**FRANKENSTEIN**

**ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BY MARY SHELLEY**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS:**

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

ELIZABETH LAVENZA

VICTOR’S CREATION

JUSTINE MORITZ

VICTOR’S FATHER, ALPHONSE FRANKENSTEIN

*LIKE ONE, ON A LONESOME ROAD WHO,*

*DOTH WALK IN FEAR AND DREAD,*

*AND, HAVING ONCE TURNED ROUND, WALKS ON,*

*AND TURNS NO MORE HIS HEAD;*

*BECAUSE HE KNOWS A FRIGHTFUL FIEND*

*DOTH CLOSE BEHIND HIM TREAD.*

PROLOGUE

***VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN*** *STANDS ALONE, SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS IN A DIM LIGHT. A RUMBLING SOUND IS GROWING FROM A MERE MURMUR.*

**VICTOR:** When I was a child, I witnessed a terrible thunderstorm. As I stood at the door, I beheld a sudden stream of fire fly from an old and beautiful oak. As soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump. The tree had shattered in a singular manner. It was not splintered, but entirely reduced to thin ribbons of wood. I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed. I at once gave up my former occupations, set down natural history and all its progeny as a deformed and abortive creation, and in this mood of mind betook myself to mathematics. When I look back, it seems to me as if the almost miraculous change of inclination and will was the immediate suggestion of some guardian angel – the last effort made by the spirit of preservation to avert the storm that was even then hanging in the stars, ready to envelope me. It was a strong effort of the spirit of good; but it was ineffectual. Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction.

I am by birth a Genevese, any my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic. My ancestors had been for many years counsellors and syndics; and my father had filled several public positions with honour and reputation. He was respected by all who knew him, for his integrity and indefatigable service and attention. It was this that prevented him marrying early; it was not until the decline of life that he became a husband and the father of a family. Alphonse Frankenstein had a very great friend of the name of Beaufort, a merchant with little fortune and even less wealth, a man forced to subsist in poverty with his beloved and attentive daughter, Caroline. Upon his death, she was left an orphan and a beggar. My father came like a protecting spirit to the poor girl, who committed herself to his care. Two years later, Caroline would become his wife, and, in time, my mother.

For a long time, I was their only care. My mother had much desire to have a daughter, but I continued their single offspring. When I was about five years old, while on an excursion through Northern Italy, we came across a poor cottager, distributing a scanty meal to five hungry babes. Among these there was one who attracted my mother far above all the rest. Her hair was the brightest gold, her blue eyes clear, her face graceful, shining. She had a celestial radiance. My mother made it her mission to care for that child until her dying days and so she joined my parents’ house, and I knew I would love this girl for the rest of my life. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me – Elizabeth, my more than sister, since till death she was till be mine only.

We lived happily together in a home full of love and encouragement. My mother bore another son, our beloved William. When I was seventeen, it was determined that I would study at the Academy at Ingolstadt. Just as I was to depart the family home, we were struck by a terrible tragedy. Elizabeth, my love, was struck down by a terrible illness. My mother flew to her aid and nursed her through and through, blinded to the natural susceptibility her own body would have to the illness. It took my mother. Despite her long struggle, I saw the terrible ease with which the human body moves from life to death; the end of the person you know with the beginnings of a mere corpse, a waste. There is that moment in which the eyes become vacant, the muscles of the mouth relax, the body slumps and retracts, and the person that was there is gone. My mother died and all that was left was a body. She was still so young.

Thus ended a day memorable to me: it decided my future destiny.

***VICTOR’S*** *FACE DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARK. CLOUD SLOWLY SEEPS IN AND THE START OF A STORM BEGINS TO GATHER. THE RUMBLING HAS GROWN IN INTENSITY.*

ACT I

*A VIOLENT THUNDERSTORM RAGES THROUGH THE NIGHT. THE CLOUD IS ENGULFING, THE LIGHTNING VICIOUS AND THE SOUND INCREDIBLE. SLOWLY, THE DELUGE SETTLES AND A PEACE IS BORN. BUT THE WIND WHISTLES EERILY AND THE THUNDER RUMBLES ON.*

*A GRAVESIDE. A FUNERAL PROCESSION ENTERS THROUGH THE FOG.* ***VICTOR*** *AND HIS* ***FATHER*** *CARRY THE COFFIN WHILE* ***ELIZABETH*** *AND* ***JUSTINE*** *CARRY LIT TORCHES, THE ONLY SOURCE OF LIGHT SAVE FOR CANDLES AROUND THE GRAVE.* ***VICTOR*** *AND HIS* ***FATHER*** *LOWER THE COFFIN INTO THE GRAVE. THEY STAND SOLEMNLY FOR A FEW MOMENTS.* ***JUSTINE*** *IS PRAYING.* ***ELIZABETH*** *IS CALM AND COLLECTED.* ***VICTOR’S******FATHER*** *IS DISTRAUGHT. AFTER SOME TIME STOOD BESIDE THE GRAVE, HE MUST RECOLLECT HIMSELF AND MOVES TO THE SIDE OF THE LAKE FOR A FEW MOMENTS. ALL ARE WEEPING, EXCEPT* ***VICTOR****, WHO LOOKS STRAIGHT DOWN INTO THE GRAVE. EVENTUALLY, EACH OF THE MOURNERS THROW SOME DIRT INTO THE GRAVE AND DEPART.* ***VICTOR*** *IS THE LAST FAMILY MEMBER AT HIS MOTHER’S GRAVESIDE. HE HANDLES SOME DIRT, LEANING BY THE GRAVE ON ONE KNEE. HE THROWS IT IN AND THEN FEELS THE EARTH AROUND THE GRAVE.*

***VICTOR*** *IS KNEELING IN HIS BEDROOM SURROUNDED BY PAPERS, BOOKS AND CANDELIGHT. A SUITCASE LIES OPEN WITH A PILE OF CLOTHES NEXT TO IT.* ***VICTOR*** *IS PACKING FRANTICALLY AND CHECKING WHETHER HE HAS LEFT ANYTHING. HE DECIDES WHICH OF HIS BOOKS HE IS MOST LIKELY TO NEED, PICKS ONE, PACKS IT, AND THEN CHANGES HIS MIND, ONLY TO THEN RECONSIDER AND STICK BY HIS ORIGINAL DECISION. HE TRIES TO FOLD HIS CLOTHES CORRECTLY BUT HIS MIND IS DISTRACTED AND HE ENDS UP MAKING THEM MORE BEDRAGGLED THAN THEY WERE IN THE FIRST PLACE. HE PICKS UP A PILE OF LETTERS THAT HAVE BEEN LEFT ASIDE AND FLICKS THROUGH THEM. THE DAYLIGHT BEGINS TO SEEP INTO THE ROOM WHILE* ***VICTOR’S FATHER, ELIZABETH*** *AND* ***JUSTINE*** *ENTER TO BID HIM FAREWELL AND HELP HIM WITH HIS THINGS.* ***JUSTINE*** *JOKES WITH HIM AND DUTIFULLY ASSISTS WITH HIS LESS-THAN-PERFECT PACKING.* ***ELIZABETH*** *IS JOVIAL AND RESPONSIVE BUT SHE REGRETS* ***VICTOR’S*** *IMPENDING ABSENCE.* ***VICTOR*** *IS EAGER IF NOT DISTRACTED. HE, TOO, REGRETS HIS DEPARTURE FROM* ***ELIZABETH*** *BUT THIS DOES NOT SULLY HIS MOOD. HE BIDS THEM EACH FAREWELL AND LEAVES.*

***VICTOR*** *IS SITTING IN HIS STUDY AT HIS UNIVERSITY LODGINGS IN INGOLSTADT.THERE ARE MORE BOOKS AND PAPERS. THE ROOM IS LIT BY CANDLES. HE**IS CLEARLY THINKING AND WORKING BUT STUCK. HE HAS A SMALL TRAY ON HIS DESK, BESIDE SOME ELECTRICAL INTSTRUMENTS AND A DEAD FROG. HE WANDERS AROUND THE ROOM, PICKING UP BOOKS AND FLICKING THROUGH WITH NO REAL INTENTION OR INTEREST. HE PICKS UP THE BLANK PIECE OF PAPER ENTITLED “PROPOSAL SPEECH”. HE LOOKS IT OVER AND PONDERS SOME MATERIAL FOR A MOMENT. HE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS TO SAY, HE JUST CAN’T PUT IT INTO WORDS. HE PLAYS WITH A PUPPET HE HAS BOUGHT FOR HIS LITTLE BROTHER WILLIAM, WALKING IT ACROSS THE TABLE. HE CONTINUES TO DO THIS WHILE HE DRIFTS OFF IN THOUGHT.*

***VICTOR*** *BRINGS IN AND BEGINS EXAMINING A BODY ON A MEDICAL TABLE. HE CONSULTS HIS ANATOMICAL GUIDE. HE EXAMINES THE BODY’S HAND. HE LOOKS IT OVER AND PLACES HIS OWN HAND BESIDE THE BODY’S. HE MOVES HIS FINGERS AND THEN MOVES THE BODY’S FINGERS. HE CONTINUES TO DO SO, LOOKING AT THE BODY’S HAND AND HIS OWN AS A PAIR, MOVING THE FINGERS OF BOTH AS THOUGH THE PAIR WERE FLEXING THEIR DIGITS. HE STOPS AND LAYS THE BODY’S HAND BACK DOWN, INANIMATE. HE PAUSES A MOMENT. HE BEGINS TO TAP HIS FINGERS ON THE TABLE, THINKING.*

