

Mary Shelley FRANKENSTEIN

Victor Frankenstein is a young, ambitious scientist who wants to make a better world, but doesn't understand the consequences of his work. Victor makes great progress in the study of medicine and biology and creates a new kind of human being – one that is so terrifying it's known simply as 'the monster'. In this fantastic adventure story, Victor and the monster fight a long courageous battle. This brilliant science-fiction story asks questions about science that we're still trying to find the answers to today.

In this reader you will find:

- Information about Mary Shelley's life
- Sections focusing on background and context
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension activities
- B2 First style activities
- Exit test

Tags

Science Fiction Fantasy/Horror

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Mary Shelley

Stage 4 B2

FRANKENSTEIN

Readers



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Young Adult

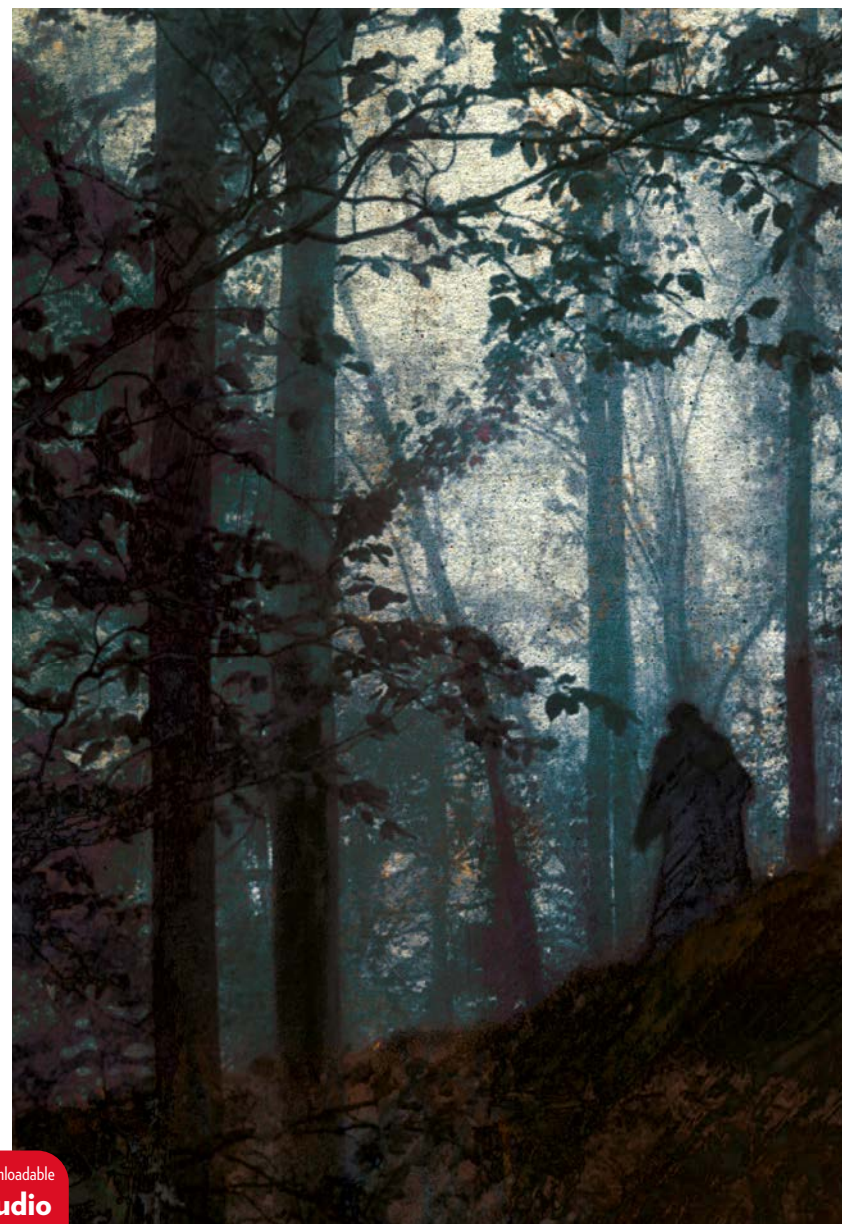


Readers

Classic

Mary Shelley

FRANKENSTEIN



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Book brief

- 1 *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* is an 1818 novel written by English author Mary Shelley, considered by many to be the first example of a science fiction story.
- 2 The novel is set in the 18th century and the action takes place in various places such as Geneva, The Swiss Alps and near the North Pole.
- 3 It tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young ambitious scientist who creates a creature in his laboratory without realising how this monster will change his life.
- 4 The story has both elements of the Gothic novel and the Romantic movement and is told through a series of letters that Captain Robert Walton writes to his sister, which include both Victor's and the monster's stories.
