



*As We Forgive*

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# chronology of events

- 1885** At the Berlin Conference of European Powers, Germany received control of the area constituting present-day Rwanda.
- 1894** The first European explorers arrived in Rwanda.
- 1921** A League of Nations mandate awarded Rwanda and Burundi to Belgium. The Belgians maintained the Tutsi king to rule the country.
- 1926** The Belgians introduced ethnic identity cards.
- 1933** Identity cards became compulsory after Belgians conducted a census. What had largely been a semifluid distinction of class between Hutu and Tutsi became a distinction fixed from birth.
- 1957** The Hutu manifesto was published, denouncing the Tutsi-dominated political leadership of the country. The Parmehutu party (or Party for the emancipation of Hutu) was formed.
- 1959** The Tutsi king Mutara Rudahigwa III mysteriously died. Hutu, supported by the Belgians, rose up against the Tutsi aristocracy. Hutus killed thousands of Tutsis and thousands more fled the country.
- A Hutu president, Gregoire Kayibanda, rose to power, representing the Parmehutu party. Rwanda gained independence.

Tutsis who had been forced to flee in 1959 attacked the country. Hutus attacked Tutsis in retaliation, killing an estimated 12,000. More Tutsis fled the country.

- 1967** More massacres against Tutsis in Rwanda occurred.
- 1973** In a coup d'état Major Juvénal Habyarimana took control of Rwanda. He created a one party state and established quotas that only allowed Tutsis less than 10 percent of the available jobs. More Tutsis fled the country as tensions mounted.
- 1978** Juvénal Habyarimana was elected president.
- 1986** Exiled Tutsis in neighboring Uganda formed the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front). Originally, the RPF was composed of those who helped overthrow the Ugandan dictator, Milton Obote.
- 1990** The RPF achieved its first victory in Rwanda. RPF leader Fred Rwigyema was killed by a sniper. His childhood friend, Paul Kagame, took control of the RPF.
- 1991** The Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) began to equip civilian militias, composed of extremist Hutus, to fight back. These militias were called *interahamwe*, or literally, "those who stand together."
- 1992** Local massacres of Tutsis were carried out.
- 1993** Hutu and RPF leaders negotiated a power-sharing agreement at Arusha, Tanzania. Extremist Hutus considered the agreement a sell-out. Under the command of Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, 2,500 UN peace-keeping forces (UNAMIR) were deployed to help ensure the Arusha Peace Agreement.
- 1993** Radio Milles Collines was launched as a private radio station. Family members of Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana were shareholders. The president delayed implementation of power-sharing agreement. Interahamwe continued to be recruited and trained. Radio Milles Collines broadcasted anti-Tutsi propaganda.
- January 11, 1994** Canadian General Romeo Dallaire faxed a warning to UN headquarters that preparations for a mass killing are underway.

## chronology of events

**March 1994** A prominent Hutu, Felicien Kabuga, is believed to have imported 50,000 machetes from Kenya.

**April 6, 1994** On a return trip from Tanzania a mysterious plane crash killed Rwandan and Burundian presidents. Today many believe that Hutu extremists, worried that Habyarimana was about to implement the Arusha Peace Agreement, planned the attack. Word spread that the RPF had shot down the President's plane. Killings began that night as the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) set up roadblocks and interahamwe militias went from door to door killing. UNAMIR forces were forbidden to intervene.

**April 7, 1994** Moderate Hutu leaders were tracked and killed, including Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Ten Belgian UNAMIR peacekeepers ordered to protect the Prime Minister were murdered in an ambush attack. Meanwhile, Hutu interahamwe forces killed thousands of Tutsis. The RPF launched a counterattack.

**April 8, 1994** An interim government was established and Hutu Jean Kambanda was appointed prime minister. He supported calls over the radio for Hutus to abuse, hurt, and kill Tutsi and Hutu moderates. In 1998 he would plead guilty to charges that he incited the slaughter of over 800,000 Rwandans. General Dallaire warned Kofi Annan that the Kigali government was planning to slaughter the Tutsi. Annan's office ordered General Romeo Dallaire not to protect the informant or to confiscate arms stockpiles.

