



# The Gifted

*Gail Bowen*

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## **The Gifted** Gail Bowen

Joanne Kilbourn is as feisty as ever in the 14th book of the series that bears her name. This time, Jo and Zack's young daughter Taylor's precocious talent as a painter has drawn the attention of people who may not be at all what they seem . . .

Jo and Zack are both proud and a little concerned when their youngest daughter Taylor -- whose birth mother was a brilliant but notoriously promiscuous artist -- has two paintings chosen for a high-level fund-raising auction. One they've seen; the other, a portrait of a young male artist's model, Taylor has carefully guarded in her studio. Their concern grows when it becomes clear (and quite public) that the young man is the lover of the older socialite who organized the fund-raiser -- and whose husband is Zack's old friend.

Soon, an ugly web of infidelity, addiction, and manipulation seems to be weaving itself around the Kilbourn-Shreve family. Jo and Zack are doing their best to keep everyone safe, but when one of the principal players in the drama is found murdered, events begin to spiral, Taylor seems to be drifting further away, and their very darkest fears seem about to be realized.

*The Gifted* reconfirms Gail Bowen's incomparable ability to interweave the domestic and the dramatic, and to explore the dark side of human nature while ensuring that the life-affirming pillars of family and friendship remain standing.

## **The Gifted Details**

Date : Published August 13th 2013 by McClelland & Stewart (first published January 1st 2013)

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Author : Gail Bowen

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## From Reader Review The Gifted for online ebook

### Vontel says

Excellent book, builds on the long string of Joanne Kilbourn mysteries, of which the first ones have been made into feature movies. The development of characters, the growth of her children into adults, her relationships after the death (subsequently found out to be murder) of her politician husband, and her career, as well as being mostly based in Regina/Saskatchewan, have kept me looking forward to the next book in Gail Bowen's series.

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### Kathryn says

Sitting down with the newest Joanne Kilbourn book is like catching up with an old friend. I love that Joanne is not a typical "detective" and is someone to whom I can relate - middle aged, retired professional with an active life and political views I can espouse. Gail Bowen weaves mysteries with many layers; complex non-linear stories. In *The Gifted*, family relationships and business affiliations are all affected by the personality and behaviour of a troubled young man, and Joanne's daughter is caught in the middle.

*The Gifted* follows up on some storylines that began in *Kaleidoscope*. While each book stands on its own, reading them in order enables the reader to benefit from the depth of character Bowen creates.

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### Gee-Gee says

*The Gifted* is the 14th book in the Joanne Kilbourn series by Gail Bowen, a renowned Canadian author. It is due out on Aug 13, 2013. I have the privilege of reading it early in order to post a review. I am a volunteer reviewer.

The book focuses on Joanne, her husband, Zack Shreve, and their daughter, Taylor. Taylor has come to live with Joanne and Zack through partially reveal circumstances that have probably been more fully explained in earlier books in the series. Taylor is a soon-to-be 15 year old with considerable artistic talent. She is the birth daughter of a famous artist and there is much concern by Joanne and Zack that Taylor follows a much less destructive path than her mother.

The story is set in Regina, Saskatchewan, and the beauty of the area is deftly folded into the narrative. Taylor has had two paintings chosen for a charity art auction, her first public showing. She is well aware of her birth mother's life and talent, and is very afraid of not living up to her mother's standards. (Her mother died when she was only 4 years old, and came to live with Joanne and Zack when she was 11 years old.)

Taylor's model for one of the paintings is a 19 year old fellow artist in the same art school. At the art auction, it becomes obvious to all that he is having an affair with the sponsor of the auction. Taylor is clearly upset. Her parents are concerned because little is known about him and he is beginning to have a strong influence over Taylor. When the older woman is found dead Joanne and Zack confront the older woman's husband, one of Zack's best friends. Who killed the socialite? Zack's friend? The young model/lover? And how can Joanne and Zack shield Taylor from all the gossip and danger?