- 5 Main themes include loss, guilt and the consequences of going against the laws of nature.

Mary Shelley

Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus

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Main Characters



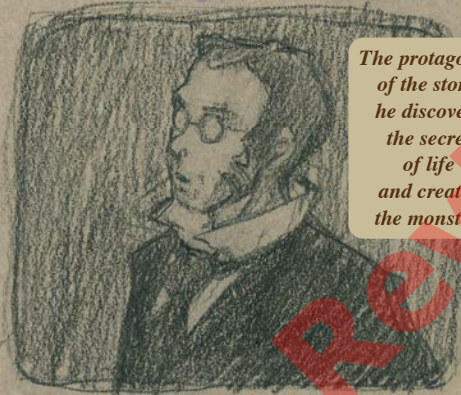
Created by Victor Frankenstein, the monster is very tall and ugly but also intelligent.

THE MONSTER



Victor's father, he always tries to help his son.

ALPHONSE FRANKENSTEIN



The protagonist of the story, he discovers the secret of life and creates the monster.

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN



An explorer on an expedition to the North Pole, he meets Victor in the Arctic.

ROBERT WALTON



Victor Frankenstein's best friend.

HENRY CLERVAL



Adopted by the Frankenstein's as a child, she becomes Victor's wife.

ELIZABETH LAVENZA

Robert Walton's sister.



MARGARET

A kind, loving woman who likes to help the poor.



VICTOR'S MOTHER

Victor's younger brother.



ERNEST

Victor's youngest brother.



WILLIAM

Elizabeth's friend. She helps her manage the Frankenstein house.



JUSTINE

The elderly man's son.



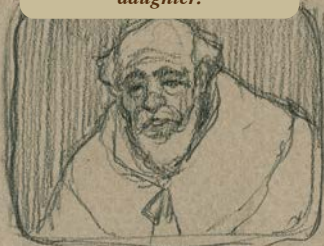
FELIX

The elderly man's daughter.



AGATHA

A poor, blind man who lives in a cottage with his son and daughter.



ELDERLY FATHER

Victor asks the judge to help him catch the monster.



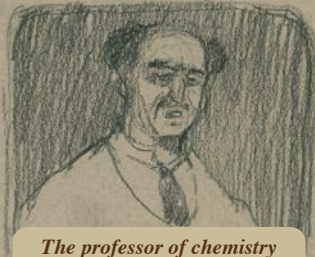
JUDGE

A magistrate who understands Victor because he can speak German.



MR KIRWIN

The professor of chemistry admired by Victor at university.



MR WALDMAN

Before you Read

Vocabulary

- 1 Most of the story takes place in Switzerland and near the Arctic circle. Complete the table with words you expect to read.

Switzerland	Arctic
mountains valleys	ice freezing

- 2 Match the opposites.