**April 9–10, 1994** French, Belgian and American civilians were rescued by their governments. No Rwandans were rescued.

**April 11, 1994** UNAMIR soldiers protecting 2,000 Tutsis at the Don Bosco School were ordered to withdraw to Kigali airport. Most Tutsi were killed after their departure. In the countryside, the interahamwe gathered local farmers and began systematic attacks.

- April 14, 1994** Belgium withdrew its UN peacekeeping forces.
- April 16, 1994** Pastor Elizaphan Ntakirutimana permitted an armed convoy of Hutu officials and militia to carry out a day-long massacre in Mugonero. Meanwhile about 12,000 Tutsis were murdered at a local Kibuye church and stadium and in the surrounding countryside.
- April 21, 1994** The UN Security Council voted unanimously to withdraw most of the UNAMIR troops, cutting the force from 2,500 to 270. The International Red Cross estimated that tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Rwandans were now dead.
- April 25, 1994** In the southern region of Butare, a building where 500 Tutsis were hiding was set ablaze. In 2001 Benedictine Sister Maria Kisito stood trial in Belgium for providing the gasoline.
- April 28, 1994** Christine Shelley, spokeswoman for the State Department, was asked whether what was happening in Rwanda was a genocide. She responded, "... the use of the term 'genocide' has a very precise legal meaning, although it's not strictly a legal determination. There are other factors in there as well." Meanwhile, the State Department issued a secret intelligence report identifying the killings as genocide.
- April 30, 1994** Hundreds of thousands of fleeing Tutsis poured into neighboring Tanzania, Burundi, and Zaire. The UN agreed to a resolution condemning the killing but omitted the word "genocide." If the word had been used, the UN would have been bound to prevent it.
- May 14, 1994** RPF forces reached Nyamata area and started combing the marshes for survivors.
- May 17, 1994** The UN Security Council issues another resolution, this time saying that "acts of genocide may have been committed." While the UN agreed to send 5,500 troops with new powers to defend civilians, disagreements between the US and

## chronology of events

UN over the financing of the operation delayed deployment. Meanwhile, the International Red Cross estimated death toll rose to around 500,000 Rwandans.

**May 22, 1994** The Kigali airport and Kanombe barracks fell to RPF forces, as well as the northern and eastern parts of Rwanda.

**June 22, 1994** Disagreements continued over the funding and deployment of UN forces. The UN authorized emergency help through 2,500 French troops known as Operation Turquoise. They were to create a “safe” area in the government-controlled part of Rwanda, although killing continued here also.

**July 4, 1994** The RPF took control of Kigali and Butare in the south. RPF leaders said they would form a government on the basis of the Arusha Accords.

**July 13–14, 1994** Hutus fleeing the RPF advance flooded into Zaire along the Gitarama road. A tidal wave of approximately 10,000–12,000 refugees per hour washed across the border into the town of Goma, creating a severe humanitarian crisis.

**July 18, 1994** The RPF announced that the war was over, declared a cease-fire, and named Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, as president with Faustin Twagiramungu as prime minister. An estimated 800,000 to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in the span of 100 days, some 300,000 of them were thought to be children, while another 95,000 children lost one or both parents.

**October 3, 1994** The United Nations Security Council called the massacres committed in Rwanda, “a genocide.”

**November 1994** The UN Security Council established an International Criminal Tribunal to prosecute those responsible for the Rwandan genocide. Almost fifteen years later, only 28 people had been convicted.

**November–December 1996** Rwandan forces supported rebel groups opposing Congo President Mobutu Sese Seko’s regime.

Tens of thousands of Hutus were killed and thousands more were forced to return back to Rwanda. They joined the 85,000 held in prisons built for no more than 20,000. Those interahamwe who were not killed or forced back during this time continued to live in Congo and made border raids over the years to come.

**April 1996** President Pasteur Bizimungu dedicated the Kigali genocide memorial.

**March 15, 1998** President Clinton apologized to Rwandan genocide victims, saying, “We did not act quickly enough after the killing began . . . We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide.”

