

Frankenstein

1. Title

Title: Frankenstein

Author: Mary Shelley

Editorial: Wordsworth classics

Pages: 173

2. The author's biography and her novel.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851)

Mary was born in Somers Town, Great Britain, in 1797 to well-known parents: author and feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and philosopher William Godwin. Unfortunately, Wollstonecraft died ten days after her birth as the result of Mary's birth. Mary was therefore educated by her father's intellectual circle.

When Mary was ten she published her first poem. When she was sixteen, she met the young poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, a devotee of her father's teachings. Together with Mary's stepsister, they run off to continental Europe several times, not hindered by the fact that Shelley is already married.

In 1816, they went abroad again, this time spending time with Byron and his friend Polidori in Geneva. There Byron suggests that they should all write a ghost story. Mary wrote Frankenstein, the only story of the four that was ever to be published as a novel (she was eighteen when she wrote it and twenty-one when it was published). Later that same year, Percy's wife drowns herself: Percy and Mary married in December 1816.

The last two years of marriage were a disaster for Mary. Her half sister died and so did two of her children. Mary became depressed, a tendency she probably inherited from her mother. She was only partly relieved by the birth of Percy, their only surviving child. Then, in 1882, they moved to Italy and while her husband was drowning a sailing trip, Mary continued writing her own novels. Mary spent his late years with the companion of her son and two good friends.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley died in 1851 at the age of fifty-three.

3. Cinematographic adaptations.

This novel is one of the most adapted novel to the cinema. There have been 50 film adaptations and many of them have funny plots but the funniest thing is that many people, who hasn't read the book, think that Frankenstein is the monster, but that's not true, Frankenstein is the creator.

Here are all the film adaptations of Mary Shelley's novel, Frankenstein:

Frankenstein films:

- FRANKENSTEIN, 1931, dir. James Whale
- THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, 1935, dir. James Whale
- SON OF FRANKENSTEIN, 1939, dir. Rowland W. Lee

- THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, 1942, dir. Erle C. Kenton
- FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN, 1943, dir. Roy William Neill
- HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, 1944, dir. Erle C. Kenton
- HOUSE OF FRACULA, 1945, dir. Erle C. Kenton
- ABBOT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN, 1948, dir. Charles D. Barton
- THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, 1957, dir. Terence Fisher
- I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN, 1957, dir. Herbert L. Strock
- FRANKENSTEIN '70, 1958, dir. Howard W. Koch
- THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN, 1964, dir. Freddie Francis
- FURANKENSHUTAIN TAI BARAGON, 1965, dir. Inoshiro Honda
- FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE SPACE MONSTER, 1965, dir. Robert Gaffney
- FURANKENSHUTAIN NO KAIJA, 1966, dir. Inoshiro Honda
- JESSE JAMES MEET'S FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER, 1966, dir. William Beaudine
- FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN, 1967, dir. Terence Fisher
- FRANKENSTEIN MUS BE DESTROYED, 1969, dir. Terence Fisher
- THE HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN, 1970 dir. Jimmy Sangster
- DRACULA VERSUS FRANKENSTEIN, 1971, dir. Al Adamson
- DRACULA, PRISONER OF FRANKENSTEIN, 1972, dir. Jesús Franco
- ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN, 1973, dir. Paul Morrissey, Antonio Margheriti
- BLACKENSTEIN, 1973, dir. William A. Levey
- FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL, 1973, dir. Terence Fisher
- FRANKENSTEIN'S CASTLE OF FREAKS, 1973, dir. Robert H. Oliver
- FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY, 1973, dir. Jack Smight
- YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, 1974, dir. Mel Brooks
- VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN, 1975, dir. Calvin Floyd
- FRANKENSTEIN'S ISLAND, 1982, dir. Jerry Warren
- THE BRIDE, 1985, dir. Franc Roddam
- GOTHIC, 1986, dir. Ken Russel
- DOCTOR HACKENSTEIN, 1989, dir. Richard Clark
- FRANKENHOOKER, 1990, dir. Frank Henenlotter
- FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND, 1990, dir. Roger Corman
- FRANKENSTEIN: THE COLLEGE YEARS, 1991, dir. Tom Shadyac
- FRANKENSTEIN: THE REAL STORY, 1992, dir. David Wickes
- MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN, 1994, dir. Kenneth Branagh

4. Characters of the novel.

The characters in general are are not described in great detail.

–Main characters:

Victor Frankenstein

The narrator of the novel, Victor, was born in Geneva as the eldest son in a distinguished family. His first interest was poetry but after some time his attention focused on science. This interest quickly turned into an obsession: he was completely dedicated to learning "the secrets of heaven and earth". After that, he started to create the dæmon. This book doesn't describe Victor's physical appearance. (pg. 26)

The dæmon (Victor's creation)

His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was a lustrous black, and flowing; his

teethe of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips. (pg.45)

–Second characters:

Elizabeth Lavenza Frankenstein

Her hair was the brightest living gold, and, despite the poverty of her clothing, seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face so expressive of sensibility and sweetness, that none could behold her without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her features. She was the adopted sister of the Frankensteins and she was meant to become Victor's wife. (pg. 28)

Alphonse Frankenstein

He was Victor's father

Caroline Beaufort Frankenstein

She was Victor's mother. She possessed a mind of uncommon mould; and her courage rose to support her in adversity. The description of Caroline can be compared to Elizabeth's; (pg.27)

Henry Clerval

Victor's best and only good friend. He was a boy of a singular talent and fancy. He loved enterprise, hardship, and even danger, for its own sake. He was deeply read in books of chivalry and romance. He composed heroic songs, and began to write many a tale of enchantment and knightly adventure. (pg.30).

