

FRANKENSTEIN

**Readers Theater Version
of the Mary Shelley Novel**



Frankenstein

Readers theater based on the famous novel by Mary Shelley

CHARACTERS:

MADAM – Victor's housekeeper

PROFESSOR WALDMAN – friend of Victor

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

MONSTER

ELIZABETH – FIANCE OF VICTOR

SAILOR 1

SAILOR 2

MATE

CAPTAIN

[SFX = Sound effects]

ACT ONE

SFX:

Pounding on door.

MADAM:

Alright... alright... I'm coming, don't break the door down. Who is it?

PROFESSOR:

It is I, Professor Waldman.

MADAM:

Oh, come in.

PROFESSOR:

Ah, Good evening Madam Maurice.

MADAM:

Good evening? Bah, it's raining cats and dogs. Step inside so I can close this door.

PROFESSOR:

Yes, Madam Maurice.

MADAM:

Ooooooh, just letting that wet umbrella drip all over my clean floor!

PROFESSOR:

Oh, I'm sorry...

MADAM:

Oh, you men of science. I suppose I should be used to such foolishness after keeping house for Victor Frankenstein.

PROFESSOR:

Oh, he's just a young scientist Madam Maurice, just wait until he reaches my age.

MADAM:

Hmmm, you leave me shocked.

PROFESSOR:

(amused) Where is our young Victor, in his laboratory?

MADAM:

Is he ever anywhere else? He doesn't even come out for his meals anymore. What has he been doing in there, professor that he's so mysterious about?

PROFESSOR:

I don't know any more than you do. Our Victor is a genius, and genius shares its secrets with no one.

MADAM:

Professor Walden, I'm worried about that boy. In the last six months he's changed.

PROFESSOR:

Changed?

MADAM:

Yes, he thinks of nothing but his work of late. You know how much he loves his fiancé Elizabeth. There's three times he's postponed their marriage because it wasn't finished. And I'm afraid of what he's doing. I feel it is unholy.

PROFESSOR:

Madam...

MADAM:

...unholy I tell you. He forbids me to enter that laboratory of his. But he can't close up my ears. At night I hear frightful sounds from there. The cries of animals in pain. And made from him who has always been so kind. Sustained shouts and crying. And I've seen the things brutish looking men bring in this house. Hideous things from the slaughter houses and the... (whispered) the morgue. Last week the public executioner was here. He brought the body of that robber who was beheaded in the square.

PROFESSOR:

There's no need for you to worry. However disgusting the tools he employs, you may be sure the object of Victor's work is to benefit mankind.

MADAM:

Mmmm, I hope you're right, but... ..he's coming from the laboratory. See him lock the door behind him? With the care he takes, one would think that room was filled with gold.

PROFESSOR:

Good evening Victor.

VICTOR:

Oh, Professor Waldman, I'm so glad you received my message and came at once. Oh, Madam Maurice get your hat and cloak. I must send you to your sister's.

MADAM:

In this awful storm?

VICTOR:

Oh... is there a storm?

MADAM:

(sarcastic) Is there a storm?!

VICTOR:

Then you must call a cab. I'm sorry but professor Waldman and I must have the house alone. This is the night for which I waited so long... the night in which I'll finish the crowning achievement of the ages!

PROFESSOR:

Victor, you are trembling with excitement.

MADAM:

What HAVE you done?

PROFESSOR:

Tomorrow, all Switzerland will know... my name shall ring throughout the world! You shall know first dear Madam Maurice, but tonight you must go... you must go now.

MADAM:

You mean your work has ended?

VICTOR:

Yes.

MADAM:

There will be no more dead bodies coming through that door? ..no more horrors from the slaughter house?

VICTOR:

No... no that's over madam... now go... go... go.. go.

MADAM:

I'm going, I'm going... even if I catch my death of cold in this awful storm, it will be worth it.

VICTOR:

Go, go, go... please go...

PROFESSOR:

Victor, what have you discovered?

VICTOR:

Wait to see if she's out of hearing.. she wouldn't understand.

PROFESSOR:

She's gone. What is it?

VICTOR:

Come in please... come into the Laboratory! Professor Waldman, from the putrescence of death I have rested the secret of LIFE!!

PROFESSOR:

Life?

VICTOR:

YES! I Victor Frankenstein have CREATED MAN! Look at him there. Bit by bit I fashioned it. His organs, his limbs, his brain, his external flesh!