**May 7, 1998** UN Secretary General Kofi Annan apologized to Rwandan parliament, saying, “What we did was not nearly enough . . . to save Rwanda . . . We will not deny that, in their greatest hour of need, the world failed the people of Rwanda.”

**March 23, 2000** President Pasteur Bizimungu resigned following a month-long debate on ethnic tensions and corruption.

**April 17, 2000** Paul Kagame was elected the country’s first Tutsi president.

**January 2003** Rwandan President Paul Kagame issued a decree to release elderly, sick, and lower-level killers and looters from the 1994 genocide who had confessed their crimes in an effort to ease intense overcrowding in the country’s prisons and foster national reconciliation. At the time of this writing, approximately 60,000 prisoners have been released, many of whom have been tried in gacaca courts.

# secrets of the Umuvumu's scars



THE GASH ACROSS THE FACE OF EMMANUEL MAHURO, A SEVENTEEN-year-old Rwandan native, is no longer an open wound. Today, like a jagged boundary line on a map, a scar juts down the plateau of his forehead, across the bridge of his nose, and up the slope of his right cheek. It is impossible to look into Emmanuel's eyes without seeing this deep cut, a mark of division etched across his face—and the face of Rwanda—fifteen years after the genocide.

My first reaction to such scars is to avert my eyes. But to look away from Emmanuel's scars is to look away from him. Strangely, as my eyes adjust to Emmanuel's face, there is an impulse, not to recoil, but to follow the line of the scar across his skin.

Emmanuel's scar testifies to two realities. It is a witness to the human capacity for evil. To look at it is to hear it scream the brutality of an April that aches in the memory of an entire people. Yet his scar testifies to another truth: the stunning capacity of humans to heal from the unthinkable. To trace that scar is to discover the hope of a people who, despite losing everything, are finding a way to forge a common future for Rwanda.

## prelude

Rwanda's wounds, like Emmanuel's, are agonizingly deep. Today, they are being opened afresh as tens of thousands of killers are released from prison to return to the hills where they hunted down and killed former neighbors, friends, and classmates. In the everyday business of life—purchasing corrugated metal for roofing, burying bananas in the ground to make *urwagwa*, and hauling harvested sorghum to the market—survivors commonly meet the eyes of people who shattered their former lives. How can they live together? This is not a philosophical question, but a practical one that confronts Rwandans daily.

In some shape or form, all Rwandans ask this question. Some, like Antoine Rutayisire, himself a survivor, put the question starkly: “If they told you that a murderer was to be released into your neighborhood, how would you feel? But what if this time, they weren't just releasing one, but forty thousand?” For Antoine and his country, which has released some sixty thousand prisoners since 2003, these questions are not hypothetical.

Fatuma Ndagiza, executive secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, began wrestling in earnest with the questions on January 10, 2003, when the president first decided to provisionally release forty thousand of the 120,000 Rwandans held in egregiously overcrowded prisons. Even with a fully functional legal system, something which had been wiped out with the slaughter of many Tutsi in 1994, the backlog of cases would have taken over two hundred years. “I was driving in the car around one o'clock, when I heard President Kagame say that these people who are going to be released have to be taken to the Reconciliation Commission for reeducation before going back to the community.” At first, Fatuma thought the president was crazy. “What sort of education do you give to people who confessed that they killed? What do we tell the victims?” she wondered.

Government officials weren't the only ones who worried about the pending release. For Gahigi, a Tutsi who lost 142 family members during the genocide, the question dripped with fear: "This time, will they kill us all?" The survivors could not imagine living side by side with their tormentors. Would Rwandan society, still barely functioning, now collapse entirely?

But even as survivors were tormented with fears and questions, so also were many of the offenders themselves. Saveri, one of the killers, recalls how he felt when he heard he would be released: "I was so overjoyed, but fear lingered also. How was I going to face a survivor and squarely look her in the eyes after I had wiped out her family?" This thought terrorized him.

Similarly, John, another man who stained his own hands with blood when he killed his neighbor, remembers, "I had a mixture of fear when I learned I was going to be released from prison. After a long time in prison it was hard for me to come back to the community that I had sinned against. My biggest challenge was how I was going to meet Chantal, whose father I had killed. This was my deepest fear."

