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Through the Tempests Dark and Wild: A Story of Mary Shelley, Creator of Frankenstein

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Darrow, Sharon. *Through the Tempests Dark and Wild: A Story of Mary Shelley, Creator of Frankenstein*. Illustrated by Angela Barrett. Candlewick Press, 2002. ISBN 0763608351. \$16.99. 33 pp.

Reviewer: AnnMarie Hamar

Reading Level: Primary; Intermediate;

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Non-fiction; Biographies;

Subject: Authors, English--19th century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft, 1797-1851--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

In an interesting choice for a children's picture book biography, Sharon Darrow explores the life of Mary Shelley, author of the Gothic novel *Frankenstein*. The daughter of a radical British philosopher and a feminist author, Mary's mother died when she was only eleven days old. When her father remarried, Mary's stepmother was determined that Mary would not be exposed to her late mother's shocking way of thinking. The fourteen-year-old girl was sent to Scotland to live with family friends, the Baxters. Darrow incorporates fact and fiction to imagine how the loss of her mother and her life in Scotland helped shape Mary and her writings. Darrow begins with a brief, one-page biography of Mary Shelley and ends with a select biography of works for further reading.

The text is very engaging. There are stories within stories that draw the reader in and keep the reader's attention. Many of Angela Barrett's watercolor illustrations have a Gothic quality to them that nicely complements the text. The text and illustrations manage to combine readability with an air of mystery that seems appropriate to the subject.