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Frankenstein Alive, Alive!



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I'M NOT WHAT THEY EXPECTED TO SEE. LEGENDS HAVE DISTORTED THEIR IMAGE OF WHAT I AM.

EVEN I DO NOT HAVE THE ANSWER TO THAT SEEMINGLY INNOCUOUS QUESTION.

COME ONE! COME ALL! HURRY! HURRY! RIDES AND ATTRACTIONS AND THRILLS AWAIT!

STENGER'S FUNLAND CIRCUS & CARNIVAL

AND THIS, I AM CERTAIN, IS NOT WHERE THEY EXPECTED TO FIND ME. MOST HAVE LONG SINCE ABANDONED ME TO THEIR NIGHTMARES.

THE SOARING SEVERINS! LUNA AND HER WALTZING STALLIONS! AND DON'T MISS THE SIDESHOW!

THE MOST ASTOUNDING ASSEMBLAGE OF FREAKS AND MONSTROSITIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD! JUST ONE THIN DIME TO SEE THE WONDERS!

THEY COME EXCITED AND CURIOUS.

EAGER TO PART WITH THEIR MONEY.

MIDGETS! GIANTS! FROM IMPOSSIBLY HUGE TO STUPEFYINGLY SMALL! TWISTED BODIES AND DISTORTED FACES! A WONDROUS COLLECTION OF THE WEIRD AND THE WARPED!



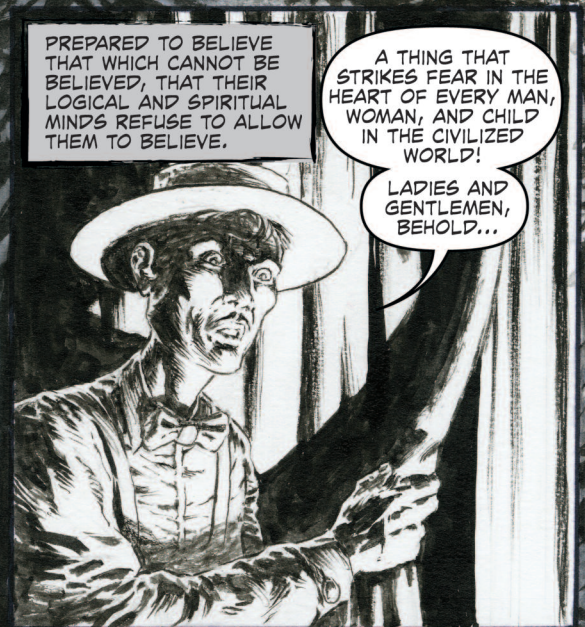
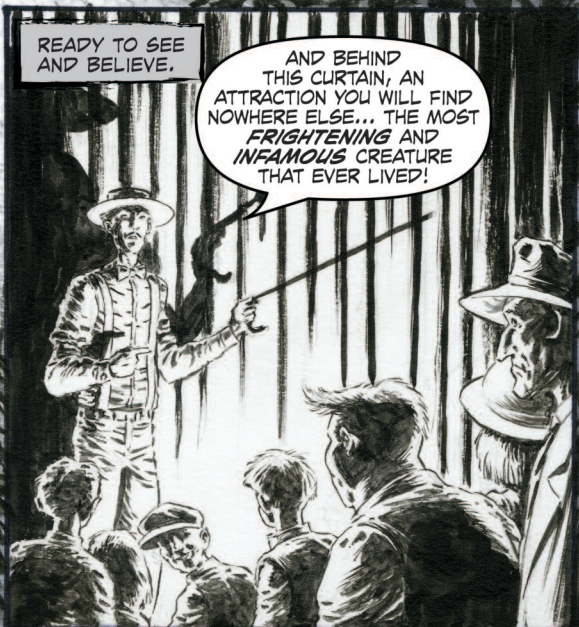
READY TO SEE AND BELIEVE.

AND BEHIND THIS CURTAIN, AN ATTRACTION YOU WILL FIND NOWHERE ELSE... THE MOST FRIGHTENING AND INFAMOUS CREATURE THAT EVER LIVED!

PREPARED TO BELIEVE THAT WHICH CANNOT BE BELIEVED, THAT THEIR LOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL MINDS REFUSE TO ALLOW THEM TO BELIEVE.

A THING THAT STRIKES FEAR IN THE HEART OF EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD IN THE CIVILIZED WORLD!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BEHOLD...





THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER!


ALL I HAVE TO
DO IS SHOW UP...

...AND WAIT FOR THE
STUNNED SILENCE.

THE HORROR IN THE
ROOM IS TANGIBLE.
ANYTHING COULD
HAPPEN.

IT IS THE MOMENT I
MOST FEAR AND MOST
ANTICIPATE. IT FEELS
LIKE LIFE, HOWEVER
FLEETING.





THEN, THE COLLECTIVE GASP... SOMETIMES A SCREAM OR TWO. THE ENERGY GOES SCATTERSHOT.

HOLY GOD! WHAT THE — ?!



THAT AIN'T FRANKENSTEIN! HE'S 'SPOSED TO HAVE A FLAT HEAD!

YEAH! WHERE THE HECK'S HIS BOLTS?



WHAT A GYP!

I'M GETTING MY MONEY BACK!



I AM NEVER WHAT THEY EXPECT.

SPLAT


...SO I HAVE ALSO LEARNED IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO GIVE THEM WHAT THEY EXPECT.



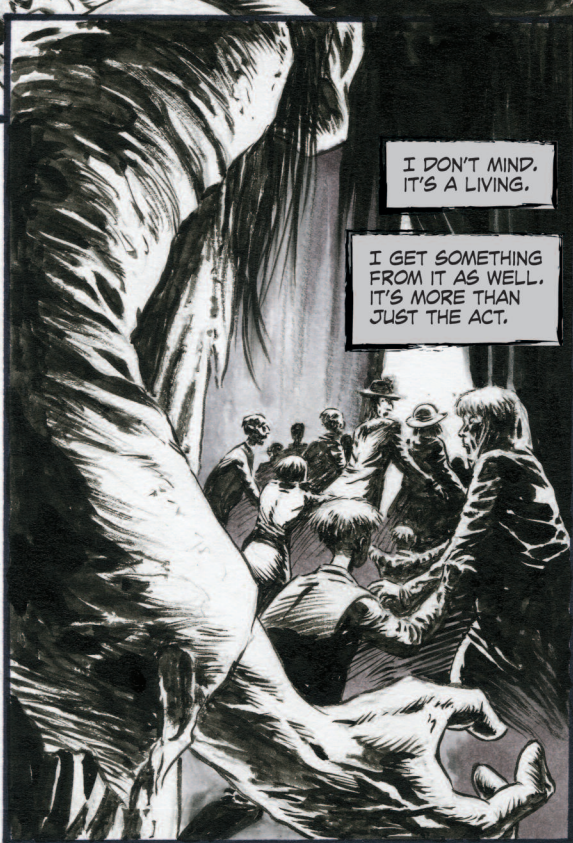
GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT.

