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R A I N B O W S

# Frankenstein

Mary Shelley



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Mary Shelley

# Frankenstein

Adaptation, dossiers and activities  
by Maria Di Tommasi

Illustrations  
by Mauro Borgarello



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# The Author

## Mary Shelley



### LIFE

**Mary Shelley** was born Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1797, in London, England. She was the daughter of the philosopher<sup>1</sup> William Godwin and of the feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft, who died ten days after her daughter's birth. Little Mary didn't have a happy childhood<sup>2</sup>; when her father re-married, she didn't have a good relationship with her stepmother<sup>3</sup>. Also, her stepsisters were given a good education, but

she wasn't. Luckily, her father's library and the influence of some special guests, such as writers Coleridge and Wordsworth who often went to her house, helped her become the writer we know today.

A student of her father's was also the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. He was married, but in 1814, started a relationship with Mary. Her father didn't approve of it, but the couple ran away, travelling through France and Germany. Mary got pregnant<sup>4</sup> but lost her baby and in 1816 moved to Geneva, Switzerland. In the meantime, two suicides happened: one of Mary's half-sisters, and Percy's wife, who at the time was pregnant. After that, Mary and Percy Shelley got married, but it wasn't an easy marriage for her because of her husband's unfaithfulness<sup>5</sup> and the death of another two of their children. The only child to become an adult was Percy Florence, born in 1819.

In 1822 another very sad event hit Mary when she was just 24: her husband died in an accident while sailing<sup>6</sup> in the Gulf of La Spezia, Italy, also known as the Gulf of Poets. Mary had to start working hard for her son's and her future.

She died in 1851, at age 53, in London. Her body is in St Peter's Church in Bournemouth.

1. *philosopher*: someone who studies or writes about the meaning of life.
2. *childhood*: the time when someone is a child.
3. *stepmother*: the woman who has married your father but who is not your biological mother.
4. *pregnant*: having a baby developing inside their body.
5. *unfaithfulness*: the fact of having a sexual relationship with a person who is not your partner.
6. *to sail*: to travel by boat on the water.



## WORKS

Thanks to her first and best work, *Frankenstein*, people say that Mary invented science fiction, but she also wrote other stories, novels,<sup>7</sup> and biographies. Also, she published<sup>8</sup> many poetical works, essays,<sup>9</sup> and letters written by her husband Percy Shelley, and helped him to become one of the most important poets of English literature.

When Mary was a child, she learned about some experiments<sup>10</sup> done on animals, so, when she was asked by a friend writer to write a horror story, some of those memories came to her mind and she wrote her great work, *Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus* (published in 1818). The main themes of the book are:

- **dangerous knowledge**: Frankenstein's desire to know more made him create a monster who will destroy his family and life;
- **ambition**<sup>11</sup>: Frankenstein's desire to do something extra-ordinary will cost him his life;
- **punishment**<sup>12</sup>: just like Prometheus, Frankenstein was punished because he decided to play God by giving life to a dead body;
- **nature**: the text is rich in wonderful descriptions of valleys, mountains, and lakes. However, going against nature and trying to control it is dangerous and has terrible consequences<sup>13</sup>;
- **death**: just as in Mary's life, death is a constant presence in the novel.

7. *novel*: long printed story about imaginary characters and events.
8. *to publish*: to produce and sell a book.
9. *essay*: short piece of writing on a particular subject.
10. *experiment*: a test done to learn

something new.

11. *ambition*: something that people want to achieve.
12. *punishment*: act of making somebody suffer because they have done something wrong.
13. *consequence*: result, effect.





### BEFORE READING

1 What do you already know about this work?

a. *Frankenstein* is a...

- ☐ 1. tragedy. ☐ 2. comedy. ☐ 3. horror novel.

b. Dr Frankenstein is a...

- ☐ 1. man. ☐ 2. woman. ☐ 3. monster.

c. The monster was born of a...

