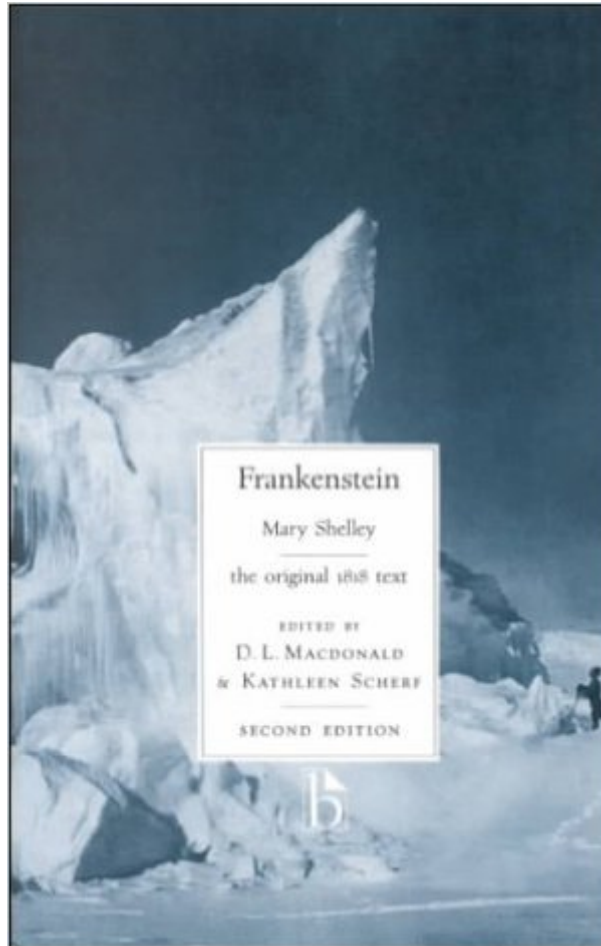


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Frankenstein: The Original 1818 Text (Broadview Literary Texts)



Synopsis

Mary Shelley's deceptively simple story of Victor Frankenstein and the creature he brings to life, first published in 1818, is now more widely read and more widely discussed by scholars than any other work of the Romantic period. From the creature's creation to his wild lament over the dead body of his creator in the Arctic wastes, the story retains its narrative hold on the reader even as it spins off ideas in rich profusion. Macdonald and Scherf's edition of Frankenstein has been widely acclaimed as an outstanding edition of the novel for the general reader and the student as much as for the scholar. The editors use as their copy-text the original 1818 version, and detail in an appendix all of Shelley's later revisions. They also include a range of contemporary documents that shed light on the historical context from which this unique masterpiece emerged. Macdonald and Scherf have now revised and updated their introduction, notes and bibliography, and have added new documents (including a review of Frankenstein by Percy Shelley).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Much like Bram Stoker's "Dracula", Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" is a story we all think we know, but really don't. Very few films have consciously attempted to follow the novel too closely (which shouldn't detract from the excellent James Whale/Boris Karloff film, or its masterpiece-sequel, "The

Bride of Frankenstein). Thus, everything popular culture "knows" about "Frankenstein" does not originate from literature, but from films. This is a shame, in a way, because the novel itself is, if not the progenitor, an early vessel of so many archetypes found science fiction and horror. The basic plot remained intact when transferred to other media. Swiss medical student Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret of life (which he never reveals, lest someone repeat the mistake). He then puts together a body, essentially a man, from various corpses. He then becomes horrified by the creature he has built, and abandons. The creature, suffering a great deal of neglect and abuse, still manages to get a thorough education, and learns of his lineage. After murdering Victor's younger brother, and framing the family maid, the creature tells his (admittedly) sad tale to his "father", and then demands a mate. Victor, in a panic, agrees, then thinks better of it at the last moment, destroying the new bride. In retaliation, the creature murders all of Victor's loved ones (including his wife), and leads Victor on a merry chase across the world. Most probably know that Mary Shelley wrote this book in response to a challenge issued by Lord Byron, during a vacation at Lake Geneva. (Along with this story came John Polidori's "The Vampyre", the first English vampire novel.) Most probably also know that Shelley went on to write other works of imaginative gothic fiction.

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