RRRRAAAAARGH!

A MONSTER.



I DON'T MIND.
IT'S A LIVING.



I GET SOMETHING
FROM IT AS WELL.
IT'S MORE THAN
JUST THE ACT.

IT'S A
LIFE.



NOT A BAD LIFE, EITHER.
THE PAY'S DECENT.


GOOD CROWD
TONIGHT, FRANK?
HEARD YOU CLEARED
THE TENT IN RECORD
TIME.

MMMMMM.
CROWD
GOOD.

FUNNY.

DECENT ENOUGH
IN THESE TIMES
OF DEPRESSION.

A HOME, A JOB, GOOD FOOD, THREE
SQUARES, AS THE TENT-RAISERS SAY.



GOOD FRIENDS. OUTSIDERS
LIKE ME. THEY ACCEPT ME
AS ONE OF THEIR OWN.

GRAB A SEAT,
FRANK. I WAS JUST
TELLING THE GANG
ABOUT THE TIME I
SAT ON MY FIRST
HUSBAND.

"FRANK"? "FRANKENSTEIN"?
IT'S JUST A STAGE NAME,
LIKE "TAD THE FROG BOY" OR
"SHELLY THE TURTLE GIRL."

IN REALITY, I DO NOT HAVE A NAME.
MY CREATOR NEVER GAVE ME ONE.

LUCKILY, NOBODY AROUND
HERE ASKS TOO MANY
QUESTIONS. WHAT WOULD
I TELL THEM, REALLY?

WHAT COULD I TELL THEM?

ONLY THE TERRIBLE TRUTH...





I WAS LOST IN
DARKNESS AND
DISTANCE.

AT LENGTH, THE HOWLING
WIND BECAME A GALE; THE
WAVES GREW MOUNTAINOUS
AROUND ME.

I WELCOMED THE
STORM AND THE
DRIVING SNOW.

AN EASY
ENOUGH END
FOR YOU,
WRETCH!






FRANKENSTEIN!


YOU'VE COME
BACK FROM HELL
TO DEVIL ME IN MY
FINAL HOUR!

THE HAUNTING SHOULD
NOT HAVE SURPRISED ME;
IT SEEMED EVEN IN DEATH
MY CREATOR WOULD BE
MY TORMENTOR.



BUT I DID NOT LET THE SPECTER ALTER MY COURSE. DEATH, OR ANY SEMBLANCE OF IT, WAS MY DESTINY.

THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR ME, IF THERE EVER WAS.



I HAVE NOTHING TO DO NOW BUT SLEEP AND LOSE MYSELF IN THE FROZEN SEAS.

IT'S TOO EASY AN END FOR YOU, WRETCH.

YOU WILL NEVER BE FORGIVEN. NOT BY ME, YOUR MAKER, NOT BY GOD!



GOD?! AS
THOUGH GOD HAS
ANYTHING TO DO
WITH MY WRETCHED
EXISTENCE, YOU
SAW TO THAT!



THEN SLEEP
FOREVER IN YOUR
ICY SARCOPHAGUS,
MURDERER. IT'S
FOR THE BEST.

YES, FOR
THE BEST.





I REMEMBER VIVIDLY
THAT DREARY
NOVEMBER WHEN I
OPENED MY EYES
FOR THE FIRST TIME.

I HAVE READ THAT MANY
BABY MAMMALS IMPRINT
UPON AND BOND WITH THE
FIRST LIVING THING THEY
SEE, BE IT MOTHER OR
STRANGER... OR CREATOR.




SO I IMPRINTED
ON VICTOR.

BUT MY NEEDFUL,
WANDERING GAZE
WAS RETURNED BY
HIS LOOK OF HORROR
AND REVULSION.


MY MAKER
SCREAMED
AND FLED
INTO THE
NIGHT.

AFRAID AND
CONFUSED, I
SOON FLED
MYSELF.




OUTSIDE, I WAS GREETED
BY A VAGUE, FRIGHTENING,
ALMOST DREAM-LIKE
FEELING OF FAMILIARITY.


YET EVERYTHING WAS NEW,
AND DARK, AND HORRIBLE.




WANDERING INTO THE WILDERNESS, LIVING ON WHATEVER I COULD FORAGE, ENDURING EXTREMES OF HEAT AND COLD. I SEEMED INVULNERABLE, BUT IT MADE THE PAIN NO LESS.



MY INFREQUENT ENCOUNTERS WITH HUMANKIND TOOK AN UNEXPECTED TURN WHEN I FOUND MYSELF FALLING DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO DEPRESSION FROM THE ISOLATION.



MY VERY APPEARANCE IN ANY TOWN OR VILLAGE PROVOKED SUCH AGITATION, FEAR, AND HOSTILITY THAT I WAS QUICKLY RUN OUT OF TOWN.