Years later, these fears and questions continue. Each day Rwandans struggle to understand how to live together. Behind prison walls, perpetrators are urged to tell the truth publicly about their crimes and to make actual or symbolic restitution. Some survivors volunteer to enter the prisons and share the stories of their shattered lives, hoping to create empathy and shared understanding. In mud-walled homes, widows and survivors gather to share and to support one another.

An ancient form of justice, known as *gacaca* (pronounced "gah-cha-cha"), unfolds on grassy fields under wild fig trees, called *umuvumu*, where trusted elders, men and women of integrity, hear cases. Unlike the Western court system, where the best strategy can be to deny guilt until the government proves it

beyond a reasonable doubt, gacaca works best if there is truth telling and confession. Together, the elders, the perpetrators, and the community—including the survivors themselves—work out solutions. The solutions may involve more prison time or require the offenders to return to the place of their crime and participate in community service and reconciliation. Gacaca strives to bring justice and peace into communities that have been shattered.

Sometimes this process even paves the way for moving beyond justice to reconciliation. Some perpetrators, whose hearts are truly changed, are eager to go beyond what is required of them. Hands that once swung machetes in violence now smooth mud bricks in peace as they voluntarily build homes for their victims. Survivors, once seething with rage, are moving toward forgiveness. While there are still deep wounds—many that may never heal—there are also clear and unmistakable signs of hope, bearing witness to the possibility of reconciliation.

There's an ancient craft practiced in Rwanda, an age-old art that has been almost lost today. The Umuvumu trees that shade the Gacaca gatherings have another purpose. Once the Umuvumu tree has matured, a small strip of bark is cut away. Like our own bodies, the tree responds to the gash. The Umuvumu produces a fine red matting of slender roots to cover the wound. The ancients then treated that matting to create a cloth, commonly called bark cloth. Historically, the bark cloth was used to make royal clothing. Today, artisans fashion the reddish-brown fabric into traditional African ceremonial dress, wallets, purses, placemats, book covers, and maps of Africa, adding decorative detail through paint, print, or needlework. Strangely, mysteriously, things of beauty and usefulness sometimes come from wounds.

This is why I want to understand what is happening in Rwanda today. Because I too have scars—wounds that make

me wonder if these too can become emblems not of shame but of triumph, not of rage but of restoration. I hesitate to evoke my scars in the same breath as those the Rwandans carry. Somehow I feel that I am treading on hallowed ground when I see the kind of pain these people have had to go through. Their pain makes my pain look like a paper cut in comparison. Perhaps you will feel the same as you read on. Perhaps not.

But for me, this is part of the importance of understanding. If Rwandans can find the courage to forgive, then perhaps there is hope for us in those problems that seem to pale in comparison and in those that echo the horrors of the genocide. This is why when I see a country known for radical brutality becoming, person by person, a place known for radical forgiveness, I want to understand. While this process is far from complete, every instance is so beautiful, so extraordinary, so beyond ordinary human capability, that it demands our attention and exploration.

We in the West, just as Rwandans, desperately need to understand forgiveness. We live in a violent world filled with conflicts. Political polarization, terrorist attacks, racial tensions, immigration fears, and school shootings define our national landscape. Meanwhile, privately, we struggle with broken marriages, splintered relationships, and doubts that pierce us to the core.

Could there be a common road map to reconciliation? Could there be a shared future after unthinkable evil? If forgiveness is possible after genocide, then perhaps there is hope for the comparably smaller rifts that plague our relationships, our communities, and our nation.

Rwanda looms as an uncharted case study in forgiveness. As *We Forgive* traces the route of reconciliation in the lives of Rwandans — victims, widows, orphans, and perpetrators — whose past and future intersect. We discover in these stories how suffering,

## prelude

memory, and identity set up roadblocks to forgiveness, while mediation, truth telling, restitution, and interdependence create bridges to healing.

