

Chapter 4

For the next two years, I became very interested in the human body and the origins of life itself. I learned from both Professor Krempe and Professor Waldman about how the body works. I even studied the way things rot and die. The other students looked on in astonishment at my rapid progress.

I spent time in underground rooms and places where dead bodies are stored. I learned first-hand about the changes from life to death. It wasn't scary for me. I had never been afraid of spooky stories or dark places. And one day, I hit upon an idea so brilliant yet so simple that it surprised even me. I couldn't understand how no one had made this discovery before me. I had finally discovered the secrets of life and how to make dead things alive again.

I see by your face that you're eager to know the details of my discovery. If you listen patiently until the end, you'll



Frankenstein researching in dark places



understand why I'm not telling you everything. I want you to understand the dangers of wanting to know too much. It's important to be happy with what you know and not try to be more than you are.

When I got the power to give life to things that had no life, I was not sure how to use it. I could now bring dead things to life again. But making a complicated thing like a human being was nearly overwhelming. But I couldn't let the size and complexity of the problem at hand stop me. I was determined. I immediately set about collecting the different parts I would need to put together a man. I quickly realized that it was much easier to work with larger pieces. So my plan was to build a giant, a man standing about eight feet tall. My creation would stand a good two or three feet taller than most other men.

As I worked on my creation, a variety of feelings came over me. Success made me happy, but the work was hard. I robbed graves and butchered animals. It was very unpleasant work, but my desire to know more kept me going.

Months went by. What I made was almost done, but it came at a price. I became so focused that I forgot about the beautiful world and my friends who missed me. I had not taken care of my health, and I had become sick. My father's letters showed that he was worried. But my need to finish my work was more important than anything. I promised myself I would make everything in my life right again, once my creation was complete.

Chapter 5

One dark night in November, after working hard for nearly two years, I finally brought my creation to life. It was the middle of the night, and the rain pattered against the windows. My candle was almost out when I saw the creature's dull, yellow eyes open. It took in air and moved its arms and legs.

But my excitement turned into fear when I saw how it looked. I had imagined a beautiful being, but it was horribly ugly. Its yellow skin barely covered the muscles and arteries beneath. Its mouth was set in a thin, black line.

I couldn't stand the sight of the creature I had created. Overwhelmed by hate, I ran out of the room. I paced up and down in my bedroom for a long time, unable to sleep. I was filled with fear and regret for what I had done.

Later that night, I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I saw Elizabeth, beautiful and healthy, walking in the streets



*Frankenstein brings his creation to life*

of Ingolstadt. I was delighted and surprised to see her, and I ran up to hug her. But as I did, her lips turned the dull color of death. Her face changed then, and I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms. I saw worms crawling in the folds of her night clothes.

I woke up in terror. When I looked around, I saw the creature at the door, looking at me with its strange eyes. It was making sounds I couldn't understand. I escaped and spent the night in the courtyard. I was terrified and hid from the creature I had given life to.

The next morning, I was happy to find the creature gone. I went out into the street, walking aimlessly. My heart was beating fast, and I was still sick with fear. After walking for some time, I found myself standing in front of the local inn. There I had a wonderful and unexpected surprise. My friend Henry Clerval had arrived in town!

"Frankenstein!" he cried when he saw me. "How happy I am to see you, my friend!" His being there brought back so many warm thoughts of home. I took his hand, and instantly forgot my horror and anxiety. For the first time in many months, I felt calm and happy. "It wasn't easy to convince my father to let me come," he went on. "But I finally talked him into it."

"I'm so glad you did! And how are my father and brothers, and how is Elizabeth?"

"Fine, fine, but sad that they haven't heard from you in so long."



*The creature at the door*

I tried to hide my trouble, but Clerval noticed my sick appearance. “I’ve just been working too hard,” I told him. “Too many long hours. But I think I’m done with all that now.”

We walked together to my university. As we reached my room, the fear of the creature coming back held me tight. I ran ahead, holding my breath. To my surprise, my room was empty. The creature had disappeared. Very happy, I clapped my hands and laughed.

“What has gotten into you, Victor?” my friend asked. “Please don’t laugh like that, you’re scaring me.”

Suddenly I imagined the monstrous creature gliding into my room. I was gripped by a fear so great that I fainted.

I then fell ill with a fever that lasted several months. Clerval looked after me as I slowly recovered. He hid from my family how bad my illness was.

Finally, Clerval’s help and the coming of spring revived me. “Dearest Clerval,” I exclaimed one spring morning, “how very good you are to me. This whole winter you were meant to be studying. Instead you’ve looked after me. How will I ever repay you?”

