



Things Slip Through

Kevin Lucia

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Welcome to Clifton Heights, New York. Just another average Adirondack town, and nice enough in its own right.

Except after dark, or under the pale light of the moon. Or in a very private doctor's office at Clifton Heights General Hospital, where no one can hear you scream. Or on a road out of town that never ends, or in an old house sitting on the edge of town with a mind - and will - of its own.

Maybe you shouldn't have left the interstate, my friend. Maybe you should've driven on to the next town.

But you didn't. You saw our sign, turned down our road, figuring on just a short stay. And maybe it will be.

Or maybe you'll never leave.

Anyway, pay a visit to The Skylark Diner. I'll be there. Pull up a chair and let me tell you about our town. It's nice enough, it really is.

Except after dark. Or on cold winter days when no one is around, and you're all alone...

Things Slip Through Details

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Author : Kevin Lucia

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From Reader Review Things Slip Through for online ebook

Ben Eads says

Things Slip Through By, Kevin Lucia

Publisher, Crystal Lake Publishing, November 2013

Things Slip Through is a unique and harrowing collection of interwoven dark as midnight short stories that are the fruits of a rare and vibrant imagination. The author weaves the stories into the narrative with effortless grace and ease, whilst breathing new life into the concept of a “collection of fiction.”

Clifton Heights is an odd little Upstate New York town. No one knows this more than Chris, the local Sheriff. Too many people disappear and the people of the town scarcely notice. However, Chris takes his job seriously and he wants answers. A little girl is missing and Chris will not rest until the case is solved. During a get-together with a veritable “who’s who” of Clifton Heights, Chris pushes for answers until one man takes him seriously and attempts to do his best to explain what is happening: a local writer, Gavin.

They go to a local diner for coffee—and what Chris hopes are answers. After all, he is the Sheriff. What good is he if he can’t solve a simple case? Gavin does his best to explain what exactly makes Clifton Heights a myriad of nightmares for those bold enough to move, or stay there. However, Gavin has an insider’s view that only creeps out when he writes about it. With patience, he hands Chris the stories, one by one, hoping to clear up any confusion. What follows is ripped directly from the headlines of the news: racism and ethnic tensions that flow like a well-crafted Hitchcock mystery. However, as Chris continues reading, he finds things that shouldn’t be; things that defy physics, things that simmer below the surface of the placid town with an ancient and depraved hunger. Story after story Chris questions the sanity of Gavin, knowing full well that in his heart he knows there is some truth to it. Isn’t there? Can this, or any other case, be solved once he’s finished reading?

It is impossible to declare which short stories are my favorites because they all add something to the bigger story. From ethnic tensions at the local High School; to a road that only appears at night; to a house where time and reality are bent, allowing things that should not be to slip through; to a local, literal demigod—Clifton Heights makes Arkham pale in comparison. In Things Slip Through, Kevin Lucia is like a mad scientist; throwing everything he’s got to create an utterly singular, pulse-pounding tale that you just can’t put down. Using a literary and evocative voice, the reader finds their heart-beat jumping in sync with the characters as they scramble away from the ancient evils that hide in the darkness like a stalking butler.

Things Slip Through is a product of a rare talent. It shines like a beacon through a dark storm, placing the author next to the pillars of the horror genre. This is an author to watch. Mr. Lucia, you have arrived.

Reviewed by Ben Eads

John says

4.5 stars

Very interesting novel composed of short stories woven together by circumstances, characters, and places. Not scary, not gory (except one part), and not very violent. But still a very entertaining first book in a series.

Recommended

Tracie Orsi says

Like Stephen King's Castle Rock, Kevin Lucia has expertly conjured an obscure town in the Adirondacks, with unexplained disappearances, where strange things happen, and a population is held at mercy by an invisible hand. No one wants to break down on I-80 near Clifton Heights after reading "Things Slip Through."

In a clever web of stories where some stand alone, Lucia has woven a series of mysteries into a cohesive collaboration that leads Sheriff Chris on a pursuit for truth through a town that turns an apathetic face to horrible situations.

