

# **FRANKENSTEIN**

by  
Vincent S. Hannam

Based on the novel  
by Mary Shelley

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## **PRODUCTION HISTORY**

*FRANKENSTEIN* was originally commissioned and produced by the Hampstead Stage Company (Artistic Director, Jay Pastucha) in the fall of 2016 in Hampstead, New Hampshire. It was directed by Austen Edwards. The cast was as follows:

FRANKENSTEIN/OLD MAN/YOUNG MAN	Patrick Sylvester
THE MONSTER/CLERVAL/FATHER/WALTON	Robert Wright III

*FRANKENSTEIN* was subsequently revised with the addition of Elizabeth and produced in the fall of 2017 by the Hampstead Stage Company. It was directed by artistic director Jay Pastucha. The cast was as follows:

FRANKENSTEIN/OLD MAN/SAILOR	Ben Jacobs
ELIZABETH/CAPTAIN WALTON/DAUGHTER	Liz Dillard
THE MONSTER/FATHER	Ross Frawley

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## **THANKS**

Ellen DeYoung, Jay Pastucha, Anna Lynn Robbins, Kathy Preston, Dave Preston, Emily Bates, Deirdre Manning, Austen Edwards, Armando Rivera, Griff Braley, Mark, Scott, Mark, Da, Daddy, Max, Lucas, Mary Shelley, Boris Karloff, James Whale, Colin Clive, Guillermo del Toro, and all the actors and designers who wish to tell the tale.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN:	A student of science filled with ambition and ultimately vengeance. 20s-30s. Male. Any race/ethnicity.
THE MONSTER:	Born from Frankenstein's experiments. 20s+. Any gender. Any race/ethnicity.
ELIZABETH:	A woman with her own ambitions and love for family. Proud, tenacious, humorous. 20s-30s. Female. Any race/ethnicity.
CAPTAIN WALTON:	The captain of the ship. Female. Any race/ethnicity.
DELACEY:	A blind old man who lives secluded in the forest. Kind, frustrated, lonely. Older. Male. Any race/ethnicity.
FATHER:	Frankenstein's father. A scientist who did what he could. Older adult. Male. Any race/ethnicity.
EMILY:	The daughter of DeLacey. She loves her father and perhaps the Monster. Younger adult. Female. Any race/ethnicity.

INSPECTOR KROGH:	A police inspector in love with Emily and scorned by her father. 20+. Male. Any race/ethnicity.
RIVERA:	The first mate. Younger adult. Any gender. Any race/ethnicity.
SAILORS:	Voices of the crew on board.

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For doubling, please consider:

ELIZABETH/CAPTAIN WALTON/EMILY  
FRANKENSTEIN/DELACEY  
RIVERA/FATHER/INSPECTOR KROGH

## **PLACE**

Central Europe

## **TIME**

Early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century

## **NOTES**

A slash (/) or dash (-) in the dialogue indicates where characters' lines should overlap or be otherwise interrupted. Noted set/technical requirements include voiceover, lightning, gunfire.

Emily's poem is from "The First Kiss of Love" by Lord Byron.

Consider producing *Frankenstein* in rep with *Wolfsblood: A Gothic Drama* for a monstrous double-feature. More information about the play at the end of this book.

## ACT I

### SCENE 1

*Inside a creaky, wooden ship. Dark, damp. Outside wind howls. In the corner are an assortment of barrels, crates, etc. THE MONSTER rises from behind the barrels, holding a large dead rat. He regards it tenderly, laying it to rest.*

*Voices are heard approaching the room. THE MONSTER hides. Two sailors enter forcefully: RIVERA, the first mate and CAPTAIN WALTON.*

RIVERA

"The Captain is out of her depth."

CAPTAIN WALTON

What else did you overhear?

RIVERA

They're afraid you've gone mad.

*Beat.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

Who did you see at this gathering?

RIVERA

(uneasy)

It was dark there on the forward aft -

CAPTAIN WALTON

Don't protect them, Rivera.