But this is not a path, nor a book, for the faint of heart. For the boy whose face bears the scars of a torturous gash, for the child who witnessed her family burned alive, for the daughter who cannot blot out the picture of her father's blood-soaked face, forgiveness is one of the most excruciating journeys imaginable. Its miles wind through chasms of pain and across solitary deserts of rage. Yet, while it is perhaps the most difficult of all journeys, it is, nonetheless, a journey that is possible.

In *No Future without Forgiveness*, Bishop Desmond Tutu describes "a picture of three U.S. servicemen standing in front of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. One asks, 'Have you forgiven those who held you prisoner of war?' 'I will never forgive them,' replies the other. His mate says, 'Then it is certain they still have you in prison, don't they?'"<sup>1</sup>

Scars represent a natural border between past and future. If not healed properly, these borders become mementos of rage that propel their bearers into a vindictive future. But a different story can be written. Rather than being lines of demarcation between Hutu and Tutsi, scars can become the intersection of justice and mercy, stitched by forgiveness, the only thread strong enough to bind these wounds. Through forgiveness, these scars cease to be emblems of vengeance, becoming instead evidence of supernatural hope. This is the story that Rwanda can tell the world. This is a story we need to understand.

# Rosaria's litany

*"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow  
to the point of death."*

Matthew 26:38

CADEAUX'S EYES LAUGHED. A GRIN FLICKERED ACROSS HER FACE AND settled into a slight smile as she went to fetch water. Leaning over the bucket, Cadeaux splashed water on her cheeks, not noticing the dark beauty shimmering back at her. With a block of soap, she scrubbed her neck, her arms, her legs, her feet, and finally her sandals while her slender shadow bowed beneath Rwanda's fierce August sun. At the age of twelve, she was on the cusp of womanhood, but still had the frame of a child and a sheen of innocence.

Her sandaled feet skimmed along the path as she returned home. Were it not for the vividness of the yellow jacaranda trees, the seamless blue skies, and Cadeaux's swishing lavender skirt, the road, the homes, and the roofs would have seemed a still life in sepia.

Back home, Cadeaux broke a deep silence with her soft footfalls and the creak of a door latch. Inside, her mother, Rosaria, had been going about her daily chores cloaked with an air of solemn dignity, wearing her sorrow like holy garments. A crushed hand hung like prayer beads loosely at her side.

Rosaria's eyes lit on Cadeaux as she flitted past. Somehow, the saturated air felt less stifling with her there. Rosaria breathed more freely. More than bread or wine or water, Cadeaux seemed to her mother a sacrament—a visible sign of inward grace. The name Rosaria gave her had this ripeness of meaning. Born in December of 1994, nine months and four days after horror's opening night, Cadeaux is her mother's consolation, her laughter, and her hope. Her name means "gift," because, as Rosaria will tell you, "She was the only gift I had left."

In a place where each person's grief is strung together like bead upon bead, Rosaria must focus her mind on Cadeaux, on the gift before her. But sometimes, she can't help how her thoughts circle back to a painful past.

WHEN ROSARIA'S SON, ALEXIS, HAD BECOME ILL WITH A LENGTHY stomach sickness, she had taken him to the hospital in Kigali. That was three days before the fighting began. When the violence erupted, Rosaria's husband, a driver for an agricultural processing plant, gathered clothes and food and drove the three other children with him to work, hoping they would be safe there. Only months after the slaughter would Rosaria learn their fate.

On May 10, 1994, two weeks after the UN conceded "acts of genocide" had been committed and thirty-five days into the slaughter that had already consumed an estimated 500,000 people, the hospital where Rosaria and her son found refuge forced all the patients to leave. Ostensibly, the hospital had too many military soldiers who needed care. More likely, hospital officials were being pressured to turn out the Tutsi patients.

Sheltered from a month of horrors, Rosaria and her son were now thrust onto the center stage of the nightmare. Along the roadside, bodies lay in various positions of flight, glass from a smashed-in car

## Rosaria's litany

windshield glinted in the sunlight, and a wild dog gnawed at something resembling a human leg. While the U.S. State Department argued over whether or not to jam Rwandan radio stations, Rosaria and Alexis walked by a radio blaring, "Search houses, search the marshes, search the ditches; make sure no rebels have slipped in to hide." A few miles down the road they found temporary shelter in the Holy Family Church, the largest cathedral in Kigali.