At first, I was confused as to whose story I was reading, so I reread the first couple of chapters to be sure I hadn't missed something. With Gavin's narrative, the pieces to the puzzle fell into place with all the nuances of a small town where skeletons come out at night, where a character's weakness allows monsters to take form. Although it seemed there were too many "monsters" and not a common thread that led the town into denial like Pascal Laugier's "The Tall Man," Chris is a newcomer and wouldn't understand what makes a small mountain community isolated from the rest of the world tick. Chris wants to fight the monsters without acknowledging his own, but knowing that Gavin's empty pages are waiting for more stories to come, Lucia leaves the door open for something greater to slip through.

I know that Lucia is not finished with Clifton Heights. Sheriff Chris has yet to meet the diabolical Dr. Jeffers and I can't wait to hear more from Clive Hartley.

When Kevin Lucia is ready to perform more of his own trickery by moving words on the page, I'm ready to experience yet another endless journey down Bassler Road.

Kat Heckenbach says

Things Slip Through is a collection of short stories by Kevin Lucia, but it's also kind of a novel. The stories are connected by the fact that they all take place in the same small town, many of them with shared characters and related situations. The big tie-together is that they've all been "written down" by the same character, Gavin, who lives in that small town as well. The main character, who is the local Sheriff, comes to Gavin in search of answers about some strange happenings, and Gavin answers by giving him a the notebook of stories he's been writing and tells him to read.

As with basically every collection of short stories I've ever read, whether they be written by all different authors or they be a collection of stories by one author, some of the stories are better than others. This is simply a fact of life. Overall, though, I found all the stories to be at the very least well-written and engaging. Some more so--some quite well-written and fascinating. And Lucia did a very good job of tying all the stories together.

All of the stories are dark and strange, but some really push the envelope. If you're a true horror fan, that is quite a good thing. One story had me literally jumping, as I was reading it late at night and my son came out of his room for a drink of water, nearly scaring me right off the couch. Another story I had to skim, because the details were quite graphic. I've read some pretty graphic horror novels, but this happened to hit on a subject--surgery--that really, really grosses me out, and Lucia has a flair for description when it comes to that sort of thing ;). No holds barred...

If I had to sum up the book and make a recommendation, I'd say *Things Slip Through* is for Stephen King fans who'd like to take a break from King's wordiness and enjoy a quicker but just as character-filled scary story. It's also for *Twilight Zone* fans--several of the stories had me feeling like I'd entered a TZ episode.

I'll definitely be reading more by Kevin Lucia and recommend this book for fans of all things strange and macabre.

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book 1

book 2

Kimberly says

THINGS SLIP THROUGH (The Clifton Heights Saga Book 1), by Kevin Lucia, contains a series of interconnected events/stories all woven into a larger narrative. The location is the small town of Clifton Heights, NY. We have a group of friends, meeting for their usual Tuesday night card game: Father Ward, teacher Gavin Patchett, "Fitzy" the town's doctor, and Policeman Chris. As an officer, Chris has seen some "unique" and inexplicable things in his one year of residency in Clifton Heights. Sensing that his friends know much more about this, he decides to trust in their friendship and confront them about the nature of this town.

" . . . Truth. It's a precious commodity. Especially between friends . . . The problem, however, lies in how much truth do we share? . . . "

It falls upon Gavin (also a writer) to meet Chris at the Skylark Diner. There, he presents to his friend a journal that he keeps, chronicling the "unsolved" crimes and disappearances in Clifton Heights.

What I loved the most about this collection is not only how the stories are entwined within the framework of Chris and Gavin's talk, but how many of the individual tales cross over into others, connecting them all as if with an invisible thread. In Gavin's own story, "Way Station", he eludes to the town as: ". . . An in-between

place. A crack between the worlds. A way station, of sorts . . . a place where strange, unexplainable . . . often violent things happen."

One of the most telling of the tales, in my opinion, is "The Sliding", chronicling a young Ward, Gavin, and Fitzy trespassing in the local "haunted house"--Bassler House, a key focal point--along with all of Bassler Road--in many of these stories.

" . . . maybe there's an opening or a rift on the quantum level . . . "

Other personal favorite tales of mine include, "On a Midnight Black Chessie", "Lament", and "A Brother's Keeper". While these stories clearly define the town of Clifton Heights, along with the resignation and acceptance that its residents show, Chris will learn simply that he has been "called" to this town--a "Guardian" of some sort, without actually knowing what it is he's being called to do.

