

Mary Shelley's
FRANKENSTEIN
by David Catlin

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Mary Shelley's
FRANKENSTEIN
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ACTORS/CHARACTER TRACKS

Debo Balogun
**DR JOHN POLIDORI, WALTON, HENRY CLERVAL,
DeLACEY**

Walter Owen Briggs V
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN, FELIX

Cordelia Dewdney
MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN, ELIZABETH LAVENZA

Keith Gallagher
**LORD BYRON, SCOTTISH SAILOR, PROFESSOR WALDMAN,
CREATURE**

Amanda Martinez
**CLAIRE CLAIRMONT, PORTUGUESE SAILOR, MOTHER,
VILLAGER, SOFIA, ANGEL of DEATH, WILLIAM, WOMAN IN
BLACK, WEDDING OFFICIANT**

*The set should evoke
An ancient villa, an old attic, an operating theater, or a tomb.*

ACT I

In darkness, the sound of A WOMAN SCREAMING.

PERCY: And with the angel of death clinging to her,
Hovering on blackened waxy wing,
She finally succumbs,
Clutching his still bleeding heart,
Life and breath extinguished...

*Long roll of THUNDER
Sound of rain pattering on the windows of the Villa Diodati.*

*Inside a curtain of gauzy fabric: An old boat, a trunk, chandelier, Persian
carpets & pillows & furs & goblets & decanters & trays of fruit.*

*MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN, PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, LORD
BYRON, DR. JOHN POLIDORI, & CLAIRE CLAIRMONT.*

LORD BYRON: I should say, old Shelley, you do possess a most disturbing
imagination. I do worry for you, Miss Mary—

PERCY: Jealous Byron, concede that my tale of horror was far more
frightening than that of yours.

Crack of Thunder

LORD BYRON: Frightening? A yawning yarn to ease us into this most
ungenial Swiss storm with a nice drowsing slumber. *(to Claire)* But not
before some devilishly delicious sweet-treat— Miss Claremont?

CLAIRE: *(teasing, touching her pregnant belly)*
Lord Byron, I believe you've already had your dessert.

LORD BYRON: Did I? Or was it Percy's insatiable sweet tooth that put
that bun in your oven?

MARY: I'm sitting right here, Lord Byron.

CLAIRE: (*to BYRON*) Such a monster you are.

POLIDORI: Miss Godwin, have you tasted these pomegranates?
They are other-worldly.

MARY: Dr. Polidori, are you the serpent tempting me in the garden?

POLIDORI: (*offering a seed*) Or perhaps Lord Hades drawing you into my underworld. Look how the juice stains the skin around your lips—
You look as if you've just tasted death.

MARY: Like Byron's vampyre?

PERCY: Dr. Polidori, if you're quite finished fascinating my wife—

MARY: Wife? Well that's quite awkward darling, don't you remember—
we're not married.

CLAIRE: You're married to someone else.

BYRON: Poor Heartbroken Harriet.

PERCY: Harriet and pomegranates aside, I have clearly emerged victorious
in Lord Byron's little contest. Gentlemen, admit you both require a change
of trousers.

POLIDORI: I shouldn't be so quick to claim yourself the victor, Shelley.

PERCY: A change of your nappies, eh, Polidori?

POLIDORI: Weren't you the one who went screaming from the room when
Byron recited Coleridge?

PERCY: I did not scream.

BYRON: Like a pale newborn baby gasping for its first breath— Waahhh!

CLAIRE: Quite adorable, Percy. Pale, pale Percy!

MARY: Your vivid imagination is peerless, my love.

PERCY: A serpent woman with two eyes where nipples ought to have been is a most discomfiting image, indeed.

CLAIRE: There's but one yet to go in this competition...sister?

POLIDORI: Still can't think of one, Mary?

LORD BYRON: (*with sarcasm*) Oh, but she's just a mere girl With a mind full of 'sugar & spice & everything nice!'

MARY: (*matching his sarcasm*)

Yes, because we women are so very incapable of unhallowed impulses. Our minds were made for more celestial thoughts.

I doubt that an eighteen-year old *girl* like myself should ever—
Could ever—

Think of anything monstrous, wretched, or even the least bit untoward.

PERCY: You couldn't think of a ghost story, Mary.

MARY: (*blows him a raspberry*)

PERCY: Miss Clairmont, Lord Byron, Dr. Polidori, so nice of you to show up— This has been a most one-sided competition, indeed. Your ghost stories, as you might generously call them, have failed to produce even the slightest murmur of a heart-beat, a complete lack of spark.

BYRON: Lack of spark? Pish!

PERCY: Miss Godwin, are you willing to spare yourself the breath of this unwinnable competition?

MARY: You'd have me concede?

PERCY: Yes.

MARY: I shouldn't even try?

PERCY: Surely.

MARY: I should give up then?

PERCY: Merely yield to the immutable, inexorable conclusion // that I...

MARY: No.

PERCY: No?

MARY: No.

Never.

Not ever, Mr. Percy Bysshe Shelley.

PERCY: I beg your pardon, my moon, you said so yourself, you couldn't think of one.

MARY: Did I say that or was it you? My beloved Shelley,
It came to me last night in that place between waking and dreaming—

PERCY: My beloved Mary,
Didn't I come to you last night in that place between waking and dreaming?

PERCY and MARY share a long sexy kiss. Catcalls from the others.

PERCY: Perhaps we ought to head to bed and see if mightn't find that place between waking and dreaming, again.

MARY: Buckle up your britches, my darling, I'm about to begin—

LORD BYRON: Oo, I do believe this animated creature has found her spark—

MARY: Spark indeed—
Somewhere in the Earth's beautiful belly, a spark ignites—
A volcano erupts sending Hell itself into world above

Sound of Distant Volcano

The skies darken and climatic doom begins its long reign
Whole summers are lost to dunnish days and unrelenting storm-time—
Thunder and lightning fill the Heavens above—

Thunder and Lightning

MARY: Keening winds howl in desecration and lamentation—

Winds howling

MARY: Tearing at the shingles and blowing open windows.

A blast of Thunder, Lightning, and Wind

Gauzy curtains FALL.

MARY: A group of Romantic young writers and poets
Shelter from the unceasing storm inside the Villa Diodati
A Swiss chalet rented by George Gordon,
Also known as Lord Byron, England's most infamous poet—

CLAIRE: 'Mad, bad, and dangerous to know.'

MARY: He is attended by his personal physician, Dr. John Polidori—
A man of flirtatious and chivalrous disposition.

POLIDORI: Thank you, milady.

MARY: My step-sister Claire Clairemont is there—
An accomplished singer and very pregnant with Byron's baby.

BYRON: Or perhaps Pale Percy's?

Mary & Claire share a moment.

MARY: Percy Bysshe Shelley, a vegetarian and atheist who believes in free
love and writes poetry that transforms the very soul—

PERCY: The sunlight claps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth,
If thou kiss not me?

MARY: He is married to Harriet Westbrook, whom he abandoned to run away to France— and most recently Switzerland—
With the woman who now holds his heart—

PERCY: Mary Godwin,
Is this an act of imaginative fiction or declarative exposition?

MARY: Every good story intersects with something that is true.

