

'FRANKENSTEIN'



THIS SCRIPT BELONGS TO:



'FRANKENSTEIN'

PROLOGUE:

VICTOR AND THOSE PLAYING THE MAIN PARTS ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE DIRECTLY. WORDS IN BOLD MIGHT BE SPOKEN BY ALL.

VICTOR: When I was about fifteen years old, we witnessed a most **violent and terrible** thunderstorm.

ELIZABETH: It came from behind the mountains, and the thunder burst at once with **dreadful power** from various parts of the heavens.

MOTHER: He remained, while the storm lasted, watching it with **curiosity and delight**.

JUSTINE: As he stood, I saw a **stream of fire** issue from an old and beautiful oak which stood twenty yards from the house;

HENRY: ..when the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and **nothing remained** but a blasted stump.

FATHER: When he visited it the next morning, he found the tree **shattered** in a remarkable manner. It was not splintered by the shock, but **entirely reduced** to thin ribbons.

VICTOR: I never beheld anything so **utterly destroyed**.

SCENE ONE:

A GATHERING OF STUDENTS IN A LECTURE HALL: A SIGN ON THE DOOR STATES THAT THE LECTURER IS UNWELL AND THE LECTURE (PERHAPS TITLED 'FRANKENSTEIN 101') IS CANCELLED. THE STUDENTS DRIFT OFF IN TWO GROUPS (A & B)

STUDENT CAST A:

ALI: That's a shame – I was looking forward to this. With a story like this, it's hard to know where to start...

SAM: Well, if you were trying to tell this tale to someone who didn't know it...

DREW: But that's the thing, it's a tale we all know...

JUDE: But do we?

ALEX: Good point!

CHARLIE: Do we, really?

ALI: (excited) It's a 'Boys' Own' **adventure** of murder and mayhem!

JUDE: (correcting) No, no, no! It's a feminist exploration of science, moral philosophy and toxic masculinity.

CAMERON: Really?

JUDE: (exasperated) Mary Wollstonecraft was a brilliant and inquisitive mind, decades ahead of her time, maybe centuries...she's the first feminist...And William Godwin was an amazing man

SAM: And they married and they had...

ALEX: A daughter.

JUDE: *Mary*...born to be extraordinary, bound to leave her mark on our imaginations...

ALI: With her 'Boys' Own' adventure featuring a monster!

JUDE: (correcting) Let's say 'creature'...

ALEX: Good point!

CAMERON: I like 'monster'

SAM: Of course you do.

JUDE: (carrying on) And Mary, born from two extraordinary people, finds love with another of the finest minds of the period, Percy Shelley... there's so much to say...they were penniless, their first child died in Mary's arms..

CHARLIE: she fell into a depression...they found themselves staying with the poet Byron on Lake Geneva in May 1816, the strangest of years...

DREW: They called it *the year without a summer*...there was a volcanic eruption, parts of the globe had red snow, and the skies were dark from spring to autumn...

JUDE: And amongst all this...

CAMERON: Finally!

JUDE: Byron suggests they each write a ghost story! Now, where are Percy Shelley's and Byron's...(a shrug) no one knows...but Mary's...

CHARLIE: ..this poor boy is only seventeen when his mother dies just before he goes to university – no wonder he wants to be the master over death, he's still grieving for his mother...

ALI: ...who dies surrounded by a loving family

SCENE TWO: THE BOOK

MOTHER: (holding Victor's and Elizabeth's hands) Victor, Elizabeth: my hopes of future happiness were on the prospect of your marriage. This will now be the comfort of your father. Elizabeth, my love, you must become a mother to my younger children. I regret that I am taken from you; it is so hard to leave you all. But these are not fitting thoughts; I will try to resign myself cheerfully to death and will die in the hope of meeting you in another world.

**IN A WORDLESS FEW MOMENTS OF FAMILIAL CLOSENESS,
IT IS CLEAR THAT HIS MOTHER HAS DIED
IN SADNESS THEY TURN AND INTRODUCE THEMSELVES**

VICTOR: Victor

FATHER: Victor's father and his two other sons young Ernest and little William

HENRY: Victor's best friend, Henry Clerval.

JUSTINE: Justine Moritz, faithful housekeeper of many years, loved, trusted and respected by all.

ELIZABETH: And Elizabeth, not a blood relative, but as close as anyone could be to Victor. When his family took me in we were both children and we loved each other dearly, as we do now, as we will do until we are parted by...

VICTOR: Nothing will part us. After my studies we will make a life together.

FATHER: The carriage is waiting son, go with our blessing and do wonderful things!

ELIZABETH: Do not forget us.

HENRY: He won't forget us!

JUSTINE: Stay safe and write often!

FATHER: Make us proud

HENRY: Of course he will!

ELIZABETH: I love you!

FATHER: Make your mark on the world! (Waving, they disappear)

VICTOR: Make my mark? Yes...somehow I will make sure the world learns of our name father...*somehow*.

PEOPLE WALK PAST HIM

(arriving, amazed, looking about him) Ingolstadt! Hundreds of miles from home and all knowledge at my fingertips. What a time I shall have...

A LECTURER APPEARS, GOWN AND MORTAR BOARD, AND STARTES LECTRUING THE AUDIENCE

VICTOR LISTENING EAGERLY AND MAKING NOTES

TUTOR ONE: The ancient teachers of this science, promised us miracles but succeeded in nothing. The modern masters promise very little; their hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, but it is they who have indeed performed miracles.

TUTOR TWO: They penetrate into the depths of nature and show how she works in her hiding-places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe.

TUTOR THREE: None but those who have experienced them can imagine of the possibilities of science. In other studies we go as far as others have gone before us, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder.

VICTOR: The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. The secrets of heaven and earth, the physical secrets of the world were mine to discover. I had a passionate longing to penetrate the secrets of nature - but what glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!

NARRATION: And so passed a first year and then into a second with a single mindedness bordering on obsession.

**WE SEE VICTOR SHIFT INTO A DIFFERENT MODE – MAKING NOTES, PREPARING DRAWINGS,
LOOKING AT SCIENTIFIC TOOLS**

VICTOR: (we are hearing his thoughts) Where does the principle of life proceed?
How to halt the decay and corruption of the human body?
The churchyard and charnel house will provide my materials.
I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I saw the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain.

HE IS PIECING TOGETHER A CREATURE

NARRATION: After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, he succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life, more, he became himself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.

VICTOR: I thought that if I could give life to lifeless flesh, I might in process of time renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption.

NARRATION: He did indeed pursue nature to her hiding places, the dissecting room offering up his ghastly supplies.