RIVERA

I ain't sure. Everyone can't be mixed up in this business.

CAPTAIN WALTON

If there be whispers of doubt regarding my position, it means everyone is mixed up.

RIVERA

I'm your first mate.

CAPTAIN WALTON

You think you can navigate a ship in this weather?

RIVERA

Captain.

CAPTAIN WALTON

This far north, with the pack ice closing in.

RIVERA

Captain, please -

CAPTAIN WALTON

You have no idea what it takes to command this ship!

RIVERA

Captain Walton! I'm on your side.

*CAPTAIN WALTON pulls a knife from RIVERA's belt.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

The crew, they know you're here?

RIVERA

Aye, but only as a messenger.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Mutinous swine -

RIVERA

Captain, no one wishes you harm but... but the men have families back home. To never see them again and die in this frozen wasteland. Can't you see it our way?

CAPTAIN WALTON

I see...

RIVERA

I got kids I ain't seen in years.

CAPTAIN WALTON

You made a choice to join this crew.

RIVERA

You insist on maintaining this course?

CAPTAIN WALTON

This is more than a wasteland of ice. We're navigating a route through the North Pole.

RIVERA

But the ship ain't cut out for this kind of cold. The ice grows thicker by the hour.

CAPTAIN WALTON

We can be the first to find a way through it.

RIVERA

You're the only person aboard capable of doing so... But I need assurances. Something solid to take back to the crew.

CAPTAIN WALTON

You say the ice grows thick?

RIVERA

Everyday I watch it choke off one passage after another.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Our current course, north north-west?

RIVERA

Clear, for now.

CAPTAIN WALTON

If I can't get us through to the other side by morning light... the ship is yours to turn around.

RIVERA

Aye.

*CAPTAIN WALTON returns the knife.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

Relay this to the crew.

*RIVERA exits. CAPTAIN WALTON pulls out a flask and drinks. She hears a noise behind the barrels. Draws a pistol and inspects. She finds the rat, regarding it curiously. A panic is heard offstage. Bells, shouting, etc. CAPTAIN WALTON holds the pistol.*

So it begins.

*RIVERA enters, panicked, out of breath.*

RIVERA

Don't shoot!

CAPTAIN WALTON

What's going on?

RIVERA

The crew - they've seen something. Someone... on board... overboard...

CAPTAIN WALTON

Overboard? Breathe, man, and speak.

RIVERA

Off the forward bow, running on the ice a... a man on a dog sled.

CAPTAIN WALTON

You tellin' me there's a man lost on the ice to get me deckside to cut my throat, or because it's the devil's own truth?

RIVERA

It's the truth. He needs our help.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Save the poor wretch! Go! I'm right behind ye!

RIVERA

Aye!

*RIVERA exits. CAPTAIN WALTON remains. She composes herself. She notices the barrels again.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

What are you that haunts my ship? Atonement for my ambition?

*Beat.*

Or retribution...?

*RIVERA enters, supporting a shivering man - VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN.*

RIVERA

He ain't long for this world.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Status report.

RIVERA

His sled turned over. Took six men to pull him out from under it. His dogs were lost but we found this among the wreck.

*RIVERA extends a beat up journal to CAPTAIN WALTON.*

You're always reading old books.

*CAPTAIN WALTON flips through it, amazed. FRANKENSTEIN groans.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

Fetch us some coffee. Good and strong, now.

RIVERA

Aye.

CAPTAIN WALTON

And Rivera. Sentiments of the crew?

RIVERA

You have until morning light, Captain.

FRANKENSTEIN

Something about coffee...?

*RIVERA exits.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

What are you doing on my ship?

FRANKENSTEIN

That's my business.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Answer me.

FRANKENSTEIN

Will you kill me?

*FRANKENSTEIN coughs violently. CAPTAIN WALTON helps him to a chair.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

No. I won't have to.

*CAPTAIN WALTON offers the flask. FRANKENSTEIN drinks.*

Now, my question.