PERCY: Is this really how your story begins?

MARY: And ends...
This is *our* story, actually.

PERCY: Ours?

MARY: Yes, my love.

PERCY: Is it so scary, my moon?

(A hint of something unattended passes between them)

MARY: As I said, this is a story about a spark—

MARY strikes a match and lights her candelabra

MARY: The spark that creates light,

PERCY: How Promethean—

MARY: Prometheus, indeed.
A spark that leads to Life

POLIDORI: The birds and the bees?

BYRON: How salaciously inappropriate—I like it already!

CLAIRE: Will you men stop interrupting.

MARY: But also to Loneliness,

And Madness

PERCY: Madness?

MARY: To Monsters

BYRON: Monsters.

MARY: To Brave Heroes, dying and haunting us.

POLIDORI: How sadly beautiful.

MARY: To Death, herself.

CLAIRE: Death is a woman?

MARY: With horns and great scabby wings.

MARY hands PERCY's horned mask to CLAIRE

MARY: But first...to Bavaria.

CLAIRE: Bavaria?

MARY: The University of Ingolstadt...

It was a dreary night of November

Not unlike this one...

Rain pattering at the windows.

Sound of rain pattering windows.

MARY: Flashes of lightning filled the sky

Flash of lightning, no thunder

MARY: Thunder rumbling in the distance—

Thunder rumbles

The Pale student of unhallowed arts knelt beside the *thing*—

The thing he had patched and sewn together.

A most hideous phantasm of fluid and flesh...
Pallid limbs and lifeless organs
Dug up and rummaged from unwept pauper's graves—

CLAIRE: Sister!

BYRON: So much for sugar & spice and everything nice.

MARY: Appendages, entrails, and rank viscera
Torn and trimmed from maggot-eaten corpses
Marrowed bones with sinewy muscle
Gauzy fascia and dermal tissue stretched taut
And sutured to encase the soup of blood and bilious fluids within—
Tubes and cables and copper wires crimped and clipped
To this most unnatural creation--

And then,

And then...

PERCY: And then?

MARY: A galvanic blast of blinding lightning fills the world—

BLINDING BLAST OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

(Long beat of silence)

MARY: The dull yellow eye of the creature opens—
Unstaring, Unseeing, Unholy—

(another beat)

BYRON: AHHHH!

PERCY: O GOD!

ANOTHER LONG FLASH OF THUNDER & LIGHTNING

MARY: From the dead...Life.

CLAIRE: (*clutching her pregnant belly*) How ungodly, sister.

MARY: The telling of our ‘ungodly’ tale begins not in Bavaria

But rather some two years later—

With the hardy Captain John Walton (*tosses furry hat to Polidori*)

And his brave crew (*tosses furry hats to Byron and Claire.*)

Our telling takes it up thousands of miles North

Up in the ice, the vast, magnificent ice—

Two pieces of gauzy fabric are billowed to create the ‘vast magnificent ice.’

CLAIRE: I’ll play, too!

MARY: Ice only ice!

The story begins somewhere near the top of the world.

POLIDORI: (*adding it up*) The North Pole!

MARY: All is white, blindingly white—

LIGHTS become even more cold and blinding

MARY: Harsh. Unsustaining. No life here—

POLAR WINDS ROARING!

MARY: Save for a single ship and her stalwart crew of brave-hearted men
Seeking to melt the secrets of the pole.

WALTON & CREW (BYRON & CLAIRE) put on furs and stand in the boat.

WALTON: Eyes sharp, my men!

How much better will our world be when we discover the Northwest passage
into the Pacific ocean! When we unlock the magnetic secrets of the pole!

MARY: We hear a loud sickening—

CRUNCH!

WALTON: HOLD FAST!

MARY: A great heaving column of ice lifts the ship into the air like a child's tiny boat—and back down again...

Maybe the boat is flipped over?

SCOTTISH SAILOR: Captain Walton!
The ice is all round—
Our rudder finds no purchase—
She won't break free!

WALTON: Won't break free??

PORTUGUESE SAILOR: She's stuck in the ice!

WALTON: Steady, men—Steady!
The icy sea shall crack these sheets soon enough.

MARY: Alone at the top of the world—
One of the crew thought they saw...
Something...something in the distance.

PORTUGUESE SAILOR: I think I see...
Something...something in the distance!
There just off the bow— There's some kind of a...is that a...man?... or a?

WALTON: Impossible, no one could survive alone, so far from civilization-

Another SICKENING CRUNCH.

PORTUGUESE SAILOR: The ice is crushing the hull!

SCOTTISH SAILOR: It'll crack our keel like a wee bit a brittle!

WALTON: Steady, men!

Another SICKENING CRUNCH OF MASSIVE ICE SHEETS CRACKING
They lift the boat in the air and return it to the ground right side up

SCOTTISH SAILOR: Och aye! Captain Walton, the pack ice has broken!

WALTON: We're floating free!

PORTUGUESE SAILOR: There'll be more of that ice soon enough,
Captain Walton—

SCOTTISH SAILOR: Perhaps we should set a course for home while we
still can?

WALTON: Not when we are so close to the pole! Do you see him?
That...creature? Can you see him?

PORTUGUESE SAILOR: No, sir— gone.

MARY: The mysterious creature had disappeared, but... just off the stern—

SCOTTISH SAILOR: Captain...just off the stern! A man, I think!

WALTON: The same?

PORTUGUESE SAILOR: Captain Walton, how is this possible?

Polar winds surge to a ROAR

A STRANGER (VICTOR) staggers in and collapses.

WALTON: Get him aboard! Bring this stranger to my cabin.

Transition MUSIC

BYRON: Ooo, quite convincing, Percy!

*A corner of gauzy fabric is pulled back to become the warmth of Walton's
cabin. A teapot, cups, an old globe appear from an old trunk. Maybe a
lantern is hauled up and swings back and forth with the rise and fall of the
waves*

MARY: They hauled the broken and weary stranger aboard Walton's ship.
They buried him in blankets and poured in hot tea

To warm and reanimate this husk of a human being.

Sounds of wood creaking and hemp ringing.

MARY: The stranger was finally able to speak—

PERCY/STRANGER: I...I...

MARY: 'I must find him—'

STRANGER: I must find him!

Where is he?

He must not...

He must be destroyed...

North, he's...ever north, he's...

Surely, you are returning to the south,

You must put me back out there on the ice--

(Trying to get up)

I must...find him//

I must find him!

WALTON: Shh, shhh, it's alright, my friend,

Our direction continues north!

STRANGER: What could possibly draw you into the nothingness that is north?

WALTON: Drawn indeed—

The magnet of the pole pulls us.

The secrets of its unknown gravity—

STRANGER: No. You mustn't. Pursue not the unknown.

It will

Destroy you. All your men.

All you care for...

Put me back on that ice and turn back.

WALTON: What are you saying?

STRANGER: Turn your ship around! I implore you.

Turn back south to your little villages and homes.
To the bliss of innocence and ignorance.

WALTON: Innocence and ignorance be damned!

STRANGER: You know not what you are saying.
Do not be the ruin of mankind.