1 ☐ calm

2 ☐ love

3 ☐ excited

4 ☐ good

5 ☐ happy

6 ☐ hope

7 ☐ joy

8 ☐ kind

9 ☐ heroic

a despair

b depressed

c selfish

d evil

e cowardly

f hatred

g disappointed

h wild

i sorrow

Speaking

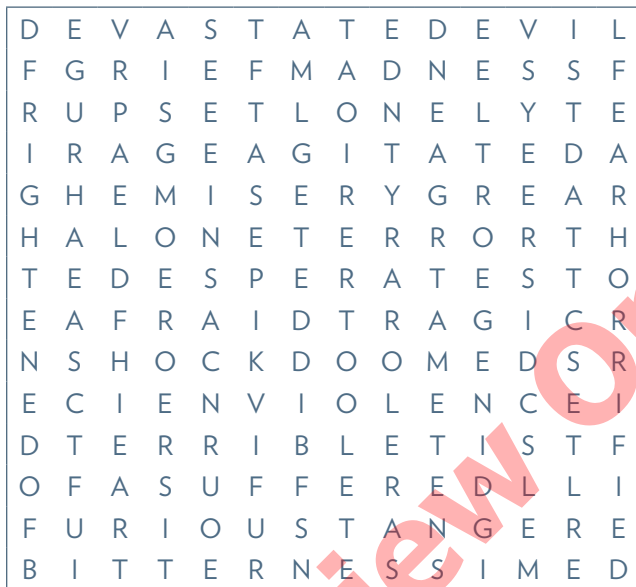
21st Century Skills

- 3 Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- 1 What words would you use to describe your character?
- 2 Do you always show what you feel or do you try to hide your emotions? Why?
- 3 What makes you happy and when do you feel sad?

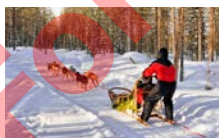
Vocabulary

- 4 Find 25 words that describe negative emotions and discover the hidden phrase that says what Victor Frankenstein wanted to become.



- 5 Write under each picture the correct name and decide which means of transport you expect to find in the story that is set in the late 1700s.

coach • cable car • rowing boat • steam ship • lorry • sledge



1



2



3



4



5



6

A Mysterious Visitor



Letter I

*To Mrs Saville, England
St Petersburg, Dec. 11th, 17–*

My dear Sister,

You'll be pleased to learn that I arrived in St Petersburg safely yesterday. You don't need to worry anymore! I'm confident that my expedition to the North Pole will be a success in spite of the dangers. I feel the north wind here and the smell of it increases my excitement at my new adventure. I'm going to a place where the sun doesn't set, where I'll discover a new and wonderful land, where I can carry out experiments to find out how compasses* work.*

It is a dangerous, unknown land, but I feel as happy and safe as a little child setting off in a boat on a lake. One day, dear Margaret, one day I'll be famous.

I'm so grateful for your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother,*

Robert Walton

expedition journey to make scientific discoveries

compass instrument you use to find direction
affectionate loving

Frankenstein

Letter II

To Mrs Saville, England

Archangel, 28th March, 17–

Everything is ready for my expedition to the north. I've hired a whaling boat*, have an excellent crew* and as soon as the weather improves, we'll set off on our historic voyage* of discovery. There's one thing missing, however, and it makes me suffer. I don't have a friend to share the difficulties and excitements of my journey with. I'm hopeful of success, but ask you to remember me with affection if you never hear from me again.*

Your affectionate brother,

Robert Walton

Letter III

August 5th, 17–

Something so surprising and strange has happened to us since my last letter to you.

The southern gales made our journey to the north quicker than I expected, but our ship has been almost completely stuck in the ice for the past two days and the crew and I are beginning to become very worried. There's nothing we can do but wait.*

Yesterday afternoon the mist lifted and we had a clear view of the huge areas of ice around us. Suddenly there was a shout from one of the crew. We ran to him and looked to where he was pointing. There,

hire pay to use something for a certain amount of time

whaling boat small boat for catching whales

crew (here) people who work on a ship

voyage a long journey by sea

gale very strong wind



only half a mile from us, a gigantic figure wearing furs was riding at full speed on a sledge* pulled by eight dogs. We watched him as he disappeared towards the north.*

Last night, the ice around the ship broke, and we were free to continue our journey. Next morning when I woke up, I saw the crew pulling something up onto the ship from the ice below. To my surprise, I saw a man, thin and ill from the cold and lack of food. He spoke English but had a European accent. What was even stranger, in my view, was that he only allowed us to bring him onto the ship when I told him we were searching for the North Pole, because that was where he wanted to go too! When I looked over the side of my ship, I saw his sledge was half broken and only one of his dogs was left alive to pull it.

