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*Dramatic Publishing*

# FRANKENSTEIN



Drama by Bo List.  
Based on the novel by Mary Shelley.

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# FRANKENSTEIN

**Drama. By Bo List. Based on the novel by Mary Shelley. Cast: 6 to 15m., 2w.** Victor Frankenstein awakens on the Archangel—captained by Robert Walton of London. The ship is frozen in place near the Arctic Circle, and Walton’s men are on the verge of mutiny. Walton, though, dreams of being the first to reach the North Pole. Frankenstein, delirious from fatigue and hunger, cautions Walton against arrogance. Frankenstein knows the dark consequences of unchecked pride better than anyone. Years before, young and optimistic Victor decides to embark from Geneva to University at Ingolstadt. His studies consume him, leading him to experiments that could benefit all humankind—or perhaps destroy it altogether. He builds a man composed of the reassembled dead, but the result is hideous and an abominable mockery of Victor’s higher intentions. Victor tries to dispose of his creation, but it escapes into the dark night. Frankenstein’s creature wanders through Germany, beaten and scorned, until a kindly blind man, De Lacey, takes him in and teaches him to speak and to read. The creature’s happiness is short-lived. He is driven from his newfound home by frightened villagers and vows revenge on the creator who brought him to life. The creature finds Victor, happy again in Geneva, and develops a plan that will bring him a companion as horrifying as he, exacting terrible punishment against the man who made him a monster. “A graphic retelling of the Frankenstein story filled with empathetic characters and a true monster who quotes Milton and the Bible.” (*ChicagoCritic.com*) *Flexible set. Approximate running time: 2 hours, 15 minutes. Code: FF2.*

New Moon Theatre Company, Memphis, Tenn., featuring (l-r)  
Gregory Boller and Kinon Keplinger. *Photo: Chase Yarwood-Gustafson.*  
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# Frankenstein

By

BO LIST

Adapted from the novel by

MARY SHELLEY



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

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*Frankenstein* was commissioned and originally produced by Kentucky Conservatory Theatre's SummerFest in Lexington, Ky., in July 2011.

Director ..... Joe Ferrell  
Stage Manager ..... Gretchen Shoot  
Fight Choreographer/Special Effects ..... Henry Layton  
Set Design ..... Dathan Powell  
Costume Design ..... Missy Johnston  
Lighting Design ..... Danny Bowling  
Sound Design ..... Paul Manning

Original Cast:

Victor Frankenstein ..... Spencer Christensen  
The Creature ..... Nick Vannoy  
Elizabeth ..... Joe Fields-Elswick  
Henry ..... Jacob L. Karnes IV  
Alphonse ..... Paul Thomas  
Justine, Female ..... Pamela Perlman  
Dr. Waldman, De Lacey, Minister ..... Carmen Geraci  
Captain Walton ..... G.B. Dixon  
William ..... Garrett Walters  
Karl, Judge ..... James Hamblin  
Horst, Sailor, Constable,  
Executioner, Guard ..... Jesse Hungerford  
Sailor ..... Harry Fogle

Kentucky Conservatory Theatre's Summerfest was produced by General Manager Martha Bernier Campbell and Artistic Director Joe Ferrell.

# Frankenstein

## CHARACTERS

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN: 20s to 30s, driven, romantically attractive and intense.

CREATURE: 20s to 50s, large and strong, rough-hewn but sensitive.

ELIZABETH LAVENZA: 20s to 30s, beautiful, bright and dutiful.

ALPHONSE FRANKENSTEIN: 50s to 60s, warm and wise, patient father to Victor and William.

HENRY CLERVAL: 20s to 30s, lighthearted best friend to Victor.

JUSTINE MORITZ: 20s to 40s, trusted servant and friend to the Frankenstein family. Later, the FEMALE creature.

WILLIAM FRANKENSTEIN: 9, later 11, young brother to Victor.

DOCTOR WALDMAN: 40s to 70s, brilliant but melancholy mentor to Victor.

DE LACEY: 50s to 70s, blind and compassionate.

CAPTAIN ROBERT WALTON: 30s to 50s, ambitious and fearless.

KARL and HORST: 20s to 50s, ruffian neighbors to De Lacey.

Also:

JUDGE

SAILOR

CONSTABLE

TOWNSPEOPLE

EXECUTIONER

GUARDS

MINISTER

KEMPE: a police lieutenant.



## PRODUCTION NOES

In the original production, the roles of De Lacey, Waldman and the Minister were played by the same actor while another played Karl, Judge and Constable. Yet another played Horst, Kempe and the Executioner. The male supporting roles can be cast as the director sees fit and in whatever combination is most practical. The play can be produced with as few as 10 actors (with creative casting/imagining of the scene with the townspeople) or more if extras are available. In the Chicago production at City Lit Theater, other combinations occurred, including the doubling of Walton and Alphonse. Whatever works.

## TIME AND SETTING

Scenes on the ship take place somewhere in the Arctic Circle, while the rest of the play is set in and around Geneva and Ingolstadt, Germany—the last years of the 18th century.