WALTON: To the contrary— to the benefit of mankind!
What if we might find a swifter and safer passage into the North Pacific?
Or find the source of the Aurora Borealis—
A hidden paradise on earth

STRANGER: But at what cost?
Put me back on that ice that I might destroy that hateful demon
who leads me not into paradise you dream of,
But into the burning maw of hell.

WALTON: Shh, friend, you're still delirious from exposure.
How is it we found you
Pursuing a demon, as you say,
Across the vast and lonely arctic ice?
Who are you?

STRANGER: My name is...*(looks to MARY)*

MARY: Frankenstein. Victor, Frankenstein.

WALTON: Victor Frankenstein?

STRANGER/VICTOR: Yes, that's right.

MARY: It all began before the 'hateful demon'—

VICTOR: When I was very young...

Transition Music

Gauzy fabric is cleared

MARY: It all began where it always begins—or at least where Nature intended it all to begin—

MARY touches CLAIRE's pregnant belly

MARY: With a mother.

VICTOR: It all began the day my mother came home with a surprise—

CLAIRE/MOTHER: We found her abandoned on the streets of Genoa. Can you imagine? My dear Victor, this is—

ELIZABETH (*MARY*): Elizabeth. Elizabeth Lavenza.

VICTOR: (*completely struck*) ...hello.

ELIZABETH: Bon Giorno.
Your mother is most kind to rescue me

MOTHER: She is to be your new sister.

VICTOR: (*to Walton*) My more-than-sister

As MARY speaks, she peels away the gauzy fabric and removes it.

MARY: They grew together at their home in Belrive on the banks of Lake Geneva, tucked away here in these very Swiss Alps.

BYRON: How beatific and pastoral—I'm sure wee little Victor was particularly scrumptious—bursting out of his tight little lederhosen and a-yodeling for his lonely goat.

VICTOR: (*to Walton*) She called me—

ELIZABETH: Cousin, let's row out to the center of the lake and see if we can see any fish or turtles.

ELIZABETH & VICTOR move the boat to the center of the room and begin 'rowing.' They eat sandwiches. Maybe traps or trunks are opened to create the reflection of water.

ELIZABETH: Do you think that fish there is smiling?
He seems to be smiling up at me, don't you think, cousin?

VICTOR: I suppose you think all the creatures of the world smile upon you.

ELIZABETH: No one ever smiled upon me.
Not until your mother found me.

VICTOR: *Our* mother, now. I think...I might be smiling, too.

ELIZABETH: How many such wondrous fish do you think are in this lake?

VICTOR: The question is not, how *many*, but rather *how*?

ELIZABETH: How?

VICTOR: How did they come to *be*?

ELIZABETH: (*blushing*) O, my Cousin, I hardly think this is an appropriate subject of conversation, given our age and circumstances—

VICTOR: My more-than-sister, I'm not speaking of birds & bees—

ELIZABETH: Or fish.

VICTOR: I'm talking about the source of our animation.

ELIZABETH: And I'm speaking about the beauty of that speckled trout
Whose lips at this very moment appear to be intentionally up-turned.
I'm speaking of all the glorious perch & pike & sturgeon that smilingly-- or
not smilingly-- swim beneath the surface.

VICTOR: Sturgeon?? I hardly think there are any sturgeon here—

ELIZABETH: There might be.

VICTOR: No other soul alive, Walton, was so in communion with the poetry of the natural world around her. But what separates the living from the not living? What causes life to spark?

Sound of Baby Crying

MOTHER steps forward with a baby basket.

MOTHER: Children, come close, you have a new baby // brother--

ELIZABETH: Look at those fingernails—so tiny. Those cheeks.
What a perfect plum!

MOTHER: His name is William.

ELIZABETH: Sweet William! A little mouse, he is!

MOTHER: Both of you look after him.

MOTHER exits.

VICTOR: Well little *Willmouse*, I am your big brother and this is Elizabeth Lavenza.

ELIZABETH: Ciao Ciccino!

VICTOR: And as your big brother, it is my sworn duty to protect you from the evils of the world—particularly, our own Lizzie Lavenza.

ELIZABETH: Victor! Let me hold him!

Sound of Baby Crying

ELIZABETH carries the baby and tries to soothe it.

This pulls MARY out of her story by the end of VICTOR's speech.

VICTOR: Yes, even the sound of her name is unsettling.
She's positively demonic!
She may *seem* smart and beautiful,
But she was actually born without a heart.
Suspect on scientific grounds certainly, but true--
No blood beats within,
Only glacial ice inches through her cold veins

That's why she's so pale and ghostly and lifeless...

Rain patters at the window, we are back in the Villa.

POLIDORI: You've stopped your story, Mary— Are you alright?

Maybe MARY unwinds the swaddle of fabric to discover no baby.

MARY: So cold. So motionless
Every night I dream I warm her by the fire
And she's here
But when I wake
No baby.

MARY & PERCY look at each other for a long moment.

Something un-mourned passes.

PERCY turns away and sits.

Sound of rain.

POLIDORI: We can begin again tomorrow.

MARY: No...*(determined, brightening)* Let's continue.

PERCY: You sure you're alright? You don't seem your sunny self.

MARY: My sunny self?

Maybe MARY chooses to set the length of unswaddled cloth in the baby basket.

MARY: Where were we? I'd only just begun—

BYRON: And already so much better than Percy's flaccid showing.

PERCY: The story seems...elusive. Though this Victor Frankenstein is a rakishly handsome and an endlessly compelling hero.

MARY: Hero?! Yes, that's where we were— Victor behaving poorly to sunny Elizabeth. Is there anyone who might defend dear Elizabeth Lavenza from this ghastly villain?

PERCY: Ghastly villain?!

MARY: Lord Byron?

CLAIRE re-enters with a decanter of wine.

BYRON: I think I'd prefer to observe and entertain inappropriate thoughts about the deliciously tumescent Mother character.

CLAIRE: A pig you are.

BYRON: Yes Circe, you need only order me down in the dirt, and down I'll gladly go!

MARY: Will no one defend Elizabeth Lavenza, from this monster?

POLIDORI dumps fruit out of a bowl and dons his makeshift knight's helmet and brandishes a cane...

POLIDORI: I should gladly defend you with my last dying breath.

ELIZABETH: My Lancelot! My dear Henry, slay this wretched villain, slay this demi-gorgon!

HENRY: Demi-gorgon, indeed!

HENRY threatens BYRON.

MARY: *(pointing him at PERCY)*. This demi-gorgon over here, Henry.

BYRON: I'm full-gorgon, actually.

PERCY: Demi-gorgon? Victor seems more the heroic lover, I should think.

HENRY: Come then— Arthur of the Britons, king of all,
Let us to the Lady of the Lake to retrieve the vaunted Excalibur--

BYRON: Who is this Henry character?

POLIDORI: He steals Elizabeth's heart and becomes her zesty and ardent lover...

MARY: Friend. He is her *friend*...

BYRON: Yawn.

MARY: Henry Clerval— dear Henry,
Head full of knights and chivalry and danger.
No one had a better childhood than the three of them--

MARY uncovers more of the stage to reveal dusty old books and equipment for experiments.

MARY: They grew together...Henry, with his dragons and swords, and Victor, with his fascination for alchemy and the occult—

VICTOR: Albertus Magnus, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa!