This is not a high-speed chase, bloody, action story. This is an exploration of who is "family", how the past informs the present, what friendship means, and can our love protect those we love. Ms Bowen is a skilled writer. She explores family dynamics, informed parenting, life-style decisions, and the gray areas between

"good" and "evil". I was "hooked" very early on in the book and followed all the twist and turns with interest, at times, anxiety, and always a desire to find out how all is resolved. It felt as if I was watching a movie; I was very much drawn into the story.

I highly recommend that if you like a good mystery without all the gore and violence, you read *The Gifted*. It is available for pre-order.

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### **Linda says**

I'm enjoying these books a lot, but I'm not sure they really should be classified as mysteries any more. They are more family/relationship/social issues novels, with some crime thrown in. I like the way the family members and their various connections are developing and she has certainly set the scene for an interesting follow-up.

PS - I think the last sentence of the acknowledgments must have been written tongue-in-cheek.

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### **Lynn Kearney says**

Joanne Kilbourn is becoming prissily good. I liked her better in the earlier books when her life wasn't so charmed.

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### **Natasha says**

More a social issues novel with a murder tossed in.

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### **Sue says**

I won a copy of "*The Gifted: A Joanne Kilbourn Mystery*", by Gail Bowen through the Goodreads Giveaway Contest. This is a character -based mystery with strong bonds of family interaction. Gail Bowen is a very talented Canadian writer and the setting for this novel is in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Joanne Kilbourn and her husband,(lawyer) Zack Shreve, a paraplegic, live with their fourteen year old daughter, Taylor, a gifted painter, in a Saskatchewan condo in the warehouse area of "The Village." The other condo on the same floor belongs to Zack's law partner, Margot Hunter and her stepson, Declan. Taylor's birth mother, Sally, had died eleven years ago, and Taylor had inherited her mothers gifted talents.

Joanne and Zack were attending a forty five birthday celebration on Halloween, hostessed by Vince, an orthopedic surgeon and Lauren Treadgold, a prior international fashion magazine model. The Treadgolds acted as co-chairs of fundraising for the Racette-Hunter Centre, a facility being built in Regina. But their relationship was a troubled one. Vince has a daughter, Celeste, from a previous marriage.

On their way to the birthday celebration, Joanne and Zack dropped in on Joanne's daughter Mieka's house, who after her marriage ended had moved back to Regina along with her partner, Riel and their two girls, Madeleine,(seven), and Lena (six).

Kaye Russell had been Taylor's Visual Arts teacher, and had invited Julian Zentner, nineteen, to be a model for Taylor. Julian's dream was to be a great painter, but he didn't have the talent, as expressed by Kaye.

Two of Taylor's portraits are hot items in a fund raising auction for the Racette-Hunter Centre. Joanne and Zack had seen only one of the paintings "Two Painters" but the other piece, "BlueBoy21" was a mystery, a nude portrait of Julian. And when this portrait is revealed, it starts a new kind of bond/relationship between Taylor and Julian. Joanne and Zack grow more uneasy about Julian's influence over Taylor. Their worst nightmare is coming true. They must save their daughter at all costs.

While there is a murder/mystery element that emerges in the latter part of the book, this novel is rich in family values, dealing with family conflict and family interaction, and draws the reader even closer. I really enjoyed reading this novel, and will definitely check out her other novels.

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### **Lyn says**

In the latest Joanne Kilbourn Mystery, Joanne and Zack's young daughter, Taylor, is beginning to make a name for herself as an artist. Her latest two paintings bring amazing prices in a charity auction held for the Racette-Hunter Community Center. In the portrait that fetches the highest price, her beautiful male model, Julian, is nude, a fact not known to Joanne and Zack until the auction.

Julian is used to manipulating women and considers fifteen-year-old Taylor easy prey. While he is pressuring Taylor to continue her art under his supervision, he is having an affair with one of Zack's oldest friends. He convinces Taylor that together they can take her art to new levels.

