



**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

COMPLETE  
CLASSICS  
UNABRIDGED

**Mary Shelley**

# Frankenstein

Read by **Daniel Philpott, Roger May** and **Jonathan Oliver**

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## CD 1

1	<b>Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus</b>	5:04
2	These visions faded when I perused...	4:22
3	Letter 2	5:01
4	Some years ago he loved a young Russian lady...	4:45
5	Letter 3	2:17
6	Letter 4	5:01
7	Two days passed in this manner...	4:50
8	August 13th	4:50
9	Even broken in spirit as he is...	5:44
10	Chapter 1	4:38
11	There was a considerable difference...	3:59
12	One day, when my father had gone by himself to Milan...	4:12
13	Chapter 2	5:41
14	I feel exquisite pleasure...	4:11
15	But here were books...	5:12
16	Chapter 3	4:00
17	My departure for Ingolstadt...	3:59

**Total time on CD 1: 77:46**

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## CD 2

1	The next morning I delivered my letters...	4:09
2	Partly from curiosity and partly from idleness...	6:04
3	Chapter 4	5:40
4	Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman.	6:52
5	The summer months passed while I was thus engaged...	3:56
6	Chapter 5	4:57
7	Morning, dismal and wet...	4:11
8	I trembled excessively...	6:27
9	Chapter 6	5:38
10	One by one, her brothers and sister died...	6:22
11	M. Krempe was not equally docile...	6:37
12	Chapter 7	5:29
13	Clerval, who had watched my countenance as I read this letter...	5:18
14	It was completely dark when I arrived in the environs of Geneva...	6:37

**Total time on CD 2: 78:17**

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**CD 3**

1	Six years had elapsed...	4:31
2	This was a strange tale...	4:04
3	Chapter 8	6:44
4	Several witnesses were called...	5:27
5	Soon after we heard...	4:32
6	During this conversation I had retired to a corner...	5:07
7	Chapter 9	4:40
8	At these moments I wept bitterly...	6:00
9	Sometimes I could cope with the sullen despair...	4:53
10	Chapter 10	5:36
11	It was nearly noon when I arrived at the top of the ascent.	6:15
12	'Begone! I will not hear you.'	5:38
13	Chapter 11	5:28
14	One day, when I was oppressed by the cold...	5:08
15	It was noon when I awoke...	5:19

**Total time on CD 3: 79:22**

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**CD 4**

1	On examining my dwelling...	5:36
2	Chapter 12	4:13
3	I discovered also another means...	4:47
4	I could mention innumerable instances...	4:07
5	My mode of life in my hovel was uniform.	3:56
6	Chapter 13	5:49
7	The next morning Felix went out to his work...	5:24
8	Every conversation of the cottagers now opened new wonders to me.	5:37
9	Chapter 14	4:44
10	Safie related that her mother was a Christian Arab...	4:57
11	They found a miserable asylum in the cottage in Germany...	3:52
12	Chapter 15	4:17
13	The volume of <i>Plutarch's Lives</i> ...	6:50
14	Several changes, in the meantime, took place in the cottage.	4:51
15	One day, when the sun shone on the red leaves...	3:50
16	Do not despair.	5:22

**Total time on CD 4: 78:12**

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**CD 5**

1	Chapter 16	4:48
2	When my hunger was appeased...	5:14
3	And now, with the world before me...	4:01
4	I generally rested during the day...	4:48
5	It was evening when I arrived...	7:15
6	Chapter 17	4:21
7	I was moved.	4:25
8	I paused some time to reflect on all he had related...	4:54
9	Chapter 18	5:06
10	I listened to my father in silence...	5:21
11	It was in the latter end of September...	3:32
12	We travelled at the time of the vintage...	5:34
13	Chapter 19	4:08
14	We quitted London on the 27th of March...	4:13
15	From Derby, still journeying northwards...	4:36
16	Having parted from my friend...	4:20

**Total time on CD 5: 76:36**

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**CD 6**

1	Chapter 20	4:24
2	Several hours passed...	5:38
3	All was again silent...	5:26
4	Nothing could be more complete...	4:00
5	Some hours passed thus...	4:59
6	Chapter 21	5:26
7	The human frame could no longer support the agonies...	3:59
8	As the images that floated before me became more distinct...	5:43
9	Nothing, at this moment, could have given me greater pleasure...	4:18
10	My father tried to awaken in me the feelings of affection.	4:39
11	Chapter 22	4:17
12	As time passed away I became more calm...	4:57
13	This letter revived in my memory what I had before forgotten...	4:38
14	Elizabeth alone had the power to draw me from these fits...	5:37
15	After the ceremony was performed...	3:41
16	Chapter 23	3:57
17	When I recovered I found myself surrounded...	2:57