" . . . Every decision creates ripples. Every ripple changes things . . . "

An incredible collection that left me wanting to read more about this strange town and its inhabitants. Lucia leaves off whetting the readers' appetites for more. Regarding Clifton Heights itself: " . . . As for haunted . . . Depends on your definition of the word."

Highly recommended!

Josh says

Welcome to Clifton Heights. It may be a nice place to visit, but lingering would be a very, very bad idea.

Things Slip Through is an archetypal trickster of a book. The stories in its pages collectively form a dark ride through a town that, though normal enough on the surface, draws its lifeblood from an ominously beating heart. Framed within a wraparound narrative that brings to mind fond memories of the Amicus anthology films, each self-contained story ties into the others, making this essentially a novel in stories, which works admirably well.

But what are the stories *about*?

Well, a lot of things. Here you'll find pernicious books, nefarious creatures and arcane artifacts. You'll find crazed doctors and crazed gods alike. You'll travel to haunted places and meet haunted people, and to my mind it's these people, more than anything, that really make *Things Slip Through* shine.

Many of the characters in these stories are on the fringes of society, marginalized or coping with things they can't quite seem to escape from. In writing about their lives, Lucia touches on racism, alcoholism, and abuse both physical and psychological. He does this with a deft and compassionate hand, which makes it that much more horrifying when characters are faced with the encroachment of unnatural, otherworldly things that they will almost *certainly* never escape from. That's not to say that this book isn't *fun*, because it is. It's vividly imagined and moves at a brisk pace, but the sometimes b-movie-esque trappings effectively underscore these deeper issues.

I enjoyed each of the stories, but personal favorites include:

“The Water God of Clarke Street”, a coming of age tale about a disillusioned high school girl and her not-so-innocuous imaginary friend.

“A Brother’s Keeper”, in which an unsuspecting man returns to his homestead to make the ultimate familial sacrifice (with a little help from the friendly family doctor).

“The Sliding”, a wonderfully atmospheric piece that invokes a subtle sense of dread and plays with time in an interesting way.

“Mr. Nobody”, the final story of the book, a touching and harrowing tale of a mother, a missing son, and a creature borne of dark dreams. Given its brief but poignant sketch of love and loss, and coupled with the conclusion of the wraparound story that follows, this is hands down my favorite of the bunch.

The only qualm I have with the book is some stilted, expositional dialogue, particularly in the wraparound piece. Given the strength of the narrative itself and the characters that people it, however, this becomes a non-issue. Lucia is a gifted storyteller. If you’re a fan of the strange and uncanny, and you like the kind of horror that sinks in slowly and hangs around to watch you squirm, you’ll be doing yourself a favor by picking this one up.

originally posted at <http://www.hellnotes.com>

Larry says

Horror isn't a genre I wade into often, but "Things Slip Though" made my departure from the norm well worth the trip. Lucia's writing features taut and smart dialogue, devilish descriptions, and compelling story. Looking forward to reading more from Kevin.

Hal Bodner says

The concept for Kevin Lucia's **THINGS SLIP THOUGH** is quite an ambitious one. The book purports to link together a series of stories about the happenings in a small Adirondack town where bizarre and horrific things happen with a far greater tendency than normal.

On the positive side, Lucia does a masterful job of weaving together the characters and events into a more or less cohesive whole. With rare exceptions, he holds his reader's attention and propels them forward as we eagerly anticipate the next example of small town strangeness from Lucia's fertile imagination. What's more, the constant cropping up of characters whose stories we've already read, or the referrals to events and people who we will not meet for several chapters, is a great deal of fun for the reader -- rather like anticipating cross-over guest stars from a different series while watching a favorite TV show.

But there are times when ambition is too great, and where the burden an author has undertaken can be a trifle too heavy. I found myself wondering, while reading this book, if **THINGS SLIP THOUGH** wasn't an example of one of those instances.

