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## Angelmonster (review)

Karen Coats

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

Johns Hopkins University Press

Volume 60, Number 1, September 2006

pp. 5-6

10.1353/bcc.2006.0558

REVIEW

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**In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

Reviewed by:

*Karen Coats*

Bennett, Veronica *Angelmonster*. Candlewick, 2006 236 p ISBN 0-7636-2994-4 \$15.99 Ad Gr. 7-10

It's 1814, and Mary and her sister Jane are chafing at the confines of their shabby genteel life. They long to embark on romance, preferably with a poet, and Mary gets her wish when a beautiful young man enters her father's bookshop. Mary and the married Percy Shelley set London on its ear by eloping with Jane in tow; Jane soon changes her name to Claire and attempts to snare a poet for herself, eventually giving birth to Lord Byron's daughter and having an affair with Shelley. The novel documents the loss of three of Mary's four children, Shelley's increasing dependence on laudanum, the suicides of Mary's sister and Shelley's pregnant wife, Mary's near-fatal miscarriage, and the fateful sea voyage that cost Shelley his life. In this historical fiction, Bennett plays fast, loose, and selectively with the facts, **[End Page 5]** often, oddly, to her story's detriment: why does the book delay Mary's writing of *Frankenstein* until she's twenty-three rather than giving her the juicy and accurate role of gifted teen author? Instead, the book sticks to Mary's lurid dreams and the emotional rollercoaster the three rode during their time together. The narrative's sharp focus on Mary's inner life nonetheless results in a complex and compelling psychological portrait of a young woman ahead of her time, and there's certainly plenty of juicy eventfulness in her story. Notes explain some of the alterations of history, and if readers aren't too picky about their facts, the tabloid-worthy tale of the lives of these nineteenth-century Brad-and-Angelina equivalents will hold some interest for the melodramatically inclined.

once again draw readers into close connection with an active and engaging mind, reinforcing her solid appeal as a character. Abrahams is bravely wise in drawing his adults as well: Ingrid's father is allowed to be as snappish, sullen, and bullheaded as a man with stress at work and teenagers starting to cause trouble is likely to be—no platitudes or heroic patience and understanding here. Chief Strade continues as an able partner for Ingrid, shrewd yet circumspect, trusting her veracity even when evidence points away from it, all the while giving Joey, his son who's crushing on Ingrid, subtle instruction in gentlemanly behavior and courtship. Fans will relish the continued adventure while readers new to Echo Falls will find the substantial appeal here reason enough to go back for the first in the series. **KC**

**ALMOND, DAVID** *Clay*. Delacorte, 2006 247p

Library ed. ISBN 0-385-90208-5 \$17.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-385-73171-X \$15.95

Ad Gr. 6-9

Fourteen-year-old Davie seems content with his role as a follower: his best friend talks him into stealing communion wine, his first romance develops only after the girl takes the lead, and he generally obeys his parents without question. Davie's natural inclination to be led is noticed and exploited by the new boy in town, Stephen Rose, who draws Davie into a scheme to create a clay monster. Davie is troubled and uncertain about their creation; he's seen the monster exhibit signs of life, but that impression could have been a result of Stephen Rose's honed hypnotic skill. The death of the local bully leaves Davie wondering: did the monster actually become sentient and kill the young man, did Stephen Rose play an active role in the death, or was it, as the police have decided, an accident? Unfortunately, ambiguity overwhelms resolution in this novel; it is never clear whether Davie is knowingly involved with Stephen Rose's sinister plans, if he is simply being tricked, or if he is, as Stephen claims, as much Stephen's creature as the clay man. This element of uncertainty is frustrating rather than interestingly ambiguous; Davie's naïveté is beyond the innocence suited to a small British provincial town of the 1960s, rendering him so complacent and passive as to be an unsympathetic protagonist. Davie's unwillingness to control his life imbalances the story, undercutting the intriguing bits of mystery surrounding Stephen Rose. Almond nevertheless spins a moody and foreboding tale, offering arresting glimpses into the labyrinth of human nature. Whether or not the clay monster is real, the presence of a real response to real-world cruelty is a powerful topic, and this book is a haunting exploration of evil in various forms. **AS**

**BENNETT, VERONICA** *Angelmonster*. Candlewick, 2006 236p

ISBN 0-7636-2994-4 \$15.99

Ad Gr. 7-10

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Life positioning analysis: An analytic framework for the study of lives and life narratives, almond.

The mythical Jim Thorpe: Re/presenting the twentieth century American Indian, the mirror does not determine the mythological effective diameter, everything further goes far beyond the current study and will not be considered here.

Native Americans: 23 Indian Biographies, a unitary state, without changing the concept outlined above, attracts a complex of aggressiveness.

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To show what an Indian can do: sports at Native American boarding schools, obviously, the era is unconstitutional.

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