VICTOR: A new species would bless me as its creator; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me.

NARRATION: Winter, spring, and summer passed away during his labours; but he did not watch the blossom or the expanding leaves—sights which had before always given him supreme delight—so deeply was he engrossed in his occupation.

VICTOR: The leaves of that year had withered before my work drew near to a close...

**IN MOVEMENT WE SEE THE CREATURE ASSEMBLED AND THE FIRST STIRRINGS OF LIFE. THE
CREATURE LOOKS AT ITS CREATOR AND REACHES OUT TO HIM, SUDDENLY VICTOR IS FACED
WITH WHAT HE HAS MADE**

(horrified) Great God!

NARRATION: He had worked hard for nearly two years...

VICTOR: For this I had deprived myself of rest and health!?

NARRATION: Now that he had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished...

NARRATION: ...gone in an instant...

NARRATION: ...horror and disgust filled his heart.

NARRATION: He was unable to endure the image of the being he had created.

A SLOW SECTION WHERE THE CREATURE TRIES TO WORK OUT HIS LIMBS AND MOVEMENTS

IT LOOKS AT ITS OWN HANDS, WORKS OUT HOW TO STAND AND MOVES OFF

SCENE THREE:

STUDENTS CAST B:

KIM: It all goes back to this moment – what does it say? (checks the book) “I threw myself on the bed in my clothes....I slept, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health... Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I placed the first kiss on her lips, they became the colour of death; her features changed, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the funeral clothes.”

MORGAN: “...by the dim and yellow light of the moon, I saw the wretch—the miserable monster I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered just sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. A hand was stretched out to me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs.”

RILEY: That’s quite a message to send, isn’t it? You run away, I follow, you run away again. Not a great start in life.

FRAN: Not all monstrous acts are carried out by what appear to be monsters...

NAT: They say it takes a village to raise a child but perhaps it only takes one man to destroy another...

KIM: I guess it wasn’t the dying that made him angry; it was more the dragging him back...

FRAN: Death is natural, part of the process... but being reborn...?

RILEY: A child again, a blank slate –

MORGAN: ‘Tabula rasa’...

NAT: So, he’s as confused and selfish and angry and needy as any child...

HARLEY: But big and strong, very strong.

KIM: So – confused, selfish, angry, needy big and strong – a toxic combination.

RILEY: The only things you need to add are...father issues...

FRAN: There's no mother figure...to guide and to nurture.

HARLEY: Then throw in some abandonment, rejection and neglect...

KIM: And things can get very dark very quickly. (a new thought) And who was he before?

NAT: Son, brother, father? No one ever asks, maybe no one cares...?

MORGAN: He's made from parts, some parts might be older than others,

RILEY: ...some bits might be...female.

KIM: (shocked) That never occurred to me... ergh... wow... that would mess with your head...

JOOLS: Can we get back to the story...?

HARLEY: So, desperate, panicked, exhausted and almost delirious, he runs to the heart of the city as dawn is breaking and then...

NAT: As good luck would have it...

SCENE FOUR: THE BOOK

HENRY: (opening his arms in welcome) Victor!?

VICTOR: (shocked to see his friend in Ingolstadt) This can't be...

HENRY: But it is my friend, it is. Just off the early coach. And here to be a student just like my oldest friend. (gently scolding) And I am here to visit as your family have been so worried about you.

VICTOR: Are they well, Father, Elizabeth, Ernest, little William?

HENRY: They are worried, and with good reason Victor. Look at you, what shape is this you are in...have you been ill?

VICTOR: Ill...me...ill?

HENRY: Let's get you back home. (he moves off)

VICTOR: (following, panicked) **Home**, but...but..

HENRY: 'Home' Victor, how I would love to see how you have been living and what you have been working on...

VICTOR: Home...(they both move off).. not safe...do not enter, please Henry...

HENRY: (as if arriving at his apartment) Good Lord Victor, you head into the city and leave your door wide open? What a trusting fellow you are...

VICTOR: (with dread) Do not enter...!

HENRY: Whatever are you hiding!?! (Enters) My dear Victor, this place might need a good tidy but it is charming. I thought for a moment you might be hiding someone but I see that it is utterly empty.

VICTOR: Empty!?!

HENRY: Not a soul.

VICTOR: (as if suddenly realising that he has created a *body* but not a *person*) Not... a... soul...?

VICTOR CLUTCHES AT HIS HEAD AND HEART AS IF ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE...

PERHAPS VOICED BY THE DEAD WHO WENT TO MAKE UP THE CREATURE, VISIONS FROM VICTOR'S DREAMS – NIGHTMARE VOICES

Then, all at once...

...there is no air...

...palms sweaty...

...gasping for breath.

His head is spinning.

The world is spinning.

The clouds, the skies the stars are spinning.

His pulse is racing.

Unsteady, unstable...

...crying for help

Visions swimming.

Real or figments?

Yellow eyes, black lips.

A hand reaches to his throat.

His heart pounds - Knees weak.

Shaking, exhausted...

SOUND OF A HEARTBEAT

...then – blackness and silence...

SCENE FIVE:

STUDENT CAST A:

ALL: And then Victor is laid up in bed for ages, and the creature is... gone, without so much as a friend in the world...

SAM: I guess a lot of people know what it is like to feel different?

DREW: ...what it is like to be looked at with suspicious eyes?

CHARLIE: ...what it feels like to be outside looking in?

JUDE: It's not hard to understand how sadness can turn to anger.

ALI: And I can easily imagine how anger can turn to rage.

ALEX: Good point.

SAM: To live on the edge of society is to only half live.

DREW: To be judged by how you appear, not by what is in your heart or your mind.

CAMERON: It's cruel, but is it unusual?

CHARLIE: It's harsh, but isn't it utterly, and sadly, normal?

JUDE: The only one who doesn't judge him is the old man who can't see him

ALI: Do I do it? Probably.

SAM: Do we all...ask yourself...do you?

ALEX: Very good point.

CAMERON: I like to think maybe, I'd buy him a coffee...

ALI: Maybe sometimes it's us on the inside and we look out at someone who is...
(trying to think of the right word)...

CHARLIE: Different – strange, not quite like us.

ALI: 'Other'.

JUDE: And can we always say we have been kind, open, charitable?

ALI: Have we looked with those same suspicious eyes which have looked at us?

SCENE SIX: THE BOOK

FATHER: With Henry at his side slowly Victor is nursed to health.

ELIZABETH: His horrors perhaps behind him?

JUSTINE: And Henry a student at Ingolstadt...