CLAIRE: And Elizabeth? What was her fascination?

BYRON: How to cook a nice haunch of mutton?

MARY: The aerial creation of the poets!

VICTOR: In these pages lie the secrets of transmuting lead into gold-

HENRY: Gold?!

VICTOR: Of creating the elixir of life,
And how to summon ghosts and devils!

ELIZABETH: Devils!

VICTOR: What if I could banish disease from the human frame
And render man invulnerable to any but a violent death?
What if we might raise the dead?

HENRY: What?

ELIZABETH: Necromancy?

HENRY: You would play God, Victor?

They peel back a section of carpet and VICTOR draws a circle in chalk. He pulls out a knife and goblet.

VICTOR: To make their journey across the threshold,
The dead demand the blood of the living—
Will you give a few drops of your living blood?

HENRY & ELIZABETH nod reluctantly nod and the three take turns pricking their thumbs and let their blood drizzle into the cup. VICTOR opens a trap. He slowly pours the blood as he speaks.

VICTOR: A sacrament of the innocents
We are one—
Et nos unum sumus.
Forever one.
O Persephone, Queen of Hades,
Will you bring us one of your dead?

BYRON appears in one of the theater's balcony boxes

BYRON: *(as undead monster)*. I...am...alive. Alive! ALIVE! ALIVE!

PERCY: *(small beat)* Lord Byron, are you quite finished?

MARY: Victor continued his quest to bring the dead back to life.

VICTOR: We offer now our virgin blood as payment—

As PERCY pours the blood—

VICTOR: Qui infernum habitatis, nunc venite huc
You who dwell in Hades, come to us now
Qui infernum habitatis, nunc venite huc

VICTOR/ELIZABETH/HENRY:
Qui infernum habitatis, nunc venite huc
Qui infernum habitatis, nunc venite huc

(beat)

BYRON: Perhaps you need blood from actual virgins.

PERCY: Byron!

BYRON: We could take my carriage into town tomorrow and find for some fresh virgins at the market. Maybe have them for lunch.

MARY: Must you continue to interrupt? You really are quite a monster, aren't you?

BYRON: Thank you.

As BYRON speaks, an unseen mud-covered hand rises from the earth for a sustained moment—

POLIDORI: Do you hear something?

The hand disappears just as they turn back to the hole.

HENRY: *(a beat)* Enough raising of the dead!
Instead, let's race to the giant oak at the base of Mont Blanc
Let us seek the headless Green Knight—

VICTOR: *(underneath)* Qui infernum habitatis, nunc venite huc

ELIZABETH: YES! Come Victor, let the dead rest-- you'll be at University soon enough. Henry, count to three—

VICTOR relents and readies to race.

ELIZABETH: COUNT!

VICTOR & HENRY & ELIZABETH: One...two...

ELIZABETH: *(taking off)* To the giant oak!!

VICTOR & HENRY: Three!

They charge off after her.

VICTOR & HENRY: To the giant oak!

A BOOM of Lightning & Thunder!
SOUND OF TREE EXPLODING

Smoke rises from a hole where a giant oak once stood.
VICTOR holds up smoking branch.

ELIZABETH: Where's the rest of the tree?

HENRY: Gone? Destroyed?

ELIZABETH: Rent by the lightning.

HENRY: But where did it go?

VICTOR: *(looking up to take sky)* It must have offended Jove.
That is true power—
The ancient alchemists say nothing of electricity.
Think of what one might achieve
Think if we truly understood.
How to harness it...
To master it and control it--

HENRY: To control lightning, Victor?!

Another BOLT of LIGHTNING! And then—

A drenching downpour...
Frolicking and ad-libbing
They are soon drenched & soaking wet & muddy.

ELIZABETH collapses suddenly.

MOTHER: (*appearing with blanket*) Elizabeth!
Victor, Henry, help me get her to her room.

VICTOR: Yellow Fever. My more-than-sister grew deathly ill.

ELIZABETH: (*shivering and stuttering with chills*)
Victor w-was r-r-right, there is only,
Only ice inside m-me—
I c-c-can't, I can't seem to
Seem to get, get warm.

MOTHER: You boys shouldn't get too close!

ELIZABETH: You mustn't be near me either —

MOTHER: I will not allow for you to shiver so,
Take this blanket.

ELIZABETH: Of-of course.
I'm s-so fortunate that you that you brought me into your home.
And m-made me feel as-as-as if I were part of your f-f-family.

MOTHER: You are every bit a part of this family—there is no 'as if.'

ELIZABETH: (*shivering*)

HENRY: Will she be alright?

VICTOR: Mother, will she... what can be done?

MOTHER: You can bring some warm chocolate, go...now.
(*to Elizabeth*) Here, you take my warmth. You take it all. Every bit.

She envelops ELIZABETH and holds her tightly.

VICTOR: (*To WALTON*) Our dear mother gave her warmth--
Gave her love—

MOTHER: Take this little locket-- read the inscription.

ELIZABETH: “*You are loved.*”

MOTHER: It will always remind you how much I love you.

VICTOR: And in return for her love, she took only Elizabeth’s Yellow Fever.

ELIZABETH: No

MOTHER: (*dying*) Take care of each other.

ELIZABETH: No, please

MOTHER: One day you must marry. Make your life together.

ELIZABETH: Please, you mustn’t go

MOTHER: Make life...Promise me...make...
Make life...

A chime sounds

MOTHER dies.

Long look between ELIZABETH and VICTOR

MOTHER’s funeral. A graveyard.

MOTHER’S GHOST: (*sings droning dirge*)

MOURNERS stand with black umbrellas.

*MOTHER, with a white umbrella, steps into her grave—
Looks at ELIZABETH/MARY for a long moment. MARY kneels by her
grave. VICTOR/PERCY joins her. Together they close the trap doors.*

Rain pattering

MARY: Percy, will I ever bear the grief of my own dear mother being gone?

They embrace.

PERCY: (*small beat*) Victor Frankenstein thought—

May I, Mary?

MARY nods. With a gesture of her hand, lights change and we are back in the story.

VICTOR: I thought—

If I could discover what causes life to spark

If I could somehow use the power of lightning to make that spark

I might bring our dearly departed mother back to life

I might mend my Elizabeth's breaking heart.

*Maybe a gesture of Elizabeth trying to hold her heart from breaking?
Or perhaps this is where she puts the locket on?*

Elizabeth, I must to University, to Ingolstadt.

ELIZABETH: Of course.

(*brightening*) This was your father's cloak—

He would've wanted you to have it.

It suits you—

He'd have been so proud of you.

I shall be cousin, sister, and mother to sweet little Willmouse.

Promise you might write us ever so often—

VICTOR: Of course.

Goodbye, dear Henry.

HENRY: Goodbye, my friend.

ELIZABETH: Little Willmouse, bid auf wiedersehen to your big brother.

VICTOR: Good-bye, my sweet brother.

ELIZABETH: Now, go learn to harness the power of the lightning bolt.

Sound of horse & carriage setting out

VICTOR: I made my way to Ingolstadt, in Bavaria
A great center of investigation—
My whole life began to open before me.