Though this collection has its fair share of merely mediocre pieces, most of the stories are extremely good.

and clearly could stand out on their own absent the creative "wrap" that Lucia has chosen to tie them all together. In fact, with the exception of one very confusing piece which juggles time in a way that I found baffling and frustrating, it is when Lucia is dealing with the wrap-around integration that he runs into problems.

The conceit is that four friends: a priest, a doctor, a teacher and the town sheriff, meet for weekly drinks. Over time, the sheriff realizes that his friends are hiding some kind of town-wide secret from him and he becomes determined to find out what it is. One of his cronies, a former novelist whose failed career has propelled him into teaching, breaks down and begins the revelations. He does this in the form of stories he has supposedly written about the "true" events in the town.

This part of the structure is what fails badly for me. The novelist simply isn't that interesting of a character and the two stories he relates about his own life, and what led him to become the town's unofficial chronicler border on being outright boring. There's also a certain amount of preciousness to this fact of the book, something that is admittedly hard to avoid when an author ends up writing about a character who is also an author, especially when part of the character's arc is a struggle with both his writing career and the process of writing. Fortunately, it's easy to ignore the wrap around conceit. The interstitial chapters tend to be short -- rarely more than a page or two -- and not too distracting.

Several of the stories are very, very good. To my mind, three stand out in particular. An early piece in which a Muslim high school student is brutally murdered by an unstable classmate appears very early in the book and sets the tone for some delicious nuggets of horror to come. A story toward the end of the book in which a model railroad aficionado's basement hobby takes on a chilling reality is both effective and disturbing. My favorite piece, however, has to be a quirky and horrific tale of a brother acting as an unwilling organ donor to his mentally challenged formerly co-joined twin.

I wish I could stop here because Kevin Lucia truly wields a ton of potential as an author and much of his work is entertaining, thought provoking and truly inspires chills. But I would be remiss in not mentioning what is the one true failure of *THINGS SLIP THROUGH*. In the very last story, Lucia seemed to have been mysteriously compelled to attempt a story of redemption. Perhaps it was intentional -- one hopes so -- and that the author desired the finale to bring a sense of hope to what has previously been a highly entertaining litany of gruesome death, disturbing hauntings, and horrible disappearances. Certainly an earlier story, in which a very troubled man picks up a hitchhiker who is not what she seems and narrowly avoids a damning fate, seems to hint that Lucia is working toward a happier ending.

But his final entry, which by the way ironically is the best written of all, makes a sharply angelic turn in a way that almost minimizes what we've read up to that point. It is if Freddy Krueger or Michael Myers suddenly repented in the last reel in order to teach handicrafts to lonely senior citizens. The change is jarring and leaves the reader wondering what was the point of having read through to the end. One wants some kind of apocalypse or, at the very least, a revelation of the underlying cause of the creepiness. Instead, Lucia gives us a rather sweet story, bordering on saccharine but for his craft as a wordsmith, that is highly unsatisfying.

Nonetheless, *THINGS SLIP THROUGH* will be a lovely little bon bon of a read for horror fans. The collection evokes the kind of constructed worlds of Charles Grant's "Oxrun" series and some of James A. Moore's work involving Ruffo the Clown and his cronies. That Lucia has managed to maintain such a high level of internal consistency is certainly praiseworthy. One hopes we will see a lot more from this author in the near future.

Glenn Rolfe says

Kevin Lucia's *Things Slip Through* isn't your average A to B adventure. It's a collection of short stories about the strange things happening in a town called, Clifton Heights. I say short stories, but this isn't your typical collection of shorts, either. We join the sheriff and Gavin for an evening at the local diner. From there, Lucia brings us deeper and deeper into the little New York town, and into a number of its dark corners. Throughout, Lucia builds the characters and town, much like he would if this was a straight up novel, but here, he's chosen to glue the pieces together via Gavin's journal entries. It's an interesting way to put a book together, for sure. The only novel that comes to mind that is close to it would be *That Which Should Not Be* by Brett J. Talley.

In *Things Slip Through*, the horror flows from "real" horror (racism), to the mythical Wendigo, to trans-dimensional disappearances, and seemingly, everything in-between. While I did find a couple of the journal entries to be a bit slow or repetitive, the majority of them are fantastic. Lucia's writing is so excellent that it pulls you through any mild-hiccups along the way.

