

Frankenstein

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Frankenstein

Scene 0. Prologue.

Mary Shelley's Study, a young writer (21yo).

Mary: *(to the audience)* Geneva, Switzerland. Summer of 1816. Villa Diodati. I found myself among a group of young writers, ready to unleash our imagination and create something special. It was known as "the year without a summer" due to the eruption of Mount Tambora, which created massive clouds that brought cold weather for months. One night, a terrible storm shook the sky and forced us to stay indoors. Since we couldn't go outside and walk by Lake Geneva, my friend Lord Byron proposed a game:

"Each of you will write a horror story. The darkest and creepiest you can imagine. The scariest one will win."

I spent several nights thinking about that story, inspired by the thunder and lightning of the storm. I explored the human soul through the mysteries of science, the reanimation of dead bodies and the return to life. Most importantly, I thought about how humans have always wanted to conquer their greatest enemy: death.

What if science could bring us back to life? Would we become Gods, or would we pay for our ambition? I didn't know the answer then, and I still don't know it today. At that time, I was creating a new literary genre: science fiction.

And the novel born on that stormy night in Geneva in 1816 was *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*.

Lightning strikes.

Scene 1 Creation

Through music and lighting effects, we transition to Victor's laboratory. In the centre of the stage, there is a table where a body lies covered by a sheet, surrounded by retrofuturistic devices. Victor looks anxious as he fiddles with levers and buttons.

Victor: Come on, Victor. Don't give up now. You've had many sleepless nights, but this is it. The storm will power my creation. Yes, it's the perfect night. It has to be today. *(looking at the sky)* Wait... Wait... Wait...

Beat. Powerful lightning strikes, and Victor flips a switch at the exact same time.

Victor: Now!

There's a flurry of special effects: lights, turbines, and sparks. Finally, the effects gradually stop. Victor checks the body. Beat. He looks disillusioned.

Victor: It didn't work. I've been trying for years. I've robbed so many graves that I've probably earned a trip to hell. All to challenge the laws of nature. But maybe the Gods are right; maybe I should forget all about this experiment. Maybe I should accept that fate puts us all in our place.

Music starts playing. Underneath the blanket, the body stirs and raises an arm. Victor freaks out.

Victor: What? It's alive... It's alive! IT'S ALIVE!

Fade to black transition.

Mary (VO): Victor's creation finally came to life. Its heart began to beat again. New blood flowed through its veins. Even its brain started to work anew, processing the world around it, though it could not remember the life of its previous owner. At that moment, Victor saw not only life return to that body but also the sensitivity of the human soul—feelings, doubts, and fears.

The same laboratory, though some time has passed. It has been redecorated and now looks more welcoming. The Monster is sitting at the table, and Victor is teaching him how to use cutlery.

Victor: The large one is for meat. No, that one is for fish. Again.

Monster: Father... when can I leave the laboratory?

Victor: You're not ready yet, son.

Monster: I've been locked up here for a long time. You gave me life, but you won't let me live.

Victor: I said no. You have much to learn, and the world isn't ready for someone like you.

Monster: Teach me everything, then. I want to learn. I want to know who I am, who we all are. I want to meet other people. I want to meet the one you call William.

Victor: William is my younger brother, and for now, you cannot meet him.

Monster: But you teach him things...

Victor: If I teach you about life... If I allow you to go into the world and meet more people, will you promise to return?

Monster: What does "promise" mean?

Victor: To promise is to commit to doing something, even if you don't want to. Even if circumstances change.

Monster: Then I promise.

Victor: Very well... We'll do something, then. We'll help you better understand life. *(to the audience)* I need two volunteers.

Audience participation section. Victor picks two volunteers (or more) to help the Monster understand abstract concepts.

Victor: Thank you for your help. We need to explain several concepts in simple terms so my son can understand them. Has anyone here studied philosophy before? How would you define philosophy? Also, do any of you like technology? How would you explain what technology is to a young child? Alright, I need my son to understand the following concepts:

Love

Beauty

Consciousness

Science

Morality

The game involves giving the volunteers cards with these keywords, which they then use to fill in the gaps in sentences that appear onstage.

" _____ is a deep feeling of connection with something or someone."

" _____ is a combination of qualities that pleases the senses or the intellect."

" _____ is the ability to experience thoughts, emotions, and the world around you."

" _____ is the study of phenomena in the world."

"To understand what is right or wrong in a society, we need _____."

Victor: Perfect! You did very well, thank you very much. Let's give them a round of applause. *(they return to the audience)*

Monster: Father, I understand all of that, but there's so much I won't grasp until I experience it myself. Can I go out? It will just be a short walk. I want to see what's out there.

