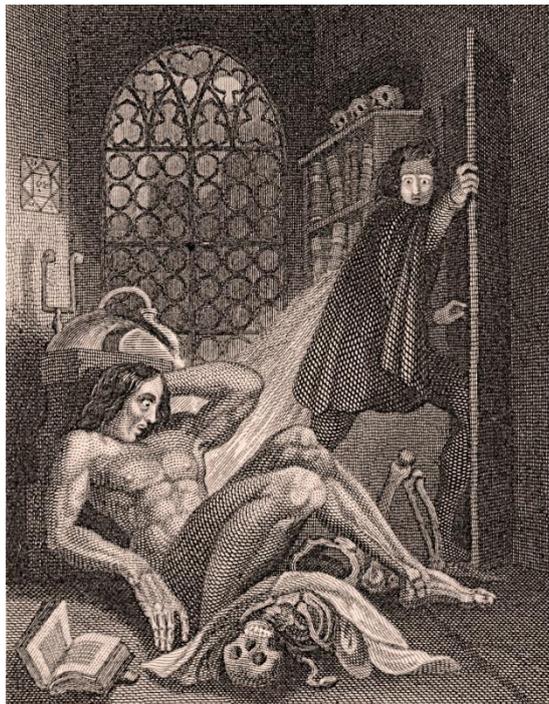


THE FRANKENSTEIN PROJECT

STORIES WRITTEN DURING THE **COVID-19 LOCKDOWN** OF 2020

BY THE **ROCKINGHAM AND DISTRICTS PLAY READING GROUP**



At our Group meeting in March 2020 we read an adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel Frankenstein. Having only finished the first Act which concluded when 'The Creature' materialised - we did not know how the play ended. These stories are possible alternative endings as imagined by our members.

Diana Morgan (Group co-ordinator) June 2020

FRANKENSTEIN REVERSES by Michael Addison

FRANKENSTEIN IN THE MOUNTAINS by Jean Barnes

FRANKENSTEIN FINDS A SOLUTION IN AMERICA by Jennie Cox

FRANKENSTEIN LOOKS TO THE STARS by Diana Morgan

FRANKENSTEIN HAS A CHOICE by Veda Orgles

FRANKENSTEIN ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY by Mac Thomson

FRANKENSTEIN MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE by Joan Westcott

Illustration on title page. Engraving by Theodore Von Hoist (1810-1844. Frontispiece of the 1831 revised edition of the novel by Mary Shelley.

FRANKENSTEIN REVERSES BY Michael Addison

Victor stirred and slowly came round, he staggered to his feet. There on the table lay the monstrous form. "Oh no, it's still there, what have I done" he exclaimed. The Creature stirred and opened its eyes, looking at Victor he said "Where am I? - what happened?" Amazingly, the voice was that of a young boy! "I was just running home to get out of the storm when there was this great big flash of lightning and I don't remember else till waking up here, I don't understand, this isn't my body- I'm just a schoolboy, and what's this big bolt thing sticking out of my head? I'm frightened, I want to go home." "I'm sorry," said Victor. "I don't know what happened either. Something has gone terribly wrong with the experiment. I suppose that bolt in your head could have come from that great bolt of lightning that struck you"

"What are you going to do about it? said the boy. "I don't want to stay in this body, and look at those horrible big boots." "Be quiet, I have to think this through very, very carefully" said Victor.

After some considerable time, pacing up and down, muttering to himself, then sitting at his desk, puzzling over complex calculations, Victor finally stopped, and walking over to the Creature he said, "I think I know what I must do. I must completely reverse the whole procedure, everything must be reversed."

So Victor went to work and after a lot of careful preparation he was ready.

Suddenly there was a thunderous roar and a blinding flash that knocked Victor to the floor unconscious.