*FRANKENSTEIN remains silent.*

Dying or not, I won't hesitate to leave you on the ice. I'm currently prepared to kill any man who refuses my orders.

FRANKENSTEIN

Doctor.

CAPTAIN WALTON

I beg your pardon?

FRANKENSTEIN

I am a doctor.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Doctor who?

FRANKENSTEIN

Frankenstein.

CAPTAIN WALTON

What are you doing in this lonely part of the world?

FRANKENSTEIN

(quotes)

“Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay to mold me Man, did I solicit thee from darkness to promote me?”

CAPTAIN WALTON

Paradise Lost.

FRANKENSTEIN

You know it?

CAPTAIN WALTON

Don't act too surprised. We don't have many books on board, but what we do have I've read a thousand times.

FRANKENSTEIN

Learned men are not so common.

CAPTAIN WALTON

(smiles)

So consider me a genius.

*Beat.*

FRANKENSTEIN

A monster stalks you and your crew.

*FRANKENSTEIN attempts to stand. He cannot.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

You are in no condition to go chasing monsters.

FRANKENSTEIN

You should be afraid.

*Beat. He turns to the barrels.*

What's behind those barrels, I wonder?

CAPTAIN WALTON

Bloody superstition.

FRANKENSTEIN

It frightens you.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Nothing frightens me.

FRANKENSTEIN

"Here be dragons."

CAPTAIN WALTON

Not on any map I've followed.

*FRANKENSTEIN laughs.*

My ship is lost at the top of the world and my crew close to mutiny if I don't soon head south... I have more pressing matters.

FRANKENSTEIN

And yet you feel the pull of the shadows.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Discovery lies in the shadows.

FRANKENSTEIN

You want to know why I'm bound to perish in your company?  
Because I reached too far into the darkness and touched...

CAPTAIN WALTON

(relating)

What no one else understands.

FRANKENSTEIN

You're trying to. But you can't.

CAPTAIN WALTON

Then help me.

FRANKENSTEIN

(re: the journal)

Is that...?

*CAPTAIN WALTON flips through the pages.*

CAPTAIN WALTON

What you've detailed in these pages...

FRANKENSTEIN

Forget you ever saw them.

CAPTAIN WALTON

(unsettled)

And these pictures... paint quite a story.

FRANKENSTEIN

Elizabeth's work...

CAPTAIN WALTON

Who is she?

FRANKENSTEIN

The night is not long enough. I heard your deal with the first mate.

CAPTAIN WALTON

What you have to say... it could be the knowledge needed to convince my crew that the impossible is worth pursuing.

FRANKENSTEIN

All I may give you is a warning.

*Lights fade.*

## **SCENE 2**

*Light rise. The Past. FRANKENSTEIN stands with his FATHER. They have returned from a funeral. Rain falls and thunder cracks outside.*

FATHER

I wish you had spoken at the service.

FRANKENSTEIN

I'll pay my respects to Mother on my own time.

FATHER

It would have been nice for people to hear from you.

FRANKENSTEIN

I don't owe them anything.

FATHER

Don't be a child. There is a decorum to this world.

FRANKENSTEIN

Perhaps, but I am no longer under your roof.

FATHER

Don't push me away.

FRANKENSTEIN

You could have done something.

FATHER

Her illness was beyond me.

FRANKENSTEIN

Then you are not as good a doctor as your books suggest.

FATHER

You have read my medical texts?

FRANKENSTEIN

I have studied your library.

FATHER

Everything?

FRANKENSTEIN

I know your secrets.

FATHER

You've always been resourceful.

FRANKENSTEIN

You always knew there was a cure.

FATHER

And at the same time a fool.

FRANKENSTEIN

You deny it?

FATHER

Mortality has no cure.

FRANKENSTEIN

Father, if it's possible.

FATHER

Forget you ever saw those journals and accept that some things are beyond human intervention.

FRANKENSTEIN

I must know for myself.

FATHER

You'll know nothing but ruin.

FRANKENSTEIN

I could have done something to save her.