PROFESSOR:

A beautiful sleeping giant!

VICTOR:

Ehhh, but sleeping only until I give him LIFE! But now the time has come, that's why I sent for you old teacher. You pointed out the path.

PROFESSOR:

I know nothing of this.

VICTOR:

Yes... you sent me to the ancients for forgotten knowledge. Through them I learned of magic, and the hidden truths of nature. But I have gone beyond the ancients. In a moment I shall make a man! I shall be as GOD!

PROFESSOR:

You blaspheme...!

VICTOR:

Why? To the race of whom this giant will be father, Frankenstein will be god's name.

PROFESSOR:

Blasphemy!

VICTOR:

No, for I am greater than your Lord..

PROFESSOR:

You're MAD!

VICTOR:

(laughing) BAH! look at this puny human tribe which He created... they must have delicate foods, long hours of rest, they're weak, decayed and gorged with sickness, afraid of heat and cold. Compared to this child of Frankenstein's great genius, men are flies living out a summer day. Look at him there... 8 feet tall.. a mountain of strength.. Immune to illness, weather and fatigue, with a brain that grasps in a single hour, all that man must take a year to learn. This machine will give him life... I pull the lever! WATCH!

PROFESSOR:

No, don't.

SFX:

big switch / electric sounds under

VICTOR:

(laughs)! In a moment he will breathe, and I shall have improved on nature! I shall have improved on GOD!

PROFESSOR:

The giant's leg grows warm, there's pulsation in his veins.

VICTOR:

Soon he will rise and walk!

PROFESSOR:

Great God...

VICTOR:

No... Great FRANKENSTEIN!

SFX:

Electric sounds begin to be strange

PROFESSOR:

Victor, the beautiful contours of his body are melting...

VICTOR:

WHAT?!

PROFESSOR:

His flesh is shriveling like a mummy's.

VICTOR:

...he's becoming ugly... misshapen...

PROFESSOR:

You are creating a horror.

VICTOR:

The machine, I'll turn it off...

PROFESSOR:

Too late... he breathes!

MONSTER:

Raaaaaarrrr (groan and growling under)

VICTOR:

It's worse... HE LIVES!!!

PROFESSOR:

May God forgive you Frankenstein, you've made a MONSTER!

NARRATOR:

It is an hour later. Victor has come to grips with the horror he has unleashed to the world. And now the responsibility for his actions begin to sink in.

VICTOR:

I can't go back into that house. (gasp) I can't look at him again.

PROFESSOR:

You must. You should not have fled from him an hour ago, you are responsible for him, you are his creator.

VICTOR:

Yes... you're right. (defeated) I am... the great god... Frankenstein...

SFX:

small Thunder rumble

VICTOR:

But how could he have changed so as I gave him life. I planned a thing of beauty - and produced a loathsome horror.

PROFESSOR:

Man cannot usurp the properties of God. Let us go in.

VICTOR:

Oh alright... Oh why should I fear him? His ugliness may be only that of an exterior that I in some way marred. I gave him a brain capable of the loftiest thoughts, the noblest actions. Why... it's going to be all right! In his body of a fiend, may be the nature of an angel... I... I planned his nature so.

SFX:

Far away crash.

PROFESSOR:

Victor! The laboratory door has opened... he has burst the lock.

VICTOR:

With giant strength!

PROFESSOR:

He's gone!

VICTOR:

Professor Waldman... what's that lying in the shadows?

PROFESSOR:

It's madam Maurice...

VICTOR:

She didn't go to her sister's... she saw him... she fainted of fright.

PROFESSOR:

Victor, she is dead!

VICTOR:

Oh, no! No!

PROFESSOR:

Her throat has been crushed by giant hands. The monster's killed her!

VICTOR:

Oh... no!... I... the great god... Frankenstein.

SFX:

Thunder under

PROFESSOR:

Well my boy, how does it feel to be on your feet again? Not bad after a year in bed, I'll wager.

VICTOR:

A year has passed after that awful night.

PROFESSOR:

Enough... I forbid you to speak of that just yet.

VICTOR:

Oh... I'm quite strong now. We must talk professor, this is my first opportunity to be with you alone.

PROFESSOR:

Careful Victor. Elizabeth is in the next room - and your mother.

VICTOR:

They don't know?