***VICTOR*** *IS PACING FURIOUSLY AROUND THE ROOM. HE HAS MORE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT AND SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS. MORE AND MORE PAPER AND BOOKS SPEW INTO THE ROOM AS* ***VICTOR*** *FRENZIEDLY DRAWS MORE AND MORE DIAGRAMS AND WRITES MORE AND MORE NOTES, THROWING THEM THROUGH AND ACROSS THE ROOM. HE MUTTERS AND MUMBLES IDEAS FOR HIS PROPOSAL SPEECH. HE SUDDENLY STOPS AND THROWS ALL PAPERS ASIDE. HE FALLS AGAINST HIS DESK AND RESTS, EXHAUSTED. HE THINKS. HE SITS, THINKING. HE LOOKS AT THE FLOOR AND NOTICES HIS REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR. HE IS STILL. HE IS PASTY AND DISHEVELLED. HE TRIES TO COLLECT HIMSELF AND IMPROVE HIS APPEARANCE. HE HAS HIS SPEECH IN HIS HAND. HE IS READY TO REHEARSE IT WITH HIMSELF. HE IS WEAK AND SHAKY BUT PASSIONATE, TRYING TO MAINTAIN A COMPOSURE THAT WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND A REAL AUDIENCE. HE IS LIT BY A DIM LAMP. HE MUMBLES HIS WAY THROUGH SOME OF IT AND WHISPERS THE REST UNDER HIS BREATH, REVISING SENTENCES AND MAKING NOTES AS HE GOES, ALL WITH UTTER CONVICTION. YET, THERE IS A FRUSTRATION. HIS WORK IS INCOMPLETE AND HE DOESN’T KNOW HOW TO RECTIFY THE MATTER. HE GETS ANGRY WITH HIMSELF AND LASHES OUT, GROANING FURIOUSLY AND RUBBING HIS EYES, BREATHING HEAVILY.*

**VICTOR:** No, no, no, no…

*HE SIGHS. HE LOOKS AT HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR AND RESTS HIS HEAD AGAINST IT.*

***VICTOR*** *IS STANDING BY THE BODY ON HIS MEDICAL TABLE. HE TAMPERS WITH HIS ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. HE PULSES ELECTRICITY THROUGH THE CORPSE ON THE TABLE. HE IS WORKING BY CANDLELIGHT IN AN OTHERWISE DARK ROOM. HE IS ANXIOUS, THRILLED, INCENSED, EXHAUSTED, WRECKED. HIS MOVEMENTS ARE FRANTIC BUT SLOW. HE IS SWEATING. HIS BREATHING IS DEEP BUT HOARSE. HE LEANS ON THE MEDICAL TABLE. HIS MIND IS IN SUCH A FLURRY IT HAS FORCED HIS BODY TO STOP, BUT EVERY PART OF HIM IS TENSE. THE BODY TWITCHES EVER SO SLIGHTLY. AS HE GOES ON,* ***VICTOR*** *IS DRIFTING TO SLEEP BUT FIGHTING THROUGH IT. THE CANDLES ARE FLICKERING, NEARLY BURNED OUT. A LOW ELECTRICAL HUM IS THE ONLY SOUND OTHER THAN THE SILENCE. HE GIVES THE PULSE ONE MORE ATTEMPT AND THEN SWITCHES OFF THE CURRENT. THE HUMMING STOPS AND FOR A MOMENT THERE IS SILENCE. THE ARMS OF THE BODY TWITCH EVER SO SLIGHTLY. A LENGHTY, STILL PAUSE. SUDDENLY, THE BODY ON THE MEDICAL TABLE BREATHES HARD AND CONVULSES.* ***VICTOR*** *GASPS AND**PANICS, RUNNING AWAY AS THE SHRIVELLED CORPSE EXHALES SHARPLY AND JERKS ON THE TABLE.* ***VICTOR*** *FLEES.*

***VICTOR*** *RUNS INTO THE STREET AND COLLAPSES AGAINST A WALL, BREATHING HARD, SHAKING. HE SLIDES DOWN THE WALL AND STOPS, BREATHING RAGGEDLY, ALMOST SOBBING. EVENTUALLY, HE ACCIDENTALLY BLOWS HIS CANDLE OUT.*

*THE EARLY MORNING LIGHT RISES AND* ***VICTOR*** *SLOWLY STANDS. HE IS SHIVERING. HE IS RAGGED. HE MAY WELL HAVE REACHED CATATONIA BUT HE WILL NOT HAVE SLEPT. HE STUMBLES AND STANDS, FIGURING OUT WHAT TO DO NEXT. HE MAKES TOWARDS HIS LODGINGS. HE LOOKS BEHIND HIM SHARPLY, STOPPING, THEN CONTINUES AND DOES NOT LOOK BACK AGAIN, FEARFUL OF WHAT HE MAY SEE.* ***JUSTINE*** *APPROACHES DOWN AN ADJACENT STREET. HE IS OVERJOYED TO SEE HER AND SPRINGS TOWARDS HER. SHE IS AT ONCE PLEASED TO SEE HIM AND CONSCIOUS OF HIS DISINTEGRATION.*

**JUSTINE:** Victor!

*HE EMBRACES HER.*

**JUSTINE:** Come, Master Victor, sir. You must show me your lodgings and get you to rest.

**VICTOR:** No! No – yes, of course – no!

**JUSTINE:** Sir?

**VICTOR:** Wait, wait, we must be patient – time and – we must – I fear – fear we may afford to attend a moment – but a moment – we must – must.

**JUSTINE:** Victor?

**VICTOR:** You – wait, attend a moment outside when we enter. I will proceed you, please, I ask it be so.

**JUSTINE:** As you wish.

*HE SILENCES HER. HE NERVOUSLY MAKES TO ENTER HIS ROOM. HE WAITS BY THE DOOR A MOMENT. HE IS TERRIFIED. HE BOLTS INTO THE ROOM. IT IS EMPTY. HE LOOKS AROUND AND SLOWLY BEGINS TO LAUGH. IT IS AN UGLY, COMPULSIVE, HOLLOW LAUGH, FULL OF RELIEF, SHOCK AND FADING YET LINGERING DREAD. HE DESCENDS INTO HYSTERICS.*

**JUSTINE:** Victor?

*HE COLLAPSES ON THE FLOOR, CONVULSING AND LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY, FOAMING AT THE MOUTH IN A HIDEOUS FIT.* ***JUSTINE*** *RUSHES TO HIS AID.*

**JUSTINE:** Victor!

*DARKNESS BEGINS TO ENGULF HIM AND HE IS DRAGGED ONTO HIS BED BY* ***JUSTINE.***

ACT II - SCENE I

***JUSTINE*** *TENDS TO* ***VICTOR****. HE DRIFTS IN AND OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS, SOMETIMES BABBLING, CONVULSING, AND SCREAMING, SOMETIMES IN A CATATONIC STATE.* ***JUSTINE****, HERSELF IN A FRAGILE AND NERVOUS STATE, GROWS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER* ***VICTOR****.*

*AFTER A WHILE, HIS JERKY MOVEMENT AND FUMBLED EXCLAMATIONS CEASE AND AN EERIE STILLNESS DESCENDS UPON HIM.* ***JUSTINE*** *BRINGS* ***ELIZABETH’S*** *LETTER TO* ***VICTOR*** *AND LEAVES IT WITH HIM WHILE SHE ADMINISTERS TO HIS NEEDS. HE HOLDS IT DEAR, EVEN WHEN DISTANT IN ILLNESS. THROUGHOUT* ***ELIZABETH’S*** *LETTER, HE IS SLOWLY SOOTHED AND REHABILITATED, BUT THERE IS SOMETHING IN* ***JUSTINE’S*** *MANNER THAT IS DISCONCERTING. SHE IS TENSE AND SEEMS LOCKED IN HER OWN TROUBLES AS MUCH AS SHE IS DISTURBED BY THE STATE OF HER MASTER AND FRIEND. BOTH ARE EVENTUALLY CALM ON THE SURFACE BUT TENSE UNDERNEATH, BUT WHILE THIS IS* ***JUSTINE’S*** *MANNER, WHILE* ***VICTOR*** *IMPROVES, HER CRACKS BEGIN TO SHOW MORE CLEARLY. SOON SHE WILL HAVE TO GET OUT.*

**ELIZABETH:** My dearest cousin, you have been ill, very ill, and even the constant letters of our dear kind Justine are not sufficient to reassure me. I only wish I could attend you myself, though I am sure Justine is more than able and loving enough. She was always a great favourite of yours, and often I recall you remarked that if you were ever in an ill humour, one glance from Justine could revive you. She has always been dear to us; a servant in Geneva does not mean the same thing as a servant in France or England. I am confident she will help you recuperate. But, my dear cousin, you must also be patient and caring towards Justine herself for she has had her share of misfortune and comes straight to your aid from nursing her own late mother.

Though her mother often resented and mistreated her, Justine feels a deep love and sense of duty to her. As you know, Madame Moritz was a most temperamental soul, and in her last years during your absence, she took Justine back into her household from our own. When my dearest aunt died, every one was too much occupied in their own grief to notice poor Justine, who had attended her illness with the most anxious affection. Her mother became very ill and believed it a judgement upon her neglect of Justine. Her conscience was troubled and Justine left us to live with her. Oh, how she wept to leave us! Not that we were shortcoming in tears. Madame Moritz was still a plague to her daughter, though, and would speak of her guilt constantly, smothering her loving daughter.

Eventually, the poor woman died and Justine was left alone. Thankfully, she came back to us. After some time, we all grew concerned about your lack of correspondence and, though your Father did not wish to bother you in your work, we felt we should send somebody to see you, and Justine volunteered. I will not bother you with constant requests or demands, but please look after she who has given so much to us and never asks for recompense.

Most importantly, get well – and return to us. You will find a happy, cheerful home, and friends who love you dearly. Your father’s health is vigorous, and he asks to see you. I wonder how you may have changed in these past two years. Little alteration has taken place since you left us, except the growth of our darling William. I wish you could see him; he has grown into a beautiful little boy, very tall for his age, with sweet laughing blue eyes, dark eyelashes, and curling hair. When he smiles, two little dimples appear on each cheek, which are rosy with health. He has already had one or two little *wives*, but Louisa Biron is his favourite.