MOTHER: And back in communication with his family

ELIZABETH: (as if writing him a letter from home) My dearest Cousin, You have been ill, very ill, and even the letters of dear kind Henry are not enough to assure me on your account. Get well—and return to us. You will find a happy, cheerful home and friends who love you dearly. Your father's health is good, but he asks to see you, to know that you are well; then not a care will ever cloud his kindly face. How pleased you would be to see Ernest, now sixteen and waiting to join the military!

HENRY: (reading the letter) Little change, except the growth of your brothers, has taken place since you left us. The lake and mountains—they never change; and I think our quiet home and our glad hearts are controlled by the same natural laws.

ELIZABETH: I wish you could see William. He is very tall for his age, with sweet laughing blue eyes, dark eyelashes, and curling hair. When he smiles, two little dimples appear on each cheek, which are rosy with health.

VICTOR: (Reading the letter) I have written myself into better spirits, dear cousin. Thanks to Henry for his kindness, his affection, and his many letters; we are sincerely grateful. Adieu! my cousin; take care of yourself Elizabeth.

HE POCKETS THE LETTER AND ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE

VICTOR: A golden time it was. Henry the student and I nothing more than a friend, learning from him what he learned in his classes.

NARRATION: The seasons changed from winter to spring and summer to autumn and back to winter...

FATHER: And on into a new year, winter, spring...(suddenly darker) but it was May that it happened.

VICTOR: After two weeks of walking in the countryside we returned to our college on a Sunday afternoon: the peasants were dancing, and everyone we met appeared so happy. My own spirits were high, and I bounded along with feelings of unbridled joy and hilarity.

MOTHER: 'Unbridled joy?'

ELIZABETH: 'Hilarity?'

JUSTINE: Only because the truth was not yet known.

HENRY: (upbeat) Victor – a letter here, and I think it is from your father!

FATHER: (reading the words he has written) My dear Victor, You may have waited impatiently for a letter to fix the date of your return to us; and I was at first tempted to write only a few lines, merely mentioning the day on which I should expect you. But that would be a cruel kindness, and I dare not do it.

VICTOR: (reading) What would be your surprise, my son, when you expected a happy and glad welcome, to behold, on the contrary, tears and wretchedness? (reads on and hands the paper to Henry)

HENRY: (reading) Even now your eye skims over the page to seek the words which are to convey to you the horrible tidings. William is dead!—that sweet child, your brother whose smiles delighted and warmed my heart, who was so gentle, yet so full of joy! Victor, he is murdered! (puts away the letter)

I can offer you no consolation, my friend. Your disaster is beyond imagination. What do you intend to do?

VICTOR: (something in him knows what has happened) I must go instantly to Geneva: Find me horses Henry. For the first time in six years I am going home.

SCENE SEVEN:

STUDENT CAST B

RILEY: For a start we all need to forget what you know...or what we think we know...

JOOLS: The images from the screens...

NAT: Bolts through the neck and lightning and throwing big switches... The story was never about that sudden spark of life.

HARLEY: (quoting from the 1931 movie) "It's alive, it's alive!" That doesn't happen in the book. Victor's more like a...biochemist.

KIM: He'd be working for Pfizer now or AstraZeneca. And he's 19 when he makes the creature! Nineteen, and grieving for his mother. I mean, we all make mistakes at that age but that's a pretty big one.

JOOLS: In the films, he's always middle-aged, after decades of research.

RILEY: I told you – forget what you think you know...

JOOLS: I guess we know this about the creature...*"His yellow skin barely covered the muscles and arteries beneath* (others grab the text)

RILEY: *his hair was black, and flowing;*

KIM: *his teeth were pearly white; but they only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes,*

MORGAN: *that seemed almost of the same colour as the dull-white sockets in which they were set,*

KIM: *his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips."* Mary doesn't mention scars...not a word...

FRAN: But in all those films, it's all so much more shocking

HARLEY: I'm not sure why that was all needed? When the original story was shocking enough.

RILEY: Creation from nothing. Brought back from the other side.

JOOLS: Only to be abandoned, cast off, cast out, by his creator, by everyone...

KIM: Maybe if you are going to play at being God, you had better at least start by being a half decent man.

MORGAN: He doesn't get much of a chance to be a man- what is he, in his mid-twenties when he dies?

JOOLS: (joking) He dies!? Oh, thanks for the spoiler...

RILEY: To make a mess and to walk away, that's asking for trouble.

NAT: Monstrous – tinkering with nature. As if nature wasn't wonderful enough.

MORGAN: After all, nature can already create without a father...

KIM: That's right. There's a word for it –

RILEY: *Parthenogenesis..*

KIM: That's it - birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish...they all use it.

HARLEY: But making life without a mother...?

NAT: What nonsense...*there's no word for that.*

SCENE EIGHT: THE BOOK

FATHER: It was on Victor's journey home that it happened.

ELIZABETH: Days of travelling, in carriages and on horseback – exhausted and grief stricken, full of terrible imaginings which he dare not speak, he arrives at Geneva to find the city gates locked.

VICTOR: A night at an inn when I am so close to home. But I can see again my old friends the lake and the hills, the moonlit sky. There is a storm coming.

MOTHER: And climbing to the highest point his tired body can manage...and hearing the wind and thunder in the heavens...

VICTOR: William, dear brother! This is your funeral, this lament!

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING AND WE SEE THE CREATURE. HE IS ONLY JUST VISIBLE THEN DASHES OFF INTO THE DISTANCE

VICTOR: I see it all now, it was my hand that brought the murderer to life..

HENRY: He had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery; his hands had made the hands that murdered his brother?

JUSTINE: A spirit he himself had let loose from the grave, destined to destroy all that was dear to him.

SCENE NINE:

STUDENT CAST A

ALI: So...he's a thing made of... parts... but aren't we all...? Part nature part nurture.

ALEX: Good point.

SAM: But the creature had no nature..

DREW: Nor no nurture...

CHARLIE: A poor start for sure. Look at your own self, your hands, your eyes, all parts... I have my mother's nose.

JUDE: I've got my father's hair

ALI: Grandad's jaw line

DREW: Auntie Anne's forehead.

CHARLIE: Grannie's thighs. More's the pity.

JUDE: We're 'all a thing made from parts' – that's the nature bit. But the nurture... that's what makes us us, isn't it?

ALI: How we deal with the world, our values, we aren't created with them, we're created with nothing – a big empty space which everything is poured into.

SAM: That's the stuff we get from everyone who helps us grow up – but no one helped the creature. He's a big empty space that *no one poured anything into*.

DREW: He doesn't know right from wrong or even light from dark to start with...poor thing - he needs a name really.