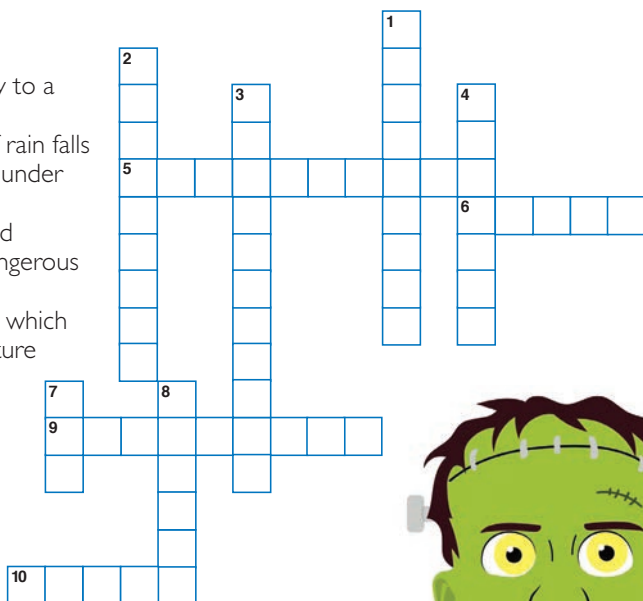
- ☐ 1. woman. ☐ 2. monster. ☐ 3. man, in a lab.

2 Complete the crossword puzzle with words you will read in the next chapter.

*lab • monster • electricity • storm • adventure • expedition • chemistry • fever • letter • scientist*

#### ACROSS

- 5 A long journey to a distant place.  
6 When a lot of rain falls quickly with thunder and lightning.  
9 An exciting and sometimes dangerous experience.  
10 A condition in which your temperature is very high.



#### DOWN

- 1 The study of the structure of substances.  
2 Someone whose job is to do scientific research.  
3 A form of energy that can produce light.  
4 An imaginary frightening creature.  
7 Room where people do scientific experiments.  
8 A message that you write on paper and send to someone.



3 Imagine you are a scientist. What or who would you like to create? A human being, a robot, an animal, a flying car? Explain your reasons.



# Frankenstein

## A new life is born



### Chapter 1



It is the 11<sup>th</sup> December of a year in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when an English sailor, Robert Walton, is guiding his ship and his **crew** towards the North Pole.

St. Petersburg, 11<sup>th</sup> December 17..  
My dear sister, I've worked a lot to prepare this **expedition**, and now that I'm here I feel so excited! But I can't share my joy with anyone. I have a whole crew, but no friends at all.



Some time later...



Captain Walton, look! There's someone over there!



We've lost him. He's so fast!



Soon, the ice **melts** and the following morning a man with a **sledge** arrives at the ship.









In a little time, Walton begins to love Victor as a brother and tells to him his desire to reach the North Pole at any cost.

I would **give up** anything, even my own life to continue my adventure.

Oh! You're as unhappy as me and **victim** of the same **craziness**!

Why do you say that?

Walton writes to his sister again.

Robert, my friend, I've lost everything and everyone. Tomorrow I'll tell you a story that I hope will help you.

19<sup>th</sup> August 17..  
My dear sister, this man we saved is very kind and **wise**, but he's very sad too and I think he is hiding some **mysterious** secrets. He is going to tell me his story. Every night I'll write to you about it.

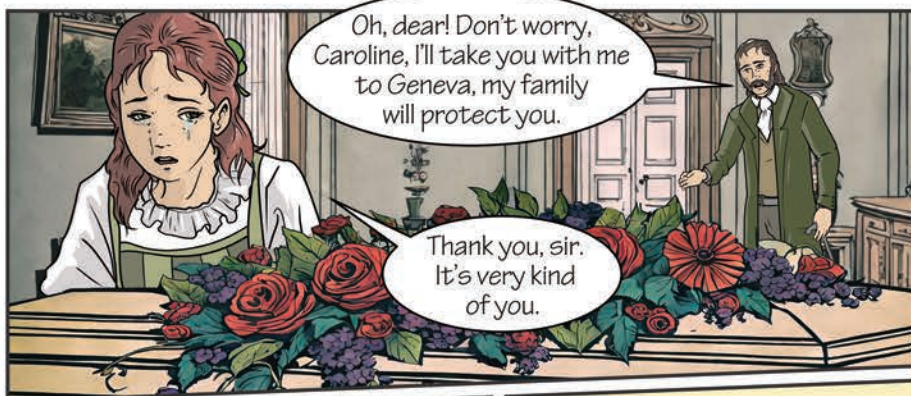
Victor starts telling Walton his family's story. Many years before, Alphonse Frankenstein, Victor's father, had a very good friend, Beaufort.

Beaufort lost all his riches and had to hide away without telling anyone where he was going.

After ten months looking for his friend, Alphonse found Beaufort's new house, but...

Beaufort!  
Can I come in?

