

"A gripping and unforgettable account of one of humanity's greatest failures, told with sensitivity and eloquence from a uniquely powerful perspective."

- SP Reviews

Eight year old Rosalinde lives in an idyllic version of Africa — vervet monkeys in her garden, the lighthouse that illuminates her bedroom window at night, and Mohini, her mystical Hindu maid who is more maternal than her own mother — until a moment in 1982, when she collides with apartheid and her entire belief system is thrown into chaos.

Mainly set on Durban's breathtaking North Coast, over a period of seventeen years, the story moves between atmospheric locations like the Skeleton Coast, Karoo, Cape Point, and KwaMashu, and hosts an array of vivid characters, including the charismatic Paris and his radical cousin Maleven; Mark, the ex-soldier; and Rosalinde's predatory, racist Uncle Léon.

While navigating personal injustice, family sagas, romance, and political unrest, Rosalinde's coming of age parallels the years of apartheid's climactic end, against an increasingly violent backdrop, and she learns that the human condition of her motherland is far more complex than she ever imagined.

"A brave, poignant novel about race, belonging and female ambition."

- Nillu Nasser, Award Winning Author of *All the Tomorrows*

When Bianca Bowers abandoned her South African motherland at age 23, she knew that she was destined to write a novel about the place that would haunt her long after she left. *CAPE OF STORMS* is that novel, and it has travelled an epic 21 year journey from concept to publication. Bianca has authored five poetry books and her poems have appeared in film, online journals, and print anthologies. She has lived in the UK and New Zealand, and now resides with her husband, two children, and rescue hound in Australia.

www.biancabowers.com



BONUS Q&A
WITH AUTHOR

10% of sales go to charities that support Durban's street kids



CAPE OF STORMS

Bianca Bowers

a novel

CAPE
OF
STORMS

bianca
bowers

PRESS KIT



Title: CAPE OF STORMS

Author: BIANCA BOWERS

Genre: COMING OF AGE/LITERARY FICTION

Publisher: AUTEUR BOOKS

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SYNOPSIS

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BOOK THEMES / TARGET AUDIENCE / BONUS

Warning...

Cape of Storms is an authentic portrayal of South Africa's complex race relations as well as its violent crime, and contains scenes that may disturb.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

There is probably something for everyone in this book - a love triangle, family saga, political drama, intrigue and suspense. I would describe it as a modern version of Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations", with the brutal realism of JM Coetzee's "Disgrace", and the universal readability of Bryce Courtenay's "Power of One".

THEMES

There are three major layers in terms of themes. On the surface, the novel delves into the systemic forms of racial and patriarchal oppression that were part and parcel of living under a totalitarian regime. The second layer is the #MeToo theme, because the story takes place in an era that enabled and empowered predatory and misogynistic behaviour. The third layer, which permeates through most (if not all) of the character's trajectories is the concept of trauma, and how differently individuals process and survive trauma.

Bonus Material and Sales

- 10% of book sales go to charities that support Durban's street kids
- A 20-Q&A with Author at the back of the book

EDITORIAL REVIEWS 1-2

“Childhood innocence and grown-up cruelty clash in *Cape of Storms* by author Bianca Bowers, a gripping coming-of-age tale woven through one of the darkest periods in South African history. Rosalinde is the precocious and endearing protagonist, an 8-year-old whose life is shaken and eyes are opened over the course of two shocking decades. With the South African landscape as a beautiful but sinister setting, this novel is a gripping and unforgettable account of one of humanity’s great failures, told with sensitivity and eloquence from a uniquely powerful perspective.” ~ **Henry, SP Reviews**

"A brave, poignant novel about race, belonging and female ambition by an author with a lilting, poet's ear. I was moved by its authentic portrayal of South Africa, apartheid and complex human nature. There is no doubt that Bianca Bowers is a gifted wordsmith.

The images she conjures are vivid (chuckling geckos was a favourite one!) and sensual and her characters wriggle their way effortlessly into the reader's consciousness. Bowers anchors us in time and place, offering intricate setting and dialect details. I savoured such details: “They would debate every subject under the infinite karoo sky, from the time the chameleons stalked the sun, to when the crickets began their nocturnal orchestra.” / “Light spilled out of Mohini’s room and drew me toward it like the sun beckons an African daisy.”

