



Gripped by Fear by John M. Wills

November 22, 2010 By [Ellen Gable Hrkach](#) [1 Comment](#)

Paperback: 310 pages

▪ **Publisher:** TotalRecall Publications (November 17, 2009)

▪ **ISBN-10:** 1590957733

▪ **ISBN-13:** 978-1590957738

reviewed by [Ellen Gable Hrkach](#)

Gripped by Fear by John M. Wills is a crime novel and, at first glance, reminded me of a Mary Higgins Clark book. The back cover of the book says that the author "spent 35 years in law enforcement," and the novel's story, for the most part, rings very true to life.

Detectives Pete Shannon and Marilyn Benson are two detectives with the Violent Crimes Unit of the Chicago Police Force. They are working together to find the rapist who is targeting "women who labor as office cleaners in downtown Chicago, sexually assaulting them as they travel to and from their jobs." In the midst of it all, they are relatively new in the department and must deal charitably with others who are jealous and envious of their positions.

The most entertaining part of "Gripped by Fear" is the story. It is engaging and the characters are interesting and likeable. This novel has something for everyone: "gripping" story line, romance, action and some theology thrown in for good measure.

I write religious fiction and I usually enjoy when the characters are evangelizing or are speaking to others about their faith. I like the fact that some of the characters attend Mass. However, the main character, Pete Shannon, is a bit over the top with regard to his faith and the question "How has God treated you today?" which he asks just about every other character in the book. This is the only part which came across as unbelievable and forced.

The chapters from the villain's perspective were especially engaging. Those sections kept me reading and quickly turning the pages.

I particularly enjoyed the romance between David and Susan (a widow with four sons) as well as the relationship between Marilyn and her boyfriend, Joe, and I would've liked to see more of those plot lines. Good morals are illustrated throughout the book, not only in situations but in attitudes. There is no graphic sexuality or violence although there are a few swear words when the villain is speaking or thinking.

The author is a talented storyteller and he has created some interesting characters. His law enforcement background makes this novel true-to-life with compelling situations and plot lines.



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