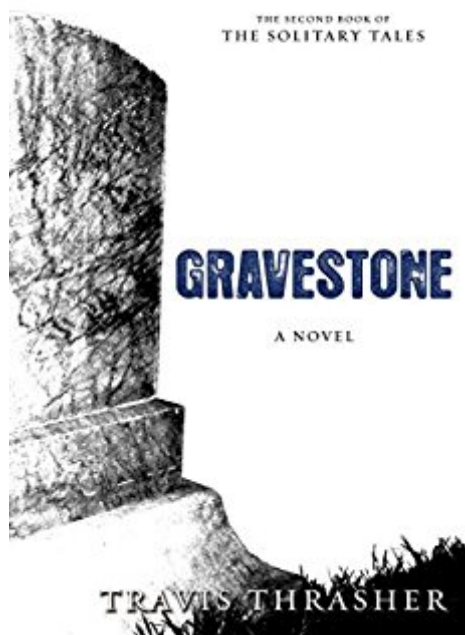


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Gravestone: A Novel (Solitary Tales Series Book 2)



Synopsis

At first, Chris Buckley was simply warned. And watched. But as Chris unravels the haunting riddles of the town of Solitary, he finds that much more than the life of a town is at stake. Whether facing a pastor with a house full of skeletons or a cousin he never knew existed, Chris is forced to choose between light and darkness, life and nightmarish death. Every choice he makes reminds him that the unthinkable has already happened—and if he trusts the wrong person, it may happen again. This second book in the Solitary Tales continues Chris's journey toward finding out who he is and what his own role is in the darkness suffocating his tiny new hometown. Filled with shocking twists, *Gravestone* is a tale of a teenager thrown into a battle over a town, a secret—and ultimately his own soul.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In some ways "Gravestone" is like the TV show *Lost: The Complete Sixth and Final Season* where every character is an enigma and every answer opens up two more questions. At time the TV show and this book can be quite maddening and you get to the point where you want

to yell-out in frustration. The difference is that "Gravestone" is able to keep the loose ends in order allowing it to progress with the tale. "Solitary: A Novel (Solitary Tales Series)" is the first novel in the Solitary series and it has a definite beginning middle and end. However, "Gravestone" makes no apologies as it clearly serves as a bridge between "Solitary" and the next installment "Temptation: A Novel (Solitary Tales Series)". Despite being a virtual literary bridge "Gravestone" is a darker (and ultimately better) than its predecessor. It is tough to explain how a YA Christian mystery novel could have the same level of gloom and dread as "Salem's Lot" and "The Mist (Previously Published as a Novella in 'Skeleton Crew')" but it matches both of them. It really is a surprising novel on many accounts - not only is scary, but it also captures teenage angst and the nature of being an outcast and a rebel. One thing that sets the Solitary apart from other books in the suspense/mystery genre is that for all of its evil and scary imagery it is a very clean novel. While I wouldn't recommend it to kids under 13 (especially if they are nightmare prone) it avoids using profanity or other cheap tricks to try and create an authentic feel. Final Verdict, while "Gravestone" may not be appropriate for every teenager it will likely be popular series if people see it for what it is (a very dark and terrifying story) and not as a YA Christian novel. Trust me - "Gravestone" is a novel that would make Stephen King very proud. 5 Stars

Travis Thrasher has written a number of novels, in a number of genres - romance, suspense, contemporary adult and (borderline) horror. Last year, he started a four-part Young Adult series with "Solitary." The second novel in the series is the recently published "Gravestone," and I devoured it, and on Kindle, no less - the first book I've read on Kindle. Chris Buckley is a high school junior living in Solitary, North Carolina, having moved with his mother from Chicago following his parents' divorce. Solitary is a strange town, and the longer Chris is there, the stranger it gets. In "Solitary," he has what he thinks are the typical new-kid-at-school experiences - the bullies, the looks, the giggles. He meets and falls in love with a girl named Jocelyn. Gradually he comes to understand that nothing is what it seems in Solitary. Nothing. And instead of small-town life, Chris finds evil. And evil finds Jocelyn. In Gravestone, Jocelyn is gone, mourned and missed by Chris. And the evil is growing more intense. His alcoholic mother claims to be threatened - by people in their own house. One of Jocelyn's friends and her family move away, suddenly. Another friend comes to understand what has happened to Jocelyn, and tries to help Chris. And there's the pastor of the town's big church, whose wife isn't seen any more and who - as far as Chris is concerned - radiates evil. It's not all bad. Chris goes to work for an elderly woman named Iris who operates a remote inn. He meets a girl named Kelsey in his art class, whose family is refreshingly normal. And the son of his missing Uncle

Robert finds him, and wants to help him. Part of *Gravestone* is Chris having interior conversations with himself, much like any teenager would, except most teenagers don't have these kinds of experiences to live through. The novel is fast-paced and action-packed, and the story itself is riveting. Best of all, Thrasher is a fine writer. The creepy characters have just enough humanity in them to avoid stereotypes. The good characters have their flaws and failings. And the novel keeps packing a punch and never stops. *Gravestone* may be aimed at the Young Adult market, but this older adult was wowed by a great story.

Last year I received a copy of *Solitary* from a publicist and tossed it in my bag on the way to a family reunion, whereupon I ended up blowing all sorts of people off since I got so engrossed in it. Thanks, Travis Thrasher. This time I have a pile of papers to grade, yet the second installment in the series--*Gravestone*--showed up on my doorstep, and I've done nothing for the past several hours except plow through it. Now my students thank you, Travis Thrasher. *Gravestone* picks up immediately where *Solitary* left off, right after New Year's Eve and all the events that happened. Chris Buckley is alone and terrified and wondering in whom to believe. Oh, and there's a snowstorm, and there's no phone or Internet service. This scene sets things in motion that are an even wilder ride than *Solitary* was. It's hard to tell much about the book without giving any spoilers, but the main thread is Chris trying to find someone, anyone, he can confide in and trust about the increasingly frightening happenings and menacing people in town. In addition to the previous characters, we're introduced to several new people--Kelsey in Chris's art class; Jared, Chris's unknown cousin; and Iris, a mysterious elderly lady who lives on a hill, each of whom provides another piece of the sinister mosaic that is *Solitary*. The increasingly-ominous Pastor Jeremiah Marsh begins to take center stage. How much does Chris's mom know about what's going on? Will Chris ever see his dad again? What about the mysterious church underneath the falls? *Gravestone* has some out-and-out horror moments and so many twists that you're wondering whom you can trust right along with Chris. As well, it examines Chris's faith, or lack of it, in greater detail and shows us yet again that nothing and no one is exactly what it seems. The book leaves us with another shocking, unexpected ending, and we have to wait until June 2012 for the next installment and June 2013 for the final installment. Thanks, Travis Thrasher!

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