Victor: Alright, son. Remember your promise.

Scene 2: Love + Prometheus + William's Death

Mary (VO): Victor's creature escaped the laboratory. He felt fresh air on his skin, saw the sun and heard the beautiful sounds of nature. That's when he realised there are wonders in the world that can't be explained by books.

But he also realised something else. For the first time in his life, people didn't call him "son". They called him "monster".

William (VO): It's a monster! Monster! Monster!

The Monster reacts with sadness and anger towards the audience, then flees.

The scene changes to a park in the evening light. Victor is dressed elegantly, holding a bouquet of roses. ELIZABETH enters.

Victor: Elizabeth, my dear.

Elizabeth: Victor. I have missed you. Where have you been all this time?

Victor: I'm sorry, Elizabeth. I've been working a lot.

Elizabeth: Yes, you do look tired. You need some rest. No experiment is more important than your health.

Victor: That is very true, Elizabeth. I am so lucky to have you.

Elizabeth: It's more than just tiredness. What's wrong, Victor? Why do you look so worried?

Victor: It's nothing, Elizabeth. I've just learned some things that made me think... Elizabeth, what do you think happens after death?

Elizabeth: Why do you ask? We are young and have our whole lives ahead of us.

Victor: Yes, but... what if I told you that there might be a way to escape death and live forever?

Elizabeth: That is a dangerous idea, Victor.

Victor: Dangerous? Why? Who wouldn't want to live forever?

Elizabeth: Don't you know the myth of Prometheus? Let me tell you about it.

Visual game to explain the myth of Prometheus.

Prometheus was an ancient Greek Titan. He existed before the Olympian gods and he really cared for humanity. Prometheus wanted to steal fire from the gods and give it to humans to help them advance and improve. But fire was a privilege reserved only for the gods. So, they chased Prometheus, captured him, and chained him to a rock. He was condemned to eternal torment. Every day, an eagle ate his liver, and

every night, it grew back so the torture could continue the next day. Since Prometheus was immortal and could not die, he would never be free of this torture.

End of the visual game.

I believe that anyone who tries to challenge the laws of nature will pay a terrible price. Victor, is there something you want to tell me about your experiments? Is everything alright?

Victor: *(beat)* Yes, Elizabeth. Don't worry about it. That was an interesting story. Look, I'm sorry I have been away these past months. You know my love for you hasn't changed since the day we met. If the Gods let me choose my fate, there's something I want to ask you. *(kneeling)* Will you marry me?

Elizabeth: Oh, Victor! Yes, I will! *(they hug and kiss)*

Lights dim, followed by screams and the sounds of a struggle.

Elizabeth: What's happening?

Victor: I don't know. I think someone is being attacked. I can't see anything.

Elizabeth: Oh, Victor. It's a child. A child has been attacked in the park!

Victor: Wait here... *(exits the stage, worried)*

Elizabeth: Victor, be careful. The killer might still be around.

Victor: *(re-enters carrying the body of a child in his arms, which a distinctively coloured, torn piece of clothing)* Elizabeth... It's William. Someone has killed my brother William.

Elizabeth: Oh, Victor.

Sad music.

Mary (VO): Victor had no idea, but the gods had begun to take their revenge. Like Prometheus, he tried to steal their fire, and he would pay a very high price for it. A great tragedy awaited him.

Scene 3 - Second Creation

Time jump. The laboratory is messy. Victor looks hopeless and tormented. Elizabeth enters the scene.

Elizabeth: Victor.

Victor: Elizabeth! What are you doing in my laboratory? It's dangerous here, please leave.

Elizabeth: No! I'm worried, Victor. I haven't seen you since William's funeral.

Victor: I'm still mourning his death. Don't you understand that?

Elizabeth: Of course I understand. But please, let me help you.

Victor: You can't be here. Leave before he comes back... *(beat)*

Elizabeth: Before who comes back? Victor, what have you been doing in your laboratory? What is all this?

Victor: You wouldn't understand. The world isn't ready for him. He's alone. Just like me.

Elizabeth: You're not alone, Victor. I'm with you.

Victor: Please leave.

Elizabeth: I'm not going to abandon you. *(she shows him the ring she's wearing)*

Victor: Please, Elizabeth...

Elizabeth: You have your science and your experiments... and I have *you*. I won't give up on you, just as you don't give up on them. I'm your fiancée, and our love comes before science. Whatever you're doing in this laboratory, I won't let the gods punish you for it.

Elizabeth exits.