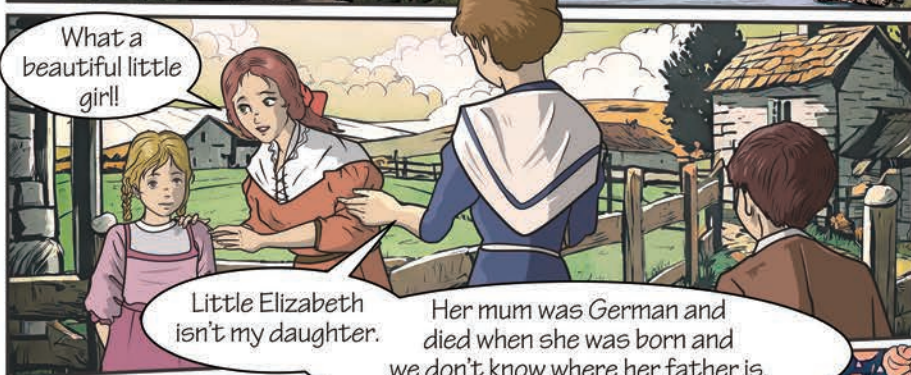




Two years later, Alphonse married Caroline and the couple had a son, Victor.



When Victor was five, they went to Como and visited some poor families.



With Alphonse's permission, Caroline asked the family to let them take the girl home with them.



Victor's happy life went on with the birth of two brothers, Ernest and William, and the friendship with Henry Clerval.

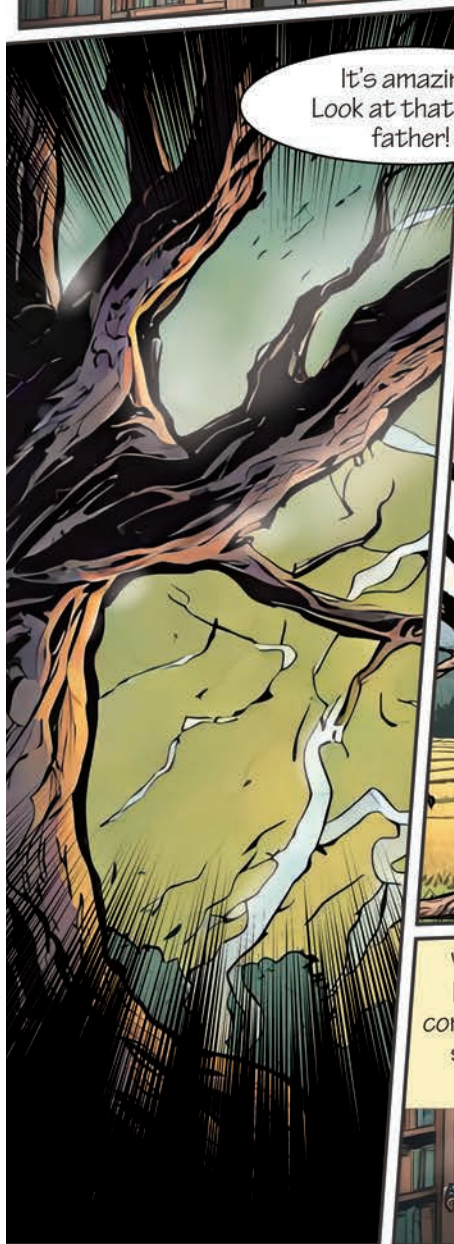


His interests went from the search of the **philosopher's stone** to ghosts and to... something that would change his life.



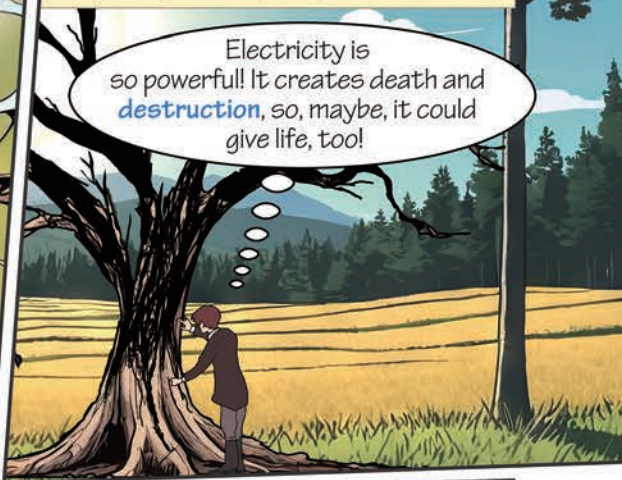
What a terrible storm!

