



For Coop? A novel usually consists of a long rising action, then a climactic scene that brings the conflict to a confrontation, followed by a final section that resolves it all. Why is this goal so supremely important to him? Is a good act done for the wrong reasons poisoned? Internet Resources on Bullying & Peer Pressure Raven Days: Surviving Middle School, Junior High, and High School as a Hunted Outsider A great teen-friendly website with helpful advice, news, and heartfelt stories from those who have been or are being bullied. What are these weaknesses and secrets, and how does the need to keep them hidden make each one vulnerable? Then she guided me through months of revisions and more rounds of polishing, until we were satisfied with the level of morality that balanced the violence. The clerk at the driver's license bureau? Why is it Ronna that Rob chooses to give to Young? 12. With this first young adult novel, Gail Giles takes her place among the great writers of the genre, in a story that moves from a seemingly light and engaging premise to a revelation of the dark places of the heart. "Rob came in and just took over the lead." Why do groups need an "Alpha wolf?" How do such leaders get the job? Who is Young finds that he is linked to Rob in a net of obligation, even to the point of giving up the girl he loves so that Simon can appear at the dance with the perfect date. How does this fear motivate their actions? Fat, clumsy Simon was a dweeb, there was no doubt about it, with his pocket protector jammed with pens, his shirt tucked into his underwear, and his irritating habit of swiping at his nose. Young fantasizes about killing Simon, and wonders "how it must feel to let loose, to allow the darkness trapped inside you out to run rampant." Why, then, is he the only one to stand back during the murder? Why is able to be the only one to defy Rob? Everybody made him the butt of their jokes, especially Lance, who had been head guy at Brazos Vale High School until Rob showed up. This book is so evocative of The Chocolate War, and intriguingly enough, many editors also wanted Robert Cormier to change the ending before the book was accepted. What are the qualities of something that is shattered, rather than just broken? What is the event about which all these various voices are speaking? I wrote all the way through college, but never showed it to anybody. It's set in Thailand, for seven-to-eleven-year-olds. Rob has a deep need to prove his power, and so when he enlists the three of them in the seemingly impossible job of Making Simon Popular, they all get involved in the transformation. What is there about the way this novel is structured that makes this possible? Young and Rob are also linked by a secret in their pasts. A Reading Group Guide to Shattering Glass By Gail Giles About the Book Simon Glass was easy to hate. How do we already know what happened afterward? What has Rob possessed and then lost? Originally published by Roaring Book Press, 2002. Giles's ear for the adolescent male voice is flawless, and her dialogue is tight, contemporary, and often very funny. National Youth Violence, with excellent links. When does it take place? I know Shattering Glass is your first young adult novel, but have you written any other books? They pull us along with questions, surprises, insights from new points of view, foreshadowing of things to come. About the Author Gail Giles (pronounced "jiles," rhymes with "miles") is a native Texan, has lived in Chicago, and now makes her home in Anchorage, Alaska, where last winter, she says, she couldn't leave her house for two days because "a moose hunkered down in the driveway and we couldn't get the car out of the garage." I imagine the isolation in Alaska in good for your writing. It was based on the story of a girl in my class in Texas. When Rob gives Young reassurance about his self-doubt, who else is he trying to reassure? 7. "What's in this for you?" he asks suspiciously. It was Schizophrenia City! How and when did you begin writing? The way Rob wears his confidence? Discussion Topics 1. But the book that most influenced Shattering Glass was The Lord of the Flies. The structure of the novel is brilliantly original, using a device that layers the present and the future, giving a double dimension to the events of the narrative and pulling the reader forward with hints and questions. I never knew exactly why, there was too much to pick from. Rob says that Lance suffers more in becoming an outcast than Simon, because Lance has had popularity and lost it. I love to be edited; I get new ideas and it makes the book better. Interesting! He's the master, that's all there is, and I've read all of his books. But beyond that, how does the phrase "shattering glass" (or "shattering glass") describe the action? I guess, really, we each hated him for a different reason, but we didn't realize it until the day we killed him. And why is he the only one willing to take the responsibility of paying for the crime? 17. Some of what Rob does is good—saving Simon from geekhood, comforting Young's fears about his sexual identity, offering friendly attention to everyone at school. Would he have been a coldhearted manipulator even if he had had a normal childhood? Yet we know all of this comes from his intense need for power. "Anyone who is the alpha wolf takes over," says Blair Crews. Are most people more comfortable having decisions made for them? Blair Crews says, "Simon, though, he let Rob show him how to dress and behave, but he never lost himself in Rob." Why is he not taken in by Rob, as the others are? Why is it so hard for Young to ask Ronna out? At the beginning, he also says, "We each hated him for a different reason." Is this true? It is. Later, Young accuses Simon of always needing to have permission. What deeper levels of sadism are revealed by his treatment of the frog? If innocent bystanders like Alice also get hurt, it is of no consequence to him. 15. 9. This guide has been provided by Simon & Schuster for classroom, library, and reading group use. Rob explains clearly that in rescuing Simon, he's not acting out of compassion, but because the mob, in its rejection of Simon, has taken the control Rob wants to keep for himself. The tender sensuality and poignancy of the love scenes between Young and Ronna are the material of poetry. Guide written by Patty Campbell, a longtime critic, librarian, editor, writer, and teacher in the field of young adult literature. When Young discovers Rob's secret, how does this knowledge obligate him to Rob? If Rob hadn't pushed him, would he ever have gotten up the nerve? What is there in his past that undermines his male confidence? 