Robert Walton

He was an investigator who wanted to do a voyage by the North Pole.

Margaret

Walton's sister. She was the addressee of his brother's letters

M. Waldman

He was a teacher of natural philosophy, in whom Victor found a true friend, as he says. He appeared about fifty years of age, but with an aspect expressive of the greatest benevolence; a few grey hairs covered his temples, but those at the back of his head were nearly black. His person was short, but remarkably erect; and his voice the sweetest I had ever heard. (pg.38)

De Lacey, Safie, Felix, Agatha

They were the cottagers, the monster's neighbours. De Lacey was the father, the blind old man. Felix and Agatha were their son and daughter and Safie was the Arabian, who was Felix's lover.

Mr Kirwin

He was an Irish magistrate.

5.Theme

The novel is about a scientist who created life in an inanimated corpse and the misfortunes that had passed because of that.

6.Plot

The book starts with some letters wrote by a man, Walton, to his sister Margaret. In these letters Walton narrates all things he does every day to his sister; his arrival to Archangel or to Saint Petesburgh where he employed the crew for a voyage, and then across the North Pole while his investigation took place. In his last letter he tells Margaret the finding of a man that was there, alone with his sledge. They sheltered him and they told him that they had seen a gigantic being crossing the ice in a sledge the day before his appearing.

That man's name was Victor. He and the captain, Robert Walton, became good friends and Victor told him this story:

Victor Frankenstein was born in Italy. His father got married with a woman who would be his mother. When he was five years old, they were in the forest when suddenly his mother saw a very poor family with many children. She put the eye on one of them, who was very little, beautiful and fair haired girl, and asked about her. She realised that she was adopted. So, she decided to adopt Elizabeth, that was the baby's name. Elizabeth and Victor were called each other cousin, and they spent their childhood together. Apart from them, they had two more brother, whose name were Ernest and William. Then Victor met a boy called Henry Clerval, his best friend.

When Victor was seventeen years old, his father said that the best thing for his son was to go to Ingoldstadt to study at university as soon as possible. But unfortunately, his sister Elizabeth became ill because of the scarlet fever. She was near to death but her mother looked after her and she finally recovered. The bad thing was that her mother sickened and when she was close to death, she told to Victor and Elizabeth that her hopes of future happiness were placed on their union, that would be the consolation for their father. After saying that she soon died, but she died calmly.

After those events, Victor went to Ingoldstandt and studied natural sciences, that was what he had liked in his childhood. He learnt more about natural philosophy and chemistry. He found a real friend in a teacher, M. Waldman.

He found out an incredible thing, how create live. He spent the hole day in his laboratory, day after day. He was really enthusiastic and excited with that experiment and tried to give life to an inhanimated corpse. So he created a human being. Regrettably, when he joined all the pieces that he had created, the beautiful being he wanted to create turned into a whretch, a really ugly and awful thing, it was hideous. After creating that monster and giving it life, he was horrified, and full of fear ran away from his laboratory. In his escape, he bumped into Clerval, his best friend, who came to Ingoldstandt to study latin classics and literature. Henry noticed that Victor was'nt very well, that something had happened. They went to his apartment and Henry asked him what the matter was, but Victor could not answer. He felt ill and went to bed and that way passed several days. Henry looked after him with all his affection and did not ask again about what happened. When he recovered, he found on his bedside table a letter that Elizabeth had written him. She asked about him and when was he planning to visit them, he had not written them since they went to university. To forget what happened and what he had created, he started studying literature, just as Henry.

He then planned to visit his family and wrote his father. He wrote him back to say that William was dead, he had been murdered. He departed immediately to his house. But before arriving there, he stayed a night in another village and at night visited the forest. There he thought to have seen the monster, his creation. He was sure that being had killed his brother.

When he arrived home he realized that every one was upset, sad and wretched. Furthermore, Justine, their loved maid, was accused of killing the boy, his preferred member of the family. The day after his arrival, Justine was declared guilty by the justice and they sent her to jail before executing her. Elizabeth and Victor visited Justine and made her notice of their belief in her innocence. Some days later, she was executed. Victor felt very guilty of all that had happened, and, of course, he did not feel with strength and energy to tell anyone his secret.

During the time that Victor was staying at home, he used to walk on the forest and mountains. In one of these walks, he found the monster. At first, he was very angry with him, but, little by little, the monster convinced Victor to listen to him. He narrated him his story:

He did not know how he had arrived to that mountains because at first he could not manage his feelings. He had no sight neither vision. Little by little he had recovered them and he discovered he was in the forest. He took refuge in a cave. He had investigated the surroundings and discovered a small village. He went there to get some food but people got so scared because of his appearance that he had to return quickly to his cave.