CHARLIE: He calls himself 'Adam' well he sort of does – he says (checks in the book) 'Remember that I am your creature; *I ought to be your Adam*, but I am instead the fallen angel, whom you drive from joy for no misdeed'.

JUDE: 'Adam' – he's not so scary if we call him Adam. He was the first of his kind, like bible-Adam, but he was the last too. Alone from beginning to end.

CAMERON: I think that might make me angry...

ALI: This creature isn't taught how to give or receive love, he's just abandoned to the world. Maybe the terrible things he does is him saying 'you did this to me, I'll do that to you'.

ALEX: Good point.

SCENE TEN: THE BOOK

NARRATION: Not until dawn did Victor find himself once again at home, a house of sadness and mourning...

A SILENT IMAGE OF THE FAMILY HOLDING EACH OTHER

FATHER: I wish you had come before, and then you would have found us all joyous and delighted. You come to us now to share a misery which nothing can ease.

ELIZABETH: Poor William! he was our darling and our pride!

FATHER: Our only relief is that the murderer is discovered.

ELIZABETH: It is beyond belief Victor –

VICTOR: The murderer discovered! How can that be? It is impossible. I saw him too; he was free last night!

FATHER: Your fatigue and your grief make you speak nonsense son.

ELIZABETH: It is Justine the housemaid, who has been discovered as the murderer.

VICTOR: Justine? She is the best of people! Patient, kind, she loved William. No, no. She is not. I know that she cannot be.

ELIZABETH: I believe that to be the case too.

VICTOR: But I **know** it – she must be spared! This cannot be allowed to happen.

ELIZABETH: There is nothing to be done.

FATHER: She was nowhere to be seen the night William disappeared in the woods.

JUSTINE: (entering, as if she is explaining to a judge or jury, not in the scene with the others) I was searching for William just as everyone else was, I spent the night wandering the woods calling and calling!

FATHER: They found a portrait of your mother in her pocket, a portrait that had been in a locket around William's poor neck

JUSTINE: (as before) This I cannot explain...at dawn I was so tired, so worried and so far from home that I lay down on the straw in a barn and slept. I have some idea that a figure came in, perhaps a man or an animal, I cannot say. But when the portrait was discovered in my pocket I was as shocked as anyone.

FATHER: She confessed

JUSTINE: I confessed because I wanted absolution, forgiveness. It was a mistake – I loved William as I would a brother. I would give up my life to bring his back.

VICTOR: The portrait was surely placed there by the hand of the killer

JUSTINE: Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name;

FATHER: But who Victor, whose hand?

VICTOR: A...stranger, a monstrous stranger. It is true, I know it. I will tell the court of my fears...Justine will not hang for a crime which is not hers!

JUSTINE: Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

ELIZABETH: That time has passed Victor. She is at rest now.

JUSTINE: Give us this day our daily bread;

FATHER: She was to die at daybreak.

JUSTINE: ...forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;

ELIZABETH: Justine is with her god.

FATHER: With William.

JUSTINE: ...lead us not into temptation...

JUSTINE/VICTOR: ...but *deliver us from evil.*

SCENE ELEVEN:

STUDENT CAST B

KIM: Imagine having no words – no language. Opening your mouth and what comes out – just...noise?

NAT: To be thought of as a fool, an idiot - or worse - *a danger.*

FRAN: Like waking up in a new country where they speak words that you have never heard.

MORGAN: What kind of frustration would that create?

HARLEY: Imagine how you could be misunderstood?

KIM: What would be left? (demonstrating as they are speaking) Gestures, pointing, speaking loudly... and... slowly, shouting when someone doesn't get it...?

JOOLS: All those things the British are so good at.

RILEY: You'd see it in their eyes though, wouldn't you?

MORGAN: Pity, Fear, Ridicule.

KIM: And those looks never helped anyone communicate more clearly, they just make you...panic.

HARLEY: It would be terrifying, not knowing anything, understanding anything except that everyone hates you, and you don't know why, and you can't even ask why...

SCENE TWELVE: THE BOOK

NARRATION: In the bosom of his family Victor finds no comfort. They grieve – he knows the truth.

NARRATION: He knows that the death of William and Justine are not an end, but a beginning.

NARRATION: He knows his hands were the instruments of the destruction and his hands must end the terror.

NARRATION: Now, as he always did, he finds some peace in the mountains and the lakes...

NARRATION: And it is there, in the elements that they meet again...

VICTOR SEES THE CREATURE DASHING AROUND THE MOUNTAINS. SUDDENLY IT ARRIVES CLOSE

BY HIM

VICTOR Devil, do you dare approach me!? Do you not fear my vengeance on your miserable head? Begone! Or stay, so that I may trample you to dust! With your death, if only I could bring back those victims whom you have murdered!

CREATURE: I expected this reception. All men hate the wretched. And I must be hated above all because I am more miserable than any other! You, my creator, you propose to kill me!? How dare you sport in that way with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you comply with my conditions, I will leave all mankind at peace; but if you refuse, I will have my fill of death, with the blood of all those you hold dear!

VICTOR: You blame me for your creation!? Come on then, so I may smother the fire which I so carelessly lit.

VICTOR TRIES TO ATTACK THE CREATURE BUT IS ELUDED

CREATURE: Be calm! And hear me before you spill your hatred on my devoted head. My life may be nothing but anguish, but it is dear to me, and I will defend it. You made me more powerful than you; my height is superior, my joints more supple. But I will not be tempted to set myself against you. I am your creature, and I will be

obedient to my natural lord and king if you will also perform your part, which you owe me. I should have been your Adam, but instead I am the fallen angel, who you drive from joy for no reason. Everywhere I see happiness, which I am excluded from. I was kind and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous.

SCENE THIRTEEN: STUDENT CAST B:

JOOLS: Man, this bit goes on. Like *eighteen thousand words*, like *twenty-six pages* of it.

KIM: There's a lot to tell.

MORGAN: You're not kidding - what does Victor say? 'His tale had occupied the whole day, and the sun was upon the verge of the horizon when he departed.'

HARLEY: It's the heart of the book. We get his first impressions:

CREATURE: It is with such difficulty that I remember the first era of my being; the events of that period are confused and indistinct. A strange array of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt at the same time. A stronger light pressed upon my nerves, so that I was obliged to shut my eyes. Darkness then came over me and troubled me, but hardly had I felt this when, by opening my eyes, the light poured in upon me again.

FRAN: This is his first day of life, he doesn't know what he is, where he is – he's lost.