2. The web tightens, and the story moves inexorably to the dark equipment room where the complex interlocking motivations of these five will explode into a bloody catharsis. What do we know about the subject of that book, and its format? Profound moral themes of social guilt, the abuse of power, and the immorality of exclusion emerge naturally from the action, but never weigh down the strong forward pull of the story in this enthralling and startling novel. 6. Why does that work in exactly the opposite way? In Shattering Glass, Gail Giles ends the book immediately after the climactic scene. Used by permission. When I finally got brave enough to submit manuscripts to publishers, it was a long time before I got a novel accepted. 16. Young, Coop, and Bob each have a different basic weakness—an empty place or something missing—and a related secret that they must preserve at all costs. Are the events in his past enough to explain such intense pleasure in cruelty? "There was a cold center in Rob where his heart should have been," remembers his girlfriend, Blair Crews. What is there about Young that makes him see Simon as a distorted image of himself? Each of the other three are held in bondage by "something missing," a hidden empty place at the center, that makes them vulnerable to Rob's manipulation. Young hates Simon from the first, for reasons he doesn't guite understand. But there are a number of places in the story where they could have resisted if they had listened to their consciences, small decisions that add up. But now Rob is the leader, along with his posse—rich and intellectual Young, good-looking Bob, and sweet dumb Coop, the star linebacker. They tell us what's going to happened) but not when or why or how. She has won the Grolier Award from the American Library Association and the ALAN Award from the Assembly on Adolescent Literature of the National Council of Teachers of English, both given for distinction in the service of young adults and reading. These are the voices of people who already know the whole story. I always wanted to write—a nun started me writing when I was in elementary school. What is it about his feelings for Rob that obligates Young to agree to give Ronna away even though he loves her? The Class Favorites election is a traditional custom at Brazos Vale High School. 13. Is someone who allows a terrible deed as guilty as those who commit it? Try your hand at writing a poem, either from Ronna's or Young's point of view, about their first date, their lovemaking, their breakup, or Ronna's heartbreaking question: "Is this the very best day I'll ever have?" 10. Is this ending satisfying, in spite of being so abrupt? How does this future knowledge affect your feelings toward the characters' hopes and fears? They take him to the mall for the right clothes and a hair styling; they teach him how to act. Getting Simon elected Class Favorite, says Rob, is a way "to put things right. On the other hand, is a bad act done for good reasons—like Simon taking the ACT to help Coop—justified by its intention? The extraordinary device of the quotes at the beginning of each chapter are like those "scenes from next week's episode" on TV. But then the project—and the book—turns dark, as Simon begins to show a devious side, a talent for hacking into the school computer, and a tendency to do what the others can't—defy Rob. Shattering Glass shares a theme, as well as several other points of similarity, with two masterworks: The Lord of the Flies by William Golding and The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier. Why does Young trust Rob with this secret? 8. If his words can "patch the heal himself? Do they agree about the consequences of following an amoral but charismatic leader? 19. It has been said that for evil to win out, all that has to happen is for the good people to do nothing. What other striking metaphors and similes does she use to describe Simon's eyebrows? Why do teens (and other human beings) enjoy ranking each other like this? And Rob made us feel like successful sons." What is the central fear "all about fathers" that haunts each of the members of Rob's posse? What is there about Alice that should have made him especially sympathetic toward her? The Goths and tweakers hanging on the edges of the action? "Ronna told me this was all about fathers," says her dad. 3. 5. In my head, kind of." Why is it more satisfying for him to make Simon Class Favorite than to be elected Class Favorite himself? 20. Take another look at the brief vignettes that show each boy interacting with his father. 11. Soon the whole school is noticing that being nice to Simon is the way to get close to Rob. How do they differ? With Shattering Glass, other editors wanted a neatly tied-up ending, but Deborah Brodie at Roaring Brook Press accepted the book. What might happen to someone who is near a shattering? Why? Simon, however, manipulates people out of vengeance, and their pain is the whole point. You can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and write when it's minus 40; you can't do anything else but sit down and usefulness? I always used to say that he was the only one other—Breath of the Dragon. In the future Young will write a successful book and sign his royalties over to the injured Coop. Is it healthy? Then the narrative lets us watch events moving in that direction. By following Rob unquestioningly, the boys allow his need for power and control to take them to a terrible end. 21. It may be reproduced in its entirety or excerpted for these purposes. Where are some of those turning points, those moments when they could have said no, for Young? With compassion and insight, she weaves understanding for six fully developed characters into a seamless tapestry. We couldn't deal with the ones we'd been given. 14. Rob's controlled rage just before the murder? Why does he feel this way? "Glass was my fun house mirror," he says. 4. Coop reveals that "Young and I both made Rob into a substitute father. Rob manipulates people so he can feel powerful, and their response is of little interest to him as long as they do his will. 18. I taught English there for nineteen years—remedial reading for the advanced seniors. Young notices that Simon has "skin like the underside of a toad," a vivid example of Gail Giles's use of figurative language. What one word from Lance makes it necessary for Rob to annihilate him? What empty place in him does it fill? What do you think of such a competition? The title of this novel is, of course, a grim pun. ? If you have read either or both of these novels, compare the opening sentence of The Chocolate War to the opening words of Shattering Glass; the murdered outcast Simon, or the violent conclusions of all three. Rather than being grateful when Rob shows that he intends to bring him out of geekdom, Simon immediately suspects Rob's motives.

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