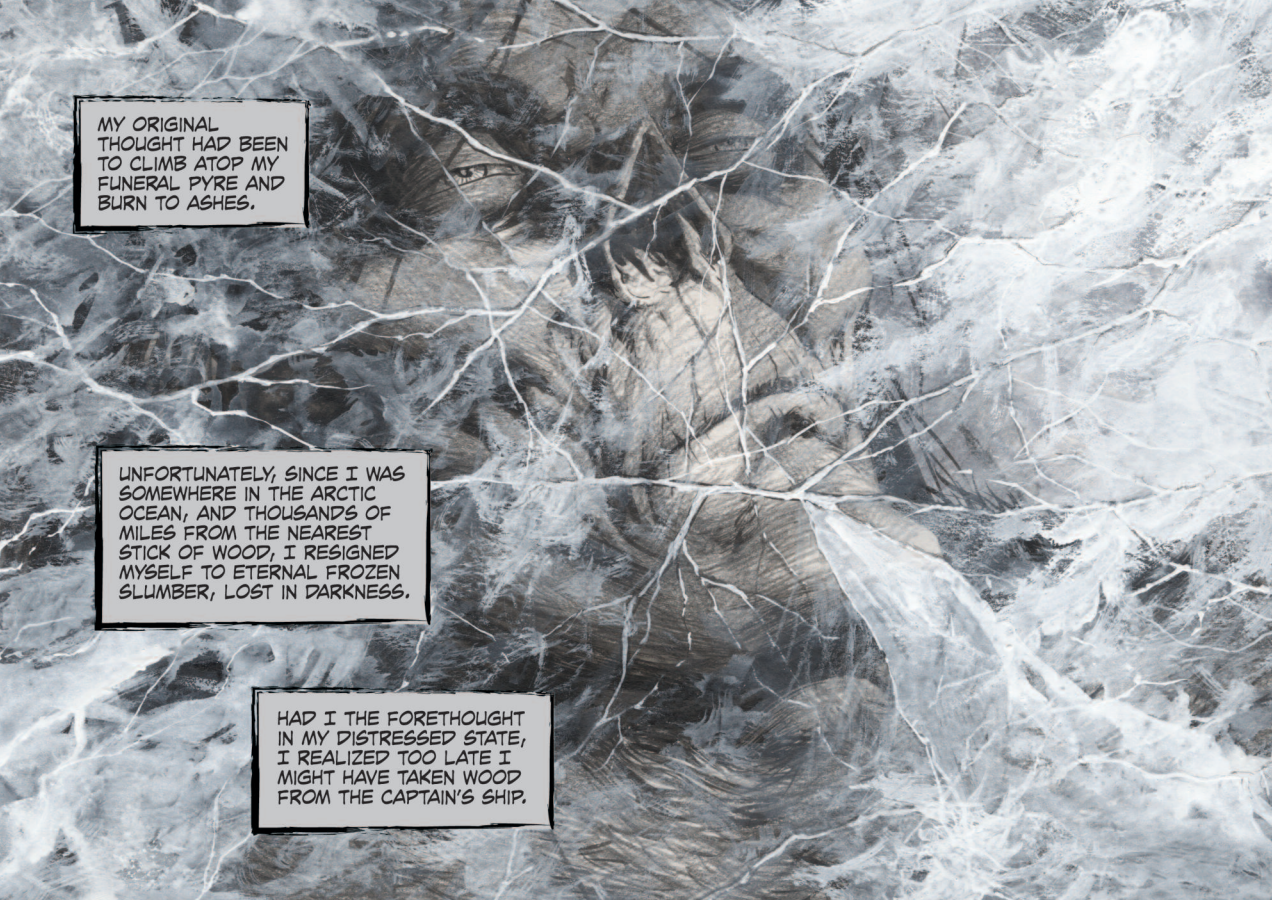
I HAD DONE NOTHING. THEIR FEAR WAS BASED SOLELY ON MY APPEARANCE.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, MY GREAT SIZE AND SUPERIOR STRENGTH AND SPEED GAVE ME THE EDGE, AND I EASILY ESCAPED ALMOST EVERY TIME.

IF ONLY I COULD OUTDISTANCE MYSELF AS EASILY.

RUN AWAY FROM THE MONSTROUS FACE AND FORM THAT, AS AN UNFATHOMABLE GULF, SEPARATES AND SEGREGATES ME FROM HUMANKIND.


IN THE END, ALL I WANTED WAS DEATH, OR ANYTHING RESEMBLING IT.




MY ORIGINAL
THOUGHT HAD BEEN
TO CLIMB ATOP MY
FUNERAL PYRE AND
BURN TO ASHES.

UNFORTUNATELY, SINCE I WAS
SOMEWHERE IN THE ARCTIC
OCEAN, AND THOUSANDS OF
MILES FROM THE NEAREST
STICK OF WOOD, I RESIGNED
MYSELF TO ETERNAL FROZEN
SLUMBER, LOST IN DARKNESS.

HAD I THE FORETHOUGHT
IN MY DISTRESSED STATE,
I REALIZED TOO LATE I
MIGHT HAVE TAKEN WOOD
FROM THE CAPTAIN'S SHIP.




BUT MY ICY TOMB
EVENTUALLY MELTED.
I WOULD NOT EVEN
BE PERMITTED
DREAMLESS NOTHING.



I WAS STILL ALIVE, AND
RELEASED ONCE AGAIN INTO
THE DESOLATE LANDSCAPE.

BUT LO! BEYOND THE
SEA OF GRINDING,
CHURNING ICE, MY KEEN
VISION FELL UPON A
MOUNTAIN OF FIRE!

I WOULD HAVE MY VIKING
FUNERAL BY FLAME AFTER
ALL; A FINAL REST THAT
ANY LONG-AGO NORSE
WARRIOR WOULD ENVY.



EAGERLY I CLIMBED
AND WALKED FOR
UNTOLD HOURS WITHOUT
SLOWING OR TIRING THE
SLIGHTEST, TOWARD MY
MUCH LONGED-FOR END.

BUT I DID
NOT WALK
ALONE.

VICTOR HAUNTED ME,
EVER-PRESENT, STARING AT
ME WITH ARROGANT EYES
THAT HAD LONG SINCE
JUDGED ME AS MURDERER,
FORGETTING ALWAYS, IT WAS
HE WHO BROUGHT ME INTO
THIS WRETCHED EXISTENCE.

I DID KILL. I DO NOT DENY MY
ACTIONS, BUT FRANKENSTEIN
MYSTERIOUSLY ESCAPED THE
REMORSE THAT TORMENTED ME
FOR MY TERRIBLE DEEDS, THE
DEEDS OF A DESPERATE CHILD.

SO, MY
CREATOR, HAVE
YOU COME TO
TAUNT ME ONE
FINAL TIME?

OR ARE YOU
MY ANGEL'S FLIGHT,
COME TO GUIDE
YOUR GREATEST
ACHIEVEMENT, AND
GREATEST MISTAKE,
TO HIS REST?

NO. I COME
ONLY TO SAY
GOODBYE.



GOODBYE, THEN. YOU ABANDONED ME IN THE LIFE YOU GAVE ME. NOW LEAVE ME ALONE TO MEET MY DEATH.



I INTENDED THAT YOU BE PERFECT... TO BE HUMAN.

BUT I WAS NOT AS YOU INTENDED, INSTEAD A HIDEOUS MOCKERY OF ALL THAT IS HUMAN, WHOSE FAULT IS THIS, MY CREATOR?

IT IS... MINE. FOR BUILDING A MONSTER... FOR FAILING TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY —

AT LAST, YOU ADMIT —





YOU MURDERED
MY BROTHER, MY
BEST FRIEND, AND
MY WIFE!

YES. AND I
WOULD HAVE
KILLED YOU IF
I COULD.



YOU DID,
IN THE END,
YOU DID.

BUT LOOK!
THE MOUNTAIN
EXPLODES. YOUR
DOOM IS NIGH.

I WILL SEE
YOU IN HELL,
VICTOR.



AS THE HOT MUD HIT MY BODY
I FELT NOTHING, THOUGH I
COULD SENSE THE GREAT HEAT.

PERHAPS.

BUT YOU
NEED A SOUL
TO GO TO
HELL.

I STRAINED TO PUSH
AWAY MY CREATOR'S
VOICE, AND HOPED
THESE WOULD BE MY
FINAL THOUGHTS...

