

ALMOST INVINCIBLE

A biographical novel of Mary Shelley

By Suzanne Burdon

Published by Criteria Publishing, 2 October, £9.99, Pb

'Don't leave me alone with her. She's been the bane of my life since I was three years old!'

These words, spoken by Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*, about her step-sister, Claire, so intrigued writer, Suzanne Burdon, that she felt compelled to learn more about Mary's life. What had happened to make her so worried about Claire's visit? What had caused such vehemence?

In her debut novel **ALMOST INVINCIBLE** Burdon examines the relationship between Mary Shelley and her step-sister, and how it impacted on her romance with the poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Based on extensive research, and set around actual events, the book is a fictional account of her life beginning when Mary was sixteen. That was the year she began her scandalous relationship with Shelley despite him being already married. When Mary eloped with her lover to France they took Claire with them, even though the two women were not good friends, and Claire was in love with Shelley, too.

Using letters and diaries from the time, and her own imagination and conjectures, Burdon writes about the real Mary, a headstrong, clever, but vulnerable woman, who fell madly in love with the aristocratic and charismatic, Shelley, who she eventually married. Their unconventional relationship led them to move many times - to Italy, Switzerland, Bath and Marlow in Buckinghamshire - escaping creditors, family censorship and ill health. Throughout much of this time, Claire was there, a damaging and unhelpful influence in their already complicated lives.

In a gripping story that contains more scandals, deaths, loves and losses, than many a modern soap opera, we follow Mary's life from a teenager in London to a wife and mother, mourning the loss of three young children, and forced to live as a social outcast. Sustained by her writing, and Shelley's unwavering belief in her talent, – as she believed in his – **ALMOST INVINCIBLE** is the tale of an extraordinary young woman who defied the times to follow her heart, and fulfil her ambitions as a writer.

About the author: *Suzanne Burdon is a social researcher and author. Born in London, she now lives in Sydney. She is available for interview and to write articles.*

For a review copy and further information please contact Charlotte Allen on 07595 881931, charlottekallen@me.com, or Jane Beaton at jane@kewpublicity.co.uk, 07802 433471.