**Total time on CD 6: 78:36**

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CD 7

1	After an interval I arose...	4:07
2	What then became of me?	6:37
3	Chapter 24	5:16
4	Amidst the wilds of Tartary and Russia...	5:19
5	As I still pursued my journey to the northward...	3:59
6	I cannot guess how many days have passed...	5:58
7	Walton, in continuation.	4:09
8	Our conversations are not always confined to his own history...	5:33
9	September 2nd	2:32
10	September 5th	6:06
11	September 7th	3:17
12	His sentence was pronounced...	4:57
13	His voice became fainter as he spoke...	4:27
14	His voice seemed suffocated...	4:50
15	I was at first touched by the expressions of his misery...	3:59
16	'You, who call Frankenstein your friend...'	3:02
17	'Fear not that I shall be the instrument of future mischief.'	5:03

**Total time on CD 7: 79:11**  
**Total time on CDs 1–7: 9:08:00**

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Mary Shelley

(1797–1851)

# Frankenstein

Mary Shelley was the daughter of the radical feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and the mistress – later the wife – of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. In 1816, she and her half-sister Claire Claremont, mistress of both Shelley and Byron, followed Shelley into exile from his native land, where his frank espousal of a philosophy of 'free love' and his outspoken atheism had been relished. They spent the summer with Lord Byron (also on the run from scandal in England) who had taken the Villa Diodati on the shores of Lake Geneva. The company may even have been joined by the shade of Milton who had once occupied the house. But the current of creative genius that had produced the divine spark in Milton had become, in the popular imagination, something demonic in these two arch-Romantic poets.

On 15 June, as the lightning flickered across the lake, Mary listened to the conversation of Byron, Shelley and Dr Polidori (Byron's young amanuensis). They were discussing galvanism (the medical use of electric current) and the possibility of provoking the very spark of life by its means. The subject was of particular interest to Shelley, who had experimented with electrical instruments at Oxford. At the same time, the company was deeply engrossed in German horror stories, and the following day each agreed to try their hand at writing a ghost story. The published outcome was Polidori's *The Vampyre* – adapted from Byron's effort, which had in turn been inspired by a hysterical fantasy from Shelley – and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Inspiration had been slow in coming,

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but when it did her nightmarish creation broke fully formed upon her drowsing consciousness. She 'saw the pale student of unhallowed arts' turning in horror from 'his odious handiwork', the vile assemblage of human remains which he had animated with the breath of life. And in working out this ghastly fantasy into a full narrative, her inspiration did not desert her.

She was hardly 19. Though she lived another 35 years, she never again approached the visionary grandeur of conception achieved in this, her first literary effort. All her youthful life's experience went into it. Above all, it was about Shelley himself, who is both the idealistic creative spirit and the hounded outcast, both Dr Frankenstein and his monster. In a sense, the popular misconception that gives the name Frankenstein to the monster is an appropriate one. Frankenstein's creation haunts him like his own evil genius, his own shadow made flesh. For it is his refusal to take responsibility for the unprepossessing fruit of his actions that turns it into an avenging angel, destroying all the human connections that make

life meaningful, as it pursues him to the grave.

*Frankenstein* is a meditation upon the grounds of evil inspired by the anarchist philosophy of Mary's father, William Godwin. It is also a daring development of Milton's vision of the fallen angel in *Paradise Lost* and a critique of the idea of divine creation itself. But finally, it must be recognised as quite a new thing for its time: it is the first work of science fiction in English. And as science fiction, it is about the limitations of goodwill without wisdom. It is a dire warning against technological hubris, against the temptation to assume that benevolent intentions are sufficient to procure beneficent results. Its timely message is that there are matters with which we tamper at our peril. As such, the novel remains the most powerful Promethean fable of modern times.

### Notes by Duncan Steen

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## Cast

Victor Frankenstein **Daniel Philpott**  
Captain Robert Walton **Roger May**  
Daemon **Jonathan Oliver**



**Daniel Philpott** trained at LAMDA and, after success in the prestigious Carlton-Hobbs Award for Radio Drama, recorded for BBC Radio 4 and other broadcast work. His theatre work includes many London fringe productions.



**Jonathan Oliver** has appeared in theatre throughout the UK in works ranging from *Julius Caesar* (for the English Shakespeare Company) to Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*. Widely experienced in television, film and radio, he has, for a decade, also recorded audiobooks for the Royal National Institute for the Blind.



**Roger May** has recorded many books and short stories including *Death on the Nile*, *The Elephant Keeper* and *The Day of the Triffids* for BBC 7. He has also appeared in over 100 radio plays for the BBC. His stage credits include *The Winslow Boy* with Timothy West and *The Railway Children* – a site-specific production on the old Eurostar platform in Waterloo Station.

## Credits

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Produced by Roy McMillan. Edited and mastered by Chris Goldsmith  
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