After that, he collapsed and we carried him to my cabin. We looked after him as well as we could, but he was very weak and I was worried that he'd die. His eyes gave the impression of wildness*, even madness*, but he's so grateful for everything we do for him, he gives us the sweetest smiles. It was many days before he was well enough to speak to us. We had a lot of questions to ask him.*

'Why have you come so far north on that strange sledge, risking your life in this way?' I asked.

'I'm following someone who's running away from me,' he replied.

'Is this person also travelling on a sledge pulled by dogs?' I asked, and when he nodded I told him of the gigantic man we'd seen.

'That's him,' the stranger said.

gigantic huge

sledge see page 13, the dogs are pulling a sledge

collapse fall down

wildness (here) violent, extremely strong

madness craziness



Mary Shelley

The stranger became agitated. He wanted to go immediately on deck* and look for this giant man on his sledge, but he was still too ill so I wouldn't let him, though it took me all my strength to stop him. I told a member of the crew to watch for the gigantic man instead.*

August 13th, 17–

During the time I've spent with my strange guest, I've begun to like him more and more. In fact he's become my very good friend. He speaks so well, is so educated, seems to know so much. Now that his health has improved, he spends as much time as he can on deck looking for the sledge and the gigantic traveller.

There's one thing which really worries me – he seems more unhappy than anyone I've ever seen. He spends his days lost in misery. I can't imagine what's happened to make him so sad.

To make him feel a little better, I told him how happy I was to have him as my new friend.

'Yes,' said the stranger, 'a friend is indeed a great gift. I had a friend once, the best friend a man could wish for. I envy you, Captain Walton, you have hope, your whole life in front of you, but I, I've lost everything. All that I have left is despair.' He became extraordinarily agitated and his face was full of grief.*

Yesterday, the stranger said to me, 'You see how much I suffer, and of course you're curious about why. Before I met you, I'd decided that my terrible story would die with me and remain a secret. I've changed

agitated extremely anxious, nervous
deck (here) 'floor' on a ship

envy want what someone else has

Frankenstein

my mind. You've told me of your expedition to the North Pole, your great desire for knowledge, but I hope with all my heart that in your search for knowledge you don't make the same mistakes as me. I don't want your story to end in tragedy and evil as mine has done. I hope that my tale may serve as a warning to you.'*

He's promised to start telling me his story tomorrow. I feel sure it'll be terrible and tragic. I've decided to write it down for you in this journal, dear Sister. I'm impatient for this story to begin.

Victor's Story

I come from an important and well-known family in the city of Geneva in Switzerland. I had a happy childhood, my mother and father loved each other very much. After they were married, they travelled in France, Germany and Italy, where I was born, in Naples. My first memories are my mother and father's love for me. I was an only child* for many years. I was the centre of their world and they taught me above all to be patient, kind and to have self-control*. My mother was very happy but often said how much she wanted a daughter.

My mother liked to help poor families and would visit them when we travelled, to give them money. It was on one of these visits that she found a child who had the most beautiful blond hair. Indeed, her hair was of the brightest gold. She looked so adorable and sweet. My mother asked the family about this child. When she discovered that the child's parents had died and that these poor people were only

desire strong wish/want
only child no brothers or sisters

self-control not showing your emotions,
reactions etc

Mary Shelley

looking after her, my mother persuaded them to let us take her to our home to live with us.

The next day, my mother said to me, 'Victor, I have a surprise for you. A pretty present.' And so it was that Elizabeth Lavenza came to live with us as part of the family and she became my adored playmate*, sister and companion.

Elizabeth and I were almost the same age, but our characters were very different. She was calm and poetic, while I wanted to find out how things worked. From an early age I looked at the world with the eyes of a scientist and more than anything I wanted to understand the hidden laws of nature.

When I was seven, my mother gave birth to a son and some time later to another boy. My family decided to live permanently* in Geneva. I wasn't happy about this as I didn't have many friends there, I preferred to be alone. I did have one good friend though, he was heroic*, loved danger and was a wonderful storyteller and writer. His name was Henry Clerval.