Some considerable time later Victor stirred and opening his eyes he was amazed to find himself in his own bed. The sun was streaming in through the window, it was a beautiful morning. Victor lay there, somewhat bemused- had it all just been a hideous nightmare? He must check the lab and there, sure enough, was the Creature, just as it had been – completely lifeless. Victor stood there looking at this horrible Creature he had assembled from bits and pieces, wondering if he should just bury the whole experiment – boots and all. Just then the door opened and Justine the maid showed in Henri and Elizabeth. “That was some storm we had last night Rotciv” said Henri. Elizabeth gave Victor a kiss and then stepped back and said “ My, Rotciv, you look so pale, are you alright?”

“I’m alright”, said Victor, “ but why are you calling me Rotciv, my name is Victor” “Don’t be silly,” said Elizabeth, “Your name is Rotciv, it has always been Rotciv. Wait a minute,- I’ve just realised something, Victor is the exact reverse of your name, how strange!”

FRANKENSTEIN IN THE MOUNTAINS by Jean Barnes

When Victor came round, he thought he was in the middle of a bad dream, then realised it was real, and that his creation really was hideous. The monster was pleading with Victor to talk to him. Victor cannot bear to look at the monster, and manages to flee. The creature is bewildered by this behaviour, until he sees a reflection of himself, and then understands Victor's reaction.

Not knowing what next to do the monster goes into the woods in an effort to find solace and to try to come to terms with his appearance, and his life. By eavesdropping on a family of peasants he becomes educated and well mannered, and is befriended by the family's blind father, however when the remainder of the family return home, they cast the creature out in horror. The creature is even more bewildered when, after rescuing a peasant girl from drowning, he is shot in the shoulder.

The creature is angry, injured, and upset. All he wants is someone to care about him, and vows to hunt Victor down in order to pressure him into creating a female mate. The creature finds Victor's journal, finds out that he has retreated into the mountains, and follows him. In his rage the creature comes across Victor's young brother, and murders him.

On finding Victor at the summit of the mountain, the creature gives Victor an ultimatum – that he creates a female mate following which he will disappear with his mate, or, if Victor should refuse or fail he will destroy Victor's friends. Frankenstein agrees, but is so horrified at the thought of creating a monster race, destroys his latest creation. In his anger, the creature begins to take his revenge, and kills Frankenstein's friend, Henry Clerval.

The creature intended to kill, Elizabeth Lavenza, Frankenstein's fiancée, to whom he is shortly to marry, however, on seeing Elizabeth, falls in love with her, and decides to destroy his creator instead, hoping that Elizabeth will forgive him, and agree to go with him. The creature pursues Frankenstein, and eventually locates him, strangles him and throws him into the water.

On his return, the creature approaches Elizabeth, and tells her what he has done. Elizabeth is distraught and horrified, and tries to flee. When the creature realises that she is repulsed by him, he captures her, and strangles her also. However, he is so distraught and overcome by grief over what has happened, the creature vows to go, never to be seen again.

Over the subsequent years, stories were told about a mysterious creature living in the woods with a blind man, his family, and a woman. Legend has it that the creature had rescued the woman from drowning years before, and on the creature's return, had accepted him into the family group.

FRANKENSTEIN FINDS A SOLUTION IN AMERICA by Jennie Cox

Victor has fainted away after the Creature had come to life.

The Creature: "He is asleep. I must wake him" (*gives Victor a prod.*) "Wake up Victor, I want you to talk to me" (*Gives Victor a vigorous shaking, but he does not move.*)

Creature (*shouting*) Wake up, I know you can hear me....(*Victor stirs*)...Victor, Victor don't be so frightened of me. I am of worth, we are all of worth. All things are connected and all things matter from hence they came. My appearance is grotesque but I have feelings such as yours and together we can work this out. You are obviously a man of great brilliance and your brilliance created me, but something went awry- we cannot but move our little finger without creating change in the Universe . There is the notion that the flap of butterfly wings in Brazil will set off a cascade of atmospheric events that weeks later spurs the formation of a tornado in Texas. Therefore as you made me, you can now unmake the awful parts of me. The interconnection of all things is absolute, in non-organic matter there exists mechanical, physical and chemical connections which interact. In living nature there exist more complex connections- the biological, which are expressed in various relations between and within species and in their relation to the environment. It is not enough to just '**be**', one must fit into the surrounding environment and look similar to