*TRANSITION TO INGOLSTADT-- The stage is transformed, opened up.
Carpets are straightened or removed. Books and microscopes are added.
Specimen boxes covered in gauzy fabric are lowered from above.
WALDMEN appears in the upper balcony.*

PROFESSOR WALDMEN: Ya, Guten tag, mein frau (or herr)!’ (*Handing a book to an audience member*). You be sure to return that one to the shelf where you found it! And wipe the chocolate from your fingers before touching the pages! (*noticing VICTOR*). You are read?

VICTOR: Yes, Professor, uh, I’ve read the alchemists, Cornelius / Agrippa—

PROFESSOR WALDMEN: Every minute, every instant you have wasted on those books is utterly and entirely lost! These fancies you have so greedily imbibed are a thousand years old and as musty as they are ancient.

Lights begin to pulse inside the covered specimen boxes.

PROFESSOR WALDMEN:
Modern science, however, penetrates into the recesses of Nature
And shows how she works in her hiding places.
The practitioners of modern science have ascended into the heavens,
They have discovered how the blood circulates
And the nature of the very air we breathe.
They cast light into the unknown,
To mock the invisible world with its own shadows.

VICTOR: “To mock the invisible world with its own shadows!”
To understand what cannot be seen!
To know the unknown.
These fateful words compelled me.
Ignited me.
And would ultimately destroy me, Walton.

Treading in the footsteps of others,
I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers,
And unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation!

VICTOR dons an apron and continues examining the contents of the specimen boxes. He takes notes in a small notebook.

VICTOR: I closed not my eyes that night—
Nor for many nights to come, Walton—
My internal being in a state of insurrection and turmoil.
If I am to bring our beloved mother back to life,
I need to find the cause of our vitality

What causes life to succeed?

ELIZABETH: *(from Geneva)* My dearest Victor,

VICTOR: Elizabeth!

ELIZABETH: I trust your professors have found a way to spark your inspiration. Baby Willmose is quite the fast little crawler. Might we dare expect you home for Christmas?

VICTOR: Dear Elizabeth, my course work compels me. Consumes me.
I will try to write more when I have more time to write.

VICTOR crosses upstage to center VOM where the ANGEL of DEATH wheels on a giant specimen box containing a dead body (BYRON) covered by gauzy fabric.

VICTOR: I became acquainted with the science of anatomy.
This was not sufficient.
To examine the causes of life we must first have recourse to death.

WALTON: Victor?

VICTOR: The more recent, the better.
I spent days & nights in morgues & mortuaries with the lost and unclaimed,
In the back rooms of asylums & prisons with executed murderers.
I needed to observe, first hand, the nature of decay,

The corruption and desiccation of the human body—

ANGEL of DEATH circles the stage.

VICTOR: Before Death might fully devour the last ebb of existence.
I disturbed with profane fingers the tremendous secrets of the human frame,

*Reaching under the gauze, VICTOR pulls out a still bloody lung.
He pulls back the sheet to reveal a worm-eaten face and holds up a
wriggling maggot.*

VICTOR: *(beginning of realization)* From the corruption of death,
The bloom of life in the lowliest worm

*Under the following, he brings in cables and begins to hook them up to the
specimen case.*

VICTOR: From death...Life!
Life to death
Death to life // *(Elizabeth starts her next section)*
Life to death
Death to life *(continuing under)*

ELIZABETH: *(from Geneva)* Cousin, we missed you dearly at Christmas.
“O wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?” The edelweiss have
made their answer. And the early Alpen roses are decidedly more magenta
than last year.

Magenta flower petals drop above VICTOR.

A LARGE LIGHT is lowered in above the Specimen Case

VICTOR: I examined every minutiae of causation
Again and again and again and again
Into the dimming darkness.
And then—

WALTON: And then?

VICTOR: Light. Brilliant illuminating light,

ELIZABETH: (*from Geneva*) Brilliant sunshine for this first day of Fall.

Dried Leaves Falling

VICTOR: Galvanic light!

ELIZABETH: We missed you again at Christmas.
Little Willmouse is very tall of his age—

Snow Falling

VICTOR: It was so simple! So very, very simple!

ELIZABETH: Summer again—Dark curling lashes and such a husky voice
for a boy of three!

VICTOR: All the brilliant men before me,

ELIZABETH: Autumn, now.

Dried Leaves Falling

VICTOR: How could they have not seen it?!

ELIZABETH: Henry and I are worried for your health.

VICTOR: I alone understood! I alone knew.

WALTON: What? What did you know, Victor?

VICTOR: I now knew how to bestow animation on lifeless matter!

CRASH of THUNDER AND BLINDING LIGHT

The CORPSE's arm raises into the air—

WALTON: My God, but how?

VICTOR pushes the arm of the CORPSE down.

VICTOR: That, I can never tell.

VICTOR removes the wires.

VICTOR: NEVER.

With the help of the ANGEL of DEATH, VICTOR wheels the corpses away—

WALTON: Never? But Frankenstein—
How can you not?
To reclaim life?
To put an end to so much pain? So much suffering?
How can one not share such knowledge?
You have a moral obligation...

VICTOR: Yes Walton, a moral obligation, indeed—
This knowledge must die with me.

WALTON: But yet you continued?

VICTOR: Had I known then what I now know...

ELIZABETH appears and returns to Mother's grave with a flower.

VICTOR: But I was driven,
Obsessed...

She exits.

VICTOR: *(holding the flower)*
I now understood things that only God had known...
I had now to put that understanding into practice.
Into being.

VICTOR: I worked like a hurricane.

VICTOR opens the grave and enters it.

VICTOR: *(from inside the grave)*

I became denizen of the graveyard and the slaughterhouse.
I searched in tombs and plundered the sepulchers.
I harvested the limbs and digits and organs and tissues that I needed.

Sound of a shovel breaking decaying flesh and bone.

WALTON: Good God, Frankenstein—

*VICTOR emerges from the grave splattered in mud & old blood
He holds a grey lifeless mud-covered heart*

VICTOR: Yes, my good Walton, a desecration, perhaps...
But to bestow the power of animation--
Of life,
Of rebirth,
Of resurrection!

MOTHER's GHOST appears and sings.

VICTOR: Certainly the dead would not begrudge this small donation.

WALTON: What then, Victor? What did you do?

*VICTOR carefully places the heart into the trap. A large hook lowers in
from above. Cables are attached to it as VICTOR speaks.*

VICTOR: Sequestered in the attic of my apartment,
I assembled the unliving limbs and inert organs of my creation.
I attached tubes for the introduction of certain animating fluids
And wires for the conduction of electrical current.
I made him in full scale and provided more muscular mass and additional
layers of dermal tissue for thermal resilience.
I gave him brain of a great philosopher-
I wanted him to be better than I am, Walton.
I sought—

VICTOR's vision of the CREATURE rises out of the grave trap—

VICTOR: Perfection...
Think of it Walton,

He will be magnificent.
Beautiful. So beautiful.
An entirely new species to bless this planet.
(to CREATURE) And you shall bless me as your creator!
My sweet creation. My perfect plum.
No father can so claim the gratitude of his child
As I might one day when you take your first breath.

Lights shift out of VICTOR's Dream of his Creation as the CREATURE is lowered back into the trap.

