

# Frankenstein Unplugged

*Based on the novel by Mary Shelley*

Adapted by  
Jonathan Yukich

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## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Jonathan Yukich's *Frankenstein Unplugged* offers a faithful stage retelling of Mary Shelley's classic Gothic novel. We meet Victor Frankenstein, who is obsessed with finding the secret to recreating life. Of course, he famously succeeds, but fearing he has overstepped the bounds of science, quickly abandons his creation and the promise to make it a mate. The creature, betrayed and forsaken, vows to ruthlessly destroy all that his creator loves and cherishes. The unrelenting pursuit goes to the very edges of the earth. Clever theatrically, such as using actors as lightning and thunder, and as professors in an intellectual Greek chorus, help transcend time and place. With its fast-paced narration and eerie landscape, this version of Frankenstein reminds us how contemporary and alive Shelley's masterpiece remains. Widely flexible cast; settings defined simply by area lighting.

## **ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

*Frankenstein Unplugged* was first performed at the Montana Repertory Theatre in September of 2007. It was directed by Noah Tuleja and the stage manager was Katie Hanson.

The cast was as follows:

Frankenstein: Brandon Johnson

Creature: Jared Van Heel

Elizabeth: Nora Munde Gustuson

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(6 m, 3 w, 4 flexible or with doubling 2 m, 1 w)*

The play has been constructed to use the maximum amount of characters (13) or the minimum amount (3). Either way will work. If a production chooses to use only three actors, the characters can be doubled as listed below.

FRANKENSTEIN

ELIZABETH

CREATURE

HENRY

PROFESSOR TICK

PROFESSOR TOCK

LIGHTNING

THUNDER

BOY'S VOICE

HUSBAND

WIFE

OLD MAN

YOUNG GIRL

\*Options for doubling:

ACTOR 1: Frankenstein / Husband / Old man

ACTRESS: Elizabeth / Professor Tock / Lightning / Boy's  
voice / Wife / Young girl

ACTOR 2: Creature / Henry / Professor Tick / Thunder

**SETTING**

The setting can be very minimal. While there is room for more, the play can be done with little more than a table and a couple of blocks.

**NOTE**

Because the actor playing the Creature must also play other roles, consider using a simple mask to signal his change into and out of the Creature character.

## Frankenstein Unplugged

### Scene 1

*(AT RISE: ELIZABETH, in a nightgown, sits before a mirror combing her hair and humming a lullaby. The CREATURE, unseen by his idle victim-to-be, appears. He stares solemnly upon her beauty before slowly advancing to her shoulder. Sensing his presence, ELIZABETH stops humming. Gently, she lifts her head to find the intruder reflected in the mirror.)*

**ELIZABETH:** What are you?

**CREATURE:** The creature.

*(The CREATURE takes ELIZABETH'S hair and coils it around her neck. He jerks the hair with a snap, ELIZABETH'S eyes bulge. A loud shriek. Terrified, FRANKENSTEIN appears, bolting up from a bad dream. He is crazed and rabid.)*

**FRANKENSTEIN:** Demon! Devil! Begone! What have I done! Abhorred monster! Oh, that I could restore those who you murdered! But wait? Can it be only a dream? Does my precious Elizabeth still live? But where am I? In the Arctic, seeking the beast who fled from me. Yes, I remember now...it is no dream. My weak heart tells me so. *(Seeing the audience, eagerly draws them in.)* You there! Stay! Please! Don't be afraid. I am tired and ill and crave a friendly ear. Allow me to tell my story so that it may never happen again. Listen, I beg of you. Lives are at stake. 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. My name is Dr. Victor Frankenstein. Hear my tale.

*(A stream of laughter halts the somberness as ELIZABETH and HENRY appear swinging a jump rope and singing a*

*Frankenstein Unplugged*

- 6 -

*jump rope rhyme. At the sound, FRANKENSTEIN becomes playful, rejuvenated, youthful.)*

**ELIZABETH & HENRY:** Apples, peaches, pears and plums!

Tell me when your birthday comes!

**HENRY:** Come on, Victor! Your turn to be in the middle!

**FRANKENSTEIN:** I'm afraid not.

**ELIZABETH:** Jump with us, won't you, Victor?

**FRANKENSTEIN:** You've seen me jump. I'm no good.

**HENRY:** Just give it a go, Victor!

**ELIZABETH & HENRY:** I like coffee, I like tea!

I like Victor to jump with me!

**FRANKENSTEIN:** A song in my name! That I can't resist!

*(FRANKENSTEIN sheds his jacket and takes part.)*

**ELIZABETH:** That's the spirit!

**FRANKENSTEIN:** Not too fast!

*(FRANKENSTEIN jumps the rope to laughter and cheers before becoming tangled and falling to the ground hard. HENRY and ELIZABETH rush to his aid.)*

**ELIZABETH:** Victor!

**HENRY:** Are you hurt, friend?

**FRANKENSTEIN:** *(Smiling.)* I'm fine, I'm fine. I told you I was no good.

**HENRY:** He's bleeding.

**FRANKENSTEIN:** It's only a scrape, Henry, nothing to blink at.

**ELIZABETH:** Oh, Victor, how I'll worry when you're away. Do you have to go?

**FRANKENSTEIN:** I must leave Geneva to tend to my studies. Of little use is the uneducated man.

**ELIZABETH:** But you'll write constantly?

**FRANKENSTEIN:** Everyday, dearest Elizabeth, and think of you every second. You'll never wander far from my heart.

**HENRY:** Things will be so dreary without you.

*Frankenstein Unplugged*

- 7 -

**FRANKENSTEIN:** Nonsense, Father remains and little William too.

**HENRY:** Ah, little William, he looks more like his big brother every day.

**FRANKENSTEIN:** A good brother, indeed. My soul aches to leave friends and family such as yourselves. You, Henry, the best friend a man can possess. Your kind-heartedness, intelligence and imagination is unmatched. And, Elizabeth, my angelic and adored Elizabeth, whom I have sworn to cherish, love and protect all my life, I will return to you, I swear. Till death, you will be mine only. Now, enough sentimental bunk—help me to my feet.

*(On rising, FRANKENSTEIN steps out to address the audience. HENRY and ELIZABETH move off stage -or- to become TICK and TOCK.)*

**FRANKENSTEIN:** *(Cont'd.)* And so I traveled to the university. I feel exquisite pleasure in dwelling in my youth, before misfortune tainted my mind and turned its bright visions into gloom. I was happy then, eager to know the secrets of heaven and earth. It was in my ravenous thirst for knowledge that my insensible steps began. I became consumed with the sciences, especially chemistry and math, devoting myself to the works of Newton and all the greats. I read anything I could get my hands on.

*(PROFESSORS TICK and TOCK appear, looking professorial. Like an assembly line, they continue to hand FRANKENSTEIN books, which he opens quickly and tosses aside, as if frantically reading.)*

**PROFESSOR TICK:** Read! Read! Read, Mr. Frankenstein!

**PROFESSOR TOCK:** Read of the miracles of the masters!

**PROFESSOR TICK:** How nature works in her hiding places!

**PROFESSOR TOCK:** Ascending into the heavens!

**PROFESSOR TICK:** Discovering how our blood circulates!

**PROFESSOR TOCK:** The nature of the air we breathe!

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