



## Braided Worlds

*Alma Gottlieb, Philip Graham*

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## **Braided Worlds** Alma Gottlieb, Philip Graham

In a compelling mix of literary narrative and ethnography, anthropologist Alma Gottlieb and writer Philip Graham continue the long journey of cultural engagement with the Beng people of Côte d'Ivoire that they first recounted in their award-winning memoir *Parallel Worlds*. Their commitment over the span of several decades has lent them a rare insight. Braiding their own stories with those of the villagers of Asagbé and Kosangbé, Gottlieb and Graham take turns recounting a host of unexpected dramas with these West African villages, prompting serious questions about the fraught nature of cultural contact.

Through events such as a religious leader's declaration that the authors' six-year-old son, Nathaniel, is the reincarnation of a revered ancestor, or Graham's late father being accepted into the Beng afterlife, or the increasing, sometimes dangerous madness of a villager, the authors are forced to reconcile their anthropological and literary gaze with the deepest parts of their personal lives. Along with these intimate dramas, they follow the Beng from times of peace through the times of tragedy that led to Côte d'Ivoire's recent civil conflicts. From these and many other interweaving narratives—and with the combined strengths of an anthropologist and a literary writer—*Braided Worlds* examines the impact of postcolonialism, race, and global inequity at the same time that it chronicles a living, breathing village community where two very different worlds meet.

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