

Frankenstein **by Mary Shelley, published in 1818**

Summary: As a student of science, ambitious Victor Frankenstein successfully brought a corpse to life. However, when his creation awoke, Victor was appalled by it and subsequently abandoned it. This led the Creature to face many hardships at the hands of humanity, and he eventually took revenge on Victor by targeting his loved ones. Victor, who afterwards began to hunt the Creature, died of illness on a ship in the Arctic. The Creature arrived to discover that Victor was dead, lamented all that had happened, and left, declaring that he would end his life by burning himself on a funeral pyre.

No More Monsters **by Olivia Bradbury, 2023**

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That had been years ago. Now, The Creature stood staring down at the specimen that lay on the table before him. He was on the precipice of something big. Either it would be a devastating failure...or a new beginning.

The Creature had been the creation of Victor Frankenstein long ago. Now, like Victor, he was going to attempt to make life out of death. However, he was not replicating Victor's experiment. He would do better than his creator.

He did not intend to create something more than human. Victor had made the Creature abnormally tall and strong. He had to hide his face when it was necessary to interact with others, and his height alone was often enough to frighten them. So, unlike Victor, he had not cobbled together an inhuman form from multiple cadavers. The Creature had stuck to a base body with typical human proportions, only replacing unhealthy internal organs. He did not wish for his creation to be alienated or feared. He wanted them to be able to live in ways he could not.

The Creature himself had come to life with no identity or memories—nothing. In that way it had been very much like a birth—a blank slate. But, unlike an infant, he had had no nurturers to care for him or guide him. He would not subject his creation to the same struggle. He would not repeat Victor's mistakes.

Mistakes. Between himself and Victor they had made many. Victor had been ambitious, and it had led him to play God. Then he abandoned the life he created when it was not what he had envisioned. The Creature had tried to survive on his own, but saw Victor's fear and hatred reflected in the face of every person he encountered. Perhaps he could have learned to live with the animosity of the public if at least his own creator had embraced him. But that had not happened. He blamed Victor for everything, so he had taken everything from him. Everything...

The Creature put a hand on the table to steady himself. The memories of his sins were often strong enough to bring him to his knees. The sheer guilt of what he had done in the name of vengeance. Innocent lives snuffed out. Humanity, or at least the extent of which he had seen, was not warm or accepting, but that had not given him the right to destroy it. He had justified it back then; Victor had wronged him, so the Creature enacted retribution. But the more years that passed and the more he distanced himself from his pain, the more objectively he could view things. Victor had done wrong, yes. But so had he.

The Creature had tracked Victor to a ship in the Arctic but, having arrived, discovered that Victor had succumbed to illness. To see the man that had given him life void of it had extinguished his rage. Despite his anger towards Victor, he was overcome with grief. After all, enemies though they may have been, Victor was all he had.

He could see Victor more clearly now than he could years ago. Before, hatred had made him view Victor as a heartless devil, and later, following Victor's demise, guilt had made him think of his creator as a pitiable victim. But Victor had never been either of those things. He was only a man. A flawed man.

The Creature's remorse had been so great he had planned to end his own life as penance. He had taken Victor's body, fled the ship, and gone north where he built a pyre on the ice. But as he was about to light it, something gave him pause. What he was about to do felt...wrong. It would, he supposed, be a fitting punishment for himself after what he had done. But would it be atonement? After the destruction he had caused, was leaving the world, his guilt, *everything* behind the right thing to do? He had looked at Victor's lifeless form lying on the ground nearby, and the thought occurred to him.

The Creature had taken everything from Victor. Perhaps he could give something back.

He had preserved Victor's body as well as possible and spent years trying to prepare and improve Victor's experiment, the one that had given him life. He had debated often the ethics of his plan. Was bringing Victor back a gift or a punishment? He supposed that would depend on the reaction Victor had when—if—he awoke.

If the experiment worked, the Creature was prepared for every possibility. Perhaps Victor would still hate him. Or perhaps, given a new chance at life, he would be willing to turn over a new leaf and they could start anew. Or maybe, when he

awoke, he would not be Victor at all. Maybe he would be a blank slate, like the creature had been. If that was the case, the Creature would embrace him as his friend, nurture him and teach him about the world.

The Creature put his hand on the switch, preparing to flip it. No matter what happened, it would be better this time. He would make sure of it.

This time, he would not allow either of them to become monsters.