It's amazing!  
Look at that **oak**,  
father!

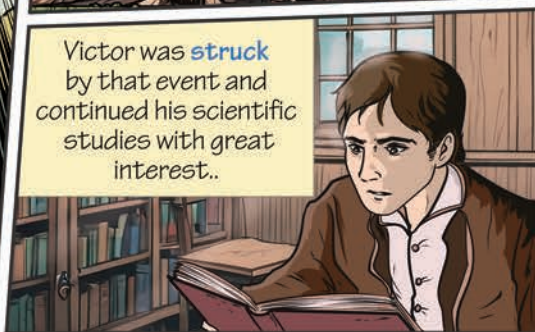


The following morning the oak completely destroyed by some **lightning**.

Electricity is  
so powerful! It creates death and  
**destruction**, so, maybe, it could  
give life, too!



Victor was **struck**  
by that event and  
continued his scientific  
studies with great  
interest..





...but something was going to **ruin** everything...

Dear children, Elizabeth has **recovered** from **scarlet fever** thanks to the care of your mother,

but now she... she is leaving us.

Vic, I've always dreamed about your future marriage with Lizzie...

Oh, mum...

And you, Lizzie, my love, you must look after my children.

Caroline died, and some weeks later a sad but **determined** Victor was ready to go to the university of Ingolstadt, in Germany.

Goodbye, Victor, don't forget to write.

My friend, I'd like to come and study with you... Goodbye!

Goodbye everyone, see you soon.

During the long trip, Victor's mind was busy thinking about his mother, and how it would be possible to recreate life from death to avoid pain. At last, he arrived.



Now that I'm alone in this country I want to learn everything about science. Thanks to me, the world will discover the secret of creation!



Mr Waldman, professor of chemistry, welcomed Victor at the university.



Welcome, Mr Frankenstein, I'll show you my lab and I'll suggest some books for you to read.

Thank you, Mr Waldman

No worries. I'm sure you'll be successful here!

Two years later, everyone at the university **admired** Victor for his studies and discoveries in chemistry, and his experience was nearly at an end, but...



I really want to go back home, but I feel there is a lot more to know about the human body. If I want to find out how life starts, then I'll need to study death first.

Victor started studying again. He was so busy that he didn't write any letters to his family and didn't go to see them. One night...



Yes, it must be like this. But...

how is it possible that...



no one has thought about that?



Now that I know how to bring dead things to life again...

I need a structure.




Could it be similar to me? Or something simpler? Let's see... I know!

I'll create a new huge being! A new, happy species will thank me because they exist!

But time passed, and things didn't **turn out** as Victor expected...

I've worked for nearly two years. I've chosen the best features, but... for God's sake! I've given up my family, my health, sleep... is this the result?!





I can't stand looking at this... No man could! I myself am **terrified**, even if I'm the **creator**. I need to leave!

Poor me!  
My dreams... my dreams have come true, but... how badly!

Victor left and he was walking with no destination, **desperate**, when a coach coming towards him. Henry Clerval, his best friend, was inside and soon got out of it.

Victor!  
I'm so pleased to see you!

My father has finally let me study here.

Fine and happy, but worried because they have no news from you.

What a surprise!

Great! But tell me... how are my brothers, my father and my Elizabeth?

Hey, wait!  
I didn't notice you were so thin and **pale**! Are you ok?

I've worked a lot recently, but it's over now.

Victor immediately ran into his flat.

Hey! Are you here?  
Oh, gosh, no one is here!

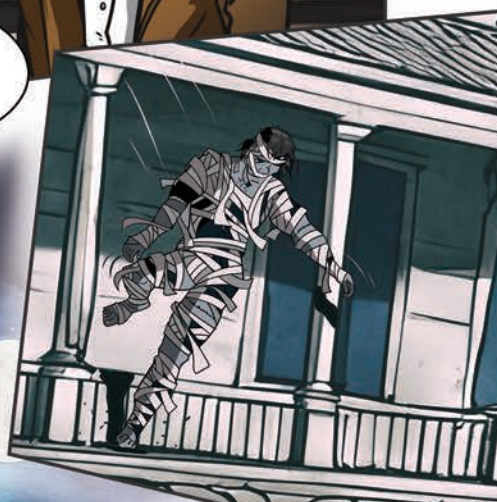
The **creature**  
I've left in my lab is probably still alive. I can't let Henry know about him. I must go upstairs and check.