Now, dear Victor, I dare say you wish to be indulged in a little gossip concerning the good people of Geneva, and I shall do my best to oblige your vices, though I must confess I may disappoint you as it has indeed been a rather consistent couple of years since your departure. However, I shall endeavour. The pretty Miss Mansfield has already received the congratulatory visits on her approaching marriage. Her ugly sister, Manon, married Mr. Duvillard, the rich banker, last autumn. Your favourite school-fellow, Louis Manoir, has suffered misfortunes in your absence. But he has already recovered his spirits and he, *too*, is married.

My trifling occupations take up my time and amuse me but there has been little change in our household and our dear home since you left us. The blue lake, the snow-clad mountains – they never change; and I think our placid home and contented hearts are regulated by the same immutable laws. I have written myself into better spirits; but my anxiety returns upon me. Write, dearest Victor – one word will be a blessing to us. Adieu, my dear cousin, take care of yourself; and, I entreat you, write!

***VICTOR*** *IS LYING DOWN. HE IS STILL AND SEEMS LOST IN THOUGHT, BUT HE CANNOT FOCUS ENOUGH TO THINK PROPERLY. HE IS TIRED. SLOWLY, HE STANDS. HE HAS RECOVERED, BUT FROM NOW, HE IS A CHANGED MAN. HE LIVES LIFE AS THOUGH IN A SHADOW, AS THOUGH IN A CONSTANT STREAM OF FEAR, SHAME AND REGRET. HIS GOOD HUMOUR IS GONE AND HE IS FAR MORE DOCILE AND SUBDUED, THOUGH HE IS CONSTANTLY TENSED.* ***JUSTINE*** *ENTERS.*

**JUSTINE:** Victor?

*HE TURNS TO HER. A MOMENT.*

**JUSTINE:** How are you feeling today?

**VICTOR:** Better.

**JUSTINE:** You look better.

**VICTOR:** Thank you.

**JUSTINE:** For what, sir?

**VICTOR:** For what you have done for me.

**JUSTINE:** Only my duty, sir.

**VICTOR:** All the same.

**JUSTINE:** It was hard to see you in such a state at times, I must confess. You seemed to have gone from us. You used to talk in your sleep. You said some horrible things. You were neither vicious nor unkind but it were as though you were troubled by some demon.

**VICTOR:** What did I say?

**JUSTINE:** I paid it no heed, sir.

**VICTOR:** What did I say?

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**JUSTINE:** You spoke of people in the room who were not there. You spoke of a creature that would kill you and would wake panting as though pursued all night. You spoke to your mother.

**VICTOR:** What did I say about the creature?

**JUSTINE:** Only that it was there and that it would kill you.

**VICTOR:** Did I scare you?

**JUSTINE:** Sometimes.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** How long was I in bed?

**JUSTINE:** Some months.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**JUSTINE:** Your family miss you, sir. Both Elizabeth and your father write regularly.

**VICTOR:** Do you miss home?

**JUSTINE:** I have spent too long in absence. As have you.

**VICTOR:** You may return to Geneva, Justine.

**JUSTINE:** Will you not return with me?

**VICTOR:** I will join you later.

**JUSTINE:** When will that be?

**VICTOR:** In the autumn.

**JUSTINE:** That shall please your family, at the very least. The summer will pass quickly, no doubt.

**VICTOR:** Yes.

*PAUSE.*

**JUSTINE:** You *are* well, sir?

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** Yes.

**JUSTINE:** Then I am pleased.

*PAUSE. SHE HESITATES AND STRAYS A LITTLE BUT THEN MAKES TO LEAVE.*

**VICTOR:** Did I have any visitors? While I was ill?

**JUSTINE:** Just the professors, or at least their servants.

**VICTOR:** Nobody unusual?

**JUSTINE:** No, sir.

**VICTOR:** No one else?

**JUSTINE:** No.

*HE NODS AND TURNS AWAY. AFTER A MOMENT’S THOUGHT,* ***JUSTINE*** *LEAVES. VICTOR LOOKS AFTER HER A MOMENT AND THEN LOOKS THROUGH HIS BOOKS. HIS MOVEMENTS ARE MORE SLUGGISH AND WEARY NOW. HE CATCHES SIGHT OF HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR. HE REMAINS LOOKING INTO HIMSELF. THERE IS A STILLNESS TO THE NEW* ***VICTOR****. HE LOOKS OVER THE SHOULDER OF HIS REFLECTION. HE BEGINS TO TURN HIS HEAD TO LOOK BEHIND HIM BUT STOPS HIMSELF. HE COVERS THE MIRROR WITH A CLOTH AND DOUSES THE LIGHT.*

ACT II - SCENE II

**VICTOR V/O:** Dear Father, I hope you and I are akin in our good spirits. I have improved dramatically these last few months. I apologise for my lack of correspondence and that this should be so short a note. I am as I write moving towards fair Geneva. I will be with you soon and am eager to see you. It has been a long time.

***VICTOR*** *GATHERS HIS BELONGINGS FOR HIS JOURNEY HOME. HE LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM TO MAKE SURE HE HAS EVERYTHING. HIS GAZE STRAYS ON THE EMPTY MEDICAL TABLE. HE LEAVES. HE ENTERS HIS FATHER’S HOUSE. HIS FATHER STANDS, WAITING FOR HIM. THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG. THERE IS A SADNESS TO HIM. HIS SON LOOKS SO VERY DIFFERENT TO HIM AND HAS CLEARLY BEEN UNWELL, BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE BOTHERING HIM IT SEEMS AND HE IS BURSTING TO SAY IT. IT IS LURKING BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE WHOLE CONVERSATION.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** I am so pleased to see you.

*SHORT PAUSE AS THEY EMBRACE.*

**VICTOR:** Is there something wrong? Are you unwell?

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** I am sorry.

**VICTOR:** For what?

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Your coming home is a pleasant gift and you no doubt thought you were returning to the house of joy to which you were accustomed. I’m afraid I can only offer you disappointment in that regard. I am so very pleased to see you but I am terribly afflicted. I am sorry even to tell you that you should come home to a house in mourning.

**VICTOR:** Mourning for whom?

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** William is dead.

*THIS HAS SHAKEN* ***VICTOR.***

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** He was murdered.

**VICTOR:** When?

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Your beloved cousin and he were playing last Thursday. He disappeared. We searched for him but found nothing. When he was found, it was too late. There were bruises upon his neck. Elizabeth blames herself. She is distraught – we all are. Worse still, the culprit, it seems, is none other than our dear Justine.

**VICTOR:** Justine Moritz? That poor girl? That cannot be. I cannot believe that.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** No one could at first – your poor cousin still refuses to be convinced.

**VICTOR:** Because it cannot be true! Father, now honestly, how can we accuse poor Justine? How can you stand there and tell me – even think – that she was capable of such a thing?

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** All the evidence is there, Victor. I would not believe it otherwise. I cared for the girl, housed her, loved her like a daughter, like I did your cousin and to earn her keep she was never less than faithful. I know how hard this is to accept but I must because – it seems – she has taken my dear William from me. How could so ugly a creature exist as to strangle a child – a known and loved child?

**VICTOR:** It cannot be Justine.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** All the evidence is there. I will not go into it now, I am too weary and you have come home to me.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:**I am a magistrate, Victor. Her trial looks only to have one outcome. As tragic as it is, I must obey the law and see justice carried out. If, indeed, the poor girl is found responsible, as much as it may pain me, she will hang.

**VICTOR:** It cannot be Justine.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Her behaviour has been so confused of late. She has not been herself.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** I am weary of this talk – you are also my son, and you are home. Go find your cousin – she will be eager to see you. I am sorry, Victor.

**VICTOR:** When is the trial?

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Tomorrow.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Go find Elizabeth.

**VICTOR:** Yes, Father.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** I am sorry. I am.

***VICTOR*** *FINDS* ***ELIZABETH*** *BY THE LAKE.*

**ELIZABETH:** Victor.

*AN AWKWARD SILENCE.*

**ELIZABETH:** You know of William?

***VICTOR*** *NODS.*

**ELIZABETH:** Our dear child.

*AFTER A MOMENT, THEY EMBRACE. A SHORT PAUSE.*

**ELIZABETH:** We have missed you so long and you should come home to this.

*SHORT PAUSE. SHE STROKES HIS FACE.* ***VICTOR*** *IS TOO WEAK TO PROPERLY RESPOND.*

**ELIZABETH:** I want to see Justine.

**VICTOR:** It cannot have been her.

**ELIZABETH:** I know. I want to see her. That poor girl must be so alone and afraid.

**VICTOR:** Go get ready.

**ELIZABETH:** Are you sure you are able? You have journeyed long.

**VICTOR:** I have to see Justine.

***ELIZABETH*** *NODS AND LEAVES.* ***VICTOR*** *TAKES A MOMENT. HE WALKS OVER TO THE LAKE AND STANDS A MOMENT. HE TAKES THE TEDDY BEAR FROM HIS SUITCASE AND DROPS IT INTO THE LAKE. SHORT PAUSE. HE TURNS TO HEAD BACK INTO THE HOUSE AND SEES A FIGURE MOVING IN THE DISTANCE. HE LOOKS CLOSER. THERE IS A MAN IN RAGS BEHIND HIM. A HORRIBLE THOUGHT DAWNS ON HIM. THIS IS HIS CREATION. HE LOOKS AGAIN AND THE MAN IS GONE.*

**VICTOR: (almost a whisper)** It was not Justine.

***ELIZABETH*** *AND* ***VICTOR*** *ARRIVE IN THE JAIL CELL.* ***JUSTINE*** *ENTERS AND RUSHES TOWARDS THEM.* ***JUSTINE*** *AND* ***ELIZABETH*** *EMBRACE WHILE* ***VICTOR*** *CLINGS TO THE EDGES OF THE ROOM, IN SHADOW. HE CANNOT LOOK* ***JUSTINE*** *IN THE EYE.*

**JUSTINE:** I am so pleased to see you – so thankful – you do not think me the culprit?

**ELIZABETH:** Of course not.

**JUSTINE:** I do not understand.

**ELIZABETH:** There must be some reasonable explanation.

**JUSTINE:** I was looking for him, I fell asleep in a barn for I was weary and needed shelter – I was tired. Exhausted. I cannot think how the locket came to me. I am not thief, I promise.