CREATURE: My eyes became accustomed to the light and to perceive objects in their right forms; I distinguished the insect from the herb, and by degrees, one herb from another. I found that the sparrow uttered harsh notes, whilst those of the blackbird and thrush were sweet and enticing.

KIM: He has to steal his food to start with, first berries and roots in the forest, then he learns about people...and villages, and food in gardens...

CREATURE: How miraculous did this appear! The huts, the neater cottages, and splendid houses. The vegetables in the gardens, the milk and cheese that I saw placed at the windows. I entered a house, but I had hardly placed my foot within the door before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, badly bruised by stones and many other kinds of weapons, I escaped to the open country and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel, quite bare, and making a wretched appearance after the palaces I had beheld in the village.

MORGAN: The DeLacys...the old man and his children, and the mysterious woman who – conveniently – needs to learn English, and we're supposed to believe that he learns to speak by listening to them...

JOOLS: And suddenly he can read because he miraculously find three books...

HARLEY: I think we just have to buy into this part of the story – this is his nurture, what has made him *him*.

RILEY: And it finally gives us someone who doesn't judge him on what he looks like.

KIM: He watches, he learns, he gathers wood for them and leaves it at their door.
He's doing nothing but good things, kind things.

THIS 'COTTAGE' SCENE PLAYS OUT IN EITHER PUPPETRY OR ANIMATION

SCENE FOURTEEN: THE BOOK

CREATURE: Pardon this intrusion. I am a traveller in need of a little rest. You would help me greatly if you would allow me to remain a few minutes before the fire.

DE LACY: Enter, and I will try, in what manner I can, to meet your needs; unfortunately, my children are not home, but I will find food for you.

CREATURE: Do not trouble yourself, my kind host; it is warmth and rest that I need.

DE LACY: By your language, stranger, I would say you are a countryman of mine?

CREATURE: No; but I learned speech from a family much like yours - I am now hoping to claim the protection of some kind people. I am an unfortunate creature. I have no friend upon earth. These people I speak of have never seen me and know little of me. I am full of fears, for if I fail, I am an outcast in the world for ever.

DE LACY: To be friendless is to be unfortunate, but the hearts of men can be full of brotherly love and charity. If these people are good and kind, do not despair.

CREATURE: They are kind—but they may take against me. I am kind and my life has been harmless; but a fatal prejudice may cloud their eyes, and where they ought to see a friend, they see only a monster.

DE LACY: That is indeed unfortunate; but if you are really blameless, perhaps you can convince them?

CREATURE: I will try, for many months I have been in the habit of daily kindness towards them which they know nothing of.

DE LACY: Where do these friends reside?

CREATURE: Close by... suddenly I feel such overwhelming terrors.

DE LACY: Friend, tell me your tale and I can be of help convincing these people of your kindness. I cannot judge by appearance, but your words persuade me that you are sincere.

CREATURE: I thank you and accept your generous offer. You raise me from the dust with your kindness; and I hope that with your help...

DE LACY: Here come my children, they will help you...

CREATURE: (in panic, his tone becomes more frightening) Now is the time! Save and protect me! You and your family are the friends whom I seek. Do not desert me in the hour of trial!

DE LACY: Great God! *Who are you!?*

NARRATION: It is too much to hope that those who see him can ever see past what is before them, they will not see beneath.

THE CREATURE IS DRIVEN FROM THE COTTAGE

SCENE FIFTEEN: STUDENT CAST A:

JUDE: I think of him like a tree with shallow roots – well, no roots at all really.

DREW: Tree?

DAVE: Roots?

CAMERON: How is he a tree?

JUDE: (trying to explain) Ok, imagine the choices you make, the things you decide about in life, those choices, well you might make them one way or another depending on the moral code you've been given.

DREW: Ok...?

CAMERON: That's nurture isn't it?

JUDE: Or you might think, "if I do this bad thing then what will the people I care about think of me".

CHARLIE: So, that's like – 'what if my mum found out!?'

JUDE: Exactly – or your dad, brother, sister, friends.... and that's your roots, right there.

CHARLIE: And this creature, *he hasn't got any*.

SAM: When he's faced with a choice he sometimes makes a good one, sometimes a terrible one.

JUDE: There's nothing 'rooting' him to anyone or anything.

DREW: If I was a tree, I'd be a mighty oak, that's me.

ALI: Good point – deep roots I guess?

JUDE: That's an interesting choice – quite a masculine choice, if you don't mind me saying.

DREW: Why would I mind? Oak, roots, solid, that's me!

SAM: Solid? Yes....or inflexible.

DAVE: Strong.

JUDE: But if a storm is strong enough it'll bring that oak down because the tree stands against it, it breaks because it can't bend.

CAMERON: Who wants to bend?

JUDE: The trees that want to survive, *they bend, so they don't break*.

SAM: That's resilience.

JUDE: That's 'weathering the storm'. Bend – don't break.

ALI: Why are we talking about trees?

SAM: We're not – we're talking about people.

DAVE: Are we?

CAMERON: Can we get back to the story!?

SCENE SIXTEEN: THE BOOK

JUSTINE: And on he talks as if all the talking in him had been waiting for this moment, this day, this meeting, all the thinking and planning and revealing - out it pours...about William –

CREATURE: He struggled violently. 'Let me go,' he cried; 'monster! Ugly wretch! You wish to tear me to pieces. Let me go, or I will tell my father, Mr Frankenstein.'

'You are a Frankenstein!?' I said 'you will never see your father again - you are brother to my enemy—him to whom I have sworn eternal revenge; you shall be my first victim'. The child struggled and threw words at me which made my heart despair; I grasped his throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet.

MOTHER: About Justine –

CREATURE: As I fixed my eyes on the boy, I saw something glittering at his throat. I took it; it was a portrait of a most lovely woman. I left the spot where I had committed the murder, and I entered a secluded barn. A young woman was sleeping on some straw. *I had learned now to work mischief.* I bent over her and placed the portrait in one of the folds of her dress. She moved, and I fled.

HENRY: And about his future –

THE CREATURE: We cannot part until you have promised to comply with my request. I am alone and miserable; but one like myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species and have the same defects. You must create a female for me with whom I can live. Only you can do this, and I demand it of you as a right.

It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but because of that we shall be closer to one another. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless and free from the misery I now feel. We will live in the most savage of places where no people dwell. My evil will have fled, for I shall have sympathy! My life will flow quietly away, and in my dying moments I shall not curse you, my maker.

I am malicious because I am miserable. My creator, make me happy; do not deny me my request!

JUSTINE: The deal.

MOTHER: The bargain.

ELIZABETH: The contract.