Nobody was there.  
The **monster** was gone!





Victor started having **hallucinations** and had to stay in bed for a few months. Henry took care of him, and he finally recovered.



**WORKING ON THE TEXT**

**1** Fill in the gaps with the correct character from the previous chapter. Remember that you need the same character at the end of each sentence and at the beginning of the following one.

- a. .... was happy to help his friend's daughter; .....
- b. .... loved travelling abroad with her husband and little  
.....
- c. .... was really into strange things, that's why he created  
the .....
- d. The ..... went away and wasn't seen by .....
- e. .... helped his friend to recover and handed him a letter  
from .....
- f. .... was adopted by the Frankensteins, Caroline and .....

**2** Answer the questions.

- a. Is Walton alone in his ship? .....
- b. Who is Caroline? .....
- c. Are Victor and Elizabeth cousins? .....
- d. Does Victor go to university with his friend? .....
- e. What does the monster look like?  
.....
- f. Why does Victor run away after creating the monster?  
.....



3 Say whether the following sentences are true or false.

- |  | T                        | F                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Ernest and William are relatives.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Victor is satisfied with the result of his experiments.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Victor and his family are in constant touch.                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Walton and his sister communicate via phone.                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. When Victor was young, he was attracted by a mysterious phenomenon. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Elizabeth lived with her parents before being adopted.              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### WORKING ON VOCABULARY

4 Match each object in Victor's lab to its description.

- |                    |                          |  |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| a. Bookshelf       | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. A piece of furniture like a table.  |
| b. Carpet          | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. A device that uses oil, gas or electricity to produce light.                        |
| c. Lamp            | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. A particular type of substance that is not a solid and not a liquid and that burns. |
| d. Operating table | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. A special table that people lie on to have a medical operation.                     |
| e. Beaker          | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. A flat board on which to keep books.  |
| f. Gas             | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. A long comfortable seat for two or more people to sit on.                           |
| g. Desk            | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. A piece of thick material that covers the floor of a room.                          |
| h. Couch           | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. A glass cup used in chemistry to measure liquids.                                   |



5 Write the plural form of the terms above.

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| a. .... | e. .... |
| b. .... | f. .... |
| c. .... | g. .... |
| d. .... | h. .... |



WORKING ON GRAMMAR

6 POSSESSIVE CASE. Complete the sentences with 's, ' or /.

- Victor's creation has no name.
- a. Victor is Ernest ..... and William ..... brother.
- b. Alphonse ..... relatives will protect Caroline.
- c. Caroline is Henry ..... friend ..... mother.
- d. Victor is Elizabeth ..... "cousin" and Henry is Victor ..... friend.
- e. The sailors ..... ship is stuck.
- f. Victor ..... family adopted Elizabeth.

WORKING ON SKILLS

Listening



7 GUESS WHO? Listen to some descriptions and guess who the correct character is.

*Victor • Elizabeth • Caroline • Walton • the monster • Henry*

- a. ....  
.....
- b. ....  
.....
- c. ....  
.....
- d. ....  
.....
- e. ....  
.....
- f. ....  
.....



### Speaking

- 8 Imagine you are the monster, what will you ask Victor? What will you do to become his friend? Say something to convince him not to abandon you.

### Writing

- 9 Imagine you are going to the North Pole with Robert Walton and his crew. What will you bring with you to live there? Think about food, clothes, pictures, and things you couldn't live without on a ship.

*On my expedition to the North Pole, I*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





# Frankenstein

*A deep reflection on the importance of taking care of children and the risks of going beyond human limits, this story, written by Mary Shelley at the beginning of the 19th century, was one of the first 'science-fiction' books. Following his love for science and impressed by a flash of lightning that burns down a tree, Dr Frankenstein gives life to a dead body. But the living creature only inspires terror and first his 'father' and then all the other human beings that he meets isolate him from society. His solitude and sadness will cause a desire for revenge with a tragic end.*

## beginner

- **A1** (Breakthrough)

## ✓ elementary

- **A2** (Waystage)

## pre-intermediate

- **B1** (Threshold)

## intermediate

- **B2** (Vantage)

## post-intermediate

- **C1** (Effectiveness)

### Levels of accredited examination boards:

Cambridge English:	Flyers / Key (KET)
Trinity:	Grade 3, 4
City & Guilds (Pitman):	Elementary
ESB:	Foundation 3
Edexcel:	Basic



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