**ELIZABETH:** We know.

**JUSTINE:** You are my only supporters.

*SHORT PAUSE.* ***JUSTINE*** *SEEMS VERY AGITATED. SOMETHING IS TRYING TO BURST OUT OF HER.*

**ELIZABETH:** We know you are innocent.

**JUSTINE:** I only wish you were the jury.

**ELIZABETH:** They will take but one look at you and realise the error of your trial. I have never known you do harm to any living creature.

**JUSTINE:** I loved William.

**ELIZABETH:** I know.

**JUSTINE:** I would never hurt him.

**ELIZABETH:** I know.

**JUSTINE:** I swear before God I would never hurt him!

**ELIZABETH:** We know, Justine. You are innocent. All will come to light it just may take time.

**JUSTINE:** I have no time!

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**JUSTINE:** How could they do this to me? The culprit? How could they conspire to destroy me? For what purpose would they do this? Why do they not step forward and absolve me? Surely the death of the child was enough?

**ELIZABETH:** Do not be upset, Justine.

**JUSTINE:** How can I refrain myself? All the odds are against me. My priest has told me to repent – to confess my crime so that I may receive absolution. He says if I do not confess, I will not enter Heaven.

**ELIZABETH:** That cannot be.

**JUSTINE:** But my soul, Elizabeth. This may cost my soul.

**ELIZABETH:** God is more forgiving than Man.

**JUSTINE:** But no guilt is mine!

**ELIZABETH:** And He will see that, I am sure.

**JUSTINE:** My priest says I must confess.

**ELIZABETH:** It would be wrong to confess to something that you did not do.

**JUSTINE:** But if I am found guilty, I am damned. Perhaps a lie would be less a sin - and absolution my reward.

**ELIZABETH:** Justine!

**JUSTINE:** Perhaps it is not a lie – perhaps I did it.

**ELIZABETH:** You are ill of mind.

**JUSTINE:** Perhaps I am a curse. Mother always said there must have been evil in me to survive where my siblings perished. Perhaps I killed them as I killed William.

**ELIZABETH:** Victor, they cannot try her like this.

**JUSTINE:** All the evidence is there.

**ELIZABETH:** We must speak to father.

**JUSTINE:** How much it means to me you support me. I am an unworthy wretch. Mother was right.

**ELIZABETH:** Without wishing to speak ill of the dead, your mother could at times be spiteful and you often saw her ill and delirious. You are delirious now.

**JUSTINE:** I am?

**ELIZABETH:** You must get some rest. We will speak to father on your behalf. I will act as witness tomorrow.

**JUSTINE:** All others have abandoned me.

**ELIZABETH:** We will not abandon you. Victor is too ill to stand at court but will support petition.

**JUSTINE:** Yes?

**ELIZABETH:** Yes.

***ELIZABETH*** *LOOKS AT* ***VICTOR****. HE MERELY NODS, ASHAMED, AWKWARD AND LOST FOR WORDS.*

**ELIZABETH:** You must rest. We will be here beside you tomorrow.

**JUSTINE:** My beloved friend.

**ELIZABETH:** Goodbye, my dear Justine.

***VICTOR*** *BOLTS TO LEAVE.* ***ELIZABETH*** *FOLLOWS AFTER NEGOTIATING HERSELF FREE FROM* ***JUSTINE.***

**JUSTINE:** My beloved friend. Thank you.

***ELIZABETH*** *AND* ***VICTOR*** *ARE GONE.*

**JUSTINE:** Pray for me.

***VICTOR*** *LINGERS OUTSIDE THE CELL AS* ***JUSTINE*** *IS LED AWAY. THE COURTROOM IS SET UP AROUND HIM.*

***JUSTINE*** *STANDS ON TRIAL.* ***ELIZABETH*** *IS GIVING EVIDENCE ON HER BEHALF.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *STANDS JUDGE.* ***VICTOR*** *FEELS SICK. HE IS DISTRACTED AND LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM, AS THOUGH HE EXPECTS SOMETHING TO JUMP OUT AT HIM. WATCHING THE TRIAL IS AN ORDEAL FOR HIM.* ***ELIZABETH*** *IS PASSIONATE, FURIOUS, BUT CALM. SHE KNOWS SHE MUST PLAY THE COURT WELL TO SERVE HER FRIEND.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Today is the trial of Justine Moritz, who stands accused of the murder of William Frankenstein. The evidence weighed against the client consists of a witness report sighting her near the scene of the crime, along with the case of a missing trinket from about the boy’s person, a trinket given to him by his late mother, whom Ms. Moritz admired greatly, containing her image within. It is supposed that the motive behind the murder was to steal this trinket and that the boy resisted, leading to his unfortunate demise at the hands of Ms. Moritz. We have heard the facts of the case and now all that remains is for Ms. Moritz to have the opportunity to provide a closing statement before we adjourn for the jury to decide upon a verdict. But first, the court will hear the testimony of character witness, Elizabeth Lavenza, of the Frankenstein household – the same household as Ms. Moritz – who wishes to make a final plea upon the behalf of Ms. Moritz.

***ELIZABETH*** *STANDS.* ***VICTOR*** *GLANCES AT* ***JUSTINE****, WHO SMILES AT* ***ELIZABETH.***

**ELIZABETH:** I am the cousin of the deceased, or rather his sister as I became accustomed to perceive him. Some may deem it indecent that I stand here in support of the defendant, but when I see a fellow creature about to perish through the cowardice of her pretended friends, I wish to be allowed to speak so that I may say what I know of her character. I have lived in the same house as her, eaten the same food as her, and shared the same life as her. During all that period she seemed to be the most amiable and benevolent of people, admired by all who knew her, beloved by all of our family and those graced enough to be in her presence. She was warmly attached to the child who is now dead, and acted towards him like a most affectionate mother – a mother he never had – a mother we endeavoured to provide. I believe and rely upon her perfect innocence. The evidence weighed against her is that of a mere trinket worn round the neck of the dear boy found upon her person. Though she cannot explain its presence and I fail to see her desire for such an item, I assure you, were she to have asked for it, I would have gladly handed over such a trifling thing; so much do I esteem and value her. And, should you find her guilty, I confess I may never again believe in beauty and innocence; for you will be condemning so much of it to the abyss.

***JUSTINE****, WHO HAS REMAINED CALM AND COMPOSED FOR THE WHOLE TRIAL SO FAR, IS CLEARLY MOVED BY HER FRIEND’S SPEECH, THOUGH SHE IS DOING ALL SHE CAN TO MAINTAIN HER COMPOSURE. HOWEVER, SHE IS BEGINNING TO CRACK. THE SHEER WEIGHT OF HER SITUATION IS UPON HER. SHE BEGINS TO UNRAVEL TOWARDS THE END OF HER TESTIMONY.*

**JUSTINE:** God knows how entirely I am innocent. I hope the character I have always borne will incline the judges to a favourable interpretation, where any circumstance appears doubtful or suspicious. I lost William when we were playing. I spent what seemed like hours in search of him before I collapsed. I believe I slept and have no recollection of that time. When I awoke, I searched again for the boy. Some witnesses have claimed to have seen me near where the body was found. If ever I stumbled near the spot where his body lay, it was without my knowledge. As for the locket, I can offer no explanation as to why that was in my possession, as vexing as that may be. It puzzles me still. I know how heavily and fatally this one circumstance weighs against me, but I have no power of explaining it. When I have expressed my utter ignorance, I am only left to conjecture as to how it came to be placed in my pocket. But here I am also checked. I believe that I have no enemy on earth, and none surely would have been so wicked as to destroy me like this. Did the murderer place it there? Why should he have stolen the jewel to part with it so soon? Why? I – no. I – *(she composes herself)* I commit my cause to the justice of my judges, yet I see no room for hope. If my witness testimonies cannot save me, and I am to be found guilty, I must be condemned – and I would be glad that justice be done. I would pledge my salvation on my innocence. I do not fear to die. That pang is past. I am resigned to the fate awaiting me. I leave a sad and bitter world. My confessor – my confessor tells me – as indeed does all the world, it seems – that I am wicked – that I am guilty. If I am – I am – perhaps I am – I – apologies….My mind is worn. I see no hope or consolation. You have all condemned me. I truly thank my friends. In these last moments, these last painful days where I have contemplated my own destruction and the hopelessness of my case – for there is nothing I can say – in these last moments, I embrace, with the most sincere gratitude, those who think of me with kindness. How sweet is the affection of others to such a wretch as I. My testimony stands at the mercy of my jurors – I can say no more. Whatever they decide, I will be in the hands of God and the hearts of those good enough to stand by me. I am sorry this task falls to you, my jurors, and my loving master as my judge. I can say no more. I await your verdict.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** The court will now take a moment to decide upon a verdict.

***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *STEPS DOWN.* ***JUSTINE*** *APPROACHES HIM.*

**JUSTINE:** I must speak with you.

*HE IS TAKEN ABACK BUT THEN TAKES HER HAND AND LEADS HER OUT OF THE ROOM.* ***ELIZABETH*** *SEES THIS AND FOLLOWS THEM.* ***VICTOR*** *IS ALONE. HIS EYES DART AROUND THE ROOM. HE CATCHES SIGHT OF SOMETHING. HE SEES THE MAN IN RAGS AGAIN. THEY ARE TRANSFIXED ON ONE ANOTHER. THE MAN IN RAGS WEARS A MASK. HE LOOKS DOWN AND THEN DISAPPEARS.* ***VICTOR*** *LOOKS AFTER HIM, CONFUSED.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *EMERGES FROM THE DARK.* ***JUSTINE*** *FOLLOWS HIM AND TAKES HER PLACE ON THE STAND.* ***ELIZABETH*** *IS TRYING TO ASK HER SOMETHING BUT IS GETTING NO RESPONSE.* ***JUSTINE*** *IS VACANT, DRIFTING AWAY.*

**VICTOR FATHER’S:** I would beg your attention, please. I judge it my misfortune to inform you that Justine Moritz has confessed to her crime and received absolution from her confessor.