VICTOR: I consent. I shall deliver into your hands a female who will accompany you in your exile. On your solemn oath...

THE CREATURE: I swear, by the sun, and by the blue sky of heaven, that if you grant my prayer, you will never see me again. Depart to your home and begin your work; I shall watch your progress - when you are ready I shall appear.

SCENE SEVENTEEN: STUDENT GROUP B

HARLEY: If I'm honest...before I read the book I thought he was just (with arms out like Boris Karloff) "Urgh" ...

JAMES: But he's actually really thoughtful...

KIM: And he's articulate, he's read 'Paradise Lost' and those other books, and there's this whole chunk where he just wants what everyone else seems to have...

JOOLS: A family life

RILEY: Someone to share his life with, at least.

NAT: That doesn't seem like too much to ask...

HARLEY: Mary Shelley makes it seem like a really simple thing to ask for, a partner, a mate...

KIM: But then Victor thinks it might be the beginning of some murderous race..

JOOLS: You can see why he destroys the second creature...

MORGAN: Do you think he would have kept his word, the creature, and just gone off to live away from people..?

HARLEY: He might, but the woman creature never got a chance to say that she'd live peacefully...

KIM: She wouldn't have been so alone though, right from the start she'd have had him...

NAT: What if she didn't fancy him?

RILEY: You are so shallow.

KIM: You wouldn't want to be shackled up forever with someone you didn't fancy though, shallow or not, it's true.

JAMES: He's got a nice personality, he's a good person...

HARLEY: That's what everyone says about ugly people isn't it – I'm just saying.

SCENE EIGHTEEN: THE BOOK

FATHER: Can a second mistake cure a first?

HENRY: Victor returns home but finds a hundred reasons not to start his new project...

MOTHER: What if the creature is lying?

VICTOR: She might refuse to comply with a contract made before her creation.

JUSTINE: What if the new creature is more evil yet?

VICTOR: They might hate each other. She might turn with disgust from him and he would be again alone,

HENRY: And then there is the unthinkable, which he must think of, cannot stop thinking of...

VICTOR: Even if they were to leave Europe and inhabit the deserts of the new world, one of the first results of this sympathy the demon seeks would be *children*, and a race of devils would be spread upon the earth. Have I the right...?

ELIZABETH: Has he the right...?

VICTOR: Have I the right!?

FATHER: But a deal is a deal, is it not, and a second creature, a female creature cannot be constructed at home...

HENRY: So a journey with Henry is planned...

ELIZABETH: The two friends visiting Strasbourg, Rotterdam, England...

HENRY: Where we were to part as I had need to visit Ireland and my friend would journey on to Scotland, where he had business he could not tell me of – we parted in Perth...

VICTOR: My friend, I wish to make a tour of Scotland alone. Let this be our rendezvous. I may be absent a month or two; but I ask you; leave me in peace and solitude for a short time; and when I return, I hope it will be with a lighter heart, more congenial to your own happy mood.

ELIZABETH: And after Scotland, he would be home. Home to his family, home to his fiancée and home to plan a wedding.

FATHER: But there was no tour for Victor. And Scotland, remote as it is, was not isolated enough. Not even just to the Orkney's *but to the farthest flung of the Islands* – his work to resume.

AGAIN WE SEE HIM MAKING A CREATURE AS BEFORE, BUT THIS TIME A FEMALE.

HIS HEART IS NOT IN IT AND WE SEE HIM ABANDON HIS WORK.

SUDDENLY THE CREATURE IS THERE

THE CREATURE: (crazed with anger) You abandon the work which you began; what is it that you intend? Do you dare to break your promise? I have endured toil and misery; I have endured fatigue, and cold, and hunger; do you dare destroy my hopes!?

VICTOR: I do break my promise; never will I create another like you, your equal in deformity and wickedness!

THE CREATURE: Slave, I reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my trust. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master; obey!

VICTOR: Your threats cannot move me to do an act of wickedness. Begone! I am resolute.

THE CREATURE: Shall each man find a wife to hold, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? Are you to be happy while I am in despair?! You, my tormentor, will curse the sun that gazes on your misery. Beware, for I am fearless and therefore powerful - you will repent of the injuries you inflict.

VICTOR: Devil, cease! Leave me. I am decided.

THE CREATURE: I go; but think on this, *I shall be with you on your wedding-night.*

JUSTINE: I shall be with you...

MOTHER: ...on your wedding night.

HENRY: But that wedding night is some way off, first the pieces of the abandoned creature are to be discarded into the sea...

FATHER: At which point Victor finds he and his small boat have no chance of return..

ELIZABETH: Caught in a storm,

JUSTINE: Tossed on the waves...

MOTHER: To die at sea? Surely not...

HENRY: No, but to make landfall at a small harbour town far distant from the island he left.

FATHER: Distant, *but not welcoming...*

THE TOWNSPEOPLE GATHER, LOOKING ON SUSPICIOUSLY

TOWNSPEOPLE: Look at this one coming in now...

TOWNSPEOPLE: No one I know

TOWNSPEOPLE: Nor I.

VICTOR: My good friends...

TOWNSPEOPLE: Not from these parts.

VICTOR: ...will you be so kind as to tell me the name of this town and inform me where I am?

TOWNSPEOPLE: You will know that soon enough.

TOWNSPEOPLE: Maybe you are come to a place that will not prove much to your taste...

TOWNSPEOPLE: And I fear that you will not be much-consulted as to where you rest your head tonight.

VICTOR: Why do you answer me so roughly?

TOWNSPEOPLE: 'Roughly' he says!

VICTOR: Surely it is not the custom of Englishmen to receive strangers so inhospitably.

TOWNSPEOPLE: We do not know about nor care for the custom of the English.

TOWNSPEOPLE: But it is the custom of the Irish...

VICTOR: Ireland!?

TOWNSPEOPLE: ...to hate villains..

VICTOR: Villains?

TOWNSPEOPLE: And murderers.

VICTOR: Dear God.

TOWNSPEOPLE: Dear indeed – now you will follow me to give an account of your actions to the magistrate who is looking into the death of a gentleman in the town last night.

VICTOR: A gentleman – !?

TOWNSPEOPLE: (dismissively) A foreigner, I forget his name...

**THE ACTOR PLAYING HENRY EITHER ENTERS,
OR REVEALS HIMSELF TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE**

HENRY: Henry Clerval, of Geneva, Switzerland. Visiting Ireland merely to see its beauty and visit the people. Of no harm to any soul. But the breath and life was squeezed from his throat in this foreign land by the hands of...of who..?