**SCENE 7**

*(VICTOR's laboratory. VICTOR and HENRY conclude work on VICTOR's creation, installing WALDMAN's brain with great urgency.)*

VICTOR. Now, continue to apply pressure until these last few stitches can be tightened.

HENRY (*obliging*). Yes.

VICTOR. We haven't a moment to waste. The brain dies quickly. We must give back its life without delay. (*To the body.*) Thank you, if you can hear me, Doctor, for your last, best gift.

*(VICTOR completes the stitching of WALDMAN's brain into the CREATURE.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Now, relieve the pressure. (*HENRY does so.*) Is the heart beating?

HENRY (*checking*). Yes. Healthily.

VICTOR. Excellent. We must act now. Connect these wires to the electric wands behind you (*HENRY does.*) and attend their corresponding levers. I will give a signal for each of them to be pulled. Do not hesitate.

HENRY. I shan't.

VICTOR (*to himself*). My thanks to God for Franklin and his ingenious kite ...

*(As HENRY connects a wire, he is slightly shocked. He cries out.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Are you all right?

HENRY. What a painful fright! Is this your "electricity," Victor?

VICTOR. Not mine, friend. We are merely borrowing it.

HENRY. Stealing it, perhaps?

VICTOR. Take care not to touch the metal itself, rather the wooden clamps.

HENRY. I'll make note of it!

*(The CREATURE begins to breathe, loudly. HENRY startles. VICTOR is thrilled.)*

VICTOR. Marvelous! The brain is connected! The body is working on its own!

HENRY. What now?

VICTOR. The part of the brain that controls involuntary responses is engaged. Now we must reactivate the mind—that which governs thought, speech, the soul.

HENRY. The soul?

VICTOR. Yes. I should think. Doctor Waldman's soul. Preserved, I trust, with his great intellect, passion and insight. It is his brain, I should hope that contained therein is all that he was, imbued with the great strength of these larger, heartier men.

HENRY. Does not the soul fly to heaven upon a man's death?

VICTOR. If it does, I hope, that we shall snatch it back.

HENRY. I hope that we shall not be snatching it back from the other place.

*(A beat. Lightning flashes and thunder cracks.)*

VICTOR. It is time!

*(VICTOR whirls about the laboratory, instructing HENRY on wires to connect, levers to pull, etc. Thunder continues to crackle, and lightning flashes all about. The storm is fierce. Finally, when all is in a state of readiness, VICTOR stands near the CREATURE and calls to HENRY.)*

VICTOR *(cont'd)*. On my command, the first lever—then the next, then the next.

HENRY. Of course.

VICTOR. Wait ... wait ... wait ... (*Lightning flashes a wild streak through the heavens.*) Now!

*(The laboratory screams to life as machines whir, electricity seethes through the CREATURE and attached fluids and flasks bubble and boil.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Now the second!

*(HENRY pulls the second lever, which animates the CREATURE, who tenses and shakes in its bindings. The machinery whizzes and churns at terrifying speeds and with dreadful roars.)*

HENRY (*yelling above the tumult*). It feels that it may shake apart at any moment, and us with it!

VICTOR. It will hold long enough! Now, on my signal the third! (*Whirls, squeals, combustion.*) Now!

*(HENRY throws the last switch. The mighty storm outside and the tempest created inside build to a tremendous climax. The CREATURE lets out a horrifying howl. Suddenly, an explosion. Machinery crashes, sparks fly and VICTOR and HENRY are thrown violently back.*

*Darkness hushes the laboratory—except for the thunder, which rolls ever farther away as the storm recedes. HENRY and VICTOR are unconscious. A few last sparks and sizzles emerge from the wreckage of the laboratory, but otherwise there is an eerie silence, until:*

*The CREATURE stirs. It coughs to life, with gasps and gurgles until it manages to breathe. A spasm wrenches him from his restraints. He is panicked and flails his way off of the slab from which he was animated, landing hard on the floor.*

*A cry of pain rings out, and the CREATURE thrashes around. He calms and struggles to stand. Something in him knows what standing is, but the memory is distant and difficult. Eventually, he manages to stand, though uncertainly. He is huge, enlarged by the process of animation, and his features are roughened and obscured. What was beautiful is now grotesque, a mass of scars and swellings and incongruous flesh.*

*VICTOR stirs, slowly, unnoticed by the CREATURE, who looks about the laboratory with the eyes of an infant, curious and blank. VICTOR himself struggles to stand.)*

VICTOR (*wheezing*). Henry? Where are you? Are you all—

*(As VICTOR turns to look for HENRY, he is stopped in his tracks by the sight of the CREATURE, who now sees VICTOR for the first time. They are frozen, both in tremendous awe.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd, a gasp, after a long beat*). It's alive ...

*(The CREATURE stares at VICTOR, who moves for a closer look at his creation. When he clears his head and eyes enough to see him, he recoils.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Oh God, it is hideous!

*(VICTOR inspects again, with disgust and disbelief.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). My materials were beautiful, perfect. And this ... *(Cries, collects himself, to the CREATURE.)* Can you speak? Can I have succeeded at least in that? Can you speak? *(No response.)* CAN YOU SPEAK?!?