**ELIZABETH:** No!

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** On the morrow, she will die. Does the defendant have any final comments?

*AFTER A MOMENT’S SILENCE,* ***JUSTINE*** *STANDS, PAUSES A MOMENT, THEN SPEAKS.*

**JUSTINE:** Farewell, my sweet Elizabeth, my beloved and only friend. Live, and be happy, and make others so.

*AS* ***JUSTINE*** *IS TALKING, LIGHTS FADE AROUND HER UNTIL ALL WE SEE IS HER FACE IS SPOTLIGHT. A NOOSE IS FITTING ROUND HER HEAD AND THERE IS A SNAP TO BLACKOUT AS SHE FINISHES SPEAKING.*

ACT III – SCENE I

***VICTOR*** *IS SITTING ON A CHAIR IN HIS BEDROOM, PALE AND DISHEVELLED. HE IS TROUBLED. HE SPEAKS IN ALMOST A WHISPER, MUTTERING TO HIMSELF.*

**VICTOR:** It could not be so. It could not be…

*AFTER A WHILE, HIS FATHER ENTERS.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Another fit?

***VICTOR****, ONLY JUST BECOMING AWARE OF HIS FATHER, IS A LITTLE STARTLED. HE TURNS AND NODS BEFORE GOING BACK TO HIS CONTEMPLATIONS.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** It has been an anxious time. I am sorry to treat you with such a homecoming as this. You have been away from us for so long.

*HE SLOWLY APPROACHES* ***VICTOR*** *ACROSS THE CHASM OF THE ROOM.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** You have been very distant. The hardest part of being a parent is watching your children stop growing. You want to reach out and help them, guide them, touch them, but it is not your place to do so any more; you must, in a sense, turn away. And yet, it is harder not to watch, it is harder to contemplate what we do not see; what has happened to our little children; what they have done and seen; what they think; what they will do; what they have become.

*NOW CLOSE ENOUGH, HE ALMOST TOUCHES* ***VICTOR’S*** *FACE, HIS HAND HOVERING THERE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** You have become very distant, my boy. Am I to blame? My little boy.

*A SHORT PAUSE HANGS IN THE AIR.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *MOVES HIS HAND AWAY.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Perhaps I am lucky to have been spared this with William.

*SHORT PAUSE.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *HEADS FOR THE DOOR. BEFORE HE LEAVES, HE TURNS BACK.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** I think a walk would do some good for you.

*HE WAITS A MOMENT AND THEN LEAVES.* ***VICTOR*** *IS SUBMERGED IN THOUGHT. EVENTUALLY, HE STANDS AND IS BROUGHT TO THE MOUNTAINS. AS HE STANDS, HE ALLOWS HIMSELF TO ADMIRE THE BEAUTY AROUND HIM FOR A MOUNTAIN. IT TRULY IS A SURGE FOR HIM, A BREAH OF FRESH AIR. HE IS BREATHING ONCE MORE. HE ALMOST SMILES. A RUMBLE OF THUNDER IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. THERE IS A LITTLE PITTER-PATTER OF WATER FROM A SMALL RUN-OFF ABOVE HIM. IT FALLS ON HIS FACE. HE TOUCHES THE MOSS ON THE ROCKS AND SMELLS THE AIR. HE IS FINDING A LITTLE PEACE. HE MOVES OVER TO A ROCK AND SITS, RESTING, LEANING HIS STICK AGAINST IT.*

*SUDDENLY, HE SEES A MAN IN RAGS IN THE DISTANCE. HE STARTS TO STAND AGAIN. THEY ARE TRANSFIXED BY EACH OTHER.* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *APPROACHES HIM. HE IS MASKED. AS HE GETS CLOSER TO* ***VICTOR****, HE GETS FASTER.* ***VICTOR*** *DECIDES TO STAND. HE IS FULL OF RAGE AND FEAR. HE LUNGES AT HIS CREATION FIERCELY. HE BEATS HIM MERCILESSLY YET FEEBLY WHILE HIS CREATION STANDS BY, REFUSING TO TAKE PART IN THE FIGHT.* ***VICTOR*** *SLOWLY STUMBLES TO HIS KNEES, STILL FIGHTING, UNTIL HE CAN NO MORE AND RESTS. THERE IS SILENCE FOR A FEW MOMENTS.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I mean you no harm. If I speak, will you listen?

***VICTOR*** *MAKES TO MOVE AWAY.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** How can I move thee?

**VICTOR:** You move me. I despise you. I despise myself that I made you.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** You know me?

**VICTOR:** Your eyes give you away – those hideous eyes! You plague me, you haunt me. Why? What have I done? Am I to be next?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I mean you no harm.

**VICTOR**:Where did you go? When I left you? Where did you go?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I will tell you all if you listen to me.

**VICTOR:** No, you tell me now!

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Please listen to me.

**VICTOR:** How did find me?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** The boy – the boy told me –

**VICTOR:** William? Just before you killed him?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** He said you were coming, you were nearby.

**VICTOR:** How did you know to kill William? Did you follow me then? For *two* *years*?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Will you hear me?

**VICTOR:** I cannot look at you.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:(covering VICTOR’S eyes)** Then I relieve thee.

***VICTOR*** *RECOILS.*

**VICTOR:** I still see you. Your face is in my mind.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I have done my best.

**VICTOR:** What do you want from me?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Please, listen.

*PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** It means so much for you to listen to me. You know who I am.

**VICTOR:** I know nothing of you. You are but a corpse.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I remember little from before you, but I feel I can recall some things; I see a street and tables; I see a fire that I am stoking; I see a child playing. Was I someone else before you? Was I a father like you? Did I leave my child as you left me? Where did I come from? Who am I? None of this is clear to me. You are all I know, and all I know of myself.

*PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** When you gave me life, I felt cold and pain; a harsh light pressed down upon me and my nerves tingled and throbbed; the darkness surrounded me and I could not see. You left me. One of the most painful aspects of my miserable existence is that you abandon me – you, who created me, find me so repulsive, so hideous, you must run away. You cannot look at me. I know I am hideous – I wish I could end myself. I know you feel this also. I have seen the vacant stare you carry. I have seen the way you linger by the lakeside.

**VICTOR:** Where did you go?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I lived in the forest. I went to the forest and that is where I lived. I stole some clothes so I would not freeze. I do not know why, as I did not fully understand or perceive my condition at the time, but I was frightened. I had lost you. I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept. I had to learn to think and see, walk and move, and to remember. I had to learn to learn. I sometimes spent an entire day searching for food and managed nothing but to scavenge some acorns from the forest floor. As I travelled further, I came across a cottage. I saw a man and a woman emerge. I had not seen a woman before - not that I could remember. They kissed. I felt peculiar. I just watched them for a while. They looked at each other in such a way, with such love, that I could not bear the way it made me feel and had to look away. I wanted to see that look. I wanted that look for myself. There was an old man in their cottage. He played such beautiful music. I wanted these people to be my friends but I dared not show myself to them. I caught sight of myself in the mountain stream and I became fully convinced that I was the monster that I am. They left the old man alone – sometimes for the whole day. I felt I could speak to him – he, at least, was too old to beat me. I walked in to pay him greeting. He looked right at me – he saw me – and yet he did not recoil. He welcomed me. At first, I thought it compassion but there was something distant in his eyes. I later learned that he was blind. But he did care for me. He taught me to speak. He told me many stories. I was quick to learn. He was proud of me. I would visit every day but leave before his companions returned. We were friends. I would cut and gather wood for the family, and various other little chores in the hope of one day being noticed and accepted; that they would see past my shame. After a year or so, this man I thought a friend asked me to stay for dinner with his family. I was afraid but I agreed. When they returned, they threw me out. The husband beat me. I fled. I returned a few days later to find the house empty and abandoned. I burned it to the ground. I came in search of you. On my way, I saw a boy playing. He was beautiful. I thought he would not judge me like the others, being but a child. I was wrong. I was angry. How dare he despise me so? He knew nothing of me. I felt you had poisoned him against me. I could have relished hurting him for a moment but then I grew afraid, as did he. He began to scream. I put my hands around his mouth. He stopped screaming. I ran away. I had a locket in my hand from round his neck.

**VICTOR:** You had the locket?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I did not know I had it. I was hiding in a barn when I saw that woman sleeping and I approached her. She was so beautiful.

**VICTOR: (interrupting)** You planted the locket on Justine!

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** What?

**VICTOR:** I knew Justine was innocent! How could you?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** And you think it did not pain me to have done these things? You think I did not suffer? What of the months of anguish and bitter loneliness I endured? What of the cruelty of others towards me? My own creator abandoned me! Am I so foul while you are virtuous? Do you think I am dead to agony and remorse? I was not always as ugly as my form dictates. No sympathy may I ever find. I am an abortion – miserable and abandoned – to be spurned at and kicked and trampled on.

**VICTOR:** Your remorse is meaningless, and so is your suffering!

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** You must be destroyed.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** So you are a good man, who asks for my destruction?

**VICTOR:** I am not a good man, but you must be destroyed.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I agree. I am a wretch. And sometimes I wish to quit the world and all its miseries forever. But, as much as life pains me, as much as I am alone, I can see the beauty in the world; I can hear the birds and feel the breeze. As much as I long for death, a burning passion consumes me which only you can gratify.

**VICTOR:** And why should I do that?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** You are my creator.

**VICTOR:** Yes. Look what I have done.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Yes. Look what you have done.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** What do you want from me?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I am alone. Alone, I am miserable and wretched. I do wicked things. If I had a companion, I may not. Man would not associate with me, but one as hideous and deformed would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species and have the same defects. This being you must create. Only you can.

**VICTOR:** What?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** It is my right.

**VICTOR:** Your right?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** All creatures in nature have a mate. You will have Elizabeth.

