

# Graveyard Girl Short Guide

## Graveyard Girl by Wendy A. Lewis

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## Overview

Lewis tried to "create a snapshot of young people in a small town," in *Graveyard Girl*.

The linking device that Lewis utilizes in connecting the book's twelve stories is a high school's 1982 recreation of the "Wedding of the Century," the royal marriage of Prince Charles to Lady Diana. Each of the stories' central characters played some major or minor role in the mock royal wedding by reenacting either an adult part or one originally carried out by a child. Five of the stories are set in 1983 and are narrated by members of that year's graduating class.

Another five are set in 1993 and are told by individuals who were preschoolers at the time of the school performance. Two other pieces, both occurring on June 19, 1999, and both told by Ginger, now a wife and mother in her mid-thirties but originally the school's student photographer who captured the school production on film, serve to introduce and conclude the collection.



## About the Author

Born in Ottawa, Ontario, on February 10, 1966, to Mike Lewis and Anne Powell, Wendy Lewis lived in Canada's capital city until she was six, at which time her family moved to a twenty-five-acre rambling farm near Metcalfe, Ontario. Another move, this time to Uxbridge, Ontario, occurred when she was eleven, and there she remained for her public school years. Lewis wanted to be a writer from as far back as she could remember. However, because she was a shy, quiet child, she did not talk much about such aspirations, choosing instead to read a lot. Characterizing herself as an "absolute bookworm," Lewis says that, from the time she started reading, her mother hardly ever saw her, for she would be tucked into a corner or on a tree branch with a book. When it came time to blow out the candles at Lewis's birthday parties, she would make a wish to someday be a published writer. She maintained that practice right up to her thirtieth birthday because that was the goal she had set for herself—to be published by the age of thirty.

As a child, one of Lewis's favorite authors was Lucy Maud Montgomery. Although she enjoyed the Anne books, *Emily of New Moon* was her favorite Lucy Maud Montgomery work because the title character became a writer. Even today when Lewis goes to her mailbox, she still recalls something she learned from the books of Montgomery—slim letters mean acceptance, but fat parcels with the manuscripts enclosed mean rejection.

Lewis's love of English was reinforced in her high school years. Consequently, when she attended the University of Toronto she majored in English literature, receiving a bachelor of arts in 1988. Actually, Lewis did realize her goal of being published by the age of thirty, for in the months following the completion of her degree, she wrote a short story which she submitted to the Toronto Star short story contest. While her story was not one of the three winners, it was published as a "Judges' Choice." The critical recognition encouraged Lewis and she finished a second story which she submitted to the same contest the following year.

She admitted to Jenkinson that "when it didn't get published, I did a foolish thing—I hardly wrote another word for the next six years."

In early 1991, Lewis and her mother opened a retail store which they ran until 1993, when the effects of an economic recession forced its closure. A year of studying corporate communications at Toronto's Seneca College of Applied Arts & Technology was followed by a job at a large retirement community in Don Mills, Ontario, where Lewis coordinated public relations, marketing, and sales. Because the job was both demanding and time-consuming, sometimes requiring Lewis to work from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., she found little time or energy to write fiction.

Serendipity then played a role in Lewis's life for she attended the "Word on the Street Festival" in Toronto where she heard Robert Munsch telling his stories. Never having heard a children's writer perform before, Lewis was surprised to find herself moved to



tears. This experience was pivotal in her life, for she found herself thinking: "Oh my gosh, this is what I want to do!

This is where my energy should go." Being there with so many children and their parents and seeing the looks on their faces, knowing how much his stories and words meant to them, that's what I'd wanted from the time I was reading L. M. Montgomery's books. To write something that touches young people in that way and stays with them for many years—that's my dream.

That very same day, Lewis learned about the Packaging Your Imagination Workshop sponsored by CANSCAIP, the Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators, and Performers, and she attended it in the fall of 1994. Lewis characterized the workshop as being her true decision-making day, for there she discovered an active community of people passionate about children's books, and she knew that was where she, too, belonged.