Some days later, he decided to search for another refuge. He found a hut where there was an old man, but he ran away, so he ate his breakfast and stayed there long time. While this staying, a family built a house beside his cottage, and he could watch them through a small hole. He spent his days like that, looking at his neighbours doing their daily duties. That was the way he learnt to speak. One day, an Arabian girl came. She was Felix's lover. She did not know how to speak their language, so they taught, in addition to teaching her their idiom, taught her geography and history. The monster learnt that way how to speak, to write and read.

But one day he decided to present himself to them. He chose to enter himself when the old man, De Lacey was alone because he was blind. He allowed him to enter in his house, and when he was going to say who he was, old man's son and daughter entered and, frightened of the being's aspect him sent him away. The being returned to his hovel. But the cottagers. Impressed by the monster, disappeared and decided to sell his house.

The monster, extremely sad, was in the forest when a little child appeared, he scared also at seeing him. The being caught the boy and asked who was he, and said he was Victor Frankenstein's son. The being knew that Frankenstein was his creator because he had dressed with some of his clothes that were in his apartment and there were some papers with his name. So, the monster, who was full of rage, because his creator abandoned him, caught the boy by the neck to ask him about Frankenstein, but he had too much strength and killed him.

This was what the monster told Victor. Victor then felt sympathy of him and accepted his accord. It consisted in creating him a partner, just like him, but this time a female, who would make companion and fall in love with, they would live together, apart from the civilization and happily. But before doing another awful being, Victor realized he had to study again to remember how to create it. So, to disconnect of what he was doing and to work alone and relaxed, he decided to do a trip to London. He communicated it to his father, and he agreed, and promised him that he would marry Elizabeth as soon as possible. Victor also agreed in that because he had loved his cousin since they were children. Elizabeth was worried about him because he was very busy thinking about the last happenings and asked Henry to go with his future husband to look after him. So they both went to London. They stayed there for some months. After that, Victor decided to continue his trip on his own to finish his creation.

He arrived at a very little village situated in an island and he rented a hut to establish there his laboratory. He knew that the monster persecuted him during all the trip to see what he was doing. One night, Victor thought

that maybe that new being, although being a female, she could be extremely evil or mad and don't like his companion. So he decided to stop his work and destroyed everything he had created. A little later, the monster appeared and threatened him by saying that he would make him very wretched by killing his family members and friends. When the being disappeared, Victor decided to take a boat and throw the work he had done into the sea. He did that but it was dark and foggy, so he slept in the boat and waited to the day to come back to the coast. But next day he appeared in an Irish island where he was accused of killing a man because of some coincidences. The village's inhabitants took Victor to a magistrate to judge his guiltiness. Before judging him, they went to see the cadaver; it was Henry's body. This magistrate, Mr. Kirwin, treated very well his prisoner, Victor, maybe because he was very ill.

His father was informed about all that had happened and travelled immediately to that village. There, he looked after his son and when he got a little better they started their trip to Geneva. They lodged in Paris a few days to have a rest and there Victor received a letter from Elizabeth in which she asked about his feelings towards her. He was sure of what he felt so when he arrived home they married each other.

When they got married, they went on a trip. But on their first night together, the monster entered in the room where Elizabeth was alone and strangled her. Victor heard a scream, so he entered the bedroom and there was his wife died. His father saw his favourite daughter died, became very ill and died too.

Victor decided to take revenge and persecuted the monster through many countries to kill him. They arrived to the North Pole and when Victor was exhausted saw a boat. He approached there and the crew sheltered him. He was really ill and the captain, Robert Walton, took him to his bed so that he could rest and recover some energy.

They became good friends, and Victor told him his story. He said what he wanted was to kill his enemy. He also told Walton to take revenge and kill the monster. He was close to death and in a few days he died.

When Walton was writing his guest's tale to send it to his sister, Margaret, he heard some noises in Victor's room. When he entered he saw the being that so many times had Victor described, it was extremely scary. The monster spoke to Robert and convinced him to allow him to live. He said he would live there, in the North Pole without bothering anyone. That way he escaped safely.

7. Structure

The book is divided in twenty-four chapters, but apart from that there are some letters at the beginning of the book written by Walton, and some at the end. Those final letters are narrated by Walton, and he continues narrating the story after Victor's death through the letters that he writes to his sister.

The structure of this novel is a flash back. The narrator starts with some letters written by Walton. Then Victor narrates his life and why he is there.

What the author narrates are in real time, she describes what happens and she knows what the characters think.

8. Personal opinion

When I started reading this book I thought that it was a bit boring, but I continued reading it and I soon engaged. Moreover, it is an English classic and, in my opinion it's a very good way to learn and improve our English, much more than watching the television. And it is also very necessary for young people like us to learn English in other ways, not only in class. So I recommend everyone to read this classic book.

Besides, I am very impressed that the book's style is a little old to our times. It has lots of expressions and

vocabulary of that era, many of them don't appear in the dictionary, but it has no difficult structures on the sentences.

9. Bibliography

All the information has been found in these directions:

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