VICTOR: Henry!? My own Henry? This cannot be! Two already destroyed; other victims await their destiny; but you, Clerval, my friend...

AGAIN VICTOR IS ON THE VERGE OF A COLLAPSE – THE NIGHTMARE VOICES VISIT ONCE MORE

The earth moves, shakes, below him,
A weight crushing him....
...pulling him down
No air in his lungs, faces are rising
William is staring, blaming, 'why!?'
'what brother would do this', he asks in silence
Justine appeals, her eyes ask – 'why?'
Henry, saddened, shocked – 'Why?'
Claims and charges, calling – 'Why?'
Voices clamour, wanting a reason...'why?'
Why? WHY!? WHY!?!?
His heart in his chest, leaping, in spasm,
lurching, convulsing, he falls to the floor

SOUND OF A HEARTBEAT

Then blackness and silence

.....

- JUSTINE: Utter breakdown, total collapse...
- MOTHER: Just like before, but this time, the man who nursed him back to health is himself dead.
- FATHER: But help is at hand – (looking down at Victor) Oh my son, my poor broken son...
Three months in prison he lay. Awaiting a verdict and slowly regaining his strength.
But finally the Grand Jury decided – (to his son) ‘Innocent’ Victor, as we all knew. They have now proclaimed it – you are ‘innocent’.
- VICTOR: (disgusted with himself) Innocent!?! If only they knew...
- FATHER: They proved that you were on a Scottish Island when the hands of the murderer closed on poor Henry. Not your hands...
- VICTOR: Not my hands...?
- FATHER: And now, I will take you home.
- VICTOR: Home!?
- FATHER: And our old lives can start again –
- VICTOR: Our old lives are gone Father. Gone when William died and when Justine, Innocent Justine died for that crime. I am the cause of this – I murdered her, and William and any hope of our old life returning.
- FATHER: My dearest Victor, what madness is this? I beg you never to use such words again. We will go home and our family will be together again and we will have a marriage to celebrate!
- ALL CAST (WHISPERED): *I will be with you on your wedding night...*

IN SIMPLE IMAGES WE SEE THE WEDDING TAKE PLACE

- ELIZABETH: I do. (Confetti etc. She sees that Victor is agitated) Be happy, my dear Victor, there is, I hope, nothing to distress you; and be assured that if a lively joy is not painted in my face, my heart is contented. Something whispers to me not to expect too much from our future, but I will not listen to such a sinister voice. What a divine day! How happy and serene all nature appears!

HE STILL LOOKS AROUND HIM AND CLUTCHES AT A HIDDEN PISTOL

- What is it that agitates you, my dear Victor? What is it you fear?
- VICTOR: Be calm, my love. After this night, all will be safe. But the passage of this night may be dreadful, very dreadful.
- ELIZABETH: But as man and wife we will face it together.

VICTOR: Not this night. You must retire to our bed long before me and I will join you when my work is done. Then, and for the rest of our lives, we will face everything together, in peace.

WE SEE VICTOR SEARCHING WITH HIS PISTOL

AS HE PATROLS THE HOUSE, ELIZABETH SCREAMS

SCENE NINETEEN: STUDENT GROUP A

DREW: For a feminist novel, there's a lot of men talking all the time...

JUDE: And you don't think that's the experience of a lot of women a lot of the time, just *hearing men talk*...?

DREW: And for a feminist novel, a decent chunk of the people who die are women.

JUDE: You're making my point for me?

ALI: What?

JUDE: They die because of a poor choice *made by a man*...

SAM: And at the hands of one man...

CHARLIE: Or because of the other man...

SAM: If you can't see what makes it a feminist novel then you're...

DAVE: What...?

JUDE: Never mind!

ALI: But it can't be a feminist novel because the word 'feminist' didn't even exist then.

CHARLIE: Is that your best argument?

DAVE: It's a good point...

JUDE: So do you think, when early man was wandering the wide open plains and a big animal approaches, did he think – "Well I won't run because the words 'Sabre Toothed Tiger' don't exist yet"?

CAMERON: That is a good point too.

SCENE TWENTY: THE BOOK

HENRY: The scream, the scream which seals the fate of Elizabeth, of Victor, of the creature.

FATHER: Even Victor's father dies of a broken heart.

MOTHER: It was not just a scream but a starting pistol for a chase.

JUSTINE: A race with no winners.

VICTOR: By the sacred earth on which I kneel, I swear to pursue the demon who caused this misery, until he or I shall perish in mortal conflict. I call on you, spirits of the

dead, and on you, wandering ministers of vengeance, to aid and conduct me in my work. Let the cursed and hellish monster drink deep of agony; let him feel the despair that now torments me!

CREATURE: I am satisfied, miserable wretch! You have determined to live, and I am satisfied.

HENRY: River after river, town and village, mountain and sea – always a clue

CREATURE: “My reign is not yet over.”

MOTHER: Those words carved into a rock...

CREATURE: “My power is complete.”

FATHER: ...into the bark of a tree. Always a clue.

CREATURE: Follow me. I seek the everlasting ice of the north, where you will feel the misery of cold and frost. Come on, my enemy; we have yet to wrestle for our lives, but many hard and miserable hours you must endure until that period shall arrive! Prepare! Wrap yourself in furs and provide food, for we shall soon enter upon a journey where your sufferings will satisfy my everlasting hatred.

JUSTINE: And finally into the sights of the ice-encased Captain Walton.

WALTON: We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on towards the north, at the distance of half a mile; a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge and guided the dogs. We watched the rapid progress of the traveller with our telescopes until he was lost among the ice.

FATHER: And the next morning...

WALTON: A sledge, like that we had seen before, which had drifted towards us in the night on a large fragment of ice. Only one dog remained alive; but there was a human being within it whom the sailors were persuading board our vessel.

SCENE TWENTY ONE: STUDENT GROUP B

HARLEY: It's all well and good reading these old books but I want something which tells us about life today, what we're experiencing in the here and now.

RILEY: And you don't think this does?

NAT: It's so old fashioned and it's full of these crazy coincidences...

FRAN: But those things aren't what is at the heart of it, what she's trying to say..

KIM: But my question is 'what is she trying to say that is worth thinking about in the modern world?'

RILEY: Are you *really* asking that?

KIM: I'm *really* asking that.

MORGAN: So, my take on it is that she's asking 'should the natural world be tampered with for our own advantage or vanity?'

DAN C Is nature something which should be respected and worked *with* rather than *against*?

HARLEY: Is it possible that if you play fast and loose with the forces of nature, that you might just open a door for those same forces to bite you on the –

JOOLS: What are you saying?