The next spring, she registered for a tenweek Writing for Children class taught by Peter Carver. Despite still holding down her demanding job with the retirement community, Lewis loved the writing experience so much that she would either write late into the night or get up at 2:00 a.m. and begin writing. During that same spring, Lewis discovered that she was pregnant with her first child. As well, she and her husband had decided to relocate to Uxbridge, Ontario. With all the changes, Lewis temporarily put her writing aside. After commencing a maternity leave in January, 1996, Lewis had her daughter in February and then wrote the Graveyard Girl stories the next month. Lewis's motivation for writing the stories so quickly was that she wanted to be part of Peter Carver's advanced workshop class, the one designed for writers preparing manuscripts for publication. Thinking that she could not appear at the class in April without a book-length manuscript in hand, Lewis used the beginning date for the course as her deadline. "I always joke that I gave birth to a baby girl and twelve short stories."

The stories were workshopped in Carver's class and then reworked before Lewis gave them to Carver in his role as the children's book editor of Alberta's Red Deer Press. When Carver returned the manuscript with comments and feedback, Lewis misunderstood his actions and thought he was indicating that Red Deer Press did not want to publish her stories. Consequently, she sent her manuscript to three other publishers, with one responding that the house would like to publish the book in 1998, subject to receiving some funding from the Canada Council. After holding on to the stories for nine months, the publisher informed Lewis that they could not publish them in 1998, but did want to consider them for 1999; however, they would understand if she wanted to submit them to another publisher, an action which Lewis took.

In the fall of 1997, Carver was again offered the stories, and this time he accepted them on behalf of Red Deer Press.

Once again, there was a publication delay, for Rick Book's Necking with Louise was being published in 1999, and Red Deer Press decided to bump Graveyard Girl to 2000 to prevent the two books of short stories from competing with each other. In retrospect,

Lewis recognizes the publication delay actually helped the stories, for it gave her additional rewrite time and also allowed the final story to take place on the day of Prince Edward's and Sophie RhysJones's wedding, an event which would not yet have occurred had the original publication date been maintained.

The possibility of another collection of stories about these characters from the community of Lee, Ontario, exists, for Lewis knows what will happen to all the characters in *Graveyard Girl* and says she could write another book about them. While Lewis would love to do more, she has decided to wait and see how the first collection is received before proceeding. The collection has received positive critical response and, in 2001, "Revelations" was the recipient of the Vicky Metcalf Short Story Award presented by the Canadian Authors Association.



## Setting

In the main, the twelve stories of *Graveyard Girl* take place in the fictional town of Lee, which is based on Lewis's home community of Uxbridge, Ontario, a place of some 8,000 people. For the book launch of *Graveyard Girl* in Uxbridge, Lewis created a car rally which took participants to some of the places in Uxbridge which were fictionally recreated in the stories. A copy of that map can be found in the Lewis "Profile" on the CM: Canadian Review of Materials Web site: [www.umanitoba.ca/cm/](http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/) As in many communities, the local high school in *Graveyard Girl* provides the principal social setting for its students, and, by and large, the social hierarchy created within its walls extends into the after-school settings. Since the stories in *Graveyard Girl* are essentially those about characters in which the players are confronted by a situation which provides them with an opportunity to modify their previous way of behaving, setting plays a lesser role. However, there are a few notable exceptions in which setting impacts both event and character. In both "Revelations" and "Loose Chippings," the main characters, Mandy and Frances, find themselves outside Lee's boundaries, both geographically and psychologically speaking. In the former, Mandy is traveling with her pastor father to a family reunion at Dorey Lake, and this long trip in the car, the first Mandy has taken since her mother's death, provides Mandy with an opportunity initially for reflection and then for confession. Frances, in "Loose Chippings," is also travelling with her father, but they are in Ireland, and the continued and enforced closeness compels them to confront the issues which have been dividing them.