No one could have had a happier childhood. I was full of energy and had a strong temper, but Elizabeth always found a way to calm me, and in time I learnt to put all my energies into my scientific studies. I didn't go to school, but instead studied the books in my father's library. I was free to choose what I read; my father wasn't scientific and didn't follow me in my studies. By chance, I started to read the scientific texts of ancient Greece. At the time, no one explained to me that the ideas in these books were completely wrong and that

playmate person you play with (as a child)
permanently forever

heroic very brave

After-Reading Activities • Chapter One

Speaking

21st Century Skills

1 Discuss in pairs. Give reasons for your answers.

- 1 Are you enjoying the story of Frankenstein?
- 2 Do you like Victor?
- 3 Would you like to explore the Arctic?
- 4 What countries in the world would you most like to visit?
- 5 Are there any countries you wouldn't like to visit?
- 6 Would you like to make a discovery to help mankind?
- 7 In your opinion, what were the three most important inventions or discoveries of the twentieth century?
- 8 Are there any inventions or discoveries you'd like to un-invent or un-discover?



Reading

2 Put the events in the order they happen in the story. (1-11).

- A** ☐ Walton and his crew see a gigantic man on a sledge.
- B** ☐ Victor sees lightning destroy a tree and becomes interested in studying electricity.
- C** ☐ Victor meets Professor Waldman and begins to study chemistry.
- D** ☐ Robert Walton arrives in St Petersburg.
- E** ☐ The stranger tells Walton he's following the gigantic man on the sledge.
- F** ☐ Victor talks about his friends Elizabeth Lavenza and Henry Clerval.
- G** ☐ Victor's mother dies and he goes to university.
- H** ☐ Victor decides to explore the unknown powers of science.
- I** ☐ Robert Walton hires a crew and a whaling boat.
- J** ☐ Victor starts telling Walton about his childhood.
- K** ☐ The crew pull a stranger from the ice.

Grammar B2 First

- 3** Read the letter below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap.

My dear Sister,

You'll be pleased to learn (1) I arrived in St Petersburg safely yesterday. You don't need to worry (2)! I'm confident that my expedition (3) the North Pole (4) be a success in (5) of the dangers. I feel the north wind here and the smell of it increases my excitement at my new adventure. I'm going to a place (6) the sun doesn't set, where I'll discover a new and wonderful land, where I can carry out experiments to find (7) how compasses work.

It's a dangerous, unknown land, but I feel (8) happy and safe as a little child setting off in a boat on a lake. (9) day, dear Margaret, one day I'll be famous.

I'm so grateful (10) your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother,

Robert Walton

Writing B2 First

- 4** Imagine that you're Robert Walton. Using 140-190 words, write a letter to your sister Margaret describing Victor Frankenstein.



Grammar

- 5 Complete the sentences using the correct form and tense of the verbs in the box.

ask • ride • inspire • see • make • say • pull
be • stand • decide (x2)

- 1 Only half a mile from us a gigantic figure at full speed on a sledge by eight dogs.
- 2 I to write it down for you in this journal, dear sister.
- 3 At the time, no one explained to me that the ideas in these books completely wrong and that modern science many new discoveries.
- 4 I watching this incredible sight from the front door of our house, when suddenly, I fire coming out of a beautiful old oak tree, which stood close to the front of our house.
- 5 My friend, Henry Clerval, his father if he could come and study with me, but his father no.
- 6 Frankenstein by his teacher Mr Waldman.
- 7 It was the day that my destiny.

Grammar

- 6 Complete the sentences below using the conjunctions in the box.

so • although • when • but • as

- 1 We watched him he disappeared towards the north.
- 2 He spoke English had a European accent.
- 3 He only allowed us to bring him onto the ship I told him we were searching for the North Pole.
- 4 He wanted to go immediately on deck to look for this giant man, but he was still too ill I wouldn't let him.
- 5 at the time it seemed such an unimportant event, it was to lead to the complete destruction of everything I loved.