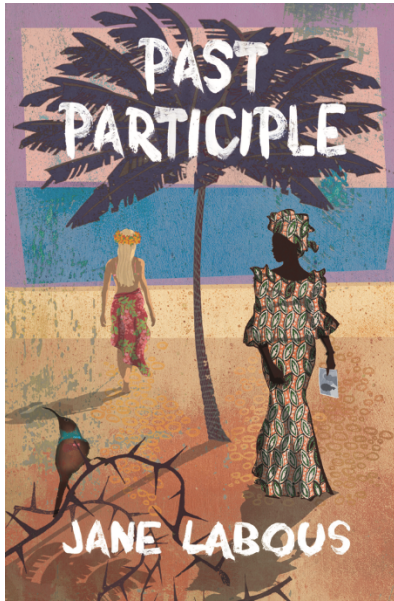


# **PAST PARTICIPLE: A multi-layered, suspenseful novel, a gripping exploration of love, friendship, power and desire, revenge and absolution, while also an ideological criticism of Western imperialism**

**Press Release, June 2023**



Dakar, Senegal, 1987: On a rainy night after a wild party, the British ambassador's wife, Vivienne Hughes, is involved in a car crash. Her vehicle hits the motorbike of a young Senegalese doctor, Aimé Tunkara, killing him. Pleading diplomatic immunity, Vivienne and her husband flee to England.

Three decades later, Aimé's little sister, Lily Tunkara, now a high-flying lawyer in Dakar, finds a photograph that compels her to investigate what really happened that rainy night. As Lily faces increasing hostility from the local community, she turns to Vivienne Hughes, the only remaining witness, but is either woman prepared for the truth to emerge?

'PAST PARTICIPLE is a captivating story of murder and imperialist corruption, of friendship and motherhood and of the past haunting the present, told through the interlinking stories of two women. The novel tackles an important subject matter, but in a way that doesn't feel hectoring or didactic. It recognises the nuances of power dynamics, personal desires and social and political realities in framing how people act and why. The novel offers a strong critique of western imperialism, attentive to the macro and micro applications of that, alongside a dynamic and moving story.' – **Keiran Devaney**, editor.

**Editor, Claire Strombeck said:** 'This novel is perfection. I am \*that\* obsessed with PAST PARTICIPLE that I want to tell everyone about it!'

**Afsana Press will release the contemporary novel, *Past Participle*, by British writer and BBC journalist Jane Labous, in September 2023.**

PAST PARTICIPLE is the story of two women bound together by the fault lines of the past, a powerful study of love, friendship and guilt, power and desire, retribution and forgiveness.

Jane Labous said: 'My starting point for the novel was the real-life case of an American ex-pat who fled Britain pleading diplomatic immunity after fatally striking a teenager with her car. I wanted to explore the nuances of this scenario transplanted to a West African setting, where the conflicts, power dynamics and dichotomies between local and ex-pat life become even more unsettling and problematic, and profound societal inequalities are thrown into relief.'

**Editor, Anne Hamilton said:** 'A sweeping story that pulls you in, PAST PARTICIPLE leaves you constantly wondering: what would I have done?'

**Author, Jane Teverson said:** 'An original and truly gripping read. There are so many strands, twist and turns. Lily is a beautiful and courageous character. A love story and an exposé. It will be on someone's shortlist for sure.'

#### About the author

Jane Labous is an award-winning author, journalist and broadcaster known for her work covering human rights and gender issues, always telling the powerful human stories behind the headlines. She spent nearly two decades working for international press and INGOs, most often out of Senegal, West Africa, while developing her creative art as a writer, filmmaker and novelist, drawing on her insider knowledge of the aid sector and foreign journalism, and her unique experience of both expat life and family life in Ngor, Senegal.

Jane's debut novel, *The Chameleon Girl*, was published in Nigeria by Farafina Books in 2022, and her credits span a vista of international outlets, including *The Times*, *Voice of America*, the UN and Radio 4's flagship programme, *From Our Own Correspondent*. She has won the BBC Radio 4 and Royal Geographical Society Documentary Award, the Merck More than a Mother Media Recognition & Film Award for Francophone African Countries, and a European Journalism Centre Development Reporting Grant. Her fiction has been longlisted for the Bath Novel Prize and the Santa Fé Writers' Project Literary Award. As a devoted single parent, Jane often writes stories, characters and locations to honour her daughter, who is half-Senegalese, reflecting their own diverse family experience.



ENDS

#### Notes to editors:

**PAST PARTICIPLE** is available from 5 June to order via Gardners (ISBN: 9781739982478) and all bookshops and online retailers, or directly from Afsana Press ([www.afsanapress.uk](http://www.afsanapress.uk)). The official launch and release of the book will be in September 2023.

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**About Afsana Press**

Afsana Press is a newly established independent publishing house based in London, producing sparkling literary works by authors whose stories have a direct relation to social, political or cultural issues in countries and communities around the world. The publisher's mission is to get to the heart of the urgent matters of our time and times past, asking important questions about migration and refugees, the environment, gender, development and social justice. Particular attention will go to the work of authors in exile, and our stories often concern the movement of humans in an ever-shifting world.