humans with whom we all depend for the social connections and other essential things we need. I need love and a job. These things will be denied me whilst I look so foul. So work your science and change the colour and texture of my skin. Perhaps a nice tone of brown which will offer a less translucent covering and hide my muscles and veins which are actually quite functional. Then I can use my height and my strength to play **Grid Iron** in America. Those uniforms they wear conceal many blemishes and hold together very well. I could make a fortune! I will get a wife like Fiona my friend Strech's wife. She is gorgeous- and we can have a family- we can all live happily ever after. So just relax Victor my friend, all will be well. If butterflies can create tornadoes, the least you can do is a bit of human improvement.

P.S. Nice black curly hair would be nice.

Victor. Thanks mate- will do.

FRANKENSTEIN LOOKS TO THE STARS by Diana Morgan

The Creature: "He is asleep. I must wake him" (*gives Victor a prod.*) "Wake up Victor, I want you to talk to me" (*Gives Victor a vigorous shaking, but he does not move.*)

Creature (*shouting*) Wake up, I know you can hear me..... (*Victor stirs and opens one eye*).....

Victor: Oh, what horror!but who are you ?

The Creature. I was created in the 14th. century by the Evil Alchemist. I was directed to travel to all parts of the known world with this box containing these vile jumping insects you call fleas. These I would place on the backs of the black rats which were so abundant everywhere. Soon the humans began to die in great numbers. I saw bodies piled into mass graves, children crying for their parent. Whole villages were deserted. I was called The Black Death. At first I was not disturbed,... you see I had no feelings, but as time passed I began to question and ask 'Why am I doing this?' Becoming more and more distressed I returned to my original haunts and climbing to the highest peak I threw myself into a crevasse on the glacier there. Several centuries passed then it was you Victor, who took my body from the melting ice and imbued this new life.

Victor: Oh no, no! What have I created? What terrible misfortune have I brought into this world?

Creature: As back in my guise as Black Death I am again reviled and hated. You must help me, you must help me!

Victor: What can I do? I cannot think straight, ...it is just too awful to contemplate.

Creature: First of all you must give me a name, I have sworn never to wreak havoc on mankind again and refuse to be once again Black Death. Give me a name. Call me Robert- that is a name I like.

Victor: All right, you shall be Robert.

Robert: (*Creature*): You must find me somewhere where I am no longer an outcast. A place to live with comfort and respect, where the beings do not shriek in horror and flee at my approach.

Victor: I understand. But what if I cannot do this?

Robert (*Creature*): You must! Otherwise I am destined to be reincarnated again as another version of Black Death, and will torment the human race again.

Victor: (*his mind is racing*). Robert, you must give time to think. This is a truly desperate situation but I will do my utmost to grant your wish.

Robert (*Creature*): I will hide away as best I can for 6 months, then I will return.

Victor: (*his head in his hands*). Why did I pursue this mad scheme,? I have no ideas at all. What shall I do.? What shall I do? Perhaps I will ask Henri, I know he will say 'I told you so' --- he did try to warn me. But he is a good friend, I'm sure he will help.

Victor tells Henri what happened.. he is horrified.

Henri: This is shocking news Victor, you should have told me before. You say Robert wants to live somewhere away from humans. I suppose it makes sense for him, but there is nowhere now on earth which is quite uninhabited. It is impossible. No..... but wait perhaps we could think of somewhere in space. *(pause)* I did hear there is a scheme in the USA to make contact with Sirius.

Victor: Sirius?

Henri: Yes, the brightest star in the constellation of Canis Major. Sometimes it is called The Dog Star. It is only 8.6 light years from our Earth and it is inhabited by an advanced race, a civilization reputed to be superior to ours. I will make enquiries.