Victor: Elizabeth, my dear... She is right. I have lost sight of the reasons that drove me to the creation of my son. He deserves to feel the same kind of love that Elizabeth gives me. I'm going to create a female companion for my son. I need help!

Audience participation section. Victor turns to the audience, preparing to create a second monster, this time a female one, with their assistance. He starts assembling it from various body parts.

Victor: Follow me. Stand right here, next to the organ tank. We are going to create a companion for my son. Do you know the names of different body parts? What is this part called? *(points to a body part)* Good. And this one? Excellent. When I ask for an organ, bring it to me as quickly as you can. Some of the body parts will be very easy to identify, but some might be more challenging. Are you ready?

Victor dresses in a protective medical suit and puts on gloves.

Hígado – liver

Corazón – heart

Riñón – kidney

Pulmones – lungs

Cerebro – brain

Vejiga - bladder

Victor: Perfect. The creation is complete. Thank you very much. Let's give them a big round of applause. *(they return to the audience)* The storm has returned. Tonight, a new soul will come into the world.

Lighting/storm effects, turbines and sparks again.

Victor: Again, she is alive! She is alive!

Victor makes a dramatic exit while the effects are still in full swing. The FEMALE MONSTER rises from the table, disoriented and confused. The original MONSTER enters, and they meet.

Mary (VO): When the two creations met in the laboratory, they instantly understood the purpose of their existence. For the first time in their short lives, they felt a new kind of love and joy. They were happy. But Victor soon realised he wasn't prepared for this. Witnessing their affection for each other filled him with terror at the thought of a world populated by creatures like them. A world populated... by monsters. A few nights later, just as he had given her life, Victor took it away. The fire of the gods burned in his heart...

Victor: No... I can't allow the world to be populated by monst... by them. It's not natural. This has all been a mistake.

Through visual effects, it is conveyed that Victor kills the FEMALE MONSTER.

Mary (VO): At that moment, Victor Frankenstein's monster broke all ties with his creator. They would never see each other as father and son again. They were now enemies at war. And wars always leave many victims...

Scene 4 – Elizabeth's Death

Park. Night. A few days later. Elizabeth is sitting in the spot where the marriage proposal happened. She's writing a letter.

Elizabeth: Dear Victor. I think about you every day. As I told you the night of the storm, I will not give up on you. I know our love is unstoppable. I will get you out of that laboratory, because my love for you hasn't changed since the day we met. Your fiancée, Elizabeth.

The MONSTER enters the scene from the back of the stage and spots ELIZABETH. He is wearing a dark cloak which hides his features.

Monster: Are you Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Who are you?

Monster: Don't worry. I understand this park might seem scary at night, but I'm just a tired old man, weak and frail. And I believe I recognize you. You're Elizabeth Lavenza, aren't you?

Elizabeth: Soon to be Elizabeth Frankenstein, but yes, that's me. Please, sit down if you're tired, old man.

Monster: Who you are, who you will be... That's an intriguing question, isn't it? Have you ever thought about the concept of identity? If all your memories were transferred to another body, another head, would you still be the same Elizabeth? It's not easy to know who we truly are. Some of us get lost along the way.

Elizabeth: You're right. Some do lose their way. But we are capable of incredible things. Some may get lost, but we can help each other find our way back, don't you think?

Monster: We are also capable of terrible things. Sometimes, we become monsters when we are lost. *(looks down at the letter she is writing)* Your handwriting is beautiful. So are your hands. Who is this letter for?

Elizabeth: I am writing to my fiancé, Victor. He... has lost himself in his experiments. But soon he will find his way back to me. I've poured all my feelings into this letter. I'm sure that when he reads it, he will finally listen to me, and we will be together again.

Monster: You have feelings for him.

Elizabeth: Of course, he is my fiancé. And everyone has feelings. Otherwise, we would be monsters.

Monster: And do you think there are monsters with feelings?

Elizabeth: No, I don't think so.

Monster: I disagree. I think there are. And I believe some are born monsters without even knowing it.

Elizabeth: But we are all good on the inside.

Monster: Really?

Elizabeth: I am sure of that. We just need someone to light our way.

Monster: Yes, the light of a fire that guides us. Like the fire that Prometheus stole from the gods...

Elizabeth: *(startles at the name)* Prometheus... Who are you?

Monster: I am the product of a sick mind. My creator was stupid to give me life. Which makes me wonder, Elizabeth Frankenstein... What if you are the creation of a mad God, like me? What if you are also... Frankenstein's monster?

Elizabeth: A monster?

Monster: That's what the children screamed that night, right here. Monster, monster! I just wanted to feel the air on my skin, see the beauty of the world with my own eyes... So, I had to kill them.

Elizabeth: You... killed William! Victor's brother!

Monster: *(beat)* His brother...?

Elizabeth: Go away. Stay away from me. I'll call the police.

Monster: *(removes the cloak)* I am going to turn you into what I was. *(grabs her)*

Elizabeth: My God...

Monster: Your God cannot save you. Nor can mine save me. We are all lost and alone in this world. My father took away the only thing I've ever loved. And now... I will take away what he loves the most.

Elizabeth screams. The MONSTER kills her. Fade to black.

Scene 5 – Monster/Victor Fight + Victor's Escape

Mary (VO): The revenge of the Gods continued, and although Victor did not know it yet, there was little hope left for him. The fire is coming, Victor. The fire of the gods will burn you...

Laboratory. Victor is writing a letter to Elizabeth.

Victor: Dear Elizabeth,
Someone once promised me they would come home. When they broke that promise, the pain was so great that I realised how important it is to be honest. I promise you that we will be together, because you are my fiancée. I will look for you, find you, and finally marry you. Please forgive me for all the times I've been wrong. I have made mistakes, but now I want to make things right. When everything goes back to normal, I will come back for you.

We hear a noise. Victor startles.

Victor: Is someone there?

The MONSTER enters, covered in blood.

Victor: Son... What happened to you? Where have you been?

Monster: Don't call me that. I have no father.

Victor: Why do you say that?

Monster: You took away my love. Why, father?

Victor: Her creation was a mistake. And it was a mistake to teach you about life! You belong in this laboratory, not in the outside world. You're covered in blood. Is it yours?

Monster: If I belong here, why did you give me the ability to understand the world? I wanted to live in it, to experience its wonders. But they called me a monster. A monster!

Victor: Monster? You are not a monster. What have you done, son?

Monster: I am not your son! I am a monster. That's what they called me when they saw me. Look at me. This is not the face of a normal person. That's why I could only love someone like me. But then you... decided to take her away. So, I took your love from you too.

The MONSTER throws Elizabeth's bloodstained letter on the ground. Victor picks it up, stunned.

Monster: Elizabeth is dead. How does it feel, huh? I hope you feel the same way I felt when you killed my love!

Victor: I didn't create you to create life. I am the creator!

Monster: Don't you have a creator too?

Victor: Of course! But I am human!

Monster: *(beat)* I see. So, I am not human. I am a beast.

Victor: No, that's not it.

Monster: A creature without feelings.

Victor: Listen to me.

Monster: A monster.

Victor: No!

Monster: Yes! I am Frankenstein's Monster!

A struggle ensues. The MONSTER chases Victor around the laboratory, destroying everything in his path. Smoke and lights flash. The MONSTER breaks the machine that gave him life. At one point, the MONSTER grabs Victor, who breaks free by waving a flaming torch in front of his eyes. The MONSTER finally exits the scene. Victor remains and changes the set to a ship + Mary's study.

Monster: I will chase you, Victor Frankenstein! I will hunt you until the end of your days. I will not rest until I find you. And then, I will give you death just as you gave me life! This is a promise!

Mary (VO): ...I will give you death just as you gave me life. That was another promise the creature would never fulfil. Victor fled, leaving behind his entire life, abandoning his laboratory. He had no love, no family, and no dreams. Cursed forever, just like Prometheus.

Scene 6 - Mary + Monster Ending

Mary Shelley appears on stage, her voice overlapping with her voice-over for the final few words. While she narrates the following scene, Victor acts it out and changes from Victor to the Monster in front of the audience.

Mary: Cursed forever, just like Prometheus. Victor spent the rest of his life running from the monster, who chased him tirelessly to the ends of the earth, like an eagle eating his liver every night. Victor finally boarded a ship, the Santa Margarita, and sailed to the polar circle to hide from the monster. But the ship got stuck in the ice, and it was the cold, not the monster, that took Victor's life. Only then could he reunite with Elizabeth and William, but that's something we will never get to see. Only the Gods know if our souls are saved when our lives end.

Mary walks to Victor and dresses him as the Monster.

Mary: The Monster found Victor's dead body on the Santa Margarita. Now at peace with his creator, and with death itself, he decided to end his own life. Both were alone when they died.

Monster: But something survived that night in Geneva, in 1816. The tale of a young Mary Shelley, 21 years old, who had just invented science fiction, did not die. Unlike my life, her creation would live forever.

Mary and the Monster hug. The Monster walks towards a fire, which grows in intensity.

THE END