PROFESSOR:

No one knows but you and me. They think your ravings of the monster, figments of delirium. And you have been quite mad you know.

VICTOR:

Yes, mercifully mad. Until a week ago, the darkness lifted from my brain... to help me remember and to fear. What other crimes has the thing I made committed since you brought me here? Where is he, you must tell me.

PROFESSOR:

You have nothing to fear Victor. The Monster is dead!

VICTOR:

Dead.

PROFESSOR:

Yes.

VICTOR:

You're not lying to me. You're not LYING just to EASE my mind!

PROFESSOR:

No... during the week since his first disappearance, he was seen in several villages, and the superstitious farmers took him for a demon from another world. At last he was fired upon and wounded. The trail of his blood was traced to the edge of a mountain chasm a thousand feet in depth. We shall never hear from him again.

VICTOR:

Really dead. Oh (laughing) Oh I feel as though the weight of time itself were lifted from my shoulders... I'm free again... my nightmare is over... there's nothing more to fear.

ELIZABETH:

Victor darling!

VICTOR:

Oh Elizabeth.

PROFESSOR:

Come in my dear.

ELIZABETH:

I hope you will forgive my intrusion, I heard Victor's voice and it sounded so different.. so happy I simply had to come in and see.

VICTOR:

Oh, I am happy dear. I shall be happy forever more.

PROFESSOR:

You will be even happier, if left with Elizabeth alone. (laughs)... I know young lovers.

ELIZABETH:

Oh, really professor.

PROFESSOR:

(laughs) I'll see you later.

VICTOR:

Elizabeth... dear sweet heart.

ELIZABETH:

Oh, how good it is to see you yourself again. You've been so ill. So close to death.

VICTOR:

But now I have returned to life... and to you forever.

ELIZABETH:

You mean until you go away again... back to your studies... your experiments.

VICTOR:

No, my studies are over. My experiments are ended.

ELIZABETH:

Victor!

VICTOR:

I shall never enter a laboratory again... there will be no more postponements of our wedding.

ELIZABETH:

Then I shall have you all my own... always.

VICTOR:

Always.

ELIZABETH:

Oh, my dear, you don't know how happy that will make me. I've been so jealous of the science which has kept you from me. It seemed to keep you from even the sun.

VICTOR:

I have come back to you... and I...

MOTHER:

Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH:

Oh, your mother is calling me. I must tell her. Perhaps we can be married right away.

VICTOR:

Tomorrow, if possible...

ELIZABETH:

Oh I love you.

VICTOR:

How I love you...

MOTHER:

Elizabeth...

ELIZABETH:

Coming, Mother Frankenstein.

ELIZABETH:

Oh, I'm so happy.

VICTOR:

And I.

SFX:

Door closes

VICTOR:

Happy... Happy... Happy... There's nothing now to fear.

MONSTER:

You're WRONG, Frankenstein.

VICTOR:

You! Alive!!

MONSTER:

Yes, I, the monster you created!

ACT II

VICTOR:

I followed you to this desolate place as you bade me. What do you want of me?

MONSTER:

To show you my home Frankenstein. This barren cave upon the mountain side, exposed to the wind and howling beasts... here I, the monster you created live, whilst you resided in comfort. I want to show you my solitude while you are planning marriage.

VICTOR:

I thought you dead.

MONSTER:

You made me too strong. The fall you heard had killed me could not destroy MY body. I simply disappeared from man, because man had shut me out. Even you cannot bare to look upon my repulsive being. Even you my maker. You my god.

VICTOR:

God... the great god Frankenstein...

MONSTER:

Yes, when you made me - so you called yourself.

VICTOR:

How did you learn that I was your creator?

MONSTER:

Upon that night when I first knew life... you fled from the horror you'd given breadth from me... I was naked, it was cold... I wrapped a cloak of yours about me... there were papers in its pocket. When I learned to read, I found those papers were notes of your creation. A pity tale they told of how you made me from the refuse of the slaughter house

and morgue. I'm partly man and partly beast! You owe me recompense for the awful life of which I'm doomed. That is why I come to you tonight. That you may pay your debt.

VICTOR:

What do you wish?

MONSTER:

A companion.

VICTOR:

A com...

MONSTER:

Yes Frankenstein, oh, I hate you, and yet I love you. For you're all I have. Take pity on the thing you made. For I am lonely with a hunger that no man can ever know.