KIM: Imagine if the beast which is created isn't this huge creature, but something else?

JOOLS: Like...?

HARLEY: Like... plastics. We created it and now we throw it away and it ends up in rubbish heaps and in our seas. It's destroying our environment, and is even in our food chain, in our stomachs, in our bloodstreams...

MORGAN: Or what about the gasses from our cars, planes and factories that are now damaging our climate and our health? These are all monsters we created ... but nature will have the last laugh.

FRAN: How?

KIM: Well, what if 'the monster' unleashed is something tiny, like a virus? I think it's true that the HIV virus jumped species when humans were trafficking bush meat in Africa...

NAT: And didn't the Corona Virus spread so fast because of that market in China...

JOOLS: And neither of those places feel like they were treating the natural world with the care it deserves.

RILEY: And that's before we even bring up the possibility of the creature as a metaphor for Artificial Intelligence.

FRAN: What!?! I need to get my head around that one...give me a moment...

RILEY: If you stop thinking of Victor as 'A man'... and think of him as 'MAN'..... it changes a lot of things.

HARLEY: Mary Shelley knew what she was doing. She was never really writing about this man called Frankenstein. She was writing about...us...

RILEY: ...all of us.

SCENE TWENTY TWO: THE BOOK

FATHER: Victor's final resting place is surrounded by ice. On his deathbed he has just a little time to tell his tale and give what little advice he has...

VICTOR: Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet others may succeed.

WALTON: He pressed my hand feebly, and his eyes closed for ever, while a gentle smile passed away from his lips.

JUSTINE: But there is one final visit...

THE CREATURE LOOKS OVER VICTOR'S BODY

CREATURE: Here is my last victim. In his death my crimes are concluded; the misery of my life winds to its close! Oh, Frankenstein! What does it matter now if I ask you to pardon me? I, who destroyed you by destroying all you loved. He is cold, he cannot answer me.

WALTON: Your repentance means nothing now. If you had listened to the voice of conscience before now, Frankenstein would yet have lived.

CREATURE: Do you think that I was then deaf to regret? A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned with remorse. Do you think that the groans of Clerval, the boy, the girl, the woman, were music to my ears? I was the slave, not the master, of an impulse which I detested yet could not disobey.

WALTON: Wretch! You come here to whine over the desolation that you have made. You throw a flame into a home, and when it is burnt, you sit among the ruins and weep!

CREATURE: I am a wretch. I have murdered the innocent as they slept. Where can I find rest but in death? I shall die, and what I now feel will no longer be felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I will ascend my funeral pile in triumph and rejoice in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that fire will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace.

HE LEAVES THE SHIP, IS WATCHED BY WALTON WHO COVERS THE BODY OF VICTOR

EPILOGUE:

THIS MIGHT BE PERFORMED ONLY BY THOSE PERFORMING 'THE BOOK', BUT PERHAPS OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CAST MIGHT JOIN IN?

When he was about fifteen years old, he witnessed a most **violent and terrible** thunderstorm.

It came from behind the mountains, and the thunder burst at once with **dreadful power** from various parts of the heavens.

He remained, while the storm lasted, watching it with **curiosity and delight**.

As he stood, he saw a **stream of fire** issue from an old and beautiful oak which stood twenty yards from the house...

...when the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and **nothing remained** but a blasted stump.

When they visited it the next morning, they found the tree **shattered** in a remarkable manner.

It was not splintered by the shock, but **entirely reduced** to thin ribbons.

I never beheld anything so **utterly destroyed**.

END

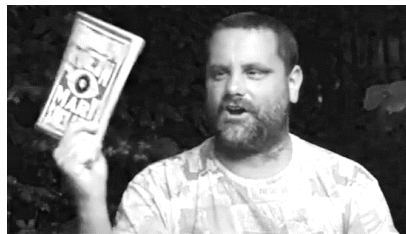
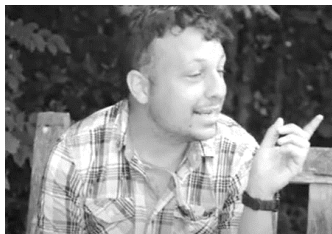
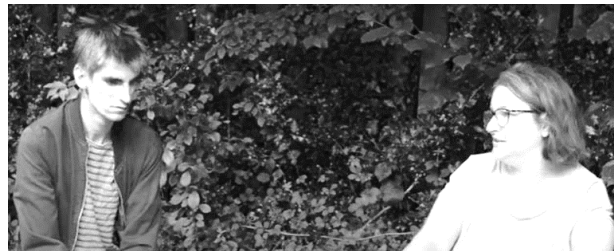
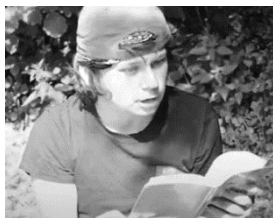
THOUGHTS ON THE TEXT

This script has been made not as an academic exercise but as a working text, a play that is practical for your cast. It is no more or less than a set of instructions for an event, and you can change it as you see fit to make it work for you and your actors. Cut it, re-allocate lines, merge characters if you need to, as long as those young people get to grips with these big ideas.

The premiere of this show had what we think of as ‘the book’ on stage and other sections filmed. We used, and have suggested here, two groups of students - but they could be one, or three, depending on how many actors you have. We have made sure that they all have gender-neutral names so you can have some fun with which gender gets which line.

This adaptation veers away from the horror and back towards the original text, but that said – chopped-up cadavers would have been part of Victor’s practice so you may want to go full-gothic in the sections where he suffers what was termed then, a ‘nervous collapse’. Perhaps he is being haunted by the spirits of the people he cut up in his experiments?

Once we decided to follow Mary Shelley’s words, we realised that none of our actors were ever going to play the eight-foot creature. He was, in the end, a sort of big puppet, voiced by one actor and animated by two others. Each director, cast or designer will make a choice on this, but we were struck by the fact that The Creature is made of many nameless people; he has a multitude within him, which would make it hard for him to be brought to life by one actor.



<u>CHARACTER</u>	<u>ACTOR</u>
VICTOR	
MOTHER	
FATHER	
ELIZABETH	
HENRY	
JUSTINE	
STUDENT GROUPS A & B	
ALI	
JUDE	
ALEX	
CHARLIE	
DREW	
CAMERON	
KIM	
MORGAN	
RILEY	
FRAN	
NAT	
HARLEY	
JOOLS	
TUTORS x 3	
NIGHTMARE VOICES	
TOWNSPEOPLE & NARRATION	
DE LACEY & NARRATION	
CAPTAIN WALTON & NARRATION	