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My mother belongs to the generation of the students I write about in this book. Very few Congolese women of this generation were allowed to access university education, and she was not one of them. However, as I finally reach the end of this long research project, I realize how much her struggle for survival has inspired much of what I have done. I am so thankful to her, to my father, and to my siblings, François, Luc, and Amalia, for their support, trust, and understanding. I also warmly thank Alice, Elise, Yvan, and Ghislaine Mouton for welcoming me in their family. I stayed with Yvan and Ghislaine many times during the writing of this book, and I so much appreciate how they always went out of their way to allow me to do my work. Many close friends similarly cared and helped: thank you, Philippe, Roland, Julien, Laurent, Nadia, Didier, Nicolas, François S., and François C. Without Amélie, there would be no book. An exigent writer, she has been a major source of inspiration. She read through many drafts cheered me up through difficult times and kept me going. Her love makes it all more beautiful.