VICTOR:

You want me for your companion?

MONSTER:

No. You, no more than other men can bare to look upon my frightfulness. Give me a creature as loathsome as myself. One who will not run from me and hide his eyes in horror.

VICTOR:

You mean, create another monster?

MONSTER:

Yes. For everything upon this earth except for me, there is a mate. Of my breed, I am Adam. Frankenstein, make me an Eve.

VICTOR:

Eve? A female?

MONSTER:

Yes...

VICTOR:

No...

MONSTER:

You plan marriage, why not I?

VICTOR:

No, no, no... why you might loose upon the world a RACE of monsters. A race who would destroy mankind.

MONSTER:

I swear we will do no harm, Frankenstein, I swear to you.

VICTOR:

Never, I presume no more upon the powers of heaven. I experiment no longer with the mysteries of God.

MONSTER:

You will not create for me a mate?

VICTOR:

No, a thousand times.

MONSTER:

Yet you yourself will take one? Beware you made me strong, I could crush you like a dove...

VICTOR:

I'm not afraid of you. Only of life's secrets, and I've already probed too deep. I will not do the thing you ask.

MONSTER:

Then DIE!

VICTOR:

Strike.

MONSTER:

NO! I spare you now. At the hour of your greatest happiness I will strike... straight to your heart Frankenstein. Wait and fear, for I'll be with you on your wedding night. On your wedding night!

NARRATOR:

Despite this dire warning, Victor goes on with the wedding. We seem him now alone with Elizabeth, the woman he loves, on his wedding night.

ELIZABETH:

Victor, how can you be so sad tonight when all our dreams have just come true.

VICTOR:

Oh, I'm not sad dear. Oh, how could I be when at last you are my wife.

ELIZABETH:

Victor, you're keeping something from me.

VICTOR:

Oh, no, no...

ELIZABETH:

You are, professor Waldman has been acting strangely too. And the grounds outside are filled with strange men who look as though they were policemen standing guard. You have nothing to fear my darling, no enemy to harm you on our wedding night?

VICTOR:

No of course not darling. Why what could I be afraid of?!

SFX:

Door knocks / (Victor is startled)

PROFESSOR:

Victor... Victor Frankenstein...

VICTOR:

Oh... Yes, yes. I exempt professor Waldman.

PROFESSOR:

Victor... Victor, come with me at once. Oh, excuse me Elizabeth - I must speak to your husband alone.

ELIZABETH:

What is all this mystery. What?

VICTOR:

It's nothing, dear, now you stay here. I'll explain everything when I return.

PROFESSOR:

Hurry Victor!

VICTOR:

Yes, yes... excuse me dear.

ELIZABETH:

But Victor. What is it?

PROFESSOR:

Close the door tightly, she mustn't hear.

VICTOR:

Did you see the monster?

PROFESSOR:

The police have him surrounded.

VICTOR:

Good...

PROFESSOR:

Come on.

VICTOR:

No wait, he's cunning. I can't leave Elizabeth in that room alone.

PROFESSOR:

It's you he threatened to strike, not her. And we have him in a net, he cannot get away.

VICTOR:

Then lead me to him. At last let me destroy the awful thing my hands have made.

ELIZABETH:

(Screams!)

VICTOR:

Elizabeth!!

PROFESSOR:

Quick, back to that room!

VICTOR:

Guards, Guards, keep her safe! The door is locked!

PROFESSOR:

Burst it open!

MONSTER:

Growls

VICTOR:

Elizabeth... Eliz...

ELIZABETH:

(one last yelp)

VICTOR:

...she's lying crumpled on the floor.

PROFESSOR:

That open window... the MONSTER!

MONSTER:

Straight to your heart Frankenstein... Straight to your heart! Ha- ha!

VICTOR:

(soft) Elizabeth... Elizabeth...

NARRATOR:

Elizabeth, the love of Victor's life, is dead at the hands of the monster. Victor now knows that for the sake of humanity he must track monster down and kill him. The monster is far too dangerous to live among mankind. That same night, Victor tracks the monster down in near the cavern where he dwells.

SFX:

Wind

MONSTER:

After all Frankenstein, you've tracked me down.

VICTOR:

You fiend of Hell... stand out from those rocks where I can see you.

MONSTER:

So you may aim at my breast with that pistol with which you carry?

VICTOR: I have you now!

