



## THE SENTINEL NEWS

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### LOVE STORY IS 40 YEARS IN THE MAKING

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■ Hout Bay resident Gail Gilbride with her book contract.

American publisher Cactus Rain is publishing Hout Bay author Gail Gilbride's debut novel, *Under The African Sun*, a book she has waited 40 years to write.

The novel tells the story of a young woman coming of age in the turbulent days of South Africa in 1976, a subject that was always close to Ms Gilbride's heart. A teacher at Hout Bay's Dominican Grimley school for a number of years, the Penzance resident also taught at UCT and CPUT but had always harboured ambitions of being a writer of romantic fiction.

In order to make this possible, she enrolled for writing courses under acclaimed South African writers Jo-Anne Richards and Richard Beynon, who aided her development in the love-story genre while also mentoring her on *Under The African Sun*.

“I had always wanted to be a writer. When I was at Rhodes University, in Grahamstown, I wrote very bad poetry,” she quipped.

“I actually never showed anybody my writing. Then, about seven years ago, I enrolled in the courses. I wrote three short stories with a love theme. I had always wanted to write Under The African Sun story though. It had been something I wanted to do for 40 years.”

She had researched publishers on the internet, and happened upon Cactus Rain Publishers, which is based in Arizona.

Liaising with publisher Nadine Laman, she had pitched her idea, sending through an initial few chapters, which were subsequently accepted. From that point, she submitted 5 000 words every month, following the guidance of Ms Richards and Mr Beynon.

“I would write first thing in the morning before teaching. In our day, politics was a very big issue, and the Soweto riots were very much part of our year in 1976. The publishers liked my novel, but felt it was too short, so they asked me to write an additional 10 000 words.

“They wanted me to focus more on the political side, which took me out of my comfort zone, but that was good. What was important was that I wanted to show an ordinary group of young people in an extraordinary situation. Because of my career, I have obviously always worked with young people, so I have always written in the voice of a young person.”

A huge follower of internationally acclaimed author Khaled Hosseini, Ms Gilbride said she felt the overseas market was very interested in the stories South Africans had to tell.

“Just as I am interested in learning about places like Iran, so readers want to find out about South Africa. This story is a story about emotions, and everyone can identify with that.”

The book will be available for purchase through Amazon.com  
and

<http://www.cactusrainpublishing.com>