VICTOR: You are now but lifeless matter,
Yet the very boundaries of Life and Death--
Heretofore unassailable, unsurmountable, unknowable to mortal man--
From that undiscovered country where only God may wander

THUNDER RUMBLE

VICTOR: Where only God may tread,

*MORE RUMBLING
ELECTRO-STATIC SURGINGS*

LIGHTS PULSE and FOG/HAZE emerge from the grave trap and BUILD under--

VICTOR: In that unmapped region,
My foot, my heart, & my eyes may now finally fall
Break boundaries, crack!

CRACK OF THUNDER!

VICTOR: Let light in! Let night out!
Banish darkness, be gone!!
Let light and life flood forth and darkness drown!!!!

GIANT LIGHTNING AND THUNDER CRASH!

VICTOR pulls up the hook--

VICTOR: Nothing?
But how can this be?

Must keep working.
Searching.
It shall work I know it.
So very close, I *need* it to work
For my dear Elizabeth
For our beloved—

MOTHER'S GHOST steps into the room.

VICTOR: Mother?

MARY sings underneath this scene.

MOTHER'S GHOST: Your cheek has grown pale with study.

VICTOR: You're clearly not real...

MOTHER'S GHOST: Always the man of science.
You need to sleep, Victor.

VICTOR: I need to work.

MOTHER'S GHOST: You forget to eat—
You are emaciated with confinement.

VICTOR: I can't just stop—
It's too elusive.

MOTHER'S GHOST: You need to eat.

VICTOR: I am fed by the work. Nourished by discovery.

MOTHER'S GHOST: You forget to breathe.

VICTOR: Breathe, indeed!
Breath is what I seek-- I'm so very close.

MOTHER'S GHOST: Henry and Elizabeth are worried for you.
Even little Willmouse, too.

VICTOR: I do this for them. For you, mother. For you.

MOTHER'S GHOST: You've stopped answering their letters.

Maybe letters written on parchment drop from the sky

VICTOR: Letters? No, I'm...I'm sure I have...

MOTHER'S GHOST: Nearly six years and you haven't been home to Geneva.

VICTOR: Six years?! No—

MOTHER'S GHOST: Look for life in life, Victor. Not in death.

MOTHER'S GHOST opens the grave and exits into it.

VICTOR gathers the letters.

VICTOR: Yes. Six years.

Thunder rumbling.

MARY with Candleabra

MARY: But being so driven, he could not help but give it one last try...
On a dreary night of November...
Victor Frankenstein,
The pale student of unhallowed arts knelt beside the *thing*...

She opens the grave trap.

MARY: The lifeless creature he had patched and sewn together.
A most hideous phantasm of fluid & flesh...

Thunder rumbling.

An electro-static charge builds and builds then—

BLINDING CRASH of THUNDER & LIGHTNING

A hideous hand emerges from the trap—

The fingers begin to move one by one, articulate, reach toward VICTOR

VICTOR: Have I done it!? Have I finally made life?

MARY: Victor looked into the watery yellow eyes of the ungodly creature he had brought to life. The beauty of his dream vanished and his heart was soon filled with breathless horror and disgust.

The hand reaches toward VICTOR, pleading, needing.

VICTOR: O God!?
O, God, do I mock you?
What have I done?
This abomination must not be.

VICTOR 'throws' the creepy hand into the trap and slams the doors. He lays on it as the CREATURE pounds from below.

VICTOR: Let it...subside.

POUNDING!

VICTOR: Let this aberration just...

Pounding!

VICTOR: Die away...

pounding fades away

VICTOR: To think on what I had nearly done?!

VICTOR grabs his suitcase and cloak.

MARY: After six years, Victor Frankenstein was now ready to walk away from his creation, to return to Elizabeth and William and Henry, to his life...

A knock.

The pounding begins again

VICTOR: No, no, please. I can't. I...I...

The trap flies open. VICTOR throws the cloak in.

VICTOR backs up slowly as the newly cloaked CREATURE emerges.

ALL SOUND STOPS
SOUND of Inhalation
Exhalation
Inhalation
Exhalation

The CREATURE reaches toward his Creator.

VICTOR: No. I...
I can't...I...I...
I reject you...
I reject you!

MARY: Terrified, Victor ran away from the horror that was coming to life in his attic apartment. He ran into the night. Ran and ran and ran and ran until—

VICTOR collapses in exhaustion.

Sound of church-bells, birds, morning.

HENRY appears with a suitcase in the bright morning light--

HENRY: Frankenstein?? Victor, is that you?!

VICTOR: (*dazed shock*) Lancelot?!
Good Sir Knight, you've come, come to rescue me?!

HENRY: Victor, it's me Henry...Elizabeth sent me to find you. What are you doing in this November morning without your cloak?! You must be half-frozen.

VICTOR: You mustn't ask me!

Dogs Barking

The cloaked SHADOW of CREATURE appears.

VICTOR: There! *There!* He can tell! Ask him!

HENRY: Whereon do you look??

VICTOR: There! He was there – I saw...

HENRY: There's no one here but us.
My God, you're burning up with fever.

VICTOR: He was there... I saw him...

VICTOR gasps for air and then collapses.

HENRY: Victor!

MARY: The heroic Henry Clerval spent several months nursing his friend back from the precipitous edge of death. Victor Frankenstein put the memory of his doomful creation behind him.

VICTOR (*to self*): Surely it could not have survived.
Surely it was just a bad dream that never lived.
No.
It never happened.

Henry re-enters with tea and a letter.

HENRY: Here, drink this.

VICTOR: Henry, I should not've survived if it weren't for you.

HENRY: Nonsense. But you are looking better.
This arrived today.

HENRY hands VICTOR a letter.

VICTOR: It's from—

ELIZABETH: My dearest cousin, to think we might have you home by Spring! Little William is quite the charmer—

VICTOR: Willmouse?

WILLIAM: William!

ELIZABETH: Get down from there!
He insists-- he's so grown up—
He has already two little wives who seem quite taken with his dimples.
Not too shabby for a boy of seven!

VICTOR: Seven?! I cannot wait to see William. And I suppose it shan't be too terribly awful, to see my more-than-sister, my Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: In the meantime, our brother and your more-than-sister shall endeavor not to forget who you are and might even look forward-- however slightly-- to having you home.

VICTOR: Home...

HENRY: Good Sir Frankenstein, what say you to one last night of revelry? One last night before you reunite with our dear Elizabeth and dear little William.

A VILLAGER (CLAIRE) brings three steins of beer, one on her head.

HENRY & VICTOR: *(toasting)* To William!

HENRY: One last night to bid auf wiedersehen to this quaint little Bavarian hamlet.

The VILLAGER dances a Polka with them. ELIZABETH appears without her necklace. The dance is in slow-motion under her letter.

ELIZABETH: Dearest Victor,
How wonderful that you are returning home.
I wanted to write you of our joy at your impending return.
I wanted so for your homecoming to be a glorious celebration.
I wanted for all of us to be together again after so very long.

I am loathe to relate that instead we are all tears and wretchedness—

VICTOR: What?

Polka Music fades slowly

ELIZABETH: How to tell you—

Our little William,
Our little Willmouse
He is gone

VICTOR: Gone?