*FATHER slaps him. FRANKENSTEIN is stunned.*

FATHER

Go to University. Write your own books. Learn what I learned the hard way.

FRANKENSTEIN

You were once a genius. What happened?

FATHER

I grew up.

FRANKENSTEIN

I refuse to be only a... a family doctor.

FATHER

Who will care for those who need it most?

FRANKENSTEIN

And what of those whose time has come? I won't let others slip away as Mother has.

FATHER

Never forget the ones who truly live.

FRANKENSTEIN

Elizabeth?

FATHER

Hold on to her while you can.

FRANKENSTEIN

I will never let her go.

*He exits. FATHER stares after him. ELIZABETH enters from the other direction.*

FATHER

How are you, my dear?

ELIZABETH

I am managing.

FATHER

You said some lovely words at the service.

ELIZABETH

I was a mess...

FATHER

Me too.

ELIZABETH

Was that Victor?

FATHER

He's not happy with me at the moment.

ELIZABETH

He's hurting as much as any of us.

FATHER

Elizabeth... she was practically your mother too.

ELIZABETH

I remember the day I met her. The look on her face when she came across a little girl, left alone in the woods.

FATHER

I cannot fathom the neglect of your parents.

ELIZABETH

(sincere)

It led me to you.

FATHER

And now, do you feel the same toward me as Victor?

ELIZABETH

I trust that you, sitting by Mother's side and holding her hand, was the best anyone could have done.

FATHER

I did all I could...

ELIZABETH

I know... and Victor knows it too, deep down.

FATHER

He leaves for Geneva on the two o'clock train. I won't see him again for years, until he's completed his studies.

ELIZABETH

I'll speak to him for you.

FATHER

Thank you. He loves you.

ELIZABETH

And I love you. Go have some rest now.

*They embrace warmly. FATHER exits.*

### **SCENE 3**

*FRANKENSTEIN enters, hurried, with some old books in hand.*

ELIZABETH

Where are you going?

FRANKENSTEIN

Last minute books to pack.

ELIZABETH

Slow down and -

FRANKENSTEIN

Elizabeth -

ELIZABETH

And look at me.

*FRANKENSTEIN stops and relaxes.*

You're practically running from us.

FRANKENSTEIN

You know I'm going to miss you.

ELIZABETH

It's nice to hear it sometimes.

FRANKENSTEIN

I'll write often.

ELIZABETH

A poor substitute.

FRANKENSTEIN

Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

No, of course. We'll write all the time. I only wish...

FRANKENSTEIN

What..?

ELIZABETH

(coy)

I could see you while you're away.

FRANKENSTEIN

Elizabeth... how wonderful that would be.

ELIZABETH

Would it not? Exploring Geneva, meeting new people...

*FRANKENSTEIN laughs.*

What?

FRANKENSTEIN

You can't come with me.

ELIZABETH

I'm not saying I've applied -

FRANKENSTEIN

Applied? Elizabeth, the University does not allow women.

ELIZABETH

No, I know, I was only thinking how nice it would be, to be there together.

FRANKENSTEIN

I want you there, believe me, but my studies must come first.

ELIZABETH

I am as brilliant as you.

FRANKENSTEIN

You are a talented artist, yes.

ELIZABETH

When you're reading about anatomy, I'm in the fields seeing it up close.

FRANKENSTEIN

You what...?

ELIZABETH

Where do you think I find the subjects I illustrate?

FRANKENSTEIN

I didn't think you were cutting open dead animals out there.

ELIZABETH

I don't kill them. Only what I come by naturally.

FRANKENSTEIN

This is grotesque.

ELIZABETH

No different than the cadavers you'll soon study.

FRANKENSTEIN

Yes, studying, not digging up out of the earth.

ELIZABETH

You do understand that science is supposed to be messy?

FRANKENSTEIN

I will do what I must, when I must. (*beat*) Does Father know?

ELIZABETH

No... he thinks I only spend my days making house calls.

FRANKENSTEIN

I'm glad he has taken someone under his wing.

