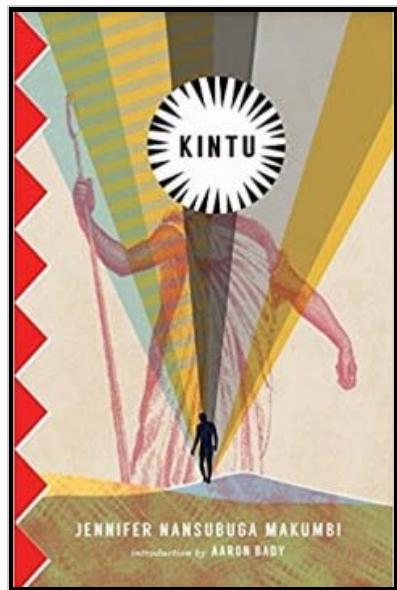


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## Kintu

by Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi

**Price: \$16.95**(Paperback)

Published: May 16, 2017

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**From the Publisher:**

Longlisted for the 2014 Etisalat Prize for Debut African Fiction Winner of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize "Kintu is a masterpiece, an absolute gem, the great Ugandan novel you didn't know you were waiting for."—Aaron Bady, *The New Inquiry* In 1750, Kintu Kidda unleashes a curse that will plague his family for generations. In this ambitious tale of a clan and of a nation, Makumbi weaves together the stories of Kintu's descendants as they seek to break from the burden of their shared past and reconcile the inheritance of tradition and the modern world that is their future.

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### About The Author

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi, a Ugandan novelist and short story writer, has a PhD from Lancaster University, where she now teaches. Her first novel, *Kintu*, won the Kwani? Manuscript Project in 2013 and was longlisted for the Etisalat Prize in 2014. Her story "Let's Tell This Story Properly" won...

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### What We Say

A great novel. When the first comparisons that spring to mind are Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "One Hundred Years Of Solitude" (because of its sprawling multi-generational cast and need for a family tree) and Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" (because that was the standard the author says she was shooting for), you know two things. One, this book is not set in the suburbs of America. And two, it's really, really good. Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi's debut is set in contemporary Uganda and begins with a seemingly random act of violence. Then we jump back in time hundreds of years to when Kintu Kidda is a leader of his people and must journey to the capital of Baganda and pay homage to the latest ruler of the kingdom. For

some 90 pages, we are enthralled by this unexpected terrain, a world where traveling across a desert is a life-fraught risk and a smart man like Kintu must make peace with his need to husband many wives (too much bother!) and play dumb so he can escape the fallout from the invariable replacement of one ruler by a brother or cousin or son too impatient to wait for nature to take its course. This section is alive with vivid characters, like the twin wives Kintu is burdened with in marriage (he loves one and is ultimately forced to accept the presence of the other). Extended families, fatherless children, people driven out by their own tribe but too proud to adopt another -- it's all vivid and new but so rooted in human nature we almost forget the book began with a violent crime in 2004. But suddenly (reluctantly, really, since I'd happily have spent the entire book in this world) we are wrenched back to the present. The cast of characters grows and grows and eventually we realize that a curse threatened hundreds of years ago has taken root in the lives of all these people who are linked by blood to one another and to Kintu back in the past. Twins and incest and sin and Western education and language and AIDS and modernity and the pull of tradition -- all of these jumble up against one another in beautiful fashion. Words that echo with meaning for Ugandans but are mere totems to us spring up time and again. Sometimes we come to understand them; other times we simply understand that it is one more example of why we should remain humble when trying to grasp this world of meaning and culture. So many great characters come to life, from a boisterous Great Aunt to orphans who tenaciously survive to a couple that take rides in buses and then harangue their fellow passengers with the Good News of Jesus to deejays and on and on. It's a rich novel and if about three-quarters of the way through I got a little lost as to who was who and how they related to one another (the family tree this book would benefit from is not included) well, it didn't matter. I simply accepted: this is the person I am with now and soon we'll be on to someone else and eventually it will all make sense. And it did, culminating in a tumultuous family gathering, a grand clash of past and present, parent and child, faith and tradition, old and new that was thoroughly satisfying. Makumbi is reportedly celebrated in her country for having delivered the great Ugandan novel and no wonder. A collection of short stories and a second novel she's working on can't come soon enough, but boy do they have a tough act to follow. -- Michael Giltz

## What Others Say

"This is an extraordinary novel about a family bound together by love, betrayal, and an age-old curse, told in gripping language that continually surprises. A literary triumph."—Maaza Mengiste, author of *Beneath the Lion's Gaze*

"A work of bold imagination and clear talent."—Ellah Allfrey, editor of *Africa39*

"An ambitious modern epic that takes in family saga and the history of Uganda, fusing the urgency of the present with the timelessness of myth."—Jamal Mahjoub, author of *The Drift Latitudes*

"*Kintu* is not just the story of a family, but a story of Uganda, a country whose history begins before colonialization and encompasses far more than just that chapter."—Mary Pappalardo, *New Delta Review*

"Our histories and our names have stories that we cannot afford to keep quiet about."—Nyana Kakoma, *Africa In Words*

"Makumbi is clearly a creative genius."—Tope Salaudeen-Adegoke, *Wawa Book Review*

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