ELIZABETH: He is...
O my Victor
He is...
We were up in the meadow—
Lit only by fire-flies in that time between day and night—
He went off to collect some in a jar

When I found him,
He was
All alone
Stretched out on the grass
Cold and motionless—

He begged me so
I should have said no
I allowed him to wear the locket that was our mother's.
His murderer took it and —

VICTOR: Murderer?!

HENRY hands VICTOR a suitcase and VICTOR leaves immediately.

HENRY: (*as VICTOR travels*) Dearest friend, your disaster is irreparable.
Dear lovely William now walks with his angel mother.

MARY: Victor arrived in Switzerland and stood in the meadow where his brother William had been found. Lightning flashed on the snowy peaks of Jura and Mont Blanc.

Thunder rolling. Lightning striking

VICTOR: Willmouse, sweet angel,
This is thy dirge,
This is thy funeral.
What kind of beast could murder someone so innocent?

LOUD CRASH OF THUNDER & LONG LIGHTNING reveals—

SHADOW of the CREATURE.

VICTOR: You— Alive!?
(dawning, slowly) Of course...
Nothing human could have killed that sweet child.
You murderer! You Monster!

*A FLASH of LIGHTNING and the MONSTER is gone.
ELIZABETH appears—a jump in time*

ELIZABETH: Cousin

VICTOR: Cousin

ELIZABETH: You've returned

VICTOR: I have, I...I,

ELIZABETH: You must be famished.

VICTOR: I can't remember having eaten.

She starts to make him a sandwich.

ELIZABETH: Allow me to make you something.

You must hate me with all your heart.

You must think me a monster.

VICTOR: My dearest Elizabeth,

ELIZABETH: You could not hate me more than I hate myself.
I gave our mother my Yellow Fever
I gave that sweet boy her locket and now—

VICTOR: It is not your fault, Elizabeth

ELIZABETH: It *is* Victor, I am responsible for—

VICTOR: No, Elizabeth, no—

ELIZABETH: I am, Victor, I am.

VICTOR: No

ELIZABETH: I am, Victor. He died because of me.

VICTOR: He didn't. You are not responsible! You are not.
It was... something monstrous...It was...IT WAS...I...I..

He turns away.

ELIZABETH: Victor?

VICTOR: I can't seem to
...um
breathe...
I'm sorry...
I must (*starts to leave...*)

ELIZABETH: Victor, please don't go.

VICTOR leaves and starts climbing

WALTON: She didn't know?

VICTOR: I climbed into the Alps, Walton,

ELIZABETH: Don't leave me alone, Victor.

VICTOR: To get some air,

ELIZABETH: I can't bear this by myself—

VICTOR: To breathe.

ELIZABETH: Victor, please, don't go away!

VICTOR: Up there, up above it all—

WALTON: You didn't tell her, did you?

VICTOR: I felt like—

ELIZABETH: Please stay—

VICTOR: I felt like God—

CREATURE: (*appearing*) Then I must be Adam.

VICTOR: Adam?!

You murdered an innocent child with those hideous hands!

CREATURE: And who made these hideous hands?
God at least made Adam in his own image.

ELIZABETH: Victor—

CREATURE: Adam was loved by his Creator,

ELIZABETH: Please—

CREATURE: Not Adam am I, but Satan.

VICTOR: Satan, indeed!

CREATURE: But Satan at least had fellow devils to cheer him—

I am alone.

ELIZABETH: So very alone.

CREATURE: You would abandon your own?

VICTOR: You are not my responsibility—
You are not mine!

MARY: PERCY!

Rain patters at the windows of the Villa Diodati

Long Beat.

POLIDORI: Mary?

MARY: Oh, Percy. I, too, feel so very, very alone sometimes...

PERCY: Alone? Aren't I enough for you, Mary?

MARY: Yes, of course, my love.
My heart is so very full of you,
You are all // that I ever—

CLAIRE: *(from off)* Pretty, pretty, Percy, where are you?

CLAIRE appears wearing the Ram's head & horns holding a decanter of Sherry and two glasses.

CLAIRE: Pale Percy, pretty-pants!
(seeing that she is interrupting) Oh.

MARY: Aren't I enough for you, Percy?
Harriet? Claire? The others?
Can't I be enough?

PERCY: I thought we agreed, my moon,
Love cannot be regulated or bound by some law or archaic moral system.

MARY: Of course—

PERCY: The human heart should be open, free, and expansive.

MARY: Yes,
But the heart is fragile, too.
It must be held in two gentle hands
Guarded
With care
With tenderness

Or else—

PERCY: Or else?

(Another beat...)

The suitcase KNOCKs. All stare at it. Something KNOCKS again inside it.

PERCY: What was that?

MARY: My loneliness.

PERCY: What?!

MARY & HER CREATURE: *(after sustained inhalation)* Listen...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT 1

ACT II

In the BLACK OUT

A Simsian drone

Sound of WATER DRIPPING

CREATURE: (*distorted v/o*). Listen...

The room, now antiseptic. White. Institutional.

The single suitcase.

MARY sits next to a metal bucket in opposite corner

A LARGE LIGHTING (4K??) INSTRUMENT illuminates the suitcase.

sub-amniotic-- distorted heartbeat.

The suitcase KNOCKS.

CREATURE EXPLODES out of the suitcase spitting blood

-- LIGHTS & SOUND SPIKE

DARKNESS

FLASH OF

CREATURE extubates a long drainage tube from his dripping abdomen.

DARKNESS

FLASH OF

VICTOR discovering CREATURE trying to walk.

VICTOR throwing CLOAK at him, leaving

VICTOR (v/o begins): I can't. I can't. I reject you. I reject you.

CREATURE reaches for his CREATOR.

DARKNESS

FLASH OF

On the street--LOUD DISORIENTING HORSES WHINNEYING

DARKNESS

FLASH OF

HENRY helping VICTOR,

SOUNDS of DOGS BARKING

VICTOR pointing at CREATURE.

DARKNESS

FLASH OF

A BEGGAR WOMAN and CREATURE screaming

DARKNESS

FLASH OF

IMAGE of CREATURE being beaten

DARKNESS

FLASH OF

IMAGE of CREATURE being beaten more

DARKNESS

FLASH OF

IMAGE of CREATURE being choked

CREATURE weeping.

SNOW.

MISERY.

*A pale light reveals MARY, a MOON floating high above.
As she speaks, she floats down to him.*

MARY: The radiant moon beamed down at the newly born soul.
So much pain and desolation.
The gentle light stole over the heavens and gave him a new sensation—

CREATURE: *(smiling)* mm?

MARY: Time passed.
The Celestial Mother became his sole companion and caretaker
In her light, the Creature learned to forage for food.
The misery of winter gave way to the bloom of spring—

Sound of Birdsong

CREATURE: *(smiling)* mmm...

MARY: He learned to differentiate between the harsh notes of the sparrow
and the dulcet song of the morning dove. One day, as he wandered deeper
into the forest, he heard a sound that soothed the throbbing pain inside his
head—

Sound of guitar, a woman's laugh

A humble COTTAGE is established— a crude table and three stools.

MARY: He came upon a humble cottage.
And though he had learned to avoid humans,
Something about this family seemed different.