**VICTOR:** Stop!

**VICTOR’S CREATION: (interrupting)** It is my right. I am alive.

**VICTOR:** You have no rights! You are a monster.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** A companion would cure my wickedness. I am wicked for I am lonely – I follow you for I am lonely and miserable. With a companion, I will quit humanity forever. We will disappear and love each other in our own little world. We will never bother anyone. Neither she nor I will ever commit such evil for I will devote myself to her entirely and bestow such love upon her, she will never leave me. I will teach her, and myself, to be good. You must not refuse me.

**VICTOR:** Why?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** You pick a fight but I will not please you thus. I am, and can be, good. I swear!

**VICTOR:** What good have you done so far?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** What chance have you given me? I am wicked for I am abused, when I am loved, I am good.

**VICTOR:** And you would disappear?

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again.

**VICTOR:** Surely someone would find you.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** We would disappear. We would have no reason to be found; no need for others. You will never see us again.

*PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** I see.

***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *BEGINS TO BOUND AWAY AS HE SPEAKS, TAKING THIS SILENCE AS A ‘YES’.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Go home and begin your labours: I shall be watching but fear not that but when you are ready I shall appear.

**VICTOR:** Stop! I did not say ‘yes’!

*HE IS GONE.* ***VICTOR*** *STANDS FOR A MOMENT, CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES. HE IS STILL UNSURE.*

ACT III – SCENE II

***VICTOR*** *SITS ALONE. HE IS CONSUMED WITH SELF-LOATHING.* ***ELIZABETH*** *HOVERS NEARBY.*

**ELIZABETH:** What happened to you in Ingolstadt?

**VICTOR:** I was ill.

**ELIZABETH:** You are no longer ill?

**VICTOR:** No.

**ELIZABETH:** But you are not happy. You do not sleep. You revert to solitude.

*NO RESPONSE.*

**ELIZABETH:** Why?

**VICTOR:** I am worn.

**ELIZABETH:** It is more than that.

**VICTOR:** Perhaps.

**ELIZABETH:** It pains your father.

*PAUSE.*

**ELIZABETH:** Are you thinking of Justine?

*NO RESPONSE.*

**ELIZABETH:**Everybody believed that poor girl to be guilty. If she had committed such a crime – to murder a child – she would have been the most depraved of human creatures. I do not consent to the death of any human being but such a creature would not be fit to stay in the society of men. I cannot believe that she would be so evil. But if I cannot, then the murderer remains alive and free, and she is dead. She is dead for nothing.

*PAUSE.*

**ELIZABETH:** We all feel hurt, Victor. We just have to abide. We have to move on.

*PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** I need to work.

***ELIZABETH*** *NODS. AFTER A MOMENT, SHE LEAVES.*

ACT III – SCENE III

***VICTOR*** *HAS TAKEN* ***JUSTINE’S*** *BODY FROM HER GRAVE. THE BODY SITS ON HIS MEDICAL TABLE, ON ICE. THERE IS LITTLE LIGHT BUT THE CANDLES IN THE ROOM AND NO NOISE BUT THE DRIPPING OF WATER FROM THE MEDICAL TABLE AND HIS SWEAT. HE STARES INTENSELY AT THE BODY IN FRONT OF HIM. HE HAS BEEN STARING LIKE THIS FOR HOURS. HE IS TIRED AND PASTY. HIS MIND IS IN A FLURRY AGAIN. HE IS UNSURE WHAT TO DO. HIS ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT LIES, WAITING. HE SLOWLY APPROACHES THE BODY. HE REACHES FOR HIS INSRUMENTS AND SLOWLY HIS HANDS MOVE TOWARDS THE BODY, THOUGH THEY HESITATE. IN THE FLICKERING CANDLELIGHT, HE NOTICES A SHADOW MOVE ACROSS THE ROOM.* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *IS WATCHING.* ***VICTOR*** *FINDS HIM AND**STARES AT HIM A MOMENT. HE TREMBLES AND BEGINS TO FEEL DISGUST. HE SHAKES AND THEN SUDDENLY TEARS INTO* ***JUSTINE’S*** *BODY, ENSURING TO PUNCTURE THE VITAL ORGANS.* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *TRIES TO STOP HIM AND IN THE STRUGGLE THE BODY FALLS UPON THE FLOOR WHILE* ***VICTOR*** *CONTINUES TO LASH INTO IT.* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *THROWS HIM TO THE FLOOR AND PINS HIM DOWN.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** No! No! You will not deny me her! You must do this. You are my creator, but I am your master; obey!

**VICTOR:** You are too late.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** No!

**VICTOR:** I will not create another. I refuse.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Why? Why? Why must I be alone?

*THEY STRUGGLE SOME MORE.* ***VICTOR*** *HOLDS HIM BACK AND WRIGGLES FREE. SHORT PAUSE.* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *GRABS* ***VICTOR’S*** *FACE.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I will not kill you, though it would be easy. I want you to suffer. I want you to be alone. I will die, but first you shall curse that you live, as I do. I will do unto you that which you do unto me. This was to be my wedding night. You have ruined it.

**VICTOR:** It had to be done.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Yes?

**VICTOR:** If you are to kill me, do it now and reveal the true wretch you are.

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I will be with you on your wedding night.

**VICTOR:** What?

***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *LEAVES.* ***VICTOR*** *IS BREATHLESS FOR A MOMENT. HE LOOKS DOWN AT* ***JUSTINE’S*** *CORPSE. HE MUST GET RID OF IT. HE COLLECTS THE CORPSE AND ALL HIS EQUIPMENT AND HEADS OUTSIDE. THE WIND HOWLS. HE THROWS THE CORPSE AND ALL HIS EQUIPMENT INTO THE GRAVE. HE HEADS BACK INSIDE. HE FEELS FAINT. HIS BREATHING BECOMES TIGHTER AND HE DESCENDS INTO A FIT AS THE LIGHTS BLACKOUT AROUND HIM AND HE IS SUBMERGED IN THE DARKNESS.*

ACT IV – SCENE I

***VICTOR*** *LIES IN BED, RECUPERATING.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *ATTENDS HIM. BOTH LOOKS OLDER AND WEARY.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** These fits are too persistent for my liking.

**VICTOR:** I assure you, I have no fondness of them, either.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** I find it hard to see you like this. I would rather *I* did, though, than Elizabeth. She does adore you so.

*PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** I do love her, father.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Would you marry her?

**VICTOR:** Yes.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Then do it.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** You tarried in your affections with her to such an extent that I thought you loved another. So did she, it seems. It must, of course, be of your doing, but your mother and I always felt there was a bond between you and Elizabeth. You know how fond your mother was of her. We often thought about the future and whether we would see you both in union one day. Your mother never saw that. It must be your decision, but I would go to my grave happier seeing you wed. I have seen enough of you wasting away. I want you to have children; I want to see that. There is nothing more precious than a child and your own child the most.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** *Do* you love Elizabeth?

**VICTOR:** Yes.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** She loves you more.

***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *STANDS AND MAKES TO LEAVE.*

**VICTOR:** Father! Make arrangements for us to be wed as soon as possible.

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Now steady, son –

**VICTOR:** I want to marry Elizabeth and I want to marry her as soon as possible. This has gone on long enough.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** **(joking)** Am I so ill you think it best to wed so soon?

**VICTOR: (smiling)** Surely that question should be addressed to me.

**VICTOR’S FATHER: (half-smiling)** Perhaps. **(Leaving)** I shall make arrangements.

***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *EXITS.* ***VICTOR*** *CLIMBS FROM HIS BED AND MOVES OVER TO HIS DESK. HE LOOKS AROUND FOR HIS CREATION. HE CAN FEEL SOMETHING LINGERING ABOUT HIM BUT THERE IS NOTHING THERE. THE WEDDING PREPARATIONS BEGIN AROUND HIM AND* ***ELIZABETH*** *TRIES TO TALK TO HIM BUT HE IS DISTANT, VACANT OR TERRIFIED. HE CONTINUALLY THINKS HE SEEING HIS CREATION EMERGE FROM EVERY CORNER, MISTAKING WEDDING PLANNERS FOR HIM, CONSTANTLY LOOKING OVER HIS SHOULDER.* ***VICTOR’S*** *PARANOIA GROWS. HE BECOMES MORE AND MORE TENSE AND IRRITABLE. THE* ***VICTOR*** *HIS FAMILY KNOWS IS FADING. HIS FATHER SEEMS PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED WITH MAINTAINING* ***VICTOR’S*** *HEALTH (AS WELL AS HIS OWN).* ***ELIZABETH*** *TRIES TO HELP* ***VICTOR*** *BUT STILL GETS NO RESPONSE OR IS TOLD TO LEAVE HIM ALONE.* ***VICTOR*** *SHUTS HIMSELF AWAY AND BIDS OTHERS TO LEAVE HIM ALONE. HIS FEARS AND THE WEDDING PREPARATIONS SMOTHER HIM. HE CAN’T BREATHE.* ***ELIZABETH*** *SITS WITH HIM, TRYING TO CALM HIM AFTER A FEVER. SHE GENTLY DABS HIM WITH A WET CLOTH. SHE STOPS A MOMENT, LOOKS AT HIM AND THEN KISSES HIM. THERE IS PRACTICALLY NO RESPONSE. IT WAS ALL SHE COULD THINK TO DO BUT IT HAS NOT WORKED.* ***VICTOR’S*** *EYES STILL TWITCH AROUND IN HIS HEAD WHILE HIS FACE SHAKES AND SWEAT POURS OUT OF HIM. HE MUTTERS INAUDIBLY, HIS LIPS QUIVERING. AS HE SLEEPS, HE IS PLAGUED BY THE APPEARANCE OF HIS CREATION, HIS FATHER,* ***ELIZABETH****, AND THE WEDDING PREPARATIONS AROUND HIM. HE AWAKENS, ALONE, PANTING, IN A COLD SWEAT. HIS HEART IS POUNDING AND HIS BREATHING HEAVY AND HOARSE. SILENCE HAS DESCENDED UPON HIM. HE SITS NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO. HE IS LOSING HIS MIND. HE IS EXHAUSTED. HE SIMPLY STARTS TO CRY. AFTER A LONG TIME IN SUCH A STATE, HIS FATHER ENTERS AND, ATTEMPTING TO ALLOW HIM TO KEEP AS MUCH DIGNITY AS POSSIBLE, HELPS US HIM AND OUT OF BED. HE DRESSES HIM FOR HIS WEDDING AND DRIES AWAY THE SWEAT. HE SOOTHES HIS SON AND TRIES TO MAKE HIM BETTER. HE PRESENTS* ***VICTOR*** *TO HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR, SQUEEZES HIS ARM, AND THEN LEAVES. THE DAY IS HERE.*

