

Reading guide for Immaculée Ilibagiza's *Left to Tell* (2006)

Part I

1. Before reading this book, how familiar were you with the 1994 genocide in Rwanda? How much did you know about Rwanda and this region of Africa? What did you know about the Hutus and the Tutsis?
2. Describe Immaculee's life prior to the genocide. Were you surprised in any way by what it was like to grow up in Rwanda?
3. Describe Immaculee's three brothers.
4. Education is highly valued in Immaculee's family. How do education and faith contribute to Immaculee's growth as a person?
5. How does being a Tutsi impact Immaculee's education?
6. Describe the circumstances surrounding Immaculee's father's arrest. How did he handle the experience? Would you have done the same?
7. What is university life like for Immaculee?
8. The political scene in Rwanda is quite tense as Immaculee finishes secondary school and heads to college. What sort of challenges does she face? How would you approach life if you were confronted with challenges like these?
9. Who are the Interahamwe and what was Immaculee's initial experience with them?
10. Why does she go home for Easter?
11. Immaculee's family home becomes a haven for their Tutsi and moderate Hutu neighbors in the wake of the president's death and the mounting violence. What does it mean to offer sanctuary to others? What is the cost to the family? Is it still the right thing to do?
12. Who protects Immaculee? Why?

Part II

1. Where does Immaculee hide? Describe the people with her.
2. Explain how Immaculee struggles with her feelings regarding the killers. How does she cope with this struggle?
3. The mother and baby in the street is by far the most haunting moment in this book for me. Which moments/ experiences stand out to you? Why?
4. What does Immaculee learn about her boyfriend John?
5. Pastor Murinzi tells his children to take a good look at the Tutsi women hiding in the bathroom. He tells them, "If you have a chance to help unfortunates like these ladies in times of trouble, make sure you do it – even if it means putting your own life at risk. This is how God wants us to live." What is the lesson here?
6. What does Jesus say to Immaculee in an apparition?

Part III

1. Whom does Immaculee meet at the camp? What do they talk about?
2. What does Immaculee learn in the letter from Damascene?
3. What is Immaculee's experience with the orphan boys?
4. What does Immaculee believe she must do in order to help heal others?
5. Do you agree with Immaculee that prayer and positive thinking are almost the same thing?
6. How does she both literally and symbolically bury the dead?
7. Immaculee shares "God's message" at the end of the book. What is it?
8. Hope and forgiveness go hand in hand during Immaculee's journey. How does she manage this?