

SOUVENIRS

by Julia Lauer-Chéenne

The Book

Souvenirs, set in the Ivory Coast during the mid seventies, depicts an African world where all is believable and possible.

Ruth, a Peace Corps Volunteer, and Kwassi, an Ivoirian English teacher, meet in the rainy season at the beginning of Ruth's two-year term. Although she initially resists his advances, Ruth soon succumbs to Kwassi's charm that is connected to the spirit world of his native upbringing. As lovers, they become caught in a web of contradictions and clashes of culture and perception.

Although educated and "Westernized" to a degree, Kwassi has a future of which Ruth is

unaware. As inheritor of the Séképoné, the secret power to cure disease and illness, he is destined to marry a young woman chosen by his tribe, the Abidji, and continue his apprenticeship of sacred duties under the tutelage of his uncle, Pathé, Spirit Master of their village.

Ruth unwittingly becomes involved with arch enemies of the Abidji tribe, the Foula. Their plan to build a power plant on the Abidji burial grounds highlights the contrast between tradition and modernization. Ruth remains blissfully innocent of the conflict whereas Pathé is convinced she is a demon capitalist. Meanwhile Kwassi, a victim of his own magic, falls deeper and deeper in love with the young, beautiful American who is unaware of his uncle's designs.

When Kwassi uses his Séképoné powers to cure Ruth of a serious flesh infection, he is forced to deal with Pathé's rage and make a decision. In the end, he accepts the wisdom of the ancients and chooses heritage over love, leaving Ruth to return to the United States, alone.



The Author

In 1974, Julia Lauer-Chéenne graduated from the University of Iowa, joined the Peace Corps and headed off to the Ivory Coast of Africa. Her life has never been the same.



With a love of language, art, travel, adventure and exploration, Julia has poured her many passions into the creation of her first novel, *Souvenirs*.

Media Information

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You may also contact Community Press for information and assistance. Media materials and files for each author can be found on our website : www.communitypresshome.com in our MEDIA ROOM. There you will find author photos, cover images, book excerpts, reviews and more. All files are in downloadable, print-ready form. If we do not have what you need, please let us know.

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