



Gail Gilbride has penned the book, 'Under the African Sun'.

City author lands US book deal

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PRETORIA'S own Gail Gilbride is flying the flag high internationally after signing a publishing deal in the US.

Gilbride, 61, clinched the international deal after a year of negotiations. "I really worked hard to make it publishable and when they told me I got the deal, I think I levitated off my bed," she said.

Cactus Rain is the Arizona-based publisher which saw her vision and believed in her work. She calls the partnership a stroke of luck.

"I went on the internet and looked up publishers. I saw Cactus Rain and I loved the name and their logo. It was pure luck that they were interested in African stories."

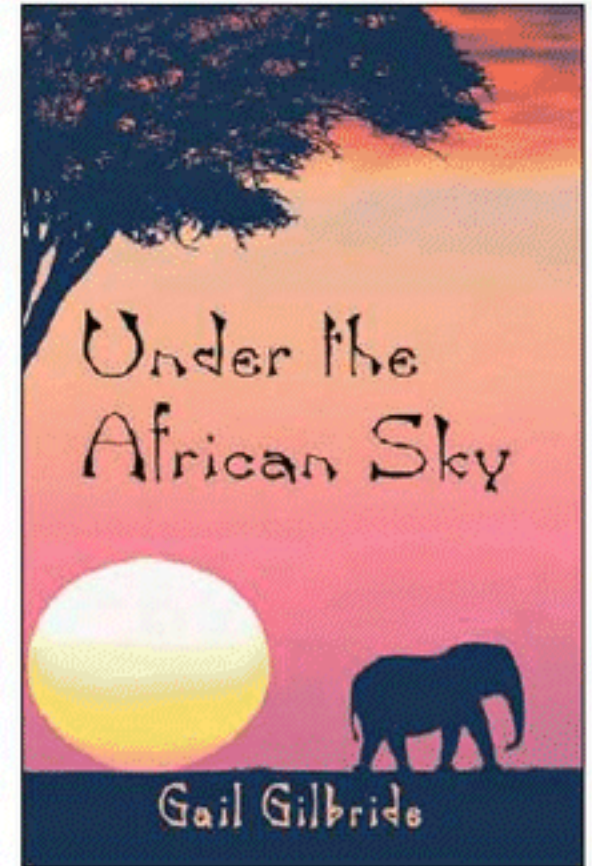
Her book, *Under the African Sun*, chronicles the lives of five 20-somethings living in apartheid South Africa in the 1970s.

"The story is about ordinary youngsters living in turbulent times and them finding their way."

Gilbride was born and raised in Pretoria and went to school at the Loreto Convent in Hillcrest for 12 years, before she went to Rhodes University in 1973. She was studying politics during 1976 – the year the Student Uprisings took place – that helped inspire her book.

"This is a story I've been wanting to publish for 40 years now."

The first-time author began writing the book at age 57 and after multiple rewrites on the advice of her mentors, she began sending her manuscript to various publishers.



Cactus Rain asked her to delete the entire first chapter of the manuscript, which she reluctantly did – and the rest as they say is history.

She said despite the book being based in South Africa, she believes people all across the globe can relate to it.

"There are some universal themes in the book and I think people's emotions are pretty much the same everywhere you go."

The semi-retired English teacher and lecturer said although people who lived through apartheid would enjoy the book the most, it is written through the eyes of a 25-year-old protagonist, so young people can also relate.

The book will be available worldwide tomorrow.