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Cast of Characters

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

THE CREATURE

CAPTAIN WALTON / FATHER / PROFESSOR

ELIZABETH

MOTHER / JUSTINE / MATE

Set

A simple, single unit, as cold and white as ice. In the central area, a raised section which serves as bed and creation table; downstage, a kind of oblong box which, at times, becomes a coffin. A few scenes assume there is a trap below this “coffin” with access to/from the offstage area. The need for a trap can be eliminated simply by using offstage entrances/exits.

Lights

They often shift abruptly. They vary from cold, harsh, and glaring to dim and shadowy to gauzy, romantic.

Sound

It should be used as much as lighting to set tone and define realities.

Throughout the text, “VICTOR’S VOICE” indicates VICTOR speaking on tape. These taped speeches are heard at a low level so that they have an almost subliminal rather than overly forceful presence in the scene.

Acknowledgements

The full-length version of *Frankenstein* was premiered by Seattle's Intiman Theatre Company (Elizabeth Huddle, Artistic Director; Peter Davis, Managing Director), October 4, 1989. Directed by Andrew J. Traister. Original music and sound, Larry Delinger; set, Jeff Frkonja; costumes, Frances Kenny; lighting, Richard Devin; special makeup, Scott Ramirez; production stage manager, Robert H. Saterlee. The cast was as follows:

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN..... Stephen Godwin
THE CREATURE..... David Drummond
WALTON/FATHER/PROFESSOR Clayton Corzatte
ELIZABETH..... Julia Fletcher
MATE/MOTHER/JUSTINE Jane Jones

An earlier version of *Frankenstein* was presented by the Skid Road Theatre (Roberta Levitow, Artistic Director), Seattle, Washington, January-February, 1981. Directed by Tom Towler. Original music and sound, Joe Seserko; set, Alex Hutton; costumes, Andy Yelusich; lighting, Ken Stuart; special makeup, Michael Flynn; stage manager, Joan Kennedy. The cast was as follows:

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN..... Michael Flynn
THE CREATURE..... Jean Sherrard
WALTON/FATHER/PROFESSOR Ed Sampson
ELIZABETH..... Jo A. Vetter
MATE/MOTHER/JUSTINE Nancy Houfek

FRANKENSTEIN

(one-act version)

by R. N. Sandberg

Scene 1

(In the black, we begin to hear wind, rain, ice cracking—and in the distance, thunder. A ship's bell rings softly, monotonously. Lightning flashes briefly. The sounds rise slightly as a pool of dim light slowly comes up. In the light, we see the outline of a figure, prone, under a sheet. We can see no face. Thunder. Under the sheet, the body tosses. A few mumbled sounds. Suddenly another lightning flash. The body tenses.)

(Eerie blue light. A soft, thumping sound begins—like someone tapping on a hollow wooden box or a heart beating. Three huge shadows appear.)

MALE VOICE. There's nothing left.

FIRST FEMALE VOICE. Nothing.

SECOND FEMALE VOICE. You're alone.

FIRST FEMALE VOICE. Alone.

MALE VOICE. We're going.

(As they speak their next lines, they enter. We cannot see any of them clearly but the male figure—the CREATURE—is of huge, unequal proportions.)

MALE. Going home.

FIRST FEMALE. *(Distinctly, calling for him:)* Father!

SECOND FEMALE. *(Distinctly, calling for her:)* Elizabeth!

FIRST FEMALE. *(Distinctly, calling for a lost child:)* William!

SECOND FEMALE. *(Distinctly:)* Justine.

MALE. Going.

FEMALES. Alone.

MALE. *(Reaching for the FIGURE in the bed:)* Father.

(The FIGURE in the bed is also reaching toward the MALE. They do not touch.)

FEMALES. Mother.

MALE. *(Still reaching as he draws away:)* Going.

FEMALES. Going.

ALL THREE. Going.

(The three have just about vanished.)

FIGURE IN THE BED. *(Abruptly, as he throws off the sheet and sits upright:)* Nooo!

(The three are gone. The lights have shifted back to a brighter, more normal level. The ship's bell rings softly. The figure in the bed can be seen clearly, now. It is VICTOR. He is very weak; his breathing is rapid. He looks around and listens but there is only silence.)

Scene 2

(WALTON, the ship captain, enters.)

WALTON. You're sitting up. Good. Another hour on that ice and you'd have been polar bear feed. *(Laughs.)* What were you doing out there, man? You're either crazy or a scientist.

(VICTOR looks at WALTON.)