...AND THE LAST I'D
EVER HEAR THE VOICE
OF FRANKENSTEIN.



to be continued...

Niles Talks Frankenstein with Wrightson

PART ONE: IN WHICH WE EXPLORE HOW WRIGHTSON FIRST CAME IN CONTACT WITH THE CREATION TO WHICH HE WOULD BE FOREVER LINKED.

NILES: How and when did you first encounter Frankenstein?

WRIGHTSON: It was 1954. My dad was working the night shift at Bethlehem Steel, the 3 to 11 shift, which meant that my mom and I still had time to make the afternoon matinee at the old Grand Theatre in Baltimore.

A quarter for her and 15 cents for me. A double feature with a cartoon and a newsreel.

N: What was on the bill?

W: That night we saw *Creature From The Black Lagoon* (in 3D!), followed by *House of Frankenstein*. I wasn't even 6 years old yet, and I really had no idea what I was watching. I don't think I'd ever even seen a monster movie before, and *The Creature* put me right under the seat. I was terrified. My mom explained that it was all make-believe and there was really nothing to be afraid of, and of course I knew that already. I'd seen movies before, and TV. I already knew about make-believe; I mean, I was almost 6, for Christ's sake, but still... So the second feature started, and my little pump was all primed, and this movie had Dracula and the Wolf Man and this big guy called Frankenstein. And who was he, a robot or something? I knew absolutely nothing about him, and mom patiently explained that he was a dead guy that Dr. Frankenstein built by sewing together arms and legs and hands, then brought him to life with lightning. So why's his head all flat? That's because the doctor opened up his head like a box to put his brain in. Oh. Then what are those things in his neck? Those are nails. Nails? Why nails in his neck? That's what holds his head on.

WOW!

Nails holding his head on? I was hooked!

N: Ha! That's so great. I recall being deeply disturbed when I realized the Monster was made of dead body parts. That captured my imagination immediately. The science made perfect sense to a kid; electrocute the dead and they come back. They just need a little jumpstart. When I think of the top 10 moments that inspired me, the birth of the Monster is right up there. And not to put

you on the spot—you know this already—but your Frankenstein was a major influence as well, but not from Frankenstein. I think the first time I saw your creature was in the "Muck Monster" story. Anyway, sorry, I digress as usual. How did you learn that there was actually an actor under all that stuff?

W: Sometime later, a neighbor lady told me that Frankenstein wasn't real at all, but an actor wearing makeup. Makeup? Like the makeup my mom puts on? "No, they did it wit' cement. That's why his head's all flat an' he walks so stiff."

N: But your next exposure to him wasn't in the theaters, was it?

W: Then it was 1956, and Universal just released its monster movies to TV. *Shock Theater* on Friday night at 11:15 p.m. Your host: Dr. Lucifer. And the first movie that played was the original *Frankenstein*, starring Boris Karloff. I knew about Karloff by then. Mom told me he was the same guy that Frankenstein pulled down in the quicksand at the end of *House of Frankenstein*, and he was the actor who played the

monster in the first movie, and I should watch this one because it would make me feel sorry for the monster. I had my doubts. This guy had practically scared me out of my pants the first time I saw him and now I'm supposed to feel sorry for him?



N: I remember seeing that first reveal, when Karloff enters the room walking backwards and then turns. I was horrified. So what happened when you saw the original?

W: She was right: I felt completely sorry for the big guy and by the end of the movie I was crying. Karloff's portrayal was so innocent and childlike, and I really felt the unfairness of it all. I mean the poor guy didn't ask for this. He had no say at all in who or what he was. I came away from that movie feeling confused and angry at Henry and Dr. Waldman and all the rest of the human characters for not even trying to understand him, and hunting him down like a rabid dog. The whole thing just broke my heart. And that face!

N: You first saw Frankenstein as the sort of brainless, clumsy, closed-eyed robot then. What was the biggest difference? For me the sympathy came when the Monster was tormented by Fritz. It sticks in my mind because I recall cheering the Monster on just a little when he hung the hunchback.

W: Karloff's face in the Monster's make-up. The first time I'd ever seen the Monster was in *House of Frankenstein*, where he was played by Glenn Strange. By that time in the series the Monster had lost most of his humanity, had become a great lumbering, expressionless automaton. But Karloff's Monster, as conceived in the original film, was played as an innocent,

bewildered character, newly born and wandering around the watchtower in a kind of daze of aimless discovery. We first hear his steps outside the door, then the door opens and he walks in backward! Wonderful! It suggests to me that the Monster, "only a few days old," according to Henry Frankenstein, is still really a baby, not knowing even his front from his back, walking forward or walking backward is all the same thing. He's a completely empty vessel, experiencing everything in his world for the first time. I wasn't even 8 years old at the time, but I totally got it. A wonderful and chilling idea, and it brought tears to my eyes.

N: I've always liked that as different as the Monster is in the novel, Karloff does manage to embody the spirit of Shelley's original creation.

W: The Monster was just a child in a giant's body, moving and reacting slowly, not out of stupidity, but tentative and wondering, and absorbing every new event with a sense of wonder and bewilderment, and all of it in pantomime, without ever speaking a single word, and he communicated it all to me, just another child, instantly. I felt an immediate connection to this poor, ugly, misunderstood creature. Very strong and very deep. A kinship that I feel to this day. In a way, Frankenstein's Monster is my oldest friend, and I've had a deep fascination with any and all things Frankenstein ever since.

N: Well, I've said it before so I might as well say it here too. To me the name Wrightson is as synonymous with Frankenstein as Karloff or Whale or Hammer. Which brings us to Hammer. Personally I loved the Hammer Frankenstein films, if only because they made Dr. Frankenstein the bad guy. I sorta hated how the Doc got off the hook in Whale's version. He should have burned with the Monster. Just my opinion. I always thought the Monster got a bad rap and Hammer sort of underlined that theme

W: In 1957 I saw Hammer's *Curse of Frankenstein*, starring Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, and here was a much different interpretation of the Monster. More explicit and visceral and in Technicolor. The creation of the Monster was handled in bloody, gory, loving detail, and I loved it!

N: All the blood and gore, and of course the cleavage. For a 10-year-old, that was some mind-blowing stuff. I always felt like I was getting away with something when I watched Hammer films as a kid. [Hammer's version] may have been the first place I saw gore on screen, and I'm pretty sure it was a bloody brain in *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*. That was an odd one, only because the "Monster" was just a bald guy with a nasty scar around his head.