“Pay me back by taking better care of yourself, my friend,” he said. “And by writing to your family right away. In fact, now that I think of it... A letter has been lying here for a few days. It’s from Elizabeth.”



Chapter 6

Clerval handed me this letter from Elizabeth:

*To Victor Frankenstein, Ingolstadt
March 18, 17—*

My Dearest Cousin,

*I've been so worried about your health!
Even Henry's letters couldn't make me feel
better. I know you're not allowed to write because
you need your rest. But we would all love to re-
ceive just one word from you, Victor, to calm us
down. I've been waiting for your letter nervously,
hoping for good news.*

*Get well soon and come back to us. Your
father is well and just wants to see you. Your*

Mary Shelley

*older brother, Ernest, is sixteen now. He is tall
and active. Sadly, he's not a very good student,
and he wants to join the military. Your father is
completely against that.*

*Our home is the same, except the children
are older now. The blue lake and snow-covered
mountains will never change.*

*Oh, one thing has changed. Do you remem-
ber little Justine Moritz? You were very fond of
her once. You might recall she had several sib-
lings. But for some reason when Justine's father
died, her mother was especially cruel to her. Your
own mother noticed this and asked if Justine
could come live with us. Justine did, and she and
your mother grew very close.*

*Justine worshiped your mother. But when
your poor mother passed away, we were all so
busy with our own grief. No one noticed how it
destroyed Justine. Then things got even worse for
her. One by one, her siblings all died of illness.
Her mother decided she wanted Justine to return
home to her. This brought Justine even lower
than before. Her mother accused Justine of some-
how having caused her siblings to die. But then
her mother died last winter. Now Justine has
returned to us, and she and I have grown very
close. She is a pretty and clever girl.*



Your brother, William, is doing well. He's tall with laughing blue eyes, curly hair, and dimples. He's had a few little girlfriends, but Louisa Biron is his favorite.

And now for some gossip, if you don't mind, dear cousin. Miss Mansfield will marry an Englishman named John Melbourne. Her sister, Manon, married a rich banker. Louis Manoir has had some bad luck. But he is recovering and may marry an older Frenchwoman, Madame Tavernier.

I hope this letter has made you happy, dear cousin. I know writing it has done my heart good. But I'm still worried about you. Please write to us soon. We are all so thankful to Henry for his kindness and his many letters. Take care of yourself, and please write!

*With love,
Elizabeth Lavenza*

After reading Elizabeth's letter, I said, "I will write to them immediately and make them feel better." Writing was tiring, but my health was improving.

I left my bedroom within another two weeks. One of my first duties was to introduce Clerval to my university professors. Ever since that horrible night when I brought



Frankenstein writes back to Elizabeth



the creature to life, I hated the sciences. The sight of even a single chemistry instrument brought back the terror of that night. Clerval had noticed this, even though he had no idea what was causing my anxiety. He had all my chemistry instruments thrown out of my home. In fact, he had me moved to a different apartment from the one where I had conducted my experiments.

When I introduced the two, Professor Waldman praised my work to Clerval. This was like torture to me. Waldman thought I was being modest, and he changed the subject to science in general. Clerval could tell the subject caused me pain, but he didn't know why. And even though he was my dear friend, how could I ever tell him? How could I ever explain it to anyone?

Professor Krempe offered even more praise for me, causing me that much more suffering. "Mr. Frankenstein has leapt ahead of us all, Mr. Clerval! He's so young! But in just a few years, he's become by far our most accomplished student." Professor Krempe saw my pained expression and added, "Mr. Frankenstein is modest, but it's all true." Professor Krempe then changed the subject, to my relief.

Clerval and I spent the winter happily. He began to study various languages from far away. I joined him in these learnings, finding peace in the beautiful words. It was a relief to me to get my mind working on something besides the science which had led to such a dark place.

Summer came to an end, and I was set to return to

Geneva in late autumn. But due to harsh weather, I couldn't travel until spring. I was disappointed, because I longed to see my home again. I missed my family and friends.

May arrived, and I expected a letter any day informing me that I could finally return home. In the meantime, Clerval suggested we explore the surrounding area of Ingolstadt. It was a beautiful countryside. We spent two weeks exploring at a leisurely pace, mostly on foot. Everything was blooming, and Clerval was excellent company. We had a great time, and this did my health and spirit much good.

We returned to our university on a Sunday afternoon. There was a festival, and the people of the town were dancing and celebrating spring. My own spirits were high, and I felt better than I had in a long time.