ACT IV – SCENE II

***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *WALKS* ***ELIZABETH*** *DOWN THE AISLE TO* ***VICTOR****. THEY EXCHANGE VOWS AND RINGS. THEY KISS. THOUGH THERE IS UNDOUBTEDLY PASSION PRESENT, THE WHOLE AFFAIR SEEMS VERY FORMAL AND MOTORISED.* ***ELIZABETH’S*** *MOOD IS MARRED BY* ***VICTOR’S*** *FEARS AND AWKWARDNESS, BUT IT IS STILL A GREAT OCCASION.*

***VICTOR*** *AND* ***ELIZABETH*** *DANCE.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *LOOKS ON PROUDLY. HE TOO, HOWEVER, NOTICES THAT THE JOY IS LARGELY ON THE SURFACE AND THAT SOMETHING IS ALWAYS STIRRING BENEATH.*

*LATER THAT EVENING, THE NEWLY-WEDDED COUPLE WALK BY THE LAKE.* ***VICTOR*** *IS GROWING MORE AGITATED AND CONVULSIVE****. ELIZABETH*** *OBSERVES IN TIMID SILENCE. SHE IS FEARFUL, BUT KNOWS NOT WHAT TO SAY. THEY SIT AS THE SUN SETS AROUND THEM AND THE EARLY EVENING MIST SETTLES IN. EVENTUALLY,* ***ELIZABETH*** *BREAKS THE SILENCE.*

**ELIZABETH:** It is a beautiful evening.

*PAUSE.*

**ELIZABETH:** Perhaps we should go inside.

*PAUSE. AT HIS INACTION, SHE DECIDES TO STAND.*

**ELIZABETH:** Will you join me?

*HE SHAKES HIS HEAD. SHE WAITS A MOMENT. HE BECOMES MORE AGITATED AND ANGRY AS THEY TALK.*

**ELIZABETH:** Why won’t you talk to me, Victor?

**VICTOR:** Please, Elizabeth.

**ELIZABETH:** Why?

**VICTOR:** I’m sick.

**ELIZABETH:** Then let me help you.

**VICTOR:** Don’t be ridiculous, how can you help me?

**ELIZABETH:** I will do anything. You seem so afraid. I understand.

**VICTOR:** Do not talk to me.

**ELIZABETH:** I understand.

**VICTOR:** Stop.

**ELIZABETH:** I have felt it, too.

**VICTOR:** Enough.

**ELIZABETH:** Why?

**VICTOR:** You know nothing of how I feel – how all this – how everything – life – affects me.

**ELIZABETH:** Are you to say I do not understand life?

**VICTOR:** Yes!

**ELIZABETH:** But Victor, I love you.

**VICTOR:** What does that matter? What has that to do with anything?

*HE GOES TO LEAVE.*

**ELIZABETH:** What is wrong with you?

**VICTOR:** What?

**ELIZABETH:** What are you afraid of? Are you frightened of me?

**VICTOR:** Leave me be!

**ELIZABETH:** Talk to me.

**VICTOR:** Do not follow me.

**ELIZABETH:** Where are you going? You always retreat away – and tonight of all nights.

**VICTOR:** What do you want from me?

**ELIZABETH:** You spend such time in solitude.

**VICTOR:** SoI have my own affairs.

**ELIZABETH:** Where do you go?

**VICTOR:** I am in my room. All I ask is a little peace – I just want a little peace.

**ELIZABETH:** All we want is to help you.

**VICTOR:** Then leave me be.

*SHORT PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** I apologise. Just leave me be tonight and all will be resolved.

**ELIZABETH:** Tonight?

**VICTOR:** Please.

**ELIZABETH:** What is it that you are frightened of?

**VICTOR:** Please.

**ELIZABETH:** Tell me.

**VICTOR:** It does no concern you.

**ELIZABETH:** It does! It does concern me. I look at you with such unease. What has made you like this? Am I responsible? All I want is to help you. I want to be with you and help you. That is all I ask for. Why can you not abide the company of those who love you so? Why do you abandon us?

**VICTOR:** Because I must.

**ELIZABETH:** I cannot understand it.

**VICTOR:** Because you refuse to listen! It is maddening! My heart races; my lungs are fit to burst; my blood is afire, and you – you – all of you – all you do is surround me, crowd me, smother me! All I ask is for some peace.

**ELIZAETH:** Victor.

**VICTOR:** Leave me.

**ELIZABETH:** Come back here, Victor!

**VICTOR:** Now, Elizabeth!

**ELIZABETH:** I demand you come back to me.

**VICTOR:** What?

**ELIZABETH:** I am your wife now! We are a union. I demand you listen to me. I demand you return to me. Now!

**VICTOR:** It is not safe.

**ELIZABETH:** Why?

**VICTOR:** Do not follow me.

*HE MAKES TO LEAVE. SHE FOLLOWS.*

**ELIZABETH:** Where are you going, Victor?!

***ELIZABETH*** *GRABS SPINS HIM ROUND AND GRABS HIS FACE, PULLING HIM TOWARDS HER, FORCING HIM TO LISTEN. HE PROTESTS AND TRIES TO PUSH HER AWAY.*

**ELIZABETH:** Now you listen to me. Whatever the matter may be we will deal with it. We will do it together. All my life I have loved you and you have loved me. you cannot and will not desert me now. A day we have both longed for. All you think of is yourself. Can you not see what this has done to your father, who has nursed you? can you not see the patience we have given you? The love and affection? All we ask is that you love us in return – that you love us as you should. We just want you. We want you. What are you afraid of? What is pursuing you to such a degree? Tell me, Victor.

***VICTOR*** *GRABS HER BY THE NECK.*

**VICTOR:** Enough!

*HE RELEASES HER AND PUSHES HER AWAY, HARD. SHE IS SHOCKED AND SILENT ON THE FLOOR.*

**VICTOR:** Enough.

*PANTING, HE LEAVES. ELIZABETH DISAPPEARS AS THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT BEGINS TO SETTLE IN AS HE HEADS TO THE SIDE OF THE LAKE.*

***VICTOR*** *PACES, FURIOUS. HE FEELS SICK. HE STOPS IN A FLURRY OF THOUGHT, PANTING. HE HOLDS HIS HEAD. HE COLLECTS HIMSELF THEN DRAWS A WEAPON. HE HAS ARMED HIMSELF WITH A KNIFE. HE IS WAITING. HE STANDS STILL FOR A MOMENT, THINKING. HE THINKS HE HEARS A NOISE OF SOME KIND – A TWIG SNAP PERHAPS. HE RAISES HIS KNIFE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE NOISE. HE LOOKS INTO THE DARKNESS. HE LOOKS FOR HIS PURSUER.*

**VICTOR:** Are you there?

*SILENCE.*

**VICTOR:** Hello?

*NO RESPONSE. HE BEGINS TO LOWER THE KNIFE, CAUTIOUSLY. HE BEGINS TO GET HIS BREATH BACK.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *SCREAMS IN THE DISTANCE.* ***VICTOR*** *TURNS AND RUNS BACK TO THE HOUSE****.*** *HE FINDS THE BODY OF* ***ELIZABETH*** *LYING ON THE FLOOR, HIS FATHER KNEELING ABOVE HER IN SHOCK.* ***VICTOR*** *SCRAMBLES TO HER AID, BUT SHE IS DEAD, MARKS ON HER NECK.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** My boy. Oh. No. No.

***VICTOR*** *MOVES AWAY FROM THE BODY IN RAGE AND GRIEF.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *BREATHES WITH DIFFICULTY, CRADLING* ***ELIZABETH’S*** *HEAD.* ***VICTOR*** *SLAMS AGAINST THE TABLE, STABBING AT IT WITH THE KNIFE. HE HOLDS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. HE BELLOWS OUT A SCREAM AND THEN BEGINS TO SOB SILENTLY BUT VIOLENTLY. HE DROPS THE KNIFE AND HIS HANDS COVER HIS FACE. HIS FATHER GETS UP TO ATTEND TO HIM.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** No. Victor.

*HE EMBRACES HIS SON.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** I am here, my boy.

*HE SHUSHES* ***VICTOR****, HOLDING HIM TIGHT. AFTER A MOMENT,* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *SLOWLY ENTERS AND STANDS BEHIND THE FATHER. HE LOOKS AT THE TWO OF THEM, THE LOVE BETWEEN THEM, THE WARMTH IN THE COLD. HE IS, FOR A MOMENT, SADDENED AND ASHAMED.*

***VICTOR*** *EMERGES FROM BEHIND HIS HANDS MOVES INTO HIS FATHER’S EMBRACE. HE SEES HIS CREATION OVER HIS FATHER’S SHOULDER. HE ANGRILY TRIES TO SPEAK AND STRUGGLES AGAINST HIS FATHER, WHO TRIES TO PLACATE HIM.* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *SHEEPISHLY HEADS AWAY AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARK.*

**VICTOR:** No!

*HE BREAKS FREE FROM HIS FATHER’S EMBRACE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Victor!

**VICTOR:** Where are you?

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** What?