W: Lee's interpretation of the Monster was very interesting and very different from Karloff's. Lee played him as a spastic, brain damaged character—not surprising, since his brain really was damaged. I loved the scene of Victor in his lab, carefully picking pieces of broken glass out of the brain. The brain looked like it was in a soup bowl—very pathetic in a very real way. Much less sympathetic than Karloff's Monster. Again, not surprising because Hammer's Frankenstein series had the really interesting idea of making Victor "the recurring character Victor" instead of the Monster. Lee's makeup was fascinating, though. With all the bloody scars, crude stitches and staples, mismatched eyes and rotted broken teeth, he really did look like he'd been pieced together from various spare parts.

N: One thing Lee shared with Karloff, I think, are some pretty incredible, expressive and piercing eyes. Lee's Frankenstein was much more savage and, like you said, spastic but every once in a while he gave us a flicker of innocence in his one good eye. I don't know. Maybe I just like monsters. Mostly what I think of when I think of *Curse of Frankenstein* is the Monster's reveal (as with the original). It has two odd things happening at once. First, the Monster (Lee) un.masks himself and there's a fast, stutter step closeup that scared the crap out of me. Unfortunately, I never got to see any of the Hammer films in a theater. I discovered all of them on late-night television.

W: During this year, '56 through '57, *Shock Theater* was running the old Universal movies every Friday night, and I was there each week watching *The Mummy*, *The Wolf Man*, *The Black Cat*, *The Raven*, and every so often the occasional Frankenstein movie. They showed them out of sequence.

N: I had *Count Gore De Vol's Creature Feature* on Channel 20 in Washington, D.C. He showed me everything from *Night of the Living Dead* to *Dracula versus Frankenstein* (the '70s one).

W: I didn't know this till a year or two later when *Famous Monsters* magazine started, and Fory Ackerman went on and on about how *The Bride of Frankenstein* was the best movie in Universal's Frankenstein series, so I waited with bated breath for the *TV Guide* section of the Sunday paper, which I immediately scanned every week, red pencil in hand, looking for that magical parenthesized word (Melodrama).

N: It's funny you bring up Fory Ackerman. He single-handedly kept all these movies and characters alive. There were some films, like *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*, which I mentioned before, the first time I actually saw the film was a very small piece of Super 8 footage they sold in the backs of *Famous Monsters*. That was where I saw the bloody brain. Also, it's worth mentioning I was introduced to Fory when he appeared in *Creature Feature* and he also had a cameo in *Dracula versus Frankenstein*. It was in *Famous Monsters* I saw pictures of the earlier films long before I would ever see the actual films, all those odd Karloff films.

W: I'd become a big fan of Karloff and Lugosi by this time, and looked forward to any old movie starring both or either of them. I saw *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* and was very disappointed with Lugosi's portrayal of the Monster (It wasn't till a few years later that I finally saw *Ghost of Frankenstein* and realized that at the end of that movie, Igor's brain wound up in the Monster's skull, and several more years after that, I found out that Lugosi's part of the Monster in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* had been drastically cut before its release, eliminating all of Igor/Monster's dialogue. I re-watched "F meets W" several times before I realized it was a direct sequel to *The Wolf Man*. Somehow, that made the movie more enjoyable to me.)



PETER CUSHING - HAZEL COURT - ROBERT URQUHART and CHRISTOPHER LEE
SCREENPLAY BY JIMMY CRAWFORD DIRECTED BY PETER COE COSTUME DESIGNER MICHAEL CARROLLS BY

Mausoleum is leaning 15 or 20 degrees off level, like the whole structure has sunken into the ground. Larry Talbot's transformation into the Wolf Man in his hospital bed is the smoothest, most seamless transformation in the series. Larry freeing the Monster from the ice, and just the story itself is so audacious. I never get tired of watching it.



N: I think the first half of *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* is my favorite, too. Those mausoleum scenes are so stylized. And like you said, the fact that it was a direct sequel to *The Wolf Man* made me crazy-happy as a kid. Universal did that so well. They made them all connected in some way. Oddly, of the whole series it was *Bride of Frankenstein* that really opened my eyes. I think it was for you too, right?

W: Yes. It wasn't until *Shock Theater's* second year that they finally got around to showing *The Bride of Frankenstein*. I thought I was moved by the Monster in the original, but I was completely unprepared to be blown out of my 8- or 9-year-old

socks by *Bride*. I've heard people say that *Bride* is too funny to be a horror movie, that it's a self-parody, and I disagree. I think what it is, is that it's remarkably self-aware. It's a film that knows exactly what it's doing. The Monster grows, intellectually, emotionally, even physically through the course of the movie (his hair grows, his scars heal), he learns to speak, we see him begin to reason. He grows from an adolescent to a young man, yearning for a companion, awakening into adulthood, yet never losing that child-like innocence until the very end, when having been rejected by his Bride, he desponds and just gives up ("She hate me, like others," and "we belong dead").

To be continued...

Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus

—by Mary Wollstonecraft (Godwin) Shelley

Letter 1

St. Petersburg, Dec. 11th, 17—

TO Mrs. Saville, England

You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise, which you have regarded with such evil forebodings. I arrived here yesterday, and my first task is to assure my dear sister of my welfare and increasing confidence in the success of my undertaking.

I am already far north of London, and as I walk in the streets of Petersburg, I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves and fills me with delight. Do you understand this feeling? This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspirited by this wind of promise, my daydreams become more fervent and vivid. I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight. There, Margaret, the sun is forever visible, its broad disk just skirting the horizon and diffusing a perpetual splendour. There—for with your leave, my sister, I will put some trust in preceding navigators—there snow and frost are banished; and, sailing over a calm sea, we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phenomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes. What may not be expected in a country of eternal light? I may there discover the wondrous power, which attracts the needle and may regulate a thousand celestial observations that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent forever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man. These are my enticements, and they are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death and to induce me to commence this laborious voyage with the joy a child feels when he embarks in a little boat, with his holiday mates, on an expedition of discovery up his native river. But supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind, to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months are requisite; or by ascertaining the secret of

the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.

These reflections have dispelled the agitation with which I began my letter, and I feel my heart glow with an enthusiasm which elevates me to heaven, for nothing contributes so much to tranquillize the mind as a steady purpose—a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. This expedition has been the favourite dream of my early years. I have read with ardour the accounts of the various voyages which have been made in the prospect of arriving at the North Pacific Ocean through the seas which surround the pole. You may remember that a history of all the voyages made for purposes of discovery composed the whole of our good Uncle Thomas' library. My education was neglected, yet I was passionately fond of reading. These volumes were my study day and night, and my familiarity with them increased that regret which I had felt, as a child, on learning that my father's dying injunction had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a seafaring life.

These visions faded when I perused, for the first time, those poets whose effusions entranced my soul and lifted it to heaven. I also became a poet and for one year lived in a paradise of my own creation; I imagined that I also might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated. You are well acquainted with my failure and how heavily I bore the disappointment. But just at that time I inherited the fortune of my cousin, and my thoughts were turned into the channel of their earlier bent.

Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking. I can, even now, remember the hour from which I dedicated myself to this great enterprise. I commenced by inuring my body to hardship. I accompanied the whale-fishers on several expeditions to the North Sea; I voluntarily endured cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep; I often worked harder than the common sailors during the day and devoted my nights to the study of mathematics, the theory of medicine, and those branches of physical science from which a naval adventurer might derive the greatest practical advantage. Twice I actually hired myself as an under-mate in a Greenland whaler, and acquitted myself to admiration. I must own I felt a little proud when my captain offered me the second dignity in the vessel and entreated me to remain with the greatest earnestness, so valuable did he consider my services. And now, dear Margaret, do I not

deserve to accomplish some great purpose? My life might have been passed in ease and luxury, but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path. Oh, that some encouraging voice would answer in the affirmative! My courage and my resolution is firm; but my hopes fluctuate, and my spirits are often depressed. I am about to proceed on a long and difficult voyage, the emergencies of which will demand all my fortitude: I am required not only to raise the spirits of others, but sometimes to sustain my own, when theirs are failing.

This is the most favourable period for travelling in Russia. They fly quickly over the snow in their sledges; the motion is pleasant, and, in my opinion, far more agreeable than that of an English stagecoach. The cold is not excessive, if you are wrapped in furs—a dress which I have already adopted, for there is a great difference between walking the deck and remaining seated motionless for hours, when no exercise prevents the blood from actually freezing in your veins. I have no ambition to lose my life on the post-road between St. Petersburg and Archangel. I shall depart for the latter town in a fortnight or three weeks; and my intention is to hire a ship there, which can easily be done by paying the insurance for the owner, and to engage as many sailors as I think necessary among those who are accustomed to the whale-fishing. I do not intend to sail until the month of June; and when shall I return? Ah, dear sister, how can I answer this question? If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet. If I fail, you will see me again soon, or never. Farewell, my dear, excellent Margaret. Heaven shower down blessings on you, and save me, that I may again and again testify my gratitude for all your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother, R. Walton

Letter 2

Archangel, 28th March, 17—

To Mrs. Saville, England

How slowly the time passes here, encompassed as I am by frost and snow! Yet a second step is taken towards my enterprise. I have hired a vessel and am occupied in collecting my sailors; those whom I have already engaged appear to be men on whom I can depend and are certainly possessed of dauntless courage.

But I have one want which I have never yet been able to satisfy, and the absence of the object of which I now feel as a most severe evil, I have no friend, Margaret: when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will

endeavour to sustain me in dejection. I shall commit my thoughts to paper, it is true; but that is a poor medium for the communication of feeling. I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me, whose eyes would reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend. I have no one near me, gentle yet courageous, possessed of a cultivated as well as of a capacious mind, whose tastes are like my own, to approve or amend my plans. How would such a friend repair the faults of your poor brother! I am too ardent in execution and too impatient of difficulties. But it is a still greater evil to me that I am self-educated: for the first fourteen years of my life I ran wild on a common and read nothing but our Uncle Thomas' books of voyages. At that age I became acquainted with the celebrated poets of our own country; but it was only when it had ceased to be in my power to derive its most important benefits from such a conviction that I perceived the necessity of becoming acquainted with more languages than that of my native country. Now I am twenty-eight and am in reality more illiterate than many schoolboys of fifteen. It is true that I have thought more and that my daydreams are more extended and magnificent, but they want (as the painters call it) KEEPING; and I greatly need a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my mind. Well, these are useless complaints; I shall certainly find no friend on the wide ocean, nor even here in Archangel, among merchants and seamen. Yet some feelings, unallied to the dross of human nature, beat even in these rugged bosoms. My lieutenant, for instance, is a man of wonderful courage and enterprise; he is madly desirous of glory, or rather, to word my phrase more characteristically, of advancement in his profession. He is an Englishman, and in the midst of national and professional prejudices, unsoftened by cultivation, retains some of the noblest endowments of humanity. I first became acquainted with him on board a whale vessel; finding that he was unemployed in this city, I easily engaged him to assist in my enterprise. The master is a person of an excellent disposition and is remarkable in the ship for his gentleness and the mildness of his discipline. This circumstance, added to his well-known integrity and dauntless courage, made me very desirous to engage him. A youth passed in solitude, my best years spent under your gentle and feminine fosterage, has so refined the groundwork of my character that I cannot overcome an intense distaste to the usual brutality exercised on board ship: I have never believed it to be necessary, and when I heard of a mariner equally noted for his kindness of heart and the respect and obedience paid to him by his crew, I

felt myself peculiarly fortunate in being able to secure his services. I heard of him first in rather a romantic manner, from a lady who owes to him the happiness of her life. This, briefly, is his story. Some years ago he loved a young Russian lady of moderate fortune, and having amassed a considerable sum in prize-money, the father of the girl consented to the match. He saw his mistress once before the destined ceremony; but she was bathed in tears, and throwing herself at his feet, entreated him to spare her, confessing at the same time that she loved another, but that he was poor, and that her father would never consent to the union. My generous friend reassured the suppliant, and on being informed of the name of her lover, instantly abandoned his pursuit. He had already bought a farm with his money, on which he had designed to pass the remainder of his life; but he bestowed the whole on his rival, together with the remains of his prize-money to purchase stock, and then himself solicited the young woman's father to consent to her marriage with her lover. But the old man decidedly refused, thinking himself bound in honour to my friend, who, when he found the father inexorable, quitted his country, nor returned until he heard that his former mistress was married according to her inclinations. "What a noble fellow!" you will exclaim. He is so; but then he is wholly uneducated: he is as silent as a Turk, and a kind of ignorant carelessness attends him, which, while it renders his conduct the more astonishing, detracts from the interest and sympathy which otherwise he would command.

Yet do not suppose, because I complain a little or because I can conceive a consolation for my toils which I may never know, that I am wavering in my resolutions. Those are as fixed as fate, and my voyage is only now delayed until the weather shall permit my embarkation. The winter has been dreadfully severe, but the spring promises well, and it is considered as a remarkably early season, so that perhaps I may sail sooner than I expected. I shall do nothing rashly: you know me sufficiently to confide in my prudence and considerateness whenever the safety of others is committed to my care.

I cannot describe to you my sensations on the near prospect of my undertaking. It is impossible to communicate to you a conception of the trembling sensation, half pleasurable and half fearful, with which I am preparing to depart. I am going to unexplored regions, to "the land of mist and snow," but I shall kill no albatross; therefore do not be alarmed for my safety or if I should come back to you as worn and woeful as the "Ancient Mariner." You will smile at my allusion, but I will disclose a secret. I have often attributed my attachment to, my passionate enthusiasm for, the dangerous mysteries

of ocean to that production of the most imaginative of modern poets. There is something at work in my soul which I do not understand. I am practically industrious—painstaking, a workman to execute with perseverance and labour—but besides this there is a love for the marvellous, a belief in the marvellous, intertwined in all my projects, which hurries me out of the common pathways of men, even to the wild sea and unvisited regions I am about to explore. But to return to dearer considerations. Shall I meet you again, after having traversed immense seas, and returned by the most southern cape of Africa or America? I dare not expect such success, yet I cannot bear to look on the reverse of the picture. Continue for the present to write to me by every opportunity: I may receive your letters on some occasions when I need them most to support my spirits. I love you very tenderly. Remember me with affection, should you never hear from me again.

Your affectionate brother, Robert Walton

Letter 3

July 7th, 17—

To Mrs. Saville, England

My dear Sister,

I write a few lines in haste to say that I am safe—and well advanced on my voyage. This letter will reach England by a merchantman now on its homeward voyage from Archangel; more fortunate than I, who may not see my native land, perhaps, for many years. I am, however, in good spirits: my men are bold and apparently firm of purpose, nor do the floating sheets of ice that continually pass us, indicating the dangers of the region towards which we are advancing, appear to dismay them. We have already reached a very high latitude; but it is the height of summer, and although not so warm as in England, the southern gales, which blow us speedily towards those shores which I so ardently desire to attain, breathe a degree of renovating warmth which I had not expected.

No incidents have hitherto befallen us that would make a figure in a letter. One or two stiff gales and the springing of a leak are accidents, which experienced navigators scarcely remember to record, and I shall be well content if nothing worse happen to us during our voyage.

Adieu, my dear Margaret. Be assured that for my own sake, as well as yours, I will not rashly encounter danger. I will be cool, persevering, and prudent.

But success SHALL crown my endeavours. Wherefore not? Thus far I have gone, tracing a secure way over the pathless seas, the very stars themselves being witnesses and testimonies of my triumph. Why

not still proceed over the untamed yet obedient element? What can stop the determined heart and resolved will of man?

My swelling heart involuntarily pours itself out thus. But I must finish. Heaven bless my beloved sister!

R. W.

Letter 4

August 5th, 17—

To Mrs. Saville, England

So strange an accident has happened to us that I cannot forbear recording it, although it is very probable that you will see me before these papers can come into your possession.

Last Monday (July 31st) we were nearly surrounded by ice, which closed in the ship on all sides, scarcely leaving her the sea-room in which she floated. Our situation was somewhat dangerous, especially as we were compassed 'round by a very thick fog. We accordingly lay to, hoping that some change would take place in the atmosphere and weather.

About two o'clock the mist cleared away, and we beheld, stretched out in every direction, vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end. Some of my comrades groaned, and my own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts, when a strange sight suddenly attracted our attention and diverted our solicitude from our own situation. We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on towards the north, at the distance of half a mile; a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge and guided the dogs. We watched the rapid progress of the traveller with our telescopes until he was lost among the distant inequalities of the ice. This appearance excited our unqualified wonder. We were, as we believed, many hundred miles from any land; but this apparition seemed to denote that it was not, in reality, so distant as we had supposed. Shut in, however, by ice, it was impossible to follow his track, which we had observed with the greatest attention. About two hours after this occurrence we heard the ground sea, and before night the ice broke and freed our ship. We, however, lay to until the morning, fearing to encounter in the dark those large loose masses which float about after the breaking up of the ice. I profited of this time to rest for a few hours.

In the morning, however, as soon as it was light, I went upon deck and found all the sailors busy on one side of the vessel, apparently talking to someone in the sea. It was, in fact, a sledge, like that we had

seen before, which had drifted towards us in the night on a large fragment of ice. Only one dog remained alive; but there was a human being within it whom the sailors were persuading to enter the vessel. He was not, as the other traveller seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but a European. When I appeared on deck the master said, "Here is our captain, and he will not allow you to perish on the open sea."

On perceiving me, the stranger addressed me in English, although with a foreign accent. "Before I come on board your vessel," said he, "will you have the kindness to inform me whither you are bound?"

You may conceive my astonishment on hearing such a question addressed to me from a man on the brink of destruction and to whom I should have supposed that my vessel would have been a resource, which he would not have exchanged for the most precious wealth the earth can afford. I replied, however, that we were on a voyage of discovery towards the northern pole.

Upon hearing this he appeared satisfied and consented to come on board. Good God! Margaret, if you had seen the man who thus capitulated for his safety, your surprise would have been boundless. His limbs were nearly frozen, and his body dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering. I never saw a man in so wretched a condition. We attempted to carry him into the cabin, but as soon as he had quitted the fresh air he fainted. We accordingly brought him back to the deck and restored him to animation by rubbing him with brandy and forcing him to swallow a small quantity. As soon as he showed signs of life we wrapped him up in blankets and placed him near the chimney of the kitchen stove. By slow degrees he recovered and ate a little soup, which restored him wonderfully.

Two days passed in this manner before he was able to speak, and I often feared that his sufferings had deprived him of understanding. When he had in some measure recovered, I removed him to my own cabin and attended on him as much as my duty would permit. I never saw a more interesting creature: his eyes have generally an expression of wildness, and even madness, but there are moments when, if anyone performs an act of kindness towards him or does him any the most trifling service, his whole countenance is lighted up, as it were, with a beam of benevolence and sweetness that I never saw equalled. But he is generally melancholy and despairing, and sometimes he gnashes his teeth, as if impatient of the weight of woes that oppresses him.

When my guest was a little recovered I had great trouble to keep off the men, who wished to ask him a thousand questions; but I would not allow him to be tormented by their idle curiosity, in a state of body

and mind whose restoration evidently depended upon entire repose. Once, however, the lieutenant asked why he had come so far upon the ice in so strange a vehicle.

His countenance instantly assumed an aspect of the deepest gloom, and he replied, "To seek one who fled from me."

"And did the man whom you pursued travel in the same fashion?"

"Yes."

"Then I fancy we have seen him, for the day before we picked you up we saw some dogs drawing a sledge, with a man in it, across the ice."

This aroused the stranger's attention, and he asked a multitude of questions concerning the route which the demon, as he called him, had pursued. Soon after, when he was alone with me, he said, "I have, doubtless, excited your curiosity, as well as that of these good people; but you are too considerate to make inquiries."

"Certainly; it would indeed be very impertinent and inhuman in me to trouble you with any inquisitiveness of mine."

"And yet you rescued me from a strange and perilous situation; you have benevolently restored me to life."

