

# Henriette Mutegwaraba

## Easy to read life story



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

Learning from genocide -  
for a better future



### Key words

**Rwanda** – A small country in east-central Africa

**Burundi** – A small country south of Rwanda in east-central Africa

**Tutsi and Hutu** – two main groups of people in Rwanda

**Genocide** – When a group of people are murdered because of who they are, for example, because of their religion or their race or ethnicity.

Henriette lived in Rwanda. She had two brothers and three sisters. Henriette remembers how much fun Christmas time was with all of her family.

Henriette's school teachers told her that she was different to her friends because she was a Tutsi and they were Hutus. Her friends stopped sharing food with her and spread rumours about her. People began to say they would do bad things to her family. Soldiers said they would kill all Tutsis.

Going to school was difficult because people blocked the roads and stopped her. Henriette's family decided that because it was dangerous Henriette should go and live in Burundi. Henriette had to hide in people's houses and try to sneak into Burundi when no one was looking. Eventually she paid two men to carry her on their shoulders across a big river into Burundi.

In Burundi Henriette met an old man who said that she looked familiar. He told her that she had relatives in Burundi. Henriette went to live with them. Henriette thought that all of her family had been killed by Hutus in the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda until one day she got a letter from her little sister. Her sister said she was in Rwanda with their aunt. She wanted to see Henriette again. Henriette was happy to learn that her sister was alive. She went back to Rwanda.

Henriette found it hard to live in Rwanda because it reminded her of the bad things that had happened. She works at the Kigali Memorial Museum helping survivors and telling everyone about what happened. Henriette wants people who are different to be friends and not fight.

Henriette's family were killed in Rwanda by their neighbours because they were different. Henriette survived because she made a journey to live in Burundi. Henriette made another journey to come home and care for her sister.

Henriette works telling people about what happened when people in her country turned against those who were different to themselves. She does this because she hopes it will stop something bad like that from ever happening again.

*Photo: Henriette Mutegwaraba from We Survived: Genocide in Rwanda pp.121–126 Henriette 2006 © Aegis Trust*

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The Holocaust: [hmd.org.uk/holocaust](http://hmd.org.uk/holocaust)

Life stories of those affected by genocide: [hmd.org.uk/lifestories](http://hmd.org.uk/lifestories)

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