

Helping you choose books for children



0-5



5-7



7-9



9-12



12+

opening extract from

Frankenstein

written by

Mary Shelley

retold by

Gill Tavner

published by

Real Reads

All text is copyright of the author and illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

THE CHARACTERS



Robert Walton

Walton is the captain of a boat trapped by ice in the frozen north. Who is the man he pulls from the sea? Can he save him?

Victor Frankenstein

After years of study, Victor creates a living creature. Why does he flee from his creation? Can he keep his family safe? Will he help the monster or will they pursue each other until death?



Elizabeth Lavenza

Victor's adopted sister and future bride. Can Victor keep her safe?



Henry Clerval

Clerval has been Victor's friend since childhood. Can he help Victor? Can he escape the monster's fury?



The Monster

The monster has been rejected by his creator and by all of mankind. Can he persuade Victor to help him, or will his fury lead to further violence? Who is stronger, the monster or his creator? Who is more to blame?

Justine Moritz

Justine has been a loyal maid to the Frankenstein family for many years. Will her innocence keep her safe from the curse upon them?





FRANKENSTEIN

To Mrs Saville,
England
August 13th, 1721

*My dearest sister,
Since my last letter, my long voyage has been interrupted by an event that has thrilled my heart with expectation, chilled my soul with terror, and ignited my mind with the most violent imaginings.*

As you know, I set out on this dangerous journey across the icy seas to the North Pole in a quest to discover more about the mysteries of the ocean. My desire is to find a route which will further mankind's understanding of our natural world.

The voyage has been long, my dear sister, and is not yet over. I have felt bitter loneliness, in spite of my crew. We are, I believe, but half a person when we lack a similar soul with whom we can share our heart's deepest concerns. I have been such

a half-person for many months. Dear sister, please share my joy when I tell you that the sympathetic ocean has delivered me the companion I need.

Two days before we found my new friend, a bewildering scene passed before my eyes. Trapped by ice, I looked from our stranded vessel over the land of frost, and saw a sledge, pulled by dogs, carrying a being the shape of a man. He was, however, of such a gigantic stature that I must call him a monster rather than a man. As I stared, his dogs pulled his sledge away beyond my sight.



I tell you this tale because it is strangely connected with my friend. Two days later, I heard my crew shouting and rushing to one side of the boat. They pulled a man, half-dead with cold, from

a broken island of ice. We dried and warmed him and fed him soup which restored him wonderfully, but he remains weak.

Over the last week, I have formed a strong friendship with our slowly-recovering guest. His name is Victor Frankenstein. Although his eyes have a wild expression, a gentle smile lights his face when he receives a kindness. Most of the time, however, his deep grief fills me with sympathy and compassion. Dear sister, he is the companion I have so long lacked, for he speaks the language of my heart and of my deeper imagination, an imagination which is now deeply troubled by the tale he has told me.

When I shared with Frankenstein the reasons for my journey, he experienced great violence of feeling. 'Unhappy man,' he groaned, 'Do you share my madness and ambition?' He beat his fists against his forehead and his body trembled. 'Walton, you must hear my tale. You must hear my terrible, terrible tale so that you do not follow



my journey to hell.’ He leaned forward, his eyes wild, his cold hand gripping my arm. ‘I have attempted what no man should attempt. I have pushed the boundaries of the natural world and they can never be restored.’

I sat, entranced and terrified.

What follows here, dear sister, is Victor Frankenstein’s story, and that of the monster he created. It will fill you with terror to learn of the horrors my friend has endured. I tremble as I record his words.

*Your affectionate brother,
Robert Walton.*