A month later

Henri: A spacecraft is going to the vicinity of Sirius later this year. A volunteer is needed to be an ambassador.

Victor: Perfect. All we have to do is to persuade Robert to go along with that. Let me call him.

Robert *(Creature appears)*. Have you found a solution?

Victor. Yes, an exciting new role for you. Ambassador to Sirius. The beings there are very keen to receive a representative from Earth and with their technological skill they have promised to change your appearance to become like them if that is your wish. What do you say.?

Robert (creature.) Oh, that sounds fantastic , you are so clever, Victor. When do I leave?

Victor: All is arranged. Here is your passport under the name of Robert de Geneva. We will fly to Cape Canaveral tomorrow and will see you off.

Two days later the space ship takes off. Victor and Henri congratulate themselves with "high fives" Back in Geneva Victor marries Elizabeth. But on their wedding night Victor wakes shrieking, sits up his hair on end.

Elizabeth: Victor, what it, what is it?

Victor: The creature, the creature is haunting me! Will I never be free? *The night terrors persisted every night.*

Elizabeth. Victor, you will just have to sleep alone. I cannot lose any more beauty sleep. I have ordered the bedroom on the top floor to be made soundproof. It is the only way this household will get any rest.

Victor; Yes Elizabeth, it is my penance. I must pay for my burning ambition. *(aside)* But I cannot endure it. I must find a way to end it all. I will go to the mountain tomorrow at dawn. But first I will write a note for Elizabeth. *(He writes the note)*
Next day reading the note.

Elizabeth: Oh no, my darling Victor has gone. He has gone to the Rhone Glacier to throw himself into a crevasse. *(bursts into tears.)* How many hundreds of years will I have to wait to see him again?

With apologies to Doris Lessing : The Sirian Experiments, published 1982?

FRANKENSTEIN HAS A CHOICE by Veda Orgles

Despite the ferocious storm that lashed Chateau Frankenstein the previous night, dawn spread serene and silent. Victor Frankenstein awoke to see the Creature sitting quietly looking at him intently. Victor noticed that the Creature now looked well and much more normal than during the traumatic ordeal of the night before.

The Creature. "Where am I, what is this place, who are you?
Totally amazed at his creation Frankenstein replied. "You are in my laboratory, I am Victor Frankenstein, I gave you new life with my re-animation machine"

*They looked across the room to the machine, still sparkling, humming and glowing with a strange blue light.
As they walked across toward the machine they both noticed that every movement they made flashed around the walls of the lab.*

Frankenstein gasped. "What can this be? My machine is operating in a strange way – I must discover what it is doing. First we must have coffee"!

Frankenstein called Justine to bring coffee and also summon Henri Clerval and Elizabeth to the laboratory. Anxious to see Frankenstein and not knowing what to expect, Clerval and Elizabeth were surprised to find Frankenstein at his creation entirely engrossed with the re-animation machine, as it lit up the walls with images. Looking up Frankenstein greeted them.

Frankenstein. " Good morning Clerval, good morning Elizabeth. Please meet my creation , he seems to be a fine fellow – this new man. Ah yes we will call him Mr. Newman.

Clerval asked "You are well, can I offer you some assistance?"

Frankenstein. "Yes please! Take Mr. Newman to breakfast, then see he is suitably bathed and attired."

Elizabeth. You should rest Victor! Why don't you come with us?

Frankenstein. "No I have urgent work here. We will have dinner together- say 7pm. I will explain everything then".

** (see alternative ending)

That evening at dinner, Frankenstein seemed quite relaxed and elated with his day's work which had progressed well.

Clerval. "What has resulted?"

Elizabeth. "Yes , do tell, you owe us an explanation Victor"

Frankenstein. 'I think we have stumbled across something really tremendous, that may affect the whole world. There is still much to be done. Newman shall be a partner in this research with me. As I worked today scenes from afar also came through my machine. Surely this has much potential?' **Newman.** "What might you call this new invention?" **Frankenstein.** "Hmm.... Far Viewer Machine? No! Television!"