The narrative is written in the first person, which suits the protagonist's youthful voice and brings the reader into her confidences effectively. I felt protective of Ros, who is let down by a number of adults around her. Her choices are utterly believable and desperately heart-breaking. I also enjoyed the use of Afrikaans and how its use added to the world-building. I don't speak Afrikaans, but the word “Mossiepop” - sparrow's fart - will stay with me.

The subject matter is, for the most part, serious and thoughtful, with excellent characterisation and sensitive handling of difficult subject matters. *Cape of Storms* reads like a labour of love and I have no doubt that readers will indeed fall in love with it.”

~ **Nillu Nasser, Award-Winning Author of All the Tomorrows**

EDITORIAL REVIEW 3

"Cape of Storms", the debut novel by Bianca Bowers, is a cry against the wind, a fusion of beauty and blood, a fierce look into the heart of darkness.

Although I have read three of her five poetry collections, and am aware of her talent as a story teller, the story she tells and the powerful way in which she tells it caught me utterly unprepared for this unique piece of writing, bringing together beauty and violence and conveying it all through a perfectly orchestrated cast of characters.

Structured as a coming-of-age novel "Cape of Storms" follows the thorny roads Rosalinde (Ros) has to walk over two decades. As a character she is not afraid to speak the truth as she sees it, irrespective of the consequences, and on many occasions the consequences are mind-shattering.

Being a bright, brave and sensitive person, Ros goes in search of answers to life's questions, the goal of which is maturity. I am not giving out any spoilers but will just say that in "Cape of Storms" Ros's maturity is not achieved gradually, rather it is attained at the expense of excruciating emotional and physical pain.

The novel, true to the genre, features a main conflict between Rosalinde, as the main character, and society. But what is typical for the coming-of-age novel is also a reconciliation of sorts between the protagonist's values and the values of society. In the world of "Cape of Storms" such a reconciliation, such an acceptance is hardly possible.

This story is told in such a powerful way that in the hours that I read it, I felt all the pain, suffering, beauty, love, despair, violence, shattering the living body of Africa. Everyone in our contemporary flawed world can find something for themselves in "Cape of Storms."

~ *Galya Varna, We Art Friends Magazine*

WHAT READERS ARE SAYING...

"I was engulfed in the story immediately..." ~ Amazon US

"Cape of Storms is one of the most harrowing and unequivocally powerful coming of age novels I have read to date." ~ Amazon AU

"Bowers pulls no punches in the narrative. Her first-hand knowledge lends authenticity to the experiences of the powerful and the powerless in an environment both beautiful and brutal." ~ Amazon CA

"The dialogue is realistic, the narrative flows smoothly and once I read the first chapter, I did not put this book down until I reached the last page. If you think you know Africa because you have watched the news and read the papers, this book may open your eyes." ~ Book Blogger.

READ THE FIRST CHAPTER

CHAPTER 1

The infrastructure of my world began to decay when I collided with apartheid during the summer of 1982. The warmth of my mother's petite hand guided me along Hill Street, where crimson streaks formed in the dusky African sky. We paused on the pavement, splattered with mottled bird droppings, and waited for a break in the rush hour traffic.

'Those coolie mynas make such a racket,' said my mother.

'What's a coolie?' I said.

'Nga,' she made a clicking sound with her tongue, which usually signalled her annoyance. 'It means loud.'

I nodded and looked up to see hordes of Indian myna birds returning to their nests in the Natal mahogany trees that separated the dual carriageway. My mother clutched my hand before crossing the road and we hugged the inner sidewalk, like a Formula 1 racing car would hug the inside lane. Her anxiety pulsed like an electric current amidst the streams of pedestrians who raced past us, destination downtown, to join the congested taxi rank queues.

When we reached the shopping arcade she ushered me toward the concrete ramp and we followed the smell of cheeseburgers to the Wimpy Bar entrance. I stopped to let a black-suited myna strut territorially across our path. In those nanoseconds, something other than the bird's orange crown and yellow beak caught my attention — a black and white sign, nailed above the door. It read:

NET BLANKES

Having been forced to learn Afrikaans from Grade One, I translated the words — *only whites* — in my head. It didn't make sense. I asked my mother to explain.

She released my hand and sighed loudly. 'That is something you don't *need* to know.'

I studied her furrowed brow and pursed lips and felt my curiosity tug at me, like the myna tugged at a Wimpy wrapper stuffed into the mouth of a discarded coke bottle.

'Please mom, I want to know.'

She shook her head and muttered, 'Nga, it means that only whites are allowed in the Wimpy.'

