

Setting Descriptions

Written by the Experts

Frankenstein- The Swiss Alps

The weight upon my spirit was sensibly lightened as I plunged yet deeper in the ravine of Arve. The immense mountains and precipices that overhung me on every side, the sound of the river raging among the rocks, and the dashing of the waterfalls around spoke of a power mighty as Omnipotence—and I ceased to fear or to bend before any being less almighty than that which had created and ruled the elements, here displayed in their most terrific guise. Still, as I ascended higher, the valley assumed a more magnificent and astonishing character. Ruined castles hanging on the precipices of piny mountains, the impetuous Arve, and cottages every here and there peeping forth from among the trees formed a scene of singular beauty. But it was augmented and rendered sublime by the mighty Alps, whose white and shining pyramids and domes towered above all, as belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings.

Waking the Moon by Elizabeth Hand

Outside, the sun had dipped below the Shrine. It was my first night in the city; my first night away from home. The sky was glorious, indigo and violet and gold, and there was a warmth and sweetness to the air that I could taste in the back of my throat, burnt honey and car exhaust, and the damp promise of a thunderstorm charging it all. I walked slowly across the Mall, alone save for one or two hooded figures I glimpsed pacing the chestnut allées beneath the Shrine's eastern tower. I finally halted atop a small hillock where a single oak sent shadows rippling across the grass. From the Shrine's bell tower came the first deep tones of the carillon calling the hour. I turned, and saw in the distance the domes and columns of the Capitol glimmering in the twilight, bone-colored, ghostly; and behind it still more ghostly buildings, their columned porticoes and marble arches all seeming to melt into the haze of green and violet darkness that descended upon them like sleep. City of Trees, someone had named it long ago; and as I gazed upon the far-off buildings and green-girt streets my heart gave a sudden and unexpected heave, as though someone nudged it.