

# Gail Giles

## Young Adult Suspense

### Short Biography

- Gail Giles began writing in fourth grade when a nun at her rigid Catholic elementary school needed a laugh. She asked Giles to write a story about a holiday dinner told from the point-of-view of an ant. The nun rolled with laughter and Giles has been writing ever since.
- Since the time of her ant holiday dinner story, she cannot view everyday occurrences without also examining them from other angles.
- She taught reading to high school students for “almost twenty years.”
- Giles taught remedial reading to ninth grade students that read below level.
- She also taught speed reading and vocabulary extension to college bound students.
- Beyond the reading, Giles taught creative writing to students who she “hadn’t already terrified.”
- Currently Giles has a cat named Truman Capote and a dog named Harper Lee.
- Giles cites that she hates “people that ask when I’m going to write for adults.”

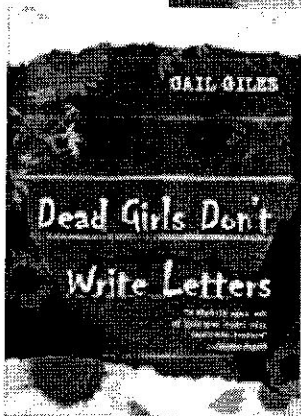
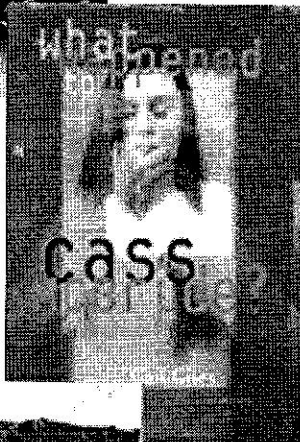
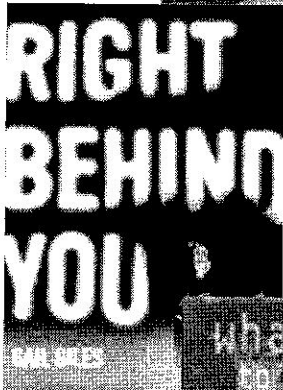
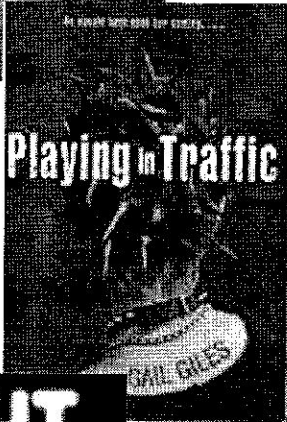
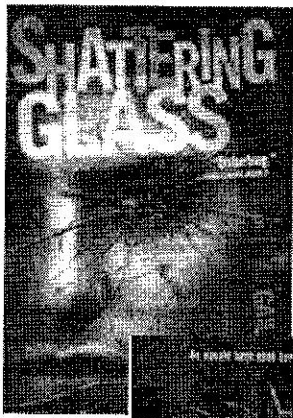
### Genres Represented

- Suspense-Her suspense novels begin with an immediate person v. person conflict that escalates until the last page. With these buildups, Giles incorporates intense trick endings.
- Semi-Mystery-In her suspense novels, crimes are committed, but the focus of her novels is not on solving the mystery but on surviving (or not!) the eventual end of the mystery.
- Short Stories-Gail Giles has written two short stories that have been published in anthologies. One highlights the power of music for teenagers and the other is a suspense story.
- Multicultural Literature-She has written one book for the fourth-sixth grade audience about a Thai girl living with her Grandmother and learning about her heritage.

### Style of Writing:

#### Gail Giles

- Writes with simple language.
- Provides a balance of dialogue and first-person narrative thoughts.
- Utilizes other methods of narration through journals, letters, emails, and (in the case of *Shattering Glass*) quotations from minor characters.
- Does not provide much description or lengthy thought processes from her narrators; her writing is meant to pull in and keep the reader for the duration.



## Themes in Writing

- Families make school/social conflicts worse; families are not safe havens for teenagers.
- Friends cannot be relied upon, especially in the face of popularity.
- Revenge does not meet the emotional needs of the vengeful.
- Outcasts should beware of popular teenagers, and vice versa.

## Other Writing Characteristics

- At times, her narrators are unreliable.
- Her climaxes are often found on the last page of the book.
- The reader is not kept from knowing who committed the crime or why; instead, the suspense comes from the reader wondering what will be the ultimate effect of the crime.
- Her novels are a variety of lengths but the writing never lags. Even a low lexile-level reader can fly through her language.
- Although obvious, none of her titles (except *The Breath of the Dragon* which is a Thai culture reference) give false sense of the positive. They are all eerie and ominous.

## Author's Appeal to Young Adults

- As aforementioned, Giles does not write for adults. However, this does not mean adults may not enjoy her writing.
- Teenagers from ages 14-17 will definitely enjoy Giles's books. Some of her novels' closing scenes involve violence (often unorthodox) that may not sit well with the younger adolescent readers. The simplistic language may not appeal to the reading interests of older teenagers who appreciate complex writing and plots.
- Her stories appeal to both male and female young adults. Three of her five novels are written from the perspectives of males. Her storylines are not complex, and the emotional settings she employs (cliques, divided families, outcasts) will appeal to reluctant readers.
- Her novels fall into the reading level that takes place as teenagers move from middle to high school. They are no longer "lose yourself" novels because they all take place here and now; instead, although suspense and not quite "realistic", the reader has a chance to connect to characters and categorize them into friends and enemies.



### Other Novels by Gail Giles

*Dead Girls Don't Write Letters*-2003  
*Playing in Traffic*-2004  
*What Happened to Cass McBride?*-2006  
*Right Behind You*-2007

### If you liked *Shattering Glass*, steal a glance at

*American Teen*-2008 Documentary (Rated PG-13)  
*Mean Girls*-2002 (Rated PG-13)  
*Never Been Kissed*-1999 (Rated PG-13)  
*She's All That*-1999 (Rated PG-13)  
*Heatherz*-1988 (Rated R)  
*Carrie*-1976 (Rated R)

### If you like Gail Giles's novels and short stories, check out the following:

*The Brimstone Journals* by Ronald Koertge  
*Shooter* by Walter Dean Myers  
*Head Games* by Christopher Golden  
*Fade to Black* by Alex Finn  
*Hit Squad* by James Heneghan (part of the *Orca Soundings* series)  
*Truth* by Tanya Lloyd Kyi (part of the *Orca Soundings* series)  
*Funny Little Monkey* by Andrew Auseon  
...or watch, *Gaslight*-1944 (Not Rated)