*(This startles the CREATURE, who makes an unintelligible moan or grunt and falls to the ground. VICTOR kneels near him.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Doctor—can you be in there? Can you have survived in any form? Are you there? Doctor! Are you there?

*(The CREATURE whimpers, understanding nothing. He extends a hand in VICTOR's direction.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Is there any memory within you? Tell me that something remains! Do you remember me? I am Victor. Frankenstein. Remember? Frankenstein!

*(The CREATURE can only stare and whimper.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). FRANKENSTEIN! Remember! Frankenstein!

*(With each yell the CREATURE shrinks back and whimpers more. VICTOR rummages through some of the wreckage and retrieves his journal. He shows it to the CREATURE.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Can you read it? Your woeful creator. FRANK-EN-STEIN.

*(The CREATURE, sensing interest in the book, reaches slowly toward it, then swiftly snatches it, holding it close.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). My failure is absolute. What a mockery of my ambitions.

*(The CREATURE moves toward VICTOR, who shrinks away. The CREATURE persists, and VICTOR, in a mixture of fear, disgust and rage, will not let him near.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Do not touch me, devil!

*(The CREATURE backs VICTOR into a corner, whimpering and eager to be touched or regarded in any way. VICTOR strikes the CREATURE, who howls terribly.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Do not touch me, abomination!

*(The CREATURE does not understand the words but cannot mistake the body language of this violent rejection. He falls to the floor blubbing. VICTOR's response to him softens somewhat.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Poor, soulless animal. It is your creator who has erred, not you. But I shall amend all.

*(VICTOR moves to a cabinet and withdraws from it a large syringe. He moves to the CREATURE.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). This will hurt just a moment, and then the slate will be wiped clean.

*(VICTOR moves slowly toward the CREATURE, who mistakes the gesture as a caring one. His whimpering ceases a moment as he hopes for some form of embrace.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Farewell ... monster ...

*(VICTOR swiftly stabs the needle into the arm of the CREATURE, who shrieks in surprise and pain. Before VICTOR can inject the life-robbing serum, the CREATURE breaks free. He strikes VICTOR, who falls then flees, awkwardly, until he finds a door in which to escape. He opens it, and a blast of freezing air tears into the room. The CREATURE pauses, looks back in at VICTOR, makes an unintelligible moan, then disappears into the night. VICTOR struggles to the door and looks out into the darkness.)*



VICTOR (*cont'd*). Very well—let nature consume what I could not fully create nor destroy.

*(VICTOR remembers that HENRY has not awakened. He searches about, finally finding HENRY and moving to revive him.)*

VICTOR (*cont'd*). Henry! My dearest friend! Henry!

HENRY (*stirring*). Victor? (*Winces.*) Victor, what happened?

VICTOR. Hush, don't move. You're injured. Badly. But fortunately for you, I am a better physician than friend!

HENRY (*smiling, coughing*). Let us hope so! But what of your experiment? Did it work?

VICTOR (*after a beat, coldly*). No. That which was created, died in the cold. I destroyed the remains.

HENRY. I'm so sorry. So many months—years of research and aspiration.

VICTOR. No, it is I who am sorry—for these your wounds, your inconvenience and to have wasted your time and mine in the pursuit of a madman's dream. We must forget about it altogether.

HENRY. But if it lived even a moment, then perhaps next time it will live longer, better somehow. If you try again—

VICTOR. Perhaps, perhaps. I may very well attempt it again, but it is best now to concentrate on the assembly of the living, not the reassembly of the dead. I must attend to your injuries. We will forget about these events, friend, and one day laugh at our follies.

*(VICTOR helps HENRY up. HENRY looks about the laboratory, which is in shambles.)*

HENRY. Oh my, Victor, your laboratory. All of this effort lain waste!

VICTOR. No, friend. The slate is cleaned.

*(VICTOR helps HENRY off. Before VICTOR is gone, WALTON appears, rapt to the story VICTOR has been telling. For a moment, VICTOR is back on the ship.)*

WALTON. Your story is fantastical. Impossible.

VICTOR. I am no liar, sir!

WALTON. Of course not, friend. I did not mean to—

VICTOR *(laughing)*. Impossible! Which is the impossibility, captain? Restoring to life that which once lived already? Or a navigable path to Asia through a continent of ice?

WALTON. If, *if* your story were true, what you speak of is witchcraft!

VICTOR. Not witchcraft. Science.

WALTON. Heresy, Doctor, regardless. Arrogance.

VICTOR. Arrogance? Sir, my voyage may have been damned, but it sailed on the winds of pure intention. *I* worked to heal the sick and maimed, conquer death. And I could have done it! What do you have to show for your efforts but a stranded vessel, dead sailors and your own damnable pride?

*(WALTON is stymied, silent.)*

VICTOR *(cont'd)*. I'm ... sorry. I spoke ... immoderately. I'm ill. Wearied.

WALTON. Whatever your trials, you have suffered much.

VICTOR. Suffered ...