The murder of Julian's lover brings things to a head. Zack is involved as a lawyer and Joanne is involved because she discovered the body. Julian's hold on Taylor is stronger than ever. Joanne and Zack worry that putting limits on Taylor's contact with him will play right into Julian's hands.

This is the fourteenth of the Joanne Kilbourn mysteries and as always, I enjoyed it. Bowen makes changes in Joanne's life that offer new challenges. Her family is always in the forefront and she is always prepared to do whatever she can to change the social injustices in their city of Regina.

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### **Susan says**

Ms. Bowen's storytelling ability made for an interesting and easy read but the actual plot seemed to play out a bit too much like a soap opera/TV drama series. Some of the main characters were indeed likeable, but I found a lot of the secondary characters were not relevant to the story and left me a bit overwhelmed at trying or caring to keep track of them all. I was initially excited about the idea that my home town was the setting of the novel but soon became disappointed that many of the mentioned landmarks and weather/environment references were not recognizable nor really relevant to the storyline.

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## **Biblio Files (takingadayoff) says**

Why do I keep reading this series? I suppose for the same reason I keep eating strawberries -- they used to be good. Strawberries still look great. They're bright and plump and smell wonderful. But you bite into one and it's tasteless. I have such vivid memories of delicious juicy sweet strawberries from decades ago that I can't resist them.

Gail Bowen's early Joanne Kilbourn mysteries were great political thrillers, and Joanne was there, in her various incarnations as politician's wife, as television producer, as poly sci professor, sifting through clues and helping to nail the culprit. Lately, she's been the wife of Zack, stirring porridge, buying upscale clothes for her granddaughters, taking the dogs for a run.

If she were my friend, I'd be happy for her. But she's the title character in a mystery series, and when there's a body, I expect her to be finding out whodunnit. This time around, she does NO investigating, she develops NO theories, and she does NOT figure out who committed the murder.

There's not even a body until over halfway through the book. So I do have to hand it to Bowen for keeping me interested enough to read that far with no murder. Last time Donna Leon tried that, I bailed out well before the halfway point.

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## **Roberta says**

I'm starting to find the tone of this series a bit smug. Didn't enjoy so much, certainly not as much as the early ones in the series.

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## **Patricia says**

I'm giving it three stars because Gail Bowen is such a splendid writer that I can't bring myself to give her a mediocre score even though I didn't enjoy the book much. I have loved the Joanne Kilbourne series from the very first book but this one left me with the feeling that Ms Bowen is becoming bored with her own creations. The solution to the mystery felt rushed. I was very disappointed in the book as I'd been looking forward to it for quite awhile.

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## **Chris Mclean says**

Decent mystery, with the narrator having the unusual twist of being in her 50s and happily married to a paraplegic. It is set in Regina, Canada which meant I had to look up some terms and the geography was often confusing. That is more a reader issue than a book issue though.

What I liked the most about this book was not the mystery, which did have a sufficient number of twists to make it engaging. I loved the depth and complexity of Joanne, the protagonist, who has an adult daughter and grandchildren and also a 15 year old daughter who she has adopted. I love that her husband is in a wheelchair and yet they have a satisfying sexual relationship. I love that they love and respect one another

and that they have a variety of friends. Joanne is deeply politically aware...she is a woman with a richness that is often not found in mystery novels.

I will be reading more of this series.

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### **Georgiana Huizenga says**

I really enjoy Gail Bowen's Joanne Kilbourne series. The murder mystery is always interesting, but the family interaction is primarily what makes her books so readable. I have grown to love the people in Joanne's life, and always look forward to a new novel. I first started reading this Canadian author when I saw a movie based upon one of the novels on the Lifetime network. I was unfamiliar with the author at that time, but got a copy of one of her early books, and have been reading them ever since.

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### **Carol Balawyder says**

What I really liked about this novel was the family dynamics and Joanne Kilbourne's loving relationship with Zack. It's refreshing to read about healthy relationships as opposed to dysfunctional ones. The family life was for me more interesting than the mystery although I've always liked Gail Bowen's mysteries. A fast paced novel with a contemporary theme.

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