The Author: The question remains- did Frankenstein accidentally help to create a monster??

.....

**** Alternative ending**

Clerval's dining room. Everyone has gathered at Clerval's as agreed and Frankenstein noticed that Newman looked slightly flushed but very happy.

Clerval. 'It's so nice to dine together after a busy day'

Elizabeth. We had a most enjoyable day, shopping, seeing my parents and friends"

Newman " Yes! With such pleasant company and seeing old acquaintances in town, it was most uplifting".

Frankenstein "I made great progress in the laboratory while you were out.

Clerval. "Let us eat, I have prepared a delicious dinner. We can talk later"

After complimenting Clerval for the beautiful meal, they retired to the lounge for coffee and sherry.

Frankenstein " Please tell me more about the events of your day"

Elizabeth. Well- we had breakfast and went to the gentleman's store as you suggested, then sat by the river for coffee where we talked for hours. We then called on my parents to introduce Newman. They liked him and conversed for a long time. They were disappointed you were not with us Victor and wondered why you spend all your time in the laboratory, instead of me. Now I wonder the same and think it may be time to call off our engagement. I never see anything of you! I thoroughly enjoyed Clerval and Newman's company today, without thinking of you at all. Why do you spend so much time with all those weird experiments? Is it to gain fame or immortality? *She continues.*

Do you think the day will ever come, when shocking hearts into beating again, or putting organs into another human to keep them alive, will be accepted by mankind, or become common medical practice?

Author's note: I wonder if these types of experiments were being done when Mary Shelly wrote her book?

There's an old saying " You can't put an old head on young shoulders " – but I am sure many with age related complaints would like their old head on a younger body!

FRANKENSTEIN ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY by Mac Thomson

Nothing is more painful to the human mind that, after the feelings have been worked up by a quick succession of events, the dead calmness of inaction and certainty which follows and deprives the soul of hope and fear. Justine died; she rested and I was alive. The blood freely flowed in my veins, but a weight of despair and remorse pressed on my heart which nothing could remove. I, and I alone, was responsible. My resolve was to make amends for all the happenings since my success in accomplishing the awful thing I had set out to do. But, where was I to start on this journey of rectification?

I decided to leave my family and to hasten back to the University, and to the very Laboratory which had seen me accomplish such a terrible wrong. I knew that the monstrous creature was seeking a revenge so terrible as to be unthinkable. I had to turn its attention away from those whom I loved, and to invite the Creature to look on me as its true and only adversary. My "success" on that night was due to my ability to harness the Power of an enormous storm. I realised that to re-use the power of the electricity contained in such a storm would have to be the way to restore my life and the lives of my dear family. I could not restore Justine and dear William to their family and friends – but I could, with Gods Good Grace, turn the hate of that terrible creature directly towards the one who had brought about its situation. I would restore the Laboratory to the way it had been on that night. I would show myself to all the World – and let it be known that I could be found in my Laboratory at all times, night or day.

By spreading the message in this way, I shall entice the Monster to me. By conversing with Him over a period of time, I would hope to assure him of my good intentions. I had to convince him of the terrible wrong done to him by the two ruffians who had delivered him to me, and that I had no part in his actual demise. Having done so, my thoughts would be to hold him captive upon the same bench to which he had previously secured.

Having been able to accomplish all I had set out to do, I would set out to redress the awful wrong. I would await the coming of another enormous storm, one equal to that which we had previously harnessed.

The Subject subsequently answered my challenge and came. After many hours of talking and reasoning, he agreed to be the principal of my great endeavour. So great a feat of scientific research and sheer laboratory triumph would this

prove to be – unrivalled in Medical History.

