal court (the *gacaca*) in which to air grievances and seek out further truths concerning that summer when a possible 75% of the Tutsi population was decimated, both Tutsis and Hutus face an uneasy coexistence but recognize the compromise as the only way for the nation to move forward. In reading the book, I was stunned by the details about the daily existence during that genocide when Tutsis and Hutus engaged in a deadly hunting game with

its own perimeters of hunting time and almost safe hours when Tutsis could emerge from the forest or the papaya marshes to forage for food. I had read about the churches where the massacres seemed straight forward. But within the forest and the marshes was an odder game, one with the slimmest chance of survivor for the Tutsis. Of the six thousand fled to Kayumba Forest, only twenty survived the daily ritual of running to evade the hunter Hutus who, armed with machetes, entered the forest each morning, then took a break for lunch, then returned to murder before finishing the day at five. The survivors from the papaya marshes tell a similar story: daily hiding in the water among vegetation during the daytime, then coming out in the evening as the Hutu hunters ate to forage for food. The goal for the Tutsis daily was to survive until mealtime. Here is massacre as a workday with the Hutus considering murders just another part of the job. That the Tutsis and Hutus even manage to get on with life, after all that has happened and the crimes that have been committed, is quite something.

Surprising, comforting and appalling all at once. More personal thoughts by Hatzfeld than in his other books. It answered so many questions from Hatzfeld's first two books on Rwanda. He puts the killers and survivors side-by-side as they now live in their villages and makes the reader really feel what it must be like to be there.

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