I wasn't sure how I wanted to rate the book after finishing it, but just this morning, found myself wanting to dive back into Clifton Heights and learn more. That's the sign of a pretty amazing piece of fiction. I give *Things Slip Through*, 4 stars. But it's really more like a very strong 4.5.

Christy Stewart says

This book has a strong premise and an interesting yet uncommon format, for that alone I would usually give a good rating. It sells itself as urban horror and that's exactly what it delivers, and although I was happy to see some ambitious social commentary it lost a lot of its impact when presented with cliché characters. Not to say that the characterizations aren't well done, but they are all extremely obvious; you'll see identical ones in any book of this genre. But like I said, that's not necessarily a bad thing as it's delivering exactly what it says it will.

The problem is that there were too many women.

Well, that's not exactly true... I guess I should say there are too many women for an average male author to handle.

You expect a book like this to have very few women, or very few women that aren't corpses were simply mentioned to establish that, yes, women exist within this universe but you just won't see them. Lucia has very few female characters in relation to the males but there are quite a few and they hold a lot of responsibility for advancing the plot. That sounds great. Unless you actually care about female representation.

I realize we had a problem when I got excited at the mention of a female character having had a conversation with her mother but quickly reread the line and realize the conversation was about her father. We almost passed the Bechdel test. Usually I wouldn't apply the Bechdel test to a novel (not because it isn't completely relevant, but because I'd rather enjoy the astonishment of finding one that does pass instead of continually getting my hopes dashed) but Lucia set himself apart by actually trying to involve women so it was so

glaringly obvious that none of them had relationships with each other and although they were essential to advancing the plot the advancement was, in most part, for a male character's story.

I made it to about the middle of the book because once I became hyper aware of the potential this book had and yet page after page I continued to see the failure of representation it became insufferable. If I quit too soon, let me know. If a miracle happened and two women, identified enough to be given names, conversed about anything other than a man let me know. I'll congratulate Lucia on being one of the very few authors to achieve the bare minimum in female representation.

Jon Recluse says

Welcome to Clifton Heights, where the Tuesday night poker game has been interrupted when the sheriff asks his friends the question that has been plaguing him....what exactly is going on in his new home town? Gavin, once a published author and now unofficial keeper of the town's dark secrets, invites the sheriff to the Skylark Diner, where what he seeks will be revealed in the pages of a journal.

The sheriff will get his answer tonight....that there are some things in this world you can't explain.

A brilliant collection of tales, forged into a single, and singular work of quiet horror, stories within stories expand outward, offering answers that invite the questions that will keep readers up long into the night.

Lucia's writing is pitch perfect. Masterfully creepy and subtle, his portrait of a small town, both the good and the bad, is spot-on, laying a solid foundation of reality for the otherness that lurks in the shadows.

Highest possible recommendation.

Barry says

A neat and unusual tale, itself comprised of tales (as prettymuch every other review on here gets into), this was a fun, fast-paced read. I was most interested in the overarching narrative, but a number of the sub-stories were memorable and neat. A very vivid picture of the town of Clifton Heights has been painted; I'm looking forward to see what else happens there in his other works!

Kimberly says

THINGS SLIP THROUGH (The Clifton Heights Saga Book 1), by Kevin Lucia, contains a series of interconnected events/stories all woven into a larger narrative. The location is the small town of Clifton Heights, NY. We have a group of friends, meeting for their usual Tuesday night card game: Father Ward, teacher Gavin Patchett, "Fitzy" the town's doctor, and Policeman Chris. As an officer, Chris has seen some "unique" and inexplicable things in his one year of residency in Clifton Heights. Sensing that his friends know much more about this, he decides to trust in their friendship and confront them about the nature of this

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One of the most telling of the tales, in my opinion, is "The Sliding", chronicling a young Ward, Gavin, and Fitzy trespassing in the local "haunted house"--Bassler House, a key focal point--along with all of Bassler Road--in many of these stories.

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Other personal favorite tales of mine include, "On a Midnight Black Chessie", "Lament", and "A Brother's Keeper". While these stories clearly define the town of Clifton Heights, along with the resignation and acceptance that its residents show, Chris will learn simply that he has been "called" to this town--a "Guardian" of some sort, without actually knowing what it is he's being called to do.