And, surely, the Storm came, upon the Night of St. Agnes. It proved to be of equal severity to the previous storm. Surely, the electricity from the lightning proved sufficiently powerful to give the strength to reproduce the needed spark, and The Subject responded as I had expected. He had been restored to his former State. Alas, not living, but free of its awful appearance – no longer a thing of terror. I had the body placed into a suitable Grave. The fact that I had achieved a remarkable experiment would never become known. The “Monster”, Justine and dear William were all unwilling and unheralded members of an incredible experiment. I, too, went unheralded.

No one would ever learn of its happening.

Written by Duncan Thomson, in the year of Our Lord 2020

FRANKENSTEIN MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE by Joan Westcott

The Creature: "He is asleep. I must wake him" (*gives Victor a prod*). "Wake up Victor, I want you to talk to me." (*Gives victor a vigorous shaking, but he does not move*)

The Creature (shouting) "Wake up , I know you can hear me!"
Victor stirs, slowly opens his eyes, blinks and blinks again- horror sweeps over his face. He tries to sit up, faints again and falls back on the couch.

The Creature hovers over Victor and attempts to rouse him again just as the door opens and Victor's fiancé Elizabeth, walks into the dimly lit room. She sees a figure bending over the couch and says, "Oh Victor, I didn't know you had a visitor. I have come to tell you that dinner is ready!" The Creature turns to look at her, red eyes blazing. Elizabeth screams and then faints- the Creature shuts the door, picks her up and places her next to Victor, then stands looking down at the petrified couple.

He then shuffles to the bench where Victor had been working and pokes at bits of wires, nuts, bolts and odd bits of skin and bones, muttering... "What antiquated materials you have been using Victor – no wonder you made a mess of it"

He begins to pick up magnets, coiled wire and batteries just when another ear-piercing thunder clap sounds and a bolt of lightning bursts through the window of the room shattering the glass. "HAA- that's more like it". The flashes continue for a few minutes and an acrid smell fills the room.

Victor rouses to see Elizabeth unconscious and a figure moving around the darkened room. The figure, who ignores Victor, is intent on moulding something in his hands at the same time humming a tune.

"Haa! At last you are awake- I thought I may have frightened you to death!" he says laughing, then continues to sing: *I Come from a Land Down Under..*
The Creature suddenly stops singing, places the moulded substance into his mouth and swallows with a loud gulp! His outline starts quivering as if he was violently shaking and becomes translucent. Victor stares transfixed, unable to move a muscle as the Creature's appearance gradually becomes less like the monster he created.

Well, that's better isn't it Victor? By the way I am 'Eman-on' (*reverse that in your language*) and I must thank you for releasing me from my previous environment. It takes so much energy trying to find a suitable host. I should mention, Victor, that you underestimate the power of *Lightning Conductivity* and its uses, but from looking at the material you have to work with in this century it's not surprising that your creation was horribly unacceptable.

Victor stares at the Creature, who now looks much more human. The ragged skin patches have been smoothed out, the hair on his head much shinier and lighter in colour, deep brown eyes have replaced the blazing red ones. His whole frame softened and not a nut or a bolt to be seen!

"I—I don't know what's happening!" Victor stutters, "It all seems like a nightmare." He cradles his head in his hands, then looking up at 'Eman-on' says "But where do you come from?"

"Well Victor, as they say in your language, 'it's a long story'!" He gives a deep sigh and continues, "One you wouldn't be able to understand at present, but future generations will be able to accomplish things that you could never imagine. Similar ideas that you had of creating another person, or at least a *facsimile* will be achieved by methods such as '*cloning*'. However, the 'methods and applications of practical or mechanical sciences for achievement are waiting in the future - which is what will then be known as *Technology*'"

Victor stands up and sees that Elizabeth is waking up "Don't worry, Victor" says Eman-on, "She won't remember anything except a bad dream - you had best hurry to get your dinner, or it will be cold and you will have to send out for a Take-away'.

A 'what?' splutters Victor.

"Sorry, that's in the future too" says Eman-on, as he opens the door. "Just don't create any more monsters, Victor, as there is a great possibility that they will possess evil forces!"