



The Gifts We Keep

Katie Grindeland

Ooligan Press (Apr 16, 2019)

Softcover \$16.00 (256pp)

978-1-947845-06-0

In her novel *The Gifts We Keep*, Katie Grindeland layers revelations over misunderstandings to spin a complex and ultimately unsustainable web of secrets between a family, their neighbor, and the ten-year-old girl who comes to stay with them. Told from several points of view, the book explores miscommunication and its inevitable traps.

Twelve years after the death of her husband, Will, Emerson is returning home to the house that she used to share with him. It is now occupied by her mother, Eve, and her sister, Tillie, a paraplegic whose best friend is their neighbor, Henry. These four people share a powerful past that is in danger of exploding. They come together to care for Addie Long, a child sent to live with Emerson.

Grindeland gives each character their own say—each narrates at least a portion of each chapter. Secrets, characters, and new connections cascade as the chapters progress. Each chapter begins with Henry doing something and the others following suit: Henry begins, Henry reads a sign, et cetera. Though gimmicky, the approach propels the plot forward and deeply characterizes the protagonists. In the book's explosive culmination, each character's fate is tied up tightly.

The characters themselves don't fall into neat delineations. Tillie finds herself floating across the spectrum of sexuality, resistant to binaries, as she gardens and moves through life without the use of her legs. Eve flits through the story, a delightful sort of butterfly with a tensile strength. Emerson and Henry, though opposites in disposition, prove painfully complex. Even little Addie has an unexpected edge.

Part thriller, part love story, part family drama, *The Gifts We Keep* satisfies a lot of appetites at once.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (March/April 2019)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.