

HORROR
a story meant to
frighten you



FRANKENST



FRANKENSTEIN

MARY SHELLEY'S CLASSIC TALE OF MURDER AND MONSTERS

ILLUSTRATION BY RICARDO TERCIO

TURN THE PAGE to perform this creepy play—if you dare!



CHARACTERS

***NARRATORS 1, 2, & 3** (N1, N2, & N3)

SAILORS 1, 2, & 3

CAPTAIN ROBERT WALTON, an explorer

***VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN**, a young scientist

***HENRY CLERVAL**, Victor's best friend

FATHER, Victor's father

ELIZABETH, Victor's fiancée

***CREATURE**, Frankenstein's monster

MR. DE LACEY, an old blind man

AGATHA, De Lacey's adult daughter

FELIX, De Lacey's adult son

**Starred characters are major roles.*

CAPTAIN: What is your name, sir?

VICTOR (*mumbling*): Dr. Victor Frankenstein.

CAPTAIN: We must get him warm.

N1: Later, the Captain sits in a chair beside Victor's bed.

CAPTAIN: What happened to you?

VICTOR (*weakly*): I will tell you. Then perhaps you can stop the terrible evil I have unleashed on the world.

N2: Victor begins a most remarkable story . . .

SCENE 2

In a messy laboratory in Ingolstadt, Germany

N3: Victor Frankenstein, 21, is a scientist. Ever since his mother died, he has been obsessed with uncovering the mysteries of life and death.

N1: Body parts—feet, legs, heads, hands, arms—are piled up around his laboratory.

N2: As a storm rages outside, Victor hovers over a large table. On it is the body of a man—a *huge* man—that Victor has constructed from pieces of various corpses.

VICTOR (*whispering*): At last, I have found a way to **reanimate** lifeless matter.

N3: Rain lashes against the window.

VICTOR (*louder*): I will stop illness.

N1: Wind rattles the windows.

VICTOR (*even louder*): I will reverse aging!

N2: Lightning flashes.

VICTOR (*very loud*): I will bring back the dead!

N3: A clap of thunder shakes the room.

VICTOR (*shouting*): A new species will bless ME as its creator!

N1: Victor watches the creature on the table open its dull yellow eyes. Victor is confused.

VICTOR: You were supposed to be beautiful . . .

N2: Two more flashes of lightning!

VICTOR: . . . but . . . you are . . . hideous!

N3: Another clap of thunder!

VICTOR: What have I done?

N1: Victor flees into the night.

N2: A few hours later, in the early morning, a **distraught** Victor runs into his childhood friend Henry Clerval.

HENRY: Victor? How wonderful to see you!

VICTOR: Henry! Oh, Henry! Oh, the eyes! The eyes!



AS YOU READ, THINK ABOUT:

Who is responsible for the creature's terrible crimes?

SCENE 1

On the deck of a ship, far out in the Arctic Ocean

N1: Captain Robert Walton and his crew are on a dangerous voyage. They are searching for a passage to the North Pole.

SAILOR 1: We're stuck in the ice, Captain!

SAILOR 2: If we don't break through soon, we will run out of supplies.

SAILOR 3: We could abandon ship and walk across the ice to land.

CAPTAIN WALTON: Too dangerous—the nearest land is hundreds of miles away.

SAILOR 1: Look! What is that out on the ice?

SAILOR 2: It's a dogsled.

SAILOR 3 (*looking through a spyglass*): The driver is enormous. He must be 8 feet tall!

N2: The crew watches, **perplexed**, as the sled disappears over the horizon.

SAILOR 1: Captain, another sled!

CAPTAIN: Where?

SAILOR 2: Stranded on that piece of ice, just ahead.

CAPTAIN: The driver is unconscious. Quick! Pull him up!

N3: The sailors drag the man onto the ship.

SAILOR 3: He looks awful. He's not going to make it.



Mary Shelley started writing *Frankenstein* in 1816, when she was just 18. She and her friends were having a contest to see who could come up with the creepiest story. (Mary won.)

THE WORLD OF FRANKENSTEIN

HENRY: Victor, what is wrong? You are so pale and thin.

VICTOR: It . . . it is nothing. Oh, but you cannot imagine how happy I am to see you.