Setting is also a significant aspect of the book's title story which concludes *Graveyard Girl*. The Lee Cemetery is where Ginger, now in her mid-thirties, went during her adolescent years to escape the crowded house in which she lived, the one that reeked of cat pee and the sour, booze breath of Albert, her foster father whose hands wandered too freely. Just down the road, the graveyard provided Ginger with a place of quiet refuge. However, when Ginger tried to share this special place with Derek Papp, the local hockey star and her first love, he did not understand the emotional meaning of Ginger's gift. Instead, he called her "Weirdo" and abandoned her for the promiscuous Molly Freestone. A previously chaste Ginger then decided to match Derek conquest for conquest, and she took each guy to the cemetery and her special spot—the trees. She continued this practice until she accidentally overheard two guys laughing and talking at the water fountain at school: "... with the Graveyard Girl."

" No way! He did her, too?"

After hearing her nickname and understanding only too well its crude, sleazy connotations, Ginger reclaimed the graveyard for its original purpose, her private place of refuge. On June 19, 1999, she returns to the graveyard after seeing a newspaper article about Derek's marriage. There, in an act which Ginger hopes will bring closure to that phase of her life, she buries the newspaper clipping about Derek, the promise ring he had given her eighteen years before, plus the school yearbook page containing the mock royal wedding photo that she had taken and which includes Derek as Prince Charles.

Graveyard Girl utilizes three distinct time frames. Sandwiched between two stories occurring on June 19, 1999, are two groupings of five stories. The first quintet takes place in 1983 and focuses on the adolescents who played adult roles in their high school's recreation of the royal wedding, while the other five stories are set in 1993 and feature adolescents who, in 1982, were preschoolers who performed as page boys and flower girls in the high school production.





## Social Sensitivity

Even a superficial glance at the stories in *Graveyard Girl* would confirm that they contain plenty of potentially objectionable subjects, such as premarital pregnancy, abortion, homosexuality, promiscuity, loss of religious faith, physical and sexual child abuse, sibling rivalry, plus alcohol and other drugs. However, before people pass judgement on the appropriateness of these topics, they must examine them within their context. A careful reading reveals that Lewis approaches these topics sensitively and explores their wider implications, especially as they apply to the lives of adolescents.

For example, Naylor Whitehead, the narrator of "The Puzzle," introduces the topic of premarital pregnancy when he mentions that Jewel Jackman, the girl he has had a crush on since kindergarten, has announced in class "that the rumors are true—she's pregnant and getting married to Jake." In the next story, "Tango," readers encounter the subject of abortion as they meet Jewel, who has now given birth to her child. She, Jake, and their baby, Belle, are living temporarily with Jewel's parents while Jake is refurbishing a rental property. Jewel's mother is most angry. As Jewel says, "Mom looks like she's permanently wounded, as if my getting pregnant was something I did on purpose to bug her." Readers learn that when Jewel's mother married she was already pregnant with Jewel, and during a dream, Jewel recalls a conversation in which she points out that very fact to her mother and receives the sharp retort: "'I didn't have a choice, Jewel!' she spits. 'You do.'"

Jewel's response to the idea of abortion is clear. "I used to be pro-choice. I guess I still am—for other people. But for me, the minute I found out I was pregnant, there was only one choice. Life." Later, when her mother tells Jewel that she is too young to start a family and will have to give up any plans for college, Jewel replies: "I told her that they'd always been more her plans than mine, that all I really wanted to do was be with kids. And not as an educator, a school principal or a curriculum maker. I want to be a mom. A wonderful, old fashioned, stay-at-home, bakecookies, and play-in-the-sandbox mom.

Call me a throwback, a dinosaur, a disgrace to my feminist foremothers, but it's what I want.

Of course, what remains unspoken between mother and daughter is Jewel's horrific but unasked question: "If Mom could do it all over again, I wonder what choice would she have made? What would she have done with the fetus that was me?" The story's conclusion affirms that Jewel's mother would likely have made the same decision.

## Literary Qualities

Reflecting on the linked structure of *Graveyard Girl*, Lewis, recalls that she took an English course in the final for her Arts degree that focused on linked collections. It is memories from this course, she maintains, that first got her thinking about linked collections. However, initially, the stories were not connected by the school's re-creation of the royal wedding. Instead, as originally written, the stories were linked geographically, with most of them set in or around the fictional town of Lee. Again, looking back, Lewis now believes that the idea of using a major school project as the unifying element was derived from her observing her sister, a teacher-librarian, who once organized a school-wide project about the Titanic. The idea of the royal wedding came when Lewis sat down to rewrite and link the stories more closely.