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An incredible collection that left me wanting to read more about this strange town and its inhabitants. Lucia leaves off whetting the readers' appetites for more. Regarding Clifton Heights itself: **"... As for haunted . . . Depends on your definition of the word."**

Highly recommended!

Phillip III says

(This was an ARC. Book due out 11/2013)

I've known Kevin for a few years now. Four? Maybe five? We met because of our shared interest in writing, and of perhaps one day writing a bestseller.

Separated by just under 200 miles, we've met only once. I will start by saying I am not a short-story reader. I do not care for anthologies. Nothing against them, other than when I sit down to read, I prefer a novel. With that said, I had no idea that really — really — *Things Slip Through*, is a collection of short stories cleverly camouflaged as a novel. What am I talking about? How could a collection of short stories possibly be masked to resemble a novel?

Is there really an author out there that could have fooled me? Like, have me 200 pages into a 309 page . . .

novel . . . before I slap the heel of my hand to my forehead and think, “Kevvvvin!” Here’s what we’re dealing with, and I want to reiterate this deception was masterfully done. Masterfully! Welcome to the small town of Clifton Heights. East of Rochester. Well, east of Syracuse, too, but also east of Rochester (where I am from). Chris has been the sheriff for just under two years. He’s made some good friends. Tuesdays are poker night. On this particular Tuesday, after Ellen Danver shows up and instructs Chris to stop looking for her missing son, to just cancel the investigation . . . Chris knows it is time to not ask, but demand answers from his friends. Weird things continually happen around town. Rarely are there any answers. It’s at the Skylark Diner where Gavin, one of the Tuesday night poker players, agrees to meet and answer the sheriff’s questions as best as possible. This being better than nothing, Chris readies himself for the meeting. Gavin explains that all the disappearances, the oddities, are things that can’t be reported; cases that can’t be solved. Basically, it is what it is. This, naturally, is not good enough for the sheriff. Gavin produces a binding of writings that are sure to explain it all, or . . . not at all. It is through a series of short-stories, written by Gavin, that the truth about Clifton Heights’ dark secrets is revealed. The stories involve bad and strange and peculiar events that happened to people in town. And sometimes, re-happened to people in town, but differently from the way they happened the first time. (You follow? No? Exactly!) Back and forth occurs between Gavin and the Sheriff at the end (or just before the beginning) of the next short tale. This is why Kevin had me tricked into thinking this was a novel. I cared about all of the characters introduced. Was sucked in to each of their stories. Loved how they all revolved around Clifton Heights. All contained similar elements. Seemed like it had all been written in one sitting! I turned pages so fast, anxious to see what would happen next. Anxious to see what else Gavin and Chris discussed. Was dying to find out what the deep dark secrets were behind Brassler Road and the Brassler House, and could not wait to learn why Ellen Danver’s no longer wanted police involvement for finding her missing child! Violent and gritty, mysterious and frightening, Lucia spins out a consistent stream of tight prose. Constant tension and ever-building suspense, I could not put the book down. It might be a collection of short stories – might sell as a collection of short stories. I figured it out! Don’t let Kevin Lucia or the publisher fool you. Don’t be tricked. This, *Things Slip Through*, is an amazing NOVEL. I don’t recommend books often. You want something different? Something very well-written, entertaining, and scary? You know where I’m going with this? I think you do. Come November, when the book is released, add *Things Slip Through* to your list of books to read! You won’t regret it!

As always, with love,
Phillip Tomasso

Thomas Smith says

Clifton Heights, the setting for Kevin Lucia’s collection, *Things Slip Through*, could be my town. Could be your town. Could be any town. At least on the surface. But as the local sheriff is about to find out, things are not what they seem, and some mysteries really are best left unsolved. Kevin Lucia has skillfully connected stories which could have worked equally well as stand alone tales. And in so doing he takes the reader into territory reminiscent of the worlds of Mulder & Scully, Robert McCammon, and H. P. Lovecraft, then drops them off to fend for themselves. This effective collection is not to be missed.