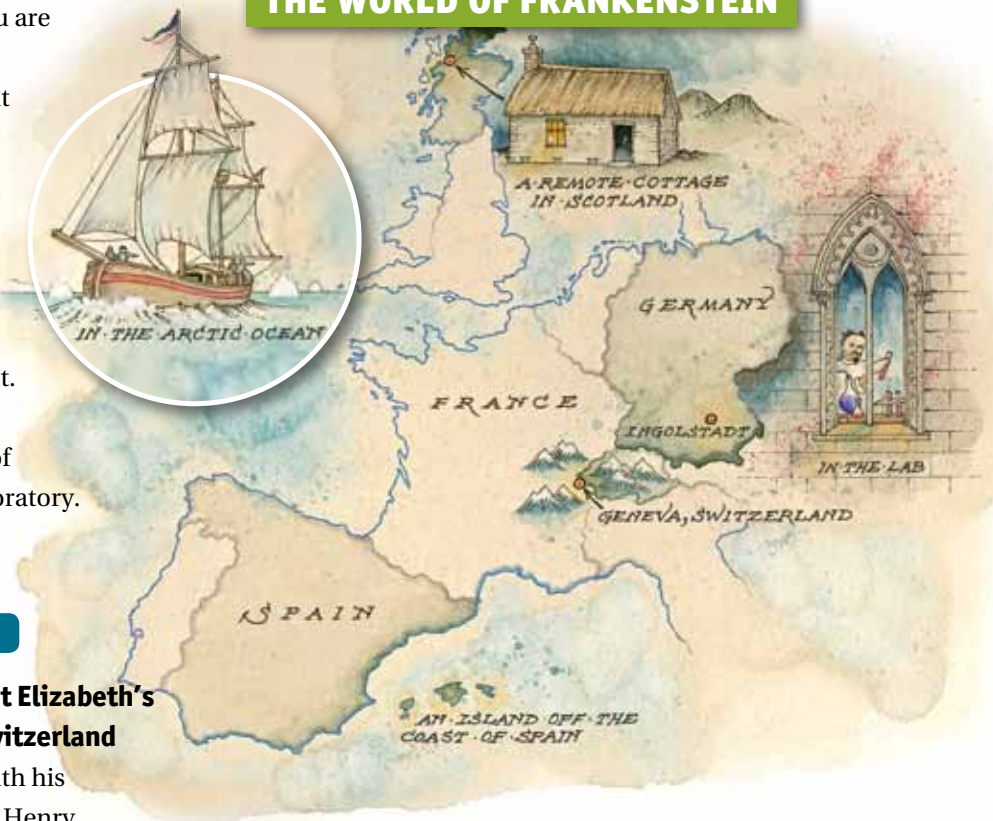
HENRY: You look as if you haven't slept in days.

VICTOR: I have been caught up in my work. . . .

HENRY: Let's go to your apartment.

N3: When they arrive, Victor asks Henry to wait outside while, full of dread, he goes upstairs to his laboratory.

VICTOR (to himself, relieved): The creature is gone!



SCENE 3

Several months later, at Elizabeth's house in Geneva, Switzerland

N1: In a small parlor, Victor sits with his fiancée, Elizabeth; his father; and Henry.

FATHER: Victor, I have called you back from Ingolstadt because I have devastating news. Your little brother, William . . .

N2: Tears stream down Father's face.

ELIZABETH (taking Father's hand): William has been murdered.

HENRY: No!

VICTOR: What? How? When?

ELIZABETH: He disappeared one evening. When we found him, he was dead. He'd been strangled.

HENRY: Who is responsible for this tragedy?

FATHER: The court says it was Justine, the nanny. Little William's chain was found in her pocket.

ELIZABETH: I don't believe she could have done this.

HENRY: Where is she now?

FATHER: She was sentenced to death and executed. But it can't be true. This was the work of a monster.

N3: A terrible thought occurs to Victor.

VICTOR (quietly): A monster. . . .

ELIZABETH: Yes. And Justine was no monster.

VICTOR: It's my fault.

HENRY: Victor, it is not your fault.

VICTOR: It's . . . the dull yellow eyes. . . .

ELIZABETH: The what?

HENRY: The poor man has been driven mad with grief.

VICTOR (to himself): Am I responsible for the deaths of two innocent people?

SCENE 4

In the mountains outside Geneva

N1: Victor is hiking alone, muttering to himself.

VICTOR: My fault. My fault. Oh. Oh—

N2: Just then, Victor spies the creature approaching at superhuman speed.

VICTOR: Be gone, vile insect! Or stay so I can kill you!

CREATURE: I expected this reaction. All humans hate the wretched, and I am more miserable than any living thing. But how can you, my creator, hate me?

The creature has appeared in countless films. He is often portrayed as green with bolts on his neck—though Mary Shelley never described him that way.



VICTOR: I never should have created you.

CREATURE: You, who should have nurtured me, called me hideous and abandoned me. I was kind and good; only misery made me a **fiend**. Please, listen to my tale before you judge me.

N3: The creature begins his story . . .

SCENE 5

In the hills of Ingolstadt, soon after Victor abandoned the creature

N1: The creature sits outside the window of a cottage, watching the family that lives there: an old blind man named Mr. De Lacey and his children, Agatha and Felix.

AGATHA: Is that fish I smell, Felix?

FELIX: It is, Agatha. My specialty, for Father's birthday.

CREATURE (*struggling*): Speh-shuhlll-tee.

DE LACEY: It smells delicious.

CREATURE: Dee-lish-ooooo.

N2: Day after day, the creature secretly observes the De Laceys. He learns to speak by listening to them. Over time, he comes to view them as his own family.