The church teemed with the barely living: a woman without an arm trying to nurse a baby, an old man moaning with bloodied cloths wrapped around his head, a child crying inconsolably for her missing mother. As Rosaria unrolled a blanket for her son, she saw the head priest speaking angrily with one of the nuns. He was a young man with a face full of hate, dressed not in a collar, but in a flack vest with a gun. After the genocide, the tribunal would charge this man with aiding the militia and also with rape. Two nights after Rosaria arrived, the militia did, in fact, raid the church. They came with a list of men, who were promptly taken outside. Alexis and Rosaria heard the shouting, then the shots. Rosaria and Alexis would not stay to see more executions; they decided to move at first light.

From there they fled to Nyamirambo Stadium and then along the Nyabarongo River out of the city toward Nyamata. They did their best to avoid the roadblocks where their fellow Rwandans, drunk on banana beer and blood, shot or butchered anyone without a Hutu identity card and piled the bodies in ditches beside the road.

Two days into the journey, Rosaria and her son encountered three Burundian refugees who were now caught in the midst of Rwanda's genocide. Hoping that identifying with them might offer her some protection, Rosaria posed as their leader. When they reached Nyamata, however, a few of Rosaria's neighbors, who had moved farther north to continue looting, recognized her.

"They sliced us with machetes and left us to die," Rosaria said slowly as if reciting details rubbed smooth through heavy handling.

Rosaria was the only one who survived, and Cadeaux was still in her womb. She paused, rolling over the mystery in her mind. “The people who cut us with machetes were neighbors—people who knew me.”

SAVERI WAS ONE OF ROSARIA’S NEIGHBORS AT THE TIME OF THE genocide. Though he is only forty, his face seems drawn and tired, as if the memories of the past find their center point where his eyes narrow and his forehead pinches down. He doesn’t recall any animosity toward the Tutsi as a child. “But the government would indoctrinate us,” he explained, “telling us that a Tutsi is an enemy, as a result of our bad history that took place before we were born.”

That “bad history” stretches back to the time of German, then Belgian, colonization around the turn of the century. The *muzuungu*, or foreigners, noticed how the majority of the king’s inner circle, the ruling class, had certain characteristics—thinner noses, lighter skin, taller frames. They theorized that this ruling class was a different race originating from Northern Africa, with common ancestral lineage to the Caucasian race. They deposed any chiefs or subchiefs who did not fit their stereotype. Like a disease, racism spread, as did the myth that the Tutsi were genetically predestined to rule over the Hutu.

When Saveri started school, he was taught this division: the Tutsi were herders, tall, with long noses, while the Hutu were farmers. Such distinctions taught him there was a sharp dichotomy between Hutu and Tutsi. But even back in school, Saveri suspected these were just fabrications geared to incite strife.

The story of those in power inciting strife in the population is one of the most grievous tales of the history of Rwanda. To divide and conquer, the Belgians incited strife by putting Tutsi in power, and relegating Hutu to lesser positions. Basically, the Belgians maintained power by propping up the Tutsi. In the midfifties when King

Mutara Rudahigwa, influenced by other African leaders, began distributing power in a more democratic fashion among Hutu and Tutsi alike, the Belgian colonialists swung the pendulum the other way. They released a prominent liberal Tutsi from prison, and aided him in the creation of his own political party. Meanwhile, disgruntled Hutu formed another party, the Parmehutu. When violence inevitably ensued, the Belgians favored the revolutionary Hutu party as a means of retaining their colonial power.

Ousted from power, Tutsi sought refuge in the neighboring countries—Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and Zaire (the present-day Democratic Republic of Congo). In the meantime, the legacy of strife continued under the Hutu reign. When these exiled Tutsi began to press for the right to return to their homeland, they were repelled. As this Rwandan Patriotic Force or RPF gathered to take back this right by violence, the Hutu extremists incited hatred among the Hutu against the Tutsi through radio broadcasts. Saveri was one of hundreds of thousands indoctrinated to hate the Tutsi people and told to cleanse the countryside of such “cockroaches.”