SFX:

GUNSHOT

MONSTER:

Not yet... you forget how fast I move.

VICTOR:

(efforts) Let me go...

MONSTER:

Did you think you could destroy me with weapons such as this? I whom you made superior to the puny race of men? I will throw your pistol into yonder cavern... and I release you unhurt and unharmed...

VICTOR:

(out of breath) Some way, some time with another weapon I shall bring you death.

Tonight you have killed the woman I have loved the best in all the world. On her broken body I am sworn to live for your destruction.

MONSTER:

I told you I'd strike you to the heart. You thought I meant your heart of flesh. Your body. There was a better way. I've turned your happiness to misery.

VICTOR:

Oh God, great Lord of all, destroy this monster!

MONSTER:

You are my god. You my lord of all. Listen, my father, as you denied me the comradeship of rightful of myself. Now you are in agony. And you condemn me to a life of solitude and sorry, now YOU are condemned. You've sworn to live for my destruction, you said. Your hate will make you follow me across the world. To the sun-scorched desert, to the icy plains. To the heat and cold and thirst and hunger... to which I, your creation, am immune. How great you made me 'great god Frankenstein', You'll follow me across the world, I always just ahead... you always just behind. Until your body wracked by age and sorrow we will reach the END!! Now I go and you will follow.

VICTOR:

I will follow. To your death.

MONSTER:

To the death of both, for you and I henceforth, are ONE!

NARRATOR: The monster was correct when he predicted Victor would pursue him across the earth, from country to country, from continent to continent, until finally, forty years later, Victor confronts the monster atop a float block of ice on the Arctic Circle.

SFX:

Icy wind - arctic ocean

SAILOR 1:

Hullo Castaway... three points starboard!

SAILOR 2:

(away) Castaway three points starboard!

CAPTAIN:

A castaway? Here at the Arctic Circle?

MATE:

Aye sir, lookout spotted a man on a floating block of ice - probably broke away from the mainland sir.

CAPTAIN:

Dead?

SAILOR 1:

A white man, a thousand miles from human kind.

MATE:

Some explorer, probably like ourselves.

SAILOR 1:

Yes, who's lost his party.

CAPTAIN:

He may be a companion of that strange giant we saw off in the distance a week ago.

MATE:

Think we can get him, sir?

CAPTAIN:

We'll try... man the longboats!

MATE:

All hands up, man the longboats! Castaway... Castaway...

NARRATOR: The longboats search the waters and finally, five days later, come upon an almost lifeless man upon the ice block. After the man is recovered and safely aboard ship, the captain questions him.

CAPTAIN:

It's a strange story you tell Mr. Frankenstein. You pursued this man for 40 years.

VICTOR:

(weak and aged) Not a man... a monstrous being. Over mountain and desert, ocean and plain... From the vales of Africa here to the Arctic Circle I have followed. I always just behind. He always just ahead. 40 years, I have known no home. No friend. Only solitude, misery and an empty dream of vengeance. Now I'm dying. I can pursue no longer,

CAPTAIN:

There, there man... five days on that ice-flow didn't do you any good. But our ship's doctor will soon have you on your feet and as good as new. What you need now is lots of rest, so I'll leave you until morning. Good Night Mr. Frankenstein.

VICTOR:

Good night captain. Rest, lots of rest.

MONSTER:

Yes, my father.

VICTOR:

You!

MONSTER:

I crept aboard the ship when darkness fell.

VICTOR:

I expected you. For we have reached the end.

MONSTER:

The end, for a god as miserable as his Adam. An Adam as sorrowful as his god.

VICTOR:

Sorrowful because your vengeance is over?

MONSTER:

No Frankenstein, at the end there is no longer heart for vengeance. All things cease. All things begin again. You're dying. The son cannot survive the parent. Let me lift you in my arms.

VICTOR:

Carry me to the deck.

MONSTER:

Gently... Tenderly I bear you, for you're all I have to love. All I've had to hate. Frankenstein, forgive me at the end.

VICTOR:

I forgive... and forgiveness sake, beneath these icy waters let there be one grave for both.

MONSTER:

You and I, creator and created.

VICTOR:

My presumption, and your misery.

MONSTER:

We're at the rail. The waters wait below.

VICTOR:

Let us find peace together... now.

MONSTER:

The end.

VICTOR:

The end.

SFX:

Splash

(END OF SHOW)