A scientist, I knew it! That's my excuse, too. Robert Walton, explorer and Captain of this dilapidated old hulk.

VICTOR. When you picked me up—did you see any—thing out there?

WALTON. No more worries, now. Except that the ice thin out. I'll bring you some broth. Just like mother used to make.

(He pats VICTOR on the cheek and laughs. VICTOR looks at him strangely. WALTON freezes in mid-laugh.)

VICTOR'S VOICE. Like mother used to.

(VICTOR touches WALTON's face with his hand.)

Scene 3

(Music as the lights shift. WALTON has become Victor's FATHER. He turns to the coffin. VICTOR turns and looks at the coffin.)

VICTOR. *(In a whisper:)* Mother.

(He goes to the coffin. He is no longer weak, ill. He has energy and seems—is—much younger.)

VICTOR. *(Touching the coffin:)* I miss her, Father.

FATHER. She was a wonderful woman, Victor, a beautiful woman.

VICTOR. The most beautiful in the world.

FATHER. I'm sorry she won't see you go to the university.

VICTOR. You don't think I'm going to go, now?

FATHER. You must. How many years have you worked for this, Victor? There isn't a scientific book in my library, in the whole town, you don't know by heart. You've nothing left to learn here. When the Professor's lectures begin—

VICTOR. I won't leave you alone.

FATHER. How am I alone? Elizabeth will walk with me in the woods and make me take my medicine. Justine will cook me apple dumplings. And William, well, your little brother is a full time project. He's primed to begin his scientific education, Victor. And with you out of the way, I'll finally have the time to teach him.

VICTOR. She gave her whole life to us. The least I can do is—

FATHER. My boy.

(They embrace. ELIZABETH enters, holding some papers.)

ELIZABETH. I hope you won't be so sentimental when I'm gone. It's a natural part of life.

FATHER. Yes, we should have a party like the Greeks or Chinese or whoever.

ELIZABETH. What a good idea. Tonight, we'll drink some champagne.

VICTOR. I don't know how you can.

ELIZABETH. I cried all my tears when I lost my mother, Victor. When I came here, your mother taught me one has to go on. Now, that's what you've got to do.

VICTOR. Why? Why must this happen?

ELIZABETH. Why must leaves fall and the winds howl? It's the way things are.

VICTOR. No. I don't accept that. There's a reason, a cause. Mother died from Scarlet Fever. You and I had the same fever; we didn't die. Something in her body caused that to happen. If we knew what that was, we could have prevented it. If we knew where the spark of life came from, perhaps we could keep it burning forever—or relight it whenever we needed.

FATHER. If there are answers, Victor, you won't find them here.

VICTOR. I'm not going, Father.

ELIZABETH. Not going?

VICTOR. My family is more important to me.

ELIZABETH. (*Laughs.*) It seems that I, at least, have become very important to you. (*She holds up the papers she brought in.*) Justine found these as she was packing your things. Luckily, I was supervising.

VICTOR. You've started packing—

ELIZABETH. Look, Victor. (*Slyly:*) I think perhaps you shouldn't, Father.

VICTOR. These are my anatomical studies.

ELIZABETH. More revealing than most portraits, I'd say.

VICTOR. These are scientific drawings of the human body, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. They all have my face, Victor.

(Shocked silence as VICTOR and FATHER look.)

VICTOR. I—I—

FATHER. Yes, the resemblance is clear. They're very good.

(ELIZABETH playfully "slaps" his face.)

VICTOR. Elizabeth, I—

ELIZABETH. They're beautiful, Victor. Though I do think my hips should be a bit thinner.

(She smiles at him. He smiles back.)

VICTOR. Objectively speaking, I think the hips are perfection. Of course, my objectivity is now highly in question.

ELIZABETH. Do you know what William just said to me? I was trying to explain that mother's death meant she wouldn't be with us any more and he said, "Oh, no, she'll be with us again. Victor will bring her back. That's what God's sending him to learn at the university."

(She gently touches his face. He puts his hand on hers. She and FATHER freeze.)

Scene 4

(The beating sound has begun again but it is transformed: it is light and lovely, a series of high-pitched bells. The lights shift. VICTOR goes to the coffin. As he does so, the bells begin to grow. A FIGURE rises from the coffin. She wears a long black dress. Her hair is silver-gray, long and beautiful, but her face cannot be seen; it is wrapped like a mummy. She rises to her full height. She stands, stiff; almost inanimate. VICTOR rushes to her.)

VICTOR'S VOICE. Mother.

(She stands, unmoving. VICTOR kisses her gently.)

