

# FRANKENSTEIN

Mary Shelley

TIMELESS CLASSICS



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# Opening Letter

*To: Mrs. Saville, England*

*August 5, 17\_\_\_\_\_*

*Dear Sister,*

*I'm alive and well. I'm close to living my dream. I'll be traveling to the North Pole soon. I want to tell you a strange story. Here's what has been happening.*

*Our ship is closed in by ice and fog. The waves are strong. Huge chunks of ice break up.*

*One day, I was looking out over the ice. I saw a dog sled going north. The figure in the carriage was shaped like a man. But he was the size of a giant. Suddenly, he was gone.*

*The next morning, we came upon a second sled. Only one dog was alive. A man was nearly frozen. We carried him to my cabin. He couldn't speak for two days. We have become friends. He's kind and gentle. And very well-educated. But something is troubling him deeply.*

*Last night, he let me know he has a story to tell me. Tomorrow, he'll tell it. I plan to write it down. And I'll try to use his words.*

*Your loving brother,*

*R. Walton*



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## Frankenstein Begins His Story

My name is Victor Frankenstein. I grew up in Geneva, Switzerland. My family is well-known there. I was my parents' only child. That changed when I was five years old.

We were on vacation in Italy. My mother liked helping the poor. We visited a farm family with many children. My parents saw a young girl. She was

different from the other children. Her name was Elizabeth. Her mother had died. Her father had gone to war. He left Elizabeth with the farm family. But he never returned.

My mother always wanted a little girl. My parents liked Elizabeth. She was bright and beautiful. The farmer knew she would be happy with our family. So he let us adopt her.

Elizabeth Lavenza became more than my sister. I adored her. We called each other “cousin.” We shared a deep love.

When I was seven, my brother Ernest was born. We had a house in Geneva.

We also had a place in the country. My brother William was born there.

I had one close friend, Henry Clerval. He was the son of a businessman. Elizabeth, Henry, and I were a great team. We were like one person. Elizabeth was the soul. Henry was the heart. And I was the mind.

As I grew, I began to study science. When I was 13, my father saw the books I was reading. “You’re reading *this*?” he said. “Victor, don’t waste your time. This is trash.”

My father didn’t tell me no one believed those books anymore. I wish



he had. Everything might have been different. The ideas in these books were silly. But I didn't know this. I was angry. My father thought the books I liked were trash! I didn't take his advice. I found more like them.

I was foolish. I know that now. I tried to change lead into gold. I tried to raise ghosts. None of these spells worked. I should have known it was silly. I might have kept going like this. But something happened. It changed my life.

I was about 15 years old. We were at our country house. A violent storm came up. I saw lightning hit an old tree. The tree disappeared. I'd never seen anything like it.

The next day I saw small pieces of wood on the ground. They had once been that big tree. It was completely destroyed.

A friend of my father's was visiting. He was a scientist. He explained his theory about electricity. This was new to me. I was amazed. My studies seemed foolish. Science was a mystery. I gave it up. I began to study math.

Today, I look back at what happened. I believe a guardian angel was looking out for me. It was the angel's last effort to save my life.

It didn't work. Destiny was strong. My terrible fate was sealed.

# FRANKENSTEIN

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Victor Frankenstein was only trying to advance the cause of science. How could his experiment have produced such a terrible result? The creature's powers were superhuman. Was there any real chance that Victor could stop the monster before he murdered again?

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