N3: One day, when Mr. De Lacey is home alone, the creature knocks on their door.

CREATURE (*to himself*): Will he run from me in terror as everyone else has always done?

DE LACEY: Who is there?

CREATURE: A traveler in want of rest.

DE LACEY: Please, come in and sit by the fire. Where are you heading?

CREATURE: I am on my way to visit friends, but they've never met me in person. I am nervous. If they reject me, I will be an outcast forever.

DE LACEY: Most people are friendly—unless they are blinded by prejudice.

N1: Just then, Felix and Agatha walk in.

AGATHA: Aaaaagghhh!

FELIX: Get away from my father, you monster!

CREATURE: I know now that there is no hope for me among humans!

N2: The creature flees.

The famous comic book superhero the Hulk was inspired by Frankenstein's monster. Can you see the similarities?



SCENE 6

Back in the mountains outside Geneva

N3: Finishing his story, the creature makes a promise.

CREATURE: Be kind to me now, Dr. Frankenstein, and I will once again be virtuous.

VICTOR: But why did you kill my brother?

CREATURE: I didn't mean to. I thought he might be my friend because he was too young to have prejudices. When he called me an ogre, I got angry and . . .

VICTOR: What do you want from me?

CREATURE: I want you to make me a companion—someone like me.

VICTOR: I will not bring more evil into the world.

CREATURE: I am evil because there's no love in my life.

N1: Victor softens.

VICTOR: All right. I'll do this if you swear that you'll never bother human beings again.

CREATURE: My companion and I will leave the human world forever.

N2: With that, the creature is gone.

SCENE 7

In a remote cottage in Scotland

N3: Victor stands in front of a table. Before him is the almost-finished body of a female creature.

VICTOR: What if the two creatures have children? They could create a whole population of monsters.

N1: Victor looks up and sees the creature in the doorway, a **ghastly** grin on his face.

VICTOR: No! I won't do it!

N2: Victor rips the female to pieces. The creature howls in agony.

CREATURE: How dare you!

VICTOR: I will never create another fiend like you!

CREATURE: You are my creator, but I am your master. And I can make it so that you hate the light of day!

VICTOR: Do not poison the air with your evil words. Leave, or kill me. I don't care anymore!

CREATURE: I will not do you the favor of killing you now. But beware: I will

have my revenge.

N3: A few days later, Victor learns that Henry Clerval has been murdered.

SCENE 8

In a house on an island off the coast of Spain

N1: A few months have passed. Victor is sitting with Elizabeth. They have just been married.

ELIZABETH: It is terrible to see you suffer.

VICTOR: I am sorry. It is a joyous day.

ELIZABETH: We will never forget Henry, my dear, but do try to be happy on our wedding day.

N2: There is a rustling outside.

VICTOR: Stay here. I . . . I need a breath of fresh air.

N3: Victor grabs a pistol and a sword and goes outside.

VICTOR (into the darkness): I know you are here, you monster.

ELIZABETH: Ahhhhhhhh!

VICTOR: Elizabeth!

N1: Victor races back inside, but he is too late. Elizabeth has been murdered.



GREEK MYTH

A Horrifying Punishment!

The full name of Mary Shelley's story is *Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus*. Prometheus is a character from Greek mythology who created humankind from clay.

Then he stole fire from the gods and gave it to humanity

so we could make progress and start a civilization. The gods didn't think we puny humans deserved that power. So they punished Prometheus by tying him to a rock. Every day, an eagle pecked out his liver. Every night, his liver grew back so it could be eaten again the next day—and the next, and the next, forever and ever. **Why do you think Shelley chose "Prometheus" as part of the title? How are Prometheus and Dr. Frankenstein similar?**

SCENE 9

Back on Captain Walton's ship

N2: The Captain has listened intently to all that Victor has told him.

CAPTAIN: So the creature murdered Elizabeth too? How horrific.

VICTOR: Yes. I've been chasing it ever since.

N3: A **spasm** of coughing racks Victor's body.

CAPTAIN: Rest easy, friend.

VICTOR: I am dying. I will not be able to carry out my duty, to destroy the monster I created. If you ever see the creature, you must kill it, Captain. You must!

N1: Victor coughs and sputters . . . and dies.

N2: Just then, the Captain looks up and sees the creature standing in the corner of the room, in the shadows.

CREATURE: I came to beg his forgiveness. I killed everyone he ever loved and caused him terrible suffering. I hated him, but not as much as I hate myself. All I ever wanted was love—but it is true that I am a **wretch**. All that is left for me is death.

N3: The creature leaps from the cabin window onto a raft of ice. He is soon carried away by the waves and lost in the darkness of the sea. ●

CONTEST

The Real Monster There's no doubt that Dr. Frankenstein's creature commits some atrocious acts. But who is really responsible for the creature's crimes? Who is the real monster? Send your answer to both these questions to **FRANKENSTEIN CONTEST**. Five winners will each get a copy of *This Dark Endeavor* by Kenneth Oppel. See page 2 for details.

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