VICTOR'S VOICE. Live.

(The FIGURE/MOTHER starts to move, to "come to life." VICTOR laughs. He touches MOTHER on the face. He reaches up with

his other hand. He lifts the mummy mask and gray hair from her face. She is young and beautiful.)

VICTOR'S VOICE. Beautiful.

(The beautiful young woman takes the mask in her hands and stares at it. VICTOR takes her hand and leads her from the coffin. She leaps out. ELIZABETH laughs happily. MOTHER and ELIZABETH clasp hands and twirl around, spinning off.)

VICTOR'S VOICE. Yes. Yes. Yes.

(VICTOR beams as the bells fade.)

Scene 5

(The lights shift as harsh laughter rings out. FATHER has transformed into Victor's PROFESSOR. He gazes at VICTOR.)

PROFESSOR. So that's why you've come to me, Frankenstein.

VICTOR. Professor, I—

PROFESSOR. How long have you studied with me?

VICTOR. Professor—

PROFESSOR. How long?!

VICTOR. More than a year.

PROFESSOR. And what have you learned, Frankenstein?

VICTOR. If one is observant and diligent, one may discover how the world works.

PROFESSOR. And you think you can break these rules, Frankenstein?

VICTOR. The world is—

PROFESSOR. The world is the world!

VICTOR. Can't we ever hope to improve it?

PROFESSOR. What do you think you're going to do? Bring your mother back to life? Make her rise up from the grave? Go take a

look in that grave, boy. It's full of worms and rotten flesh. Even the ooze in the eye sockets has crumbled to dust by now. Do you think you can make her live from bones and teeth?

VICTOR. I know my mother is dead, professor. I know I can't bring her back.

PROFESSOR. I'm sorry, Frankenstein. I don't mean to be harsh with you. But you are a brilliant student. The best I've ever had. You can do anything.

VICTOR. Except change the world. I don't mean to be disrespectful, professor, it's just that—

PROFESSOR. No, no. Let me make my proposal, now—before we start arguing again. You've been my assistant for almost a year. I offer you now the position of associate.

VICTOR. Professor, I'm flattered. That you, with all you've accomplished—

PROFESSOR. No speeches, Frankenstein. Is it yes or no?

VICTOR. Professor—I'm grateful for all you've taught me—

PROFESSOR. No, then.

VICTOR. Professor, I'm young—

PROFESSOR. And I'm old.

VICTOR. No.

(PROFESSOR laughs.)

VICTOR. I mean I've much to discover.

PROFESSOR. Let us do it together, Victor.

(PROFESSOR extends his hand to VICTOR. VICTOR hesitates.)

VICTOR. I believe it's possible to discover the basis of life.

PROFESSOR. Ahhch! Agrippa and Paracelsus again!

VICTOR. Yes, but with Harvey's work—

PROFESSOR. Are you speculating—or have you done the experiments? A scientist is concerned with what is, boy, not what might be.

VICTOR. We are alive, professor, therefore, there must be some force which keeps us that way. Have we no hope of discovering that force? Shouldn't we devote every possible effort to finding it, so we change this world from the place of pain and suffering it is into—

PROFESSOR. You think if we lived forever, there would be less suffering? We make our lives what they are. One man, given a loaf of bread, cries, "Why is there no meat?"; another, bent with pain, thanks god he can still see the beauty of the earth.

VICTOR. And I see no beauty?

PROFESSOR. You see it, but you spend your time crying for more instead of cherishing it.

VICTOR. And that's what I shall keep on doing. The world is too wondrous a place for us to just sit back and watch.

PROFESSOR. Prometheus was punished, Frankenstein, and Moses never got to the Promised Land.

VICTOR. I'm talking about making the world into a place children love instead of fear.

PROFESSOR. We're not children, Frankenstein.

(The PROFESSOR goes.)

Scene 6

(The ship's bell rings dully as the lights shift back to the normal "ship" level. The energy drains from VICTOR: he is weak, ill once more. The CREATURE appears in the shadows. VICTOR senses someone is behind him. The CREATURE begins to reach out his hand toward VICTOR. VICTOR turns abruptly.)

CREATURE. I'm waiting for you. Father.

(Cheery whistling is heard just offstage. The CREATURE looks toward the whistling then back at VICTOR.)

CREATURE. The moment's coming.

(The CREATURE quickly exits as WALTON enters.)

WALTON. *(Seeing the fleeing CREATURE:)* Jesus god, what is that?!

(WALTON rushes to the exit where the CREATURE vanