

# The gothic setting of frankenstein



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One of the most important aspects of any gothic novel is setting.

Mary Shellys Frankenstein is an innovative and disturbing work of misery, dread, and remorse that exemplifies what a gothic novel should be.? Shelly reveals the story of a mans thirst for knowledge which leads to a monstrous creature that goes against the laws of nature and natural order. Victor Frankenstein, in disgust, abandons his creation who is shunned by all who meet him, yet still feels and wants affection and love.

? The monster then seeks revenge for his life of isolation and misery.? The setting can bring about these feelings of loneliness, sadness, and despair. Shellys writing shows how the dramatic and gothic settings of Frankenstein can create the atmosphere of the novel and can also effect the actions of Frankenstein and his monster as they go on their seemingly endless chase where the hunter becomes the hunted.

Dark and dramatic moments stand out as the most gothic in the novel.? The setting sets the atmosphere and creates the mood.? The dreary night of November where the monster is given life is a perfect example of where Shelly uses gothic elements. Victor recites the following: ??? It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the pains, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated his limbs.??? (43) This scene displays many gothic elements.

The fact that it is in the middle of the night is one prominent element. The rain, which is featured frequently throughout the novel, is another element

that emits a feeling of dread. Also, there were grand scenes; the thunderstorm of the Alps, the valleys of Servox and Chamounix, the glacier, the smoke of rushing avalanches, and on that last journey with Elizabeth which were his last times of happiness.

Shelly can keep the mood and create a mental picture and it is in this way she begins to foreshadow coming danger. An example of this is after Victor is alerted by his father of William's death and is traveling to Geneva, Victor says, "...the darkness and storm increased every minute, and the thunder burst with a terrific crash over my head...

vivid flashes of lightning dazzled my eyes, illuminating the lake, making it appear like a vast sheet of fire; then for an instant everything seemed of a pitchy darkness..."(62). Here, once again, weather is used to set the scene and to give a gothic mood. The thunder is meant to instill a feeling of fear and the intermittent lightning gives a sense of uncertainty from the the bright flashes to complete darkness. Victor also describes the lake as a sheet of fire, and as human beings we have a primitive instinct to associate fire as something that can hurt us.

? The setting, as it can affect the reader, can also greatly impact the actions of characters in the novel .? Frankenstein's creation proclaims that; "...

the desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge.? I have wandered here many days; the caves of ice which I only do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge..."(88).? Here the creature explains how he lives in places where man cannot go because the temperatures and dangers of these settings are too extreme and he wishes

to be isolated and separate from the society that hated him so much. Also the desolate settings that he lives in represents the creatures harsh and dangerous feelings. But near the end, Frankenstein's rage takes him all over the world in an obsessed search for his creation, enduring terrible hardships, which the monster also has endured.

? Frankenstein pursues his creation to the Arctic, revenge being the only thing keeping him alive.? The arctic is a very fitting setting for the pursuit of the monster. It is very cold, desolate, lonely and barren, all things that reflect both the creature and Victor as they both no longer fit in with any part of society.

This cold and loneliness also contributes to to the gothic setting in that the reader can picture themselves in that situation and feel immense fear and dread of what may happen. This is mainly because in the wilderness of the arctic, there is no one to help you. Victor explains his setting and hardship of the arctic when he says: ??? I still pursued my journey to the northward, the snows thickened and the cold increased in a degree almost too severe to support.???(196). And it is this setting that serves only to thicken the strange darkness that surrounds the two outcasts . It seems as if Frankenstein may finally capture his self -created enemy but nature thinks otherwise.

? The monster tempts his creator through this world of ice and the setting becomes a problem as the wind arose and the sea roared. Because of this gothic setting in the Arctic ice , the despair hits both Frankenstein and the reader. Frankenstein, Mary Shelly's dark and disturbing tale, is a great example of the gothic novel and the genre of gothic literature.? With her

writing, Shelly creates a setting that sets a gloomy mood and causes, as well as prevents, actions that create dramatic tension. ? Works Cited Shelley, Mary, and Diane Johnson.

Frankenstein. New York: Bantam, 1981.