ELIZABETH

He only wants to share what he knows.

FRANKENSTEIN

He wants to keep me here, bottled up.

ELIZABETH

At least try to see things his way. For Mother's sake, if not mine.

FRANKENSTEIN

Elizabeth, there is something I must explain to you...

*He hands her one of the books. She flips through it, amazed.*

I will be devoting my energies to the mysteries of not only her death, but of her life and if the two are more connected than previously imagined.

ELIZABETH

Father wrote this?

FRANKENSTEIN

He was merely playing with fire. I wish to harness the flames and discover what gives a creature life. What makes a heartbeat? Why do we feel pain and joy? How can we think for ourselves when other living creatures cannot? Even the soul. Where does it come from, if it even exists?

ELIZABETH

Victor, these are age old questions.

FRANKENSTEIN

Elizabeth, there is one other...

ELIZABETH

Yes?

FRANKENSTEIN

We have known each other our entire lives and yet, I have never outgrown you. You are as beautiful in this hour as you were when you first came to live with us.

ELIZABETH

Which book did you read that in?

FRANKENSTEIN

I am leaving now but I would like to see where the coming years take us. Together. Elizabeth, what I am asking... will you -

ELIZABETH

Will you concede I'm as brilliant as you are?

FRANKENSTEIN

(struggles)

We both have our strengths.

ELIZABETH

Hold on to that question of yours.

FRANKENSTEIN

(rejected)

I... I had better pack these away.

ELIZABETH

Victor.

*She hugs him. It has been an emotional day. In the shadows, THE MONSTER emerges. His presence is unknown to the pair. He watches, curious about this relationship. FRANKENSTEIN and ELIZABETH exit.*

*Lights fade.*

#### **SCENE 4**

*Lights rise. THE MONSTER enters wheeling an operating table covered in papers, books, scientific instruments, and a large rat. He studies the rat.*

*THE MONSTER retreats as FRANKENSTEIN enters in a surgeon's smock. FRANKENSTEIN holds up the rat, nervous.*

FRANKENSTEIN

Only through direct contact with the central nervous system may I begin the experimentation.

*He sets the rat down. Raises a scalpel. Breathes deeply.*

Cut it open, Victor. You can do this.

*He places the scalpel on the rat. Struggling to go through with it.*

Just cut it open.

*He's about to cut into it when...*

How do I cut it open?

*He puts the scalpel down, turning to a book. He flips through pages, mumbling passages:*

"Begin at the sternum, slowly working your way down..." Dammit! It's too...!

*Frustrated, he knocks items off the table. He's a wreck; a man with no direction.*

*There is a knock at the door. THE MONSTER exits. FRANKENSTEIN contemplates answering. ELIZABETH enters.*

ELIZABETH

Victor?

FRANKENSTEIN

Go away.

ELIZABETH

Victor, are you all right?

FRANKENSTEIN

I don't know...

ELIZABETH

Come here.

*She pulls him up to a chair; pours water into a mug.*

FRANKENSTEIN

I'm on the verge of something great.

ELIZABETH

You need water.

*She hands him the water. He takes it.*

Victor?

*He drinks deeply, revitalizing his spirits. ELIZABETH begins cleaning up. FRANKENSTEIN helps.*

FRANKENSTEIN

My god... Elizabeth, is it really you?

ELIZABETH

Hello. You're dehydrated.

*She has him drink more water.*

FRANKENSTEIN

I didn't even... You found me, how?

ELIZABETH

It's all right, isn't it?

FRANKENSTEIN

Yes!

*They stop cleaning and embrace.*

I'm so glad to see you.

ELIZABETH

It's been so long.

*They look like they're going to kiss, but FRANKENSTEIN is unsure of himself.*

FRANKENSTEIN

How are you?

ELIZABETH

Better now. It was a long journey.

FRANKENSTEIN

Rest, rest. I'm afraid I don't have much to eat but we can make a trip to town.

ELIZABETH

Why not the University?