In terms of the collection's structure, the delay in the book's publication date provided Lewis with a bonus, that being the engagement announcement of Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones. Lewis realized that this next royal wedding helped the stories in *Graveyard Girl* come full circle, with the collection beginning in 1983 with the restaging of the royal wedding, a marriage that everybody thought was going to be perfect but which went sour, and then ending in 1999 with another royal wedding.

Although the re-creation of "The Wedding of the Century" by the graduating class of 1983 is the book's principal linking element, Lewis uses time as a secondary organizing structure, with ten of the collection's twelve stories being divided into two time periods a decade apart. The period grouping came about when Lewis was writing the "K is for Kristmas" story, and she recognized that its time setting had to be more recent than 1983 since the story's Kernohan family had a personal computer.

Then, in looking at the wedding pictures, Lewis realized the further possibilities that would result from creating two different time groups. In one, she could have some of the characters in their teens when the recreation event took place and could then examine how that event affected them in the near future. The other time group could contain the wedding re-creation's preschoolers who are a decade older and for whom the event is a part of their past which still resonates in their lives.

While each of the stories is told in the first person, two consecutive stories in the book's 1993 section, "Loose Chippings" and "The Hag Stone," use different literary formats. The former consists of seven letters that Frances Reid writes to her boyfriend, David MacDuff, back in Lee while she is visiting Ireland with her father and younger half sister David's correspondence with Frances takes the form of nineteen free verse poems in which he expresses his affection for her and, more significantly, his growing dread about the impending visit of his paternal grandfather from Scotland. Lewis experienced difficulties in finding David's voice which included numerous false starts. Because she knew the character, David, so thoroughly, Lewis recognized he was not the kind of person to use a lot of words. As a way of finding David's voice, Lewis would drive up and down the Brookdale Road in Uxbridge, the book's Leebrooke Road, until, as she said, "One day it just clicked.



David thinks in short, crystalline thoughts, like poems or lyrics, so that's how he should tell his story."

Rich in character and theme, the ten central stories in *Graveyard Girl* can be read separately, for each in its own way can stand alone. However, read together, they create an experience that is greater than just the sum of the parts. Because of its unusual linking and tri-temporal structure, *Graveyard Girl* is more challenging than the typical adolescents' book, but the rewards to be acquired from its reading are commensurate to the challenge.



## Themes and Characters

Each story in *Graveyard Girl* has its own theme, but virtually all of them focus on some aspect of one of the developmental tasks that adolescents encounter as they live through their teen years. Some of the stories, for example, deal with adolescents' developing new relationships with their parents, but their achieving those new relationships is shown to be complicated by factors such as parental divorce, remarriage, or abuse. Themes are repeated in *Graveyard Girl* so that readers are exposed to many aspects of the same theme. First love, for instance, can be found in many stories, including "You Never Knew," "Rabbits," "Bodies," and "K is for Kristmas."

A unifying theme for the entire collection would have to be the idea of resolution because, at the conclusion of the stories, the central characters have achieved some type of resolution regarding their problems. But the term "resolution" should not be confused with the idea of something being fully resolved or completed: ironically, a story's resolution often signals a new beginning. For instance, while Frances Reid in "Loose Chippings" has resolved her communication difficulties with her father via their use of a code phrase to indicate that one of them has introduced touchy subject matter, she must now begin to rebuild her relationship with him, her stepmother, and half sister.

Lewis has observed that, unlike some other writers, she does not usually begin with character and then have her stories grow from there. "With me, it's usually an odd thing, an image or phrase or actual event that simmers in the back of my mind and some day becomes a story." As a concrete example, Lewis cited her experience as a sixteen year old who, with three friends, traveled from Uxbridge to Toronto, stayed at the Sheraton Hotel, and quite unexpectedly ended up in front of the Brass Rail, a strip club. "Sweet shy little Wendy went in, and I knew that some day I would have to put that experience in a story." From that incident, Lewis developed "Revelations," in which her fictional character, Mandy Solesby, joins her friends in entering a strip club.

An unusual aspect of *Graveyard Girl* is that the narrator of the opening and closing pieces is a woman in her thirties. Lewis acknowledges that the commonly accepted wisdom is that books for young people should have characters the same age as, or slightly older than, the intended readers.

While Lewis is prepared to accept that statement as valid, she does not believe that young people should be excluded from reading about older people if the stories' themes and the adult characters' thoughts are of interest to them. Using her own experience during adolescence as evidence to support this position, Lewis recalls that, when she was about twelve and thirteen, she was not looking for books about kids her own age, but was reading Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens, and Charlotte Bronte. She also pointed out that, "although Ginger's older, her thoughts, at least on this day, are very much back in the past when she was a teenager."

The remaining ten stories are each told by a different individual, three females and two males in each of the two sections. Lewis recognized that in the first drafts of the



Graveyard Girl stories, the characters' voices sounded too similar or too much like her own. She attributed this to writing the stories under a self-imposed time constraint, one she created by believing that she must have a book-length manuscript ready for Carver's advanced writing class. Being able to rewrite the stories over time then proGraveyard Girl 203 vided Lewis with opportunities to learn more about the characters and how each speaks. Consequently, each of the completed stories presents a most distinctive voice, one which reveals and reinforces that story's principal character. For example, Mandy Solesby, a minister's daughter in "Revelations," usually perceives things in biblical terms. Therefore, when innocent Mandy describes her older, more worldly cousin, Eden, she sees her as "an earthly paradise, with a serpent wrapped around its heart."

On the other hand, in "Rabbits," Derek Papp, the party-going jock and adolescent womanizer, thinks in sports metaphors.

After Derek fantasizes about giving his next intended conquest, Laura, "a tour of my waterbed," he admonishes himself: "I know I've got to check those thoughts (stuff them in the penalty box, two minutes for lusting!)"

because coming on strong and fast works on the ice, but it doesn't work on certain girls."

As previously noted, Lewis's intention in writing Graveyard Girl was to create a snapshot of young people in a small town.

Each story then acts as a portrait of a particular individual at a specific point in time.

However, Lewis frequently includes one or more of the stories' central characters as minor players in another individual's story, thereby allowing readers to see these adolescents from someone else's perspective.

For instance, "You Never Knew" focuses on Tish and her relationship with Alex. The pair's friendship began in grade two when they both were newcomers to their school.

By high school, Tish realizes that the feelings she has for Alex extend well beyond friendship. When during a practice kissing session Alex is confronted by the depth of Tish's emotions, the girls' relationship is forever changed. Following Alex's accidental death, readers encounter two other "lead" characters at the funeral. Tish sits in the back row next to Ginger Byam, from the book's opening and closing stories, and comments, "I wondered what she was doing here. She was a loner and had never been Alex's friend as far as I knew." Mandy Solesby, whom readers previously met in "Revelations," had an active role in the memorial service. Socially isolated by being a preacher's kid, Mandy found acceptance in high school by becoming a member of the cheerleader squad, an activity which brought her into contact with Alex. Again, Tish provides her perspective on a schoolmate.



Then we stopped talking because Mandy Solesby had stood up at the front. I remembered that she was the minister's daughter. I'd always thought of her as just one of the cheerleaders in a tight sweater and short skirt, giggling about nothing.

But this was a Mandy I'd never seen in school. She read a poem about friendship and talked about what Alex's friendship had meant to her.

Because schools usually contain a variety of friendship groups whose boundaries are largely closed, it is not surprising that Tish, herself a social isolate because of her sexual orientation, would have limited perspectives of others such as Ginger and Mandy. Interestingly, in the final story, "Graveyard Girl," readers learn that Tish and Ginger later became friends: "That was Tish. First real girl friend I ever had... .

People said she was a dyke. Drew some stares when we started hanging out... .

After what I heard at the water fountain, Tish was the only person I took to the cemetery."



## Topics for Discussion

1. Very often, when we first meet someone, the initial impressions people make last a long time. In the "Prologue," Ginger provides brief comments about a number of the participants in the recreation of the Marriage of the Century. How do your first impressions of these characters, as influenced by Ginger's comments, match the later impressions you gain from reading their individual stories? Which characters is Ginger "on target" with, and about which ones is she misleading you?
2. Not only do people make first impressions, but so do books. Their covers and titles can either attract or repel potential readers. What is your first reaction to the cover of *Graveyard Girl* and to its title? What do you think the title means? What is your response when you find out the title's actual meaning?
3. Each of the stories in *Graveyard Girl* has a title followed by the name of the story's central character. One of the qualities of these titles is that they often present a variety of meanings. For example, consider the many types of revelations that occur in "Revelations." Explore the various meanings in the book's other story titles.
4. In "Bodies," Anna says, "I felt different talking to Sam now, as if we'd crossed a line and couldn't go back." Anna's statement could have easily been made by several other characters in *Graveyard Girl*. Who else could have made this comment, and what lines did they cross?
5. When Frances in "Loose Chippings" is being teased by her father about the lists she is keeping in her travel journal, she says sharply: "I don't write fiction, Dad, ... Fiction is for liars." Do you agree with Frances's assessment that fiction is lies, or can truth be told in fiction?
6. David, in his poem "Masks," says: "I've learned to be / someone I'm not / by pulling on an invisible costume / and zipping it tight." Who else in *Graveyard Girl* could be said to be wearing a costume or mask? What costumes or masks are they wearing? Who are they really?
7. Lewis has said that most of the stories in *Graveyard Girl* originally had a supernatural element; however, when another Canadian author, Sarah Ellis, published a collection of supernatural stories, *Back of Beyond*, Lewis decided to downplay the mystical content. Which stories still contain a supernatural element?
8. Other than the obvious example of "The Puzzle," could other stories in *Graveyard Girl* be considered to contain a koan, something Naylor defined as "a riddle that forces you to throw out logic and think with your intuition"?
9. In "Tango," Jewel observes, "That's the nice things about dreams. You can do things in them that you can't do in real life." All of the stories' lead characters could probably



make the same statement. What are their dreams? Who achieves their dreams, and who does not?

10. In the story "Loose Chippings," Frances and her father seem to be unable to be around each other for any length of time without one of them saying something which causes the other to react angrily. Finally, Frances's father suggests, "I thought if we had a code word, something we could say when one of us starts pushing the other's mad buttons, ... we could solve the problem before we get too mad." They do decide on "Slow, please, loose chippings" as their code phrase. However, they are not the only pair in Graveyard Girl who Graveyard Girl 207 are in need of a code word or phrase.

What other pairs would benefit from such a code, and what could their code words be?

11. The high school's re-creation of the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana is a theme throughout Graveyard Girl.

However, Lewis makes other subtle references to royalty. For example, in "Rosetta Stone," Rosetta Teodosovich lives in the Buckingham Suites Nursing Home.

Of course, Buckingham Palace is one of the residences of the British royal family. Review each of the stories in Graveyard Girl with an eye to locating indirect "royal" allusions. Do these other allusions to royalty add meaning to the stories? If so, what meaning do you see suggested in them?

12. In a symbolic act at the conclusion of Graveyard Girl, Ginger buries the page from the school yearbook, the clipping from the newspaper, and the promise ring given to her by Derek. In what ways may it be true that Ginger has buried her past? In what ways may it not be true?



# Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. In many of the stories in *Graveyard Girl*, Wendy Lewis uses similes. The Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (on-line version) defines a simile as "a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as (as in cheeks like roses)." Because similes convey meaning, Lewis has some of her characters use similes that are consistent with their personalities. For example, while describing a scene from nature, Mandy Solesby, the daughter of a minister, says, "When I look up, the higher branches [of a willow tree] arch above me like a cathedral." In "Rabbits," hockey-jock and party animal Derek Papp describes a girl's eyes in the following way: "[Laura's] eyes are golden, too. They're usually hiding behind her glasses, but when she took them off the other day to wipe them, wham! It was like falling into a keg of cool amber beer when you're dying of thirst." Find other examples of similes in *Graveyard Girl* that suit the characters who use them, and then rewrite these similes from the perspective of another character.

2. For his English class, Naylor Whitehead, the lead character in the story "The Puzzle," must write a poem, specifically a haiku. Page 30 describes the haiku's form, and on page 46 Naylor's haiku is presented. Compose a haiku that relates to one of the book's other characters.

3. "Loose Chippings" and "The Hag Stone" are complementary stories, for they are communications between Frances Reid and David MacDuff while they are separated during Frances's trip to Ireland.

Frances writes letters while David writes poetry in the form of free verse. Engage in some role reversal, and either transform one of Frances's letters into a poem or transpose one of David's poems into a letter.

4. Angelica, in "K is for Kristmas," wears a T-shirt with the wording, "SMILE if you believe in angels!" Create T-shirt labels or captions for other characters from *Graveyard Girl*, and challenge your classmates to identify their owners.

5. Sometimes portions of other fairy tales can be found within *Graveyard Girl* or the stories' characters could be from fairy tales. For instance, the scene in "Revelations" in which Mandy Solesby is being outfitted by her friends for their night out in Toronto could suggest a scene from *Cinderella*. However, the fact that Mandy "had to wear my own grey shoes," rather than glass slippers, alerts readers to the reality that Mandy won't find her prince, even though the girls spot and pursue "The Man." Which other characters in *Graveyard Girl* could be fairy-tale characters, and to what degree do their stories parallel those told by the fairy tales.

6. Stones are a recurring motif in a number of the stories in *Graveyard Girl*.

Explore how Lewis uses them to develop theme and character.



7. Lewis has said, "When I was doing the rewrites [of the stories in *Graveyard Girl*], I made a big chart of all the characters and how they fit together, who was friends with whom, what year they were born in, and what role they played in the Royal Wedding." Create your own chart to show the relationships.

Indicate what additional information about a character is provided by someone else. For example, in the 1983 story "Tango," readers learn from Jewel that she has a child; however, in "Bodies," Anna, one of the 1993 narrators, adds to what readers know about Jewel when she comments: "One night we were baby-sitting Jewel's own three kids."

8. Gaby, in "K is for Kristmas," observes: "You're lucky, Kevin, to have such a great family." Research the families found in *Graveyard Girl*. Is the Kernohan family the only one which merits the adjective "great"?

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Perrin, Susan. Review of Graveyard Girl.

Globe & Mail (December 16, 2000): D16.

The children's book columnist for a Canadian national newspaper provides a brief review in which she characterizes Lewis's work as "a subtle, sophisticated, beautifully crafted book."



## Related Titles/Adaptations

Two other short story collections which contain high school characters whose lives overlap are *Golden Girl and Other Stories* and *Glory Days and Other Stories* by Gillian Chan.

Each book contains five short stories about students attending a fictional high school, Elmwood High. Like *Graveyard Girl*, each story is told from the perspective of a different adolescent, and, also like Lewis's work, major characters in one story appear as minor characters in other stories.

Individual stories in *Graveyard Girl* may also find complementary stories in other collections. For example, Tish's enormous challenge in revealing her love for Alex in "You Never Knew" is parallel to the situation in "Will You Kiss Me?" by Marnie Woodrow, one of seven true stories in *Nerves out Loud: Critical Moments in the Lives of Seven Teen Girls*, edited by Susan Musgrave.

The literary idea of encountering characters at other points in their lives is found in Chris Crutcher's collection of short stories, *Sports Shorts*, which contains six stories whose principal characters have previously appeared in one of Crutcher's novels and who are now being presented at a time before or after readers first met them in Crutcher's books.

## Related Web Sites

Jenkinson, Dave. "Profile: Wendy Lewis."

CM: Canadian Review of Materials

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/profiles/lewis.html> (November 2, 2001).

Based on an interview conducted in Toronto on November 25, 2000, this lengthy piece offers biographical information about Lewis and explores how she came to write *Graveyard Girl*.

Peters, Joanne. Review of *Graveyard Girl*.

CM: Canadian Review of Materials

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol7/no9/graveyard.html> (January 5, 2001). A brief, positive review.



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## Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

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