

GILL PERDUE AVOIDS DIFFICULT SECOND NOVEL SYNDROME WITH THRILLING READ

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Gill Perdue's first novel featuring Garda Detective and expert witness interviewer Laura Shaw and her partner Garda Detective Niamh Darmody was published to wide critical acclaim. *If I Tell* (first published as *The Interview*) shot to the top of the charts earlier this year. The former school-teacher certainly appears to have followed the adage "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" with the narrative structure of this, her pulsatingly exciting follow-up.

In *When They See Me* — the second of what is clearly becoming the Shaw and Darmody series — the same three-voice pattern is followed. We are again privy to the thoughts and actions of Laura and Niamh, while this time the third voice is male. It belongs to a psychopathic serial killer the gardaí are hunting after the body of Mia Ruiz, a 19-year-old Spanish au pair, is found on wasteground.

It's two years on from their first case, and things have changed radically for Shaw and Darmody. Shaw has taken a considerable time to recover from the physical and mental traumas of her close brush with death and has also given birth to her second child, a little boy called Noah, now nine months old. She is clearly suffering from post-natal depression and questioning whether she can continue to do police work and be the kind of mother that her perfectionist nature demands.

Her husband Matt, who has taken on a lot of the burdens of childcare to now five-year-old Katie is beginning to lose patience with Laura's almost crippling insecurities and vacillation. He has been offered a huge promotion that would take the family to New York for two years. While she is still reluctant to stall the career she has spent so much time and effort to build, Laura is leaning towards the move.

In Shaw's absence, Darmody has been partnered by Garda Senan McCarthy, a man from near her hometown whom she dislikes.. She has also come out as gay and is in a relationship with a stunningly pretty but self-absorbed and demanding young TV actress.

When a second young woman is found dead, Laura finally decides to become involved. Suspicion initially falls on the father of the two-year-old child Mia had been hired to look after and who had been with her when she was abducted. Fortunately, the girl had been left on a roadside and not harmed, but she simply doesn't have the vocabulary to help the investigation.

The third voice driving the plot, that of the killer, is deeply disturbing from the very start. This is a man who boasts that he hides in plain

sight. "They never really see me until I will it. Until they are in my arms...That's when I have their undivided attention." It is clear from the start that he has killed before and that he is stalking a number of possible victims. As the investigation proceeds, this chilling voice describes in awful detail how the bizarre familial events of his childhood and early adult life have shaped him into the cunning monster he has become. It also becomes clear that he is extremely adept at ensuring he leaves no clues that might identify him. Worryingly, it also seems he knows exactly who is leading the hunt for him, and plans to put an end to the investigation.

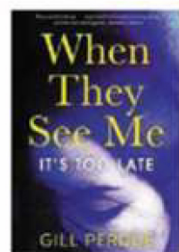
Many writers of blazingly successful first novels often find it hard to create a follow-up that equals or surpasses the original. Perdue passes this tough test with flying colours, because *When They See Me* is an adrenalin-charged page-turning read that leaves the reader wanting more of Shaw and Darmody's colourful lives.

THRILLER

When They See Me

Gill Perdue

Sandycove, 400 pages,
paperback €19.60;
e-book £7.99



Blazing success:
Gill Perdue