The CREATURE cautiously peeks in on this idyllic family.

FELIX & SOFIA kiss.

CREATURE: hm?

De LACEY: Felix? Sofia?

FELIX: Mon père!

MARY: After many weeks of watching from his hidden place, he slowly began to understand.

SOFIA puts a small bowl of thin soup in front of DeLACEY.

De LACEY: Ah, Confit of Duck?

FELIX: Papa, it is only water with a few sad turnips. Why do we not sell your books that we might eat more than warm broth, my Father?

CREATURE: Fa-ther

De LACEY: The body can endure much, my son. But the soul must be nourished with companionship and stories! Read to me, Felix.

MARY: Night after night, the Creature listened--

FELIX: "The mirror is a worthless invention."

De LACEY: *(finishing it)* "The only way to truly see yourself is in the reflection of someone else's eyes."

SOFIA: I like this Monsieur Voltaire.

MARY: and he learned, and his new mind expanded.

SOFIA: "What a piece of work is man
How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty"

SOFIA/De LACEY/FELIX:
"In form and moving how express and admirable

SOFIA/De LACEY/FELIX/CREATURE: "In action, how like an angel!

Thunder rumble

CREATURE: "In apprehension, how like a god!"

THUNDER CRASH!

The CREATURE takes in the beauty of this family

CREATURE: When I behold my person reflected in a glass pane

MARY holds up an empty frame and 'mirrors' the CREATURE.

CREATURE: I see what a wretched outcast I am.
I am similar to them

MARY: But also strangely unlike them.

CREATURE: I am dependent on none,
I am related to none,
There are none to lament my annihilation.
None. Why? Why none?
Who am I? What am I? Whence did I come? What is my destination?

MARY: My heart yearned to be known.

CREATURE: My heart yearned to be loved.

De LACEY plays guitar alone. The CREATURE is suddenly in the cottage.

De LACEY: Have you come here to rob me?

CREATURE: No.

De LACEY: To hurt us?

CREATURE: No.

De LACEY: Then sit and have some breakfast.

CREATURE: I am not—

De LACEY: You must be hungry.

CREATURE: No...

De LACEY: You sound hungry.

CREATURE: I...am.

De LACEY: Then, eat.

De LACEY slides a plate of bread to CREATURE.

De LACEY: Sit and eat, my son.

CREATURE: Son?

De LACEY: I hear such pain in your voice.
Might I touch your face?

CREATURE: You mustn't.

De LACEY: My eyes have forsaken me. Please allow these old fingers to see you. Please. I want to know what you look like.

CREATURE: I am...hideous.

De LACEY: You are not.

CREATURE: How can you say that? You are without sight.

De LACEY: I can hear you. May I?

De LACEY extends his hand.

(A long moment of decision.)

The CREATURE relents and lets De LACEY touch his face.

De LACEY: You are so young. Yet...so old.
Such sorrow you have endured.

CREATURE crumples and weeps, clutching De LACEY'S knees

De LACEY: Hey, shhh. Sweet boy. All is well. All is well.

*Maybe DeLACEY plays music as the CREATURE gently weeps.
FELIX & SOFIA enter having collected some wood and apricots—
this startles the CREATURE who springs to his feet, knocking over the table
and a chair--*

SOFIA: What is that Felix?!

FELIX: Out vile thing, OUT MONSTER!

*FELIX viciously begins beating the CREATURE.
Much of the following dialogue is chaos and overlaps on top of itself.*

CREATURE: FAHTHER

De LACEY: STOP IT!!! STOP IT!!!
YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU ARE DOING!!!

FELIX: GET OUT, YOU BEAST! GET OUT, YOU MONSTER!

*The world around the CREATURE becomes slow and distorted as he speaks
the following:*

CREATURE: *(as he is being beaten)* I could have torn the Felix.
I could have torn his limbs from his body.
As a lion tears the antelope.
But I didn't.

FELIX: OUT! GET OUT!

De LACEY: Please, my son! STOP IT!!!

SOFIA: ¡Fuera! Basura asquerosa [OUT! Disgusting garbage!]

The CREATURE departs.

FELIX: Out! Out! Wretched FILTH! Out I say!

CREATURE: I escaped into the dark.
Moonless dark.
My body...hurt
I wanted to hurt...back.
I wanted to hurt...Felix.
To make him feel the pain he gave me.
But I didn't. Couldn't.

DeLACEY, FELIX, & SOFIA depart with many of their books and belongings.

CREATURE: I watched them pack—
They took their books.
They took their guitar.
They abandoned their cottage.
They abandoned me.

MARY: He hurt somewhere else.
(*pointing to her own heart*) It hurt—

CREATURE: In my heart?

MARY: Deeper even

CREATURE: I piled the vengeance of my hurt upon their forsaken cottage.
I burned it to the ground.

*The CREATURE sets the cottage and the forest on fire.
He howls wildly into the night—
MARY tries to console this wounded soul.
The CREATURE collapses, breath heaving.*

CREATURE: Does it hurt in my...
Soul?

Rain patters at the window back in the Villa Diodati

(LONGISH BEAT)

PERCY, CLAIRE, and POLIDORI step in separately.

POLIDORI: How could this patchwork of parts have a soul?
We don't even know where it resides in the human frame.

CLAIRE: (*holding her pregnant belly*) Doesn't the soul come from
Heaven, from God?

MARY: Maybe it comes of suffering.

PERCY: Should it still be bleeding like that?

MARY: Some wounds are slow to heal, Percy. Does it offend you?

PERCY: I find it unpretty, Mary.

MARY: Unpretty, Percy?
Would you have me stop?
Concede this contest?
Abandon my story, my creation?

PERCY: Never, not ever, my moon...
Your creature is unpretty, but your creation is beautiful.

MARY: Viciously attacked and beaten and then forsaken
The Creature had been all but consumed by the blaze of his vengeful fury
And yet...(*feeling her own heart*)
More than a corner of his heart remained
Unburnt, unscorched, and tempered with
Hope.

PERCY: Hope, Mary?

MARY: The Gods' final gift to Pandora, Percy.

PERCY: You said the human heart was fragile
That is must be held with 'two gentle hands'...

MARY: Yes, but somehow the human heart endures suffering

For a while, at least...

Something unresolved again passes between them.

MARY: The moon shone down on the Creature

MARY presses two hands on the CREATURE's heart. He discovers something in his pocket—

CREATURE: A notebook?

The CREATURE thumbs through VICTOR's notebook.

MARY: The Creature moved through the night, plunging into the dark unknown, guided only by a dream—

CREATURE: “But to bestow the power of animation--
Of life, of rebirth...”

“And you shall bless me as your *creator!*”

My creator?

“Victor Frankenstein. Belrive, Switzerland.”

MARY: After many weeks he found himself at the foothills of the Alps.

WILLIAM enters with a jar of fireflies.

WILLIAM: Stay back, Dragon-spawn!

CREATURE: So small. What are you?

WILLIAM: A man, ogre.

CREATURE: A small man.

WILLIAM: William, I am William Frankenstein—

CREATURE: Frankenstein? Victor??...

WILLIAM: Victor is my brother, a great man of science.