**VICTOR:** Come out! Show yourself!

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Victor –

**VICTOR:** Is this what I deserved?

*HE STUTTERS AND CHOKES A LITTLE. HE CANNOT BREATHE. HE BLINKS AND STUMBLES. HE FALLS TO HIS KNEES AND COLLAPSES TO HIS SIDE.*

**VICTOR’S FATHER:** Oh Lord! Victor.

***VICTOR*** *LIES STILL, STARING BLANKLY AND SILENTLY INTO THE NOTHINGNESS BEFORE HIM.*

***ELIZABETH*** *IS DRAINED AWAY INTO HER GRAVE LIKE A SHRIVELLING FLOWER. THE COLD WINDS BEGIN TO GATHER AND RUMBLE.* ***VICTOR’S FATHER*** *USES WHAT STRENGTH HE HAS TO LIFT HIS SON AND CARRIES HIM TO HIS ROOM. HE LAYS HIM ON THE BED AND FETCHES SHEETS AND PILLOWS. HE TREATS HIM IN HIS ILLNESS. AS THIS GOES ON,* ***VICTOR*** *APPEARS TO BE IN A STATE OF CATATONIA, NOTHING BUT A SHOCKED LOOKED INHABITING HIS FACE. HIS FATHER BRINGS HIM FOOD, DABS HIM WITH A CLOTH TO SOOTH HIS FEVER, EVERYTHING HE CAN TO REVIVE HIS SON, WHO WILL MAKE NO MORE NOISE. THE TOLL OF THIS CARE IS CLEAR. HIS FATHER IS GETTING WEAKER AND THERE IS NO ONE TO CARE FOR HIM ANYMORE.* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *ENTERS, WATCHING ALL OF THIS UNFOLD SOMBRELY. THE COLD, MOURNFUL WIND CONTINUES, HARSH SHRIEKS AND WHISTLES BEGINNING TO SETTLE IN. AT SOME POINT,* ***VICTOR*** *FALLS OUT OF BED, HE HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO MOVE, WAKING FROM HIS TRANCE-LIKE STATE. HIS FATHER TRIES TO LIFT HIM BACK INTO IT BUT CANNOT SUMMON THE STRENGTH, THOUGH HE TRIES REPEATEDLY.* ***VICTOR*** *IS SAT, SLUMPED ON THE FLOOR, LEANING AGAINST THE BED. HIS FATHER ASSUMES A SIMILAR POSITION, BREATHING HEAVILY. HE TOUCHES HIS SON’S FACE AND SLOWLY STROKES IT, ONCE, BEFORE HIS ARM FALLS TO HIS SIDE AND HE EBBS AWAY UNTIL HE IS ASLEEP AND WILL NOT WAKE.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of fame, of virtue, and of enjoyment. But now crime has degraded me beneath the lowest animal and left me irredeemably alone. The love I see with you is the love I wanted to find. You have a father who cares for you and attends your every need. And yet every day he sees the truth of what he has made you – the good and the bad – and every day it drains him. No matter how strong, as I have learned, love cannot last. Your father is slipping away. You will survive to be alone. All you will have is me. But now, you have a reason not to love me, and I no longer want your love. You said I have no rights and now I agree. I renounce what I call life and await my punishment. Surely you will feel the same. As you are left alone, as you hear the voices of loved ones past and the sounds of empty houses, you will realise the damage you have wrought in treating me the way you have. Your grief will turn to anger and violent thoughts will fill your mind. Your anger will let you live longer but all it achieves in the end is the temporary distraction from your guilt. There is no release from that. It will plague your every day and you will wish yourself destroyed and yet fear the thought lest you not gain your revenge. This is all that will drive you. Then, you will be like me. At last, you will begin to know how I feel, but you are not yet the same as me. No guilt, no mischief, no malignity, no misery, is comparable to mine. But soon you will know exactly how I feel. We both know how this will end. Neither you nor I may remain in this world while the other does. I am going to head to the coldest northern regions. I do not intend to return. And so, there, we will reach our mutual peace.

***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARKNESS.* ***VICTOR*** *SLOWLY WAKES. HE LOOKS AT HIS FATHER’S BODY. HE IS BEYOND GRIEF. HE SLOWLY STANDS, TAKES THE SHEET FROM THE BED AND COVERS HIS FATHER WITH IT. HE WALKS OVER THE KNIFE RESTING ON THE FLOOR AND PICKS IT UP. HE STARES AT THE KNIFE IN HIS HAND, ALMOST AS THOUGH IN A TRANCE. IN THE DIMLY LIT BACKGROUND,* ***VICTOR’S FATHER’S*** *BODY IS CARRIED AWAY UNDER THE SHEET.* ***VICTOR*** *IS LEFT ALONE. HE IS STILL WEAK. HE THROWS ON HIS COAT AND THIS SIMPLE EFFORT LEAVES HIM ON HIS KNEES. HE LIES DOWNS A MOMENT AS THE WIND HOWLS TO A CRESCENDO AND A MURKY YET PIERCING WHITE LIGHT LOOMS IN.*

ACT V

***VICTOR*** *IS LYING ON THE FROZEN ARTIC FLOOR, WHILE THE WIND CHANTS AND WHISTLES EMPTILY, A BLIZZARD RAGES AND THE MIST ENCIRCLES HIM. HE IS A MERE SPECK IN THE IMMENSE WHITE AROUND HIM. HE SLOWLY BRINGS HIMSELF TO HIS KNEES AND CRAWLS ONWARDS, THE KNIFE FIRMLY IN HIS HAND. THE ICE BENEATH HIM RUMBLES AND WE HEAR DISTANT CRACKS AS IT BREAKS AND MELTS. THE COLD WATER SURROUNDS HIM. HE IS SO COLD HE CAN BARELY MOVE. HE SHIVERS AND IS ALMOST FORCED TO SOB. HE IS SO COLD HE FEELS LIKE CRAWLING UP TO DIE. HE HOLDS HIS ARMS TO HIS CHEST. AND STANDS, MOTIONLESS SAVE FOR HIS CONVULSIVE SHIVERING. HE EXHALES SHARP, SHALLOW BREATHS. HE IS SURROUNDED BY DESOLATION. HE IS UTTERLY ALONE. SLOWLY, HE BEGINS TO CRY AND MOAN. HE IS BROKEN. AFTER SOME TIME, HE REGAINS HIMSELF. HE BEGINS TO LOOK AROUND, PURSUING HIS CREATION.*

*AS THE EVENING DRAWS IN AND THE COLD GETS COLDER, HE SLOWLY STUMBLES AND COLLAPSES TO HIS KNEES AND SWAYS. HE WILL NOT GET UP AGAIN IF HE FALLS.*

**VICTOR: (in a hoarse whisper)** Fine.

*THE WHITE AROUND HIM BECOMES MORE GREY. HE IS STILL SHIVERING UNCONTROLLABLY. HE IS STARTING TO COUGH NOW. HE LOOKS AROUND HIM. HE IS ALONE. HE GROANS QUIETLY, LOWLY, LENGTHILY. IT IS AKIN TO A SCREAM BUT NOT AS SHARP OR GRAPHIC. HE SWAYS A LITTLE MORE.*

***VICTOR*** *IS CRUMBLING. HE SITS VERY STILL, HIS ARMS CROSSED AND HIS HEAD BOWED, SHIVERING. HE LOOKS ABOUT HIM. HE IS ALONE. HE IS IN SUCH PAIN. HE LOOKS GROTESQUE. THE COLD IS FREEZING HIS SKIN AND BURNING HIS FACE WITH BLISTERS. HE ROUGHLY RUBS HIS FACE, DESPERATE FOR WARMTH. THE MORE HE DOES, THE BLISTERS BEGIN TO CUT AND BLEED.*

**VICTOR: (barely audible)** Enough.

*PAUSE.*

**VICTOR:** Enough.

***VICTOR*** *FALLS TO HIS SIDE AND LIES STILL IN THE COLD. BUT HE IS NOT YET DEAD. IT WILL TAKE A LONG TIME AND A LOT MORE PAIN FOR HIM TO FREEZE TO DEATH. IT IS GETTING DARKER. EVEN THE WIND IS BECOMING MORE DISTANT. AFTER A LONG TIME,* ***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *WALKS ONTO THE ICE. HE LOOKS AT* ***VICTOR*** *FOR A MOMENT. HE SPEAKS SLOWLY.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** Our work is nearly complete. I shall consume myself to ashes. No one must ever find me and make me what you intended. There must be a halt to such ambition. I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me, or be the prey of feelings unquenched. I shall no longer see the sun or stars, or feel the winds play on my cheeks. Some years ago, I should have wept to die; now it is my only consolation, as it is to you. Now you know how I feel. It is in darkness where we must find some peace. Where else can we find rest but in death?

*PAUSE.*

**VICTOR’S CREATION:** I am sorry. But now you know.

***VICTOR’S CREATION*** *DISAPPEARS. THERE IS NOTHING BUT SILENCE AROUND* ***VICTOR*** *NOW. THE SNOW HAS STOPPED. EVERYTHING IS SILENT, STILL, COLD. AFTER SOME MOMENTS,* ***VICTOR*** *DRAGS HIMSELF TO THE EDGE OF THE ICE AND SEES HIMSELF IN THE WATER. HE STARES FOR SOME TIME, STILL. HE BOWS HIS HEAD AND SIGHS, ONCE. HE REMOVES HIS COAT AND SHIVERS, INHALING SHARPLY FROM THE SUDDEN SMACK OF COLD. HE SHUFFLES HIMSELF TO THE EDGE AND LETS HIS LEGS SINK INTO THE WATER. WITH SOME EFFORT, HE PUSHES HIMSELF ALONG, HAVING TO STOP EVERY NOW AND THEN FOR BREATH. THE WATER IS FREEZING. HE INHALES SHARPLY ONCE MORE. THEN, AFTER MOMENT’S STILLNESS, HE SLIPS INTO THE WATER AND SINKS AWAY, LETTING IT WASH OVER HIM. THE LIGHT FADES AWAY TO TOTAL DARKNESS. ALL IS GONE.*

THE END