

THE WOUNDED SINNER

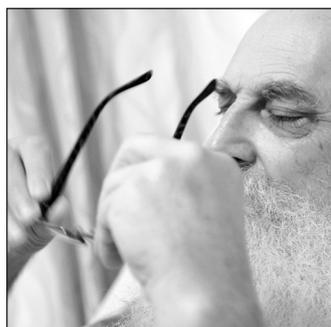
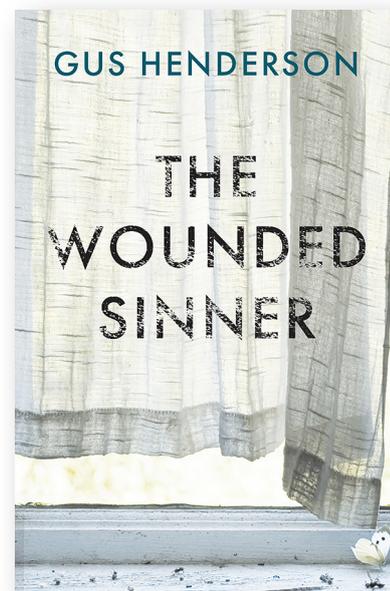
A complex and gritty debut novel set in WA's hinterland in which all are asking the ultimate questions about life, death and the purpose of it all

'The old man was dozing in his chair, his breathing a series of shallow, reedy ins and outs that seemed barely enough to sustain a body, even one as frail as his. Occasionally he would twitch and his bleary eyes would open long enough to remind himself he was still alive. Then they would close again, their mechanisms working against the clock of life, against that sad finality. Death sat in an empty chair, but soon realised he was not required that day, at least not there.'

Matthew and Jeanie moved to the backblocks of the isolated gold mining town of Leonora – back to Jeanie's roots and family. Matthew's father, Archie, is dying and he spends three weeks out of four caring for him in *The Wounded Sinner*, his grand, decaying family home. Whilst Matthew is away, Jeanie stays and works as a teacher and looks after their five children. Their eldest, Jaylene, is hitting adolescence and is challenging Jeanie's self-image and burgeoning sense of identity.

On a hot desolate day in the West Australian hinterland, Matthew's car finally breaks down. Vince, whose own family is falling apart in unanticipated ways, stops to pick him up and, in amongst the chaos of their lives, an unlikely friendship is formed.

In this unforgettable debut, the challenges of growing old, fidelity and identity run through this complex, gritty novel in which all are asking the ultimate questions about life, death and the purpose of it all.



About the author

Gus Henderson was born in Sydney in 1950. His people are from the Flinders Ranges region in SA, and he spent his early years with an aunty and uncle. Gus and his siblings grew up without any of their Aboriginal family, and were always told not to tell anybody. It has been a struggle over the years for him to construct a realistic heritage.

Gus describes his schooling as forgettable, and he joined the Australian Army in 1967. In 2014, he was the first student to graduate from Edith Cowan University South West Campus (WA) with a PhD in Writing. Gus is now retired. *The Wounded Sinner* is his first book (Photo credit: Kate Heaslip).

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