'What's a white?' I shrugged

Her hazel eyes searched the empty arcade and rested on an African man, who used a gnarled wooden knobkerrie as a walking stick. He had the type of weathered skin you'd see on an elephant's trunk, and a crooked back that curved into a question mark. She waited for him to shuffle past before she spoke.

'That man is a black man', she whispered, 'and we are white'.

I frowned and said, 'I still don't understand.'

She sighed loudly and rubbed her forehead. 'The colour of our skin is white.' She touched the skin on her arm to illustrate her point. 'The colour of that man's skin is black.'

I nodded my understanding so far.

'Ja,' she said. Her voice dangled like a hooked fish poised for release.

I looked at my mother, and then through the Wimpy windows. 'But, there are black people in the Wimpy,' I said.

Her shoulders drooped forward as if they too were sighing.

'Black people can work in there, Ros, but only white people are allowed to eat.'

I stared at her, open-mouthed. Awareness engulfed my mind like a fire spreading through the veld and the injustice of her revelation burned wildly. 'But, why? That's not fair.'

'It's a rule,' she said.

'I thought that rules were supposed to help people?'

'Ag, honestly, Ros, why are you so difficult?'

'What is Mohini?' I said.

'What?' she said, caught off guard.

'If we are white, and that man is black, then what is Mohini?'

She narrowed her eyes and scrutinised me like an explosive device. 'Mohini is Indian,' she said, 'and before you ask me any more questions, no, Mohini is not allowed in there either.'

'At Sunday School they say that *God is love*. I don't think that God would be happy with this rule.'

'I told you. You're too young to understand.'

'I do understand,' I said. 'Jesus loves white people more than blacks and Indians.'

Her cheeks flushed and she slapped my face. 'Sometimes you have to do things you don't like. Now, take my hand, your father's waiting for us.'

When I didn't move, she placed her hand behind the small of my back and pushed me across the threshold of the black and white sign, and into the home of the hamburger, where the upbeat sounds of Michael Jackson came marching out of the speakers.

'What about Michael Jackson?' I said.

'Speak to your daughter,' she said, pushing me toward my father.

'Finally,' said my father, 'I was about to call a search party.' He looked at my mother, then at me, then back at my mother.

My mother shot him one of her notorious dirty looks, then sat down next to him without saying a word.

'Hmmm. Well, I went ahead and ordered everyone's favourite,' he said, as if the universe had not tilted.

I sat opposite my parents and scrutinised them like strangers. I wondered why I saw things so differently. Rules were supposed to be good, but this colour rule seemed bad. The clatter of a tray jolted me out of my thoughts. Our jolly, black waitress didn't seem to mind that she could work, but not dine, in the Wimpy. I entwined my arms like a straitjacket across my chest, and thought of all the years I had been oblivious to the colour rule. I felt foolish. Deceived. My mind reeled like a fishing line in deep waters.

UNIVERSAL SHOPPING LINKS

AMAZON

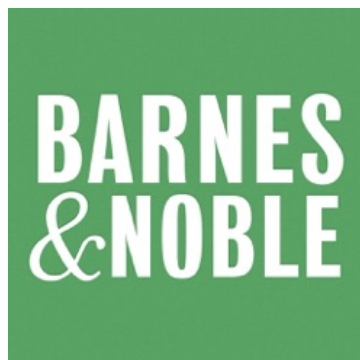
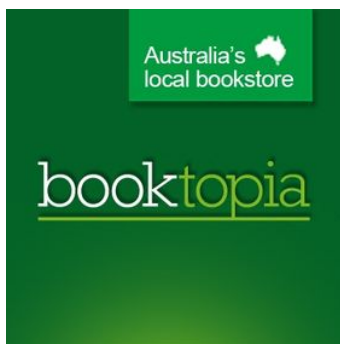
APPLE

BARNES & NOBLE

BOOKTOPIA

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KOBO



BOOKS  READ

AUTHOR BIO / CONTACT



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Bianca is the author of 5 poetry books. She has a BA in Film/TV/Media and English from the University of Auckland, and her poems have appeared in film, online journals, and print anthologies over the last 20 years. She has lived in the UK and New Zealand, and now resides in Australia with her husband, two children, and rescue hound, Honey.

Thanks for your interest in Bianca's books. Please contact Bianca directly for interviews, or to join your book club discussion via Skype.

EMAIL: CONTACT@BIANCABOWERS.COM

WEBSITE: WWW.BIANCABOWERS.COM

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