FRANKENSTEIN

No... no, I can't go there.

*ELIZABETH takes in the space, looking around.*

ELIZABETH

The headmaster says you've been away for months, renting this lonely castle.

FRANKENSTEIN

I explained in my letters... the nature of my work demands seclusion.

ELIZABETH

Victor, I haven't received a letter since you've moved into this place. Father and I were worried something had happened. Surely you require access to the University.

FRANKENSTEIN

I have procured all the instruments I need. This laboratory is as good as any, if not better.

ELIZABETH

But what of colleagues? Assistants who may help with your experiments?

FRANKENSTEIN

Nobody understands what I am trying to do.

*ELIZABETH inspects the rat.*

ELIZABETH

You still afraid to get your hands dirty?

FRANKENSTEIN

Four years of research has led to this.

ELIZABETH

The final experiment.

*FRANKENSTEIN hands her a book. She flips through it.*

One of Father's?

FRANKENSTEIN

(shakes head)

He only scratched the surface, remember?

ELIZABETH

Your own?

FRANKENSTEIN

Yes.

ELIZABETH

You've learned so much.

FRANKENSTEIN

In class I brought up what I had read for myself in Father's books. About how I believed mankind was destined for something greater, beyond the limits of our own lives.

ELIZABETH

And yet you haven't changed a bit.

FRANKENSTEIN

The headmaster said Father would speak of similar ideas when he was at school.

ELIZABETH

(reading)

"20,000 volts may be enough to reanimate tissue, long dead..."

FRANKENSTEIN

By stimulating the central nervous system.

ELIZABETH

You're talking about bringing the dead back to life?

FRANKENSTEIN

You sound as skeptical as my colleagues.

ELIZABETH

(re: the rat)

I've seen enough lifeless nervous systems to know that dead is dead.

FRANKENSTEIN

There must be something beyond atoms and molecules. Think back to the evening of Mother's funeral. Remember what I said?

ELIZABETH

Victor, you're full of ideas, but as incredible as all this sounds... the fact is you're close to failing your courses.

FRANKENSTEIN

I'm close to redefining the metaphysical meaning of life!

ELIZABETH

You must complete your studies.

FRANKENSTEIN

Why are we always so caught up in the inane problems of our practical lives, that we never wonder about the problems of after life?

ELIZABETH

You're not a theology student.

FRANKENSTEIN

Not the "afterlife", but... but... why does it all have to end for us here when our eyes close and the coffin lowered?

ELIZABETH

You want immortality.

FRANKENSTEIN

I want to give life back to the dead.

ELIZABETH

But even if it's possible, how would you acquire the amount of energy needed?

*A crash of thunder. Lightning illuminates the room.*

A bolt of lightning.

FRANKENSTEIN

Straight to the heart of a cold, dead human being.

*Rolling thunder.*

ELIZABETH

You truly believe you can do this?

FRANKENSTEIN

All that's left is applying the research to a specimen.

ELIZABETH

You'll start with an animal?

FRANKENSTEIN

Time is too short for anything less than the ultimate goal.

ELIZABETH

You can hardly dissect a rodent.

FRANKENSTEIN

Do you still have an eye for anatomy?

ELIZABETH

Victor, I don't know if it's genius or madness...

FRANKENSTEIN

I need your help.

ELIZABETH

Why?

FRANKENSTEIN

You understand me more than anyone.

ELIZABETH

No, why do you need my help?

FRANKENSTEIN

Because... because you are as brilliant as I could ever be.

*ELIZABETH moves in close to FRANKENSTEIN.*

ELIZABETH

Do you mean that?

FRANKENSTEIN

I can only do this with you.

*ELIZABETH kisses him.*

ELIZABETH

Where will we find our specimen?

FRANKENSTEIN

The graveyard.

ELIZABETH

Tonight?

*Rolling thunder and lightning.*

FRANKENSTEIN

While there's no one to bother us.

ELIZABETH

Good.

*They kiss each other hard. Thunder and lightning. Lights fade.*