“What brought us the conviction to commit genocide was the indoctrination of divisive ideas by bad government,” continued Saveri.

Bad government took many forms. The government-backed newspaper *Kangura* printed the Hutu Ten Commandments, one of which stated that a Hutu man who married a Tutsi woman should be thought of as a traitor. Presidential advisor Leon Mugesera, speaking at a political rally in 1992, asked, “What are we waiting for to decimate these families?” and “The person whose neck you do not cut is the one who will cut yours.” Little by little, those in authority laid the psychological foundation necessary to build genocide. In fact, between 1990 and 1994, systematic killing of Tutsi had already become widespread. And when the United Nations negotiated a treaty of peace and distribution of power between the two groups

at a summit in Arusha, Tanzania, on August 4, 1993, those Hutu clinging to power made preparations for one of the worst genocides in history.

On April 6, 1994, President Juvenal Habyarimana's plane plummeted from the sky after being hit by a missile. It became the albatross around the neck of the Tutsi people when Hutu claimed that the RPF had shot it down. The most widely accepted theory today is that radical Hutu, unsatisfied with the direction of the peace talks, assassinated the Rwandan and Burundian presidents. Either way, the sudden streak of a missile and the fiery light of a falling plane were a diabolical kind of fireworks that night—evil's unseemly opening ceremonies to a hundred days of slaughter that would consume the country.

Within hours of the plane's metal shrapnel gashing Rwandan soil, Hutu sharpened their machetes to do likewise. Radios hissed a message that "the season for slaughter" had arrived. In the days to follow, Hutu killed the Tutsi and their sympathizers at a rate five times higher than the mechanized Nazi gas chambers.

Saveri originally objected to the killings. He was standing with some others, mending a fence that April day, when a community leader approached them. The leader told Saveri and the others that he had seen where some rebels, or *inkotanyi*, were hiding, and that they should follow him. But when they got there, they found what the community leader, Ngabonziza Zakayo, had known all along: these weren't rebels at all. It was a mother, hiding in a neighbor's house with her two children.

Zakayo ordered the old man who had been hiding this mother and her children to kill them. If the old man refused, he would be killed himself. The old man began pleading. Zakayo demanded ten thousand francs. But the old man begged, saying that he did not have that much money.

Zakayo had eyed the small herd of cattle as he approached the

house. Greedily, he said that he would take a bull instead as a ransom for the old man's life, so that he would not be buried with the Tutsi he was hiding. The old man continued to plead, suggesting that if he gave Zakayo the bull that the mother and her children should be able to go free. But Zakayo was adamant; the bull was merely penalty for hiding the "cockroaches" and the price for the old man's own life.

"Dig a grave," Zakayo yelled in the direction of the old man. The old man and his neighbor reluctantly obeyed. When the grave was done, the mother and her two children were told to sit in it. They did not try to run, but did just as they were told.

Zakayo selected one of Saveri's friends to beat the mother and her children to death using a spiked club. He refused, was beaten severely, and was then told to sit aside. "Whoever will refuse to kill will be punished later at our discretion," Zakayo warned.

After seeing what had befallen his friend, Saveri did not resist. When given the spiked club, he pummeled the woman and her two small children until they died. Though there were many who then joined in, Saveri was the first to strike. Once they had finished, they covered the bodies with dirt and left the scene. The mother's name was Christine; she was Rosaria's sister.

After killing, Saveri was changed. "Something happened to me," he said. "I was not the same. I was void of peace in my heart from that moment."

UNLIKE SAVERI, ROSARIA DOES NOT SAY MUCH ABOUT THE PAST.

If asked, she will bare her scars. A gash across her left shoulder reminds the onlooker how she used her back as a human shield to hide two fragile lives, hers and Cadeaux's.

Those mysteries not told by her scars are spoken plainly through her eyes. In the flash of a moment, in the glint of steel, something

as we forgive

changed her, and she would never be the same. She too became void of peace in her heart from that moment.

These are the sorrowful mysteries. But Rosaria must turn her eyes again to other mysteries — the mystery of a spared life. Cadeaux: her name is a word Rosaria is just beginning to understand.