Soon after this he inquired if I thought that the breaking up of the ice had destroyed the other sledge. I replied that I could not answer with any degree of certainty, for the ice had not broken until near midnight, and the traveller might have arrived at a place of safety before that time; but of this I could not judge. From this time a new spirit of life animated the decaying frame of the stranger. He manifested the greatest eagerness to be upon deck to watch for the sledge, which had before appeared; but I have persuaded him to remain in the cabin, for he is far too weak to sustain the rawness of the atmosphere. I have promised that someone should watch for him and give him instant notice if any new object should appear in sight.

Such is my journal of what relates to this strange occurrence up to the present day. The stranger has gradually improved in health but is very silent and appears uneasy when anyone except myself enters his cabin. Yet his manners are so conciliating and gentle that the sailors are all interested in him, although they have had very little communication with him. For my own part, I begin to love him as a brother, and his constant and deep grief fills me with sympathy and compassion. He must have been a noble creature in his better days, being even now in wreck so attractive and amiable. I said in one of my letters, my dear Margaret, that I should find no friend on the wide ocean; yet I have found a man who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should

have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart.

I shall continue my journal concerning the stranger at intervals, should I have any fresh incidents to record.

August 13th, 17—

My affection for my guest increases every day. He excites at once my admiration and my pity to an astonishing degree. How can I see so noble a creature destroyed by misery without feeling the most poignant grief? He is so gentle, yet so wise; his mind is so cultivated, and when he speaks, although his words are culled with the choicest art, yet they flow with rapidity and unparalleled eloquence. He is now much recovered from his illness and is continually on the deck, apparently watching for the sledge that preceded his own. Yet, although unhappy, he is not so utterly occupied by his own misery but that he interests himself deeply in the projects of others. He has frequently conversed with me on mine, which I have communicated to him without disguise. He entered attentively into all my arguments in favour of my eventual success and into every minute detail of the measures I had taken to secure it. I was easily led by the sympathy which he evinced to use the language of my heart, to give utterance to the burning ardour of my soul and to say, with all the fervour that warmed me, how gladly I would sacrifice my fortune, my existence, my every hope, to the furtherance of my enterprise. One man's life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought, for the dominion I should acquire and transmit over the elemental foes of our race. As I spoke, a dark gloom spread over my listener's countenance. At first I perceived that he tried to suppress his emotion; he placed his hands before his eyes, and my voice quivered and failed me as I beheld tears trickle fast from between his fingers; a groan burst from his heaving breast. I paused; at length he spoke, in broken accents: "Unhappy man! Do you share my madness? Have you drunk also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me; let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!"

Such words, you may imagine, strongly excited my curiosity; but the paroxysm of grief that had seized the stranger overcame his weakened powers, and many hours of repose and tranquil conversation were necessary to restore his composure. Having conquered the violence of his feelings, he appeared to despise himself for being the slave of passion; and quelling the dark tyranny of despair, he led me again to converse concerning myself personally. He asked me the history of my earlier years. The tale was

quickly told, but it awakened various trains of reflection. I spoke of my desire of finding a friend, of my thirst for a more intimate sympathy with a fellow mind than had ever fallen to my lot, and expressed my conviction that a man could boast of little happiness who did not enjoy this blessing. "I agree with you," replied the stranger; "we are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves—such a friend ought to be—do not lend his aid to perfectionate our weak and faulty natures. I once had a friend, the most noble of human creatures, and am entitled, therefore, to judge respecting friendship. You have hope, and the world before you, and have no cause for despair. But I—I have lost everything and cannot begin life anew."

As he said this, his countenance became expressive of a calm, settled grief that touched me to the heart. But he was silent and presently retired to his cabin.

Even broken in spirit as he is, no one can feel more deeply than he does the beauties of nature. The starry sky, the sea, and every sight afforded by these wonderful regions seem still to have the power of elevating his soul from earth. Such a man has a double existence: he may suffer misery and be overwhelmed by disappointments, yet when he has retired into himself, he will be like a celestial spirit that has a halo around him, within whose circle no grief or folly ventures.

Will you smile at the enthusiasm I express concerning this divine wanderer? You would not if you saw him. You have been tutored and refined by books and retirement from the world, and you are therefore somewhat fastidious; but this only renders you the more fit to appreciate the extraordinary merits of this wonderful man. Sometimes I have endeavoured to discover what quality it is which he possesses that elevates him so immeasurably above any other person I ever knew. I believe it to be an intuitive discernment, a quick but never-failing power of judgment, a penetration into the causes of things, unequalled for clearness and precision; add to this a facility of expression and a voice whose varied intonations are soul-subduing music.

August 19, 17—

Yesterday the stranger said to me, "You may easily perceive, Captain Walton, that I have suffered great and unparalleled misfortunes. I had determined at one time that the memory of these evils should die with me, but you have won me to alter my determination. You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to

sting you, as mine has been. I do not know that the relation of my disasters will be useful to you; yet, when I reflect that you are pursuing the same course, exposing yourself to the same dangers which have rendered me what I am, I imagine that you may deduce an apt moral from my tale, one that may direct you if you succeed in your undertaking and console you in case of failure. Prepare to hear of occurrences, which are usually deemed marvellous. Were we among the tamer scenes of nature I might fear to encounter your unbelief, perhaps your ridicule; but many things will appear possible in these wild and mysterious regions which would provoke the laughter of those unacquainted with the ever-varied powers of nature; nor can I doubt but that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth of the events of which it is composed."

You may easily imagine that I was much gratified by the offered communication, yet I could not endure that he should renew his grief by a recital of his misfortunes. I felt the greatest eagerness to hear the promised narrative, partly from curiosity and partly from a strong desire to ameliorate his fate if it were in my power. I expressed these feelings in my answer.

"I thank you," he replied, "for your sympathy, but it is useless; my fate is nearly fulfilled. I wait but for one event, and then I shall repose in peace. I understand your feeling," continued he, perceiving that I wished to interrupt him; "but you are mistaken, my friend, if thus you will allow me to name you; nothing can alter my destiny; listen to my history, and you will perceive how irrevocably it is determined."

He then told me that he would commence his narrative the next day when I should be at leisure. This promise drew from me the warmest thanks. I have resolved every night, when I am not imperatively occupied by my duties, to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what he has related during the day. If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes. This manuscript will doubtless afford you the greatest pleasure; but to me, who know him, and who hear it from his own lips—with what interest and sympathy shall I read it in some future day! Even now, as I commence my task, his full-toned voice swells in my ears; his lustrous eyes dwell on me with all their melancholy sweetness; I see his thin hand raised in animation, while the lineaments of his face are irradiated by the soul within.

Strange and harrowing must be his story, frightful the storm, which embraced the gallant vessel on its course and wrecked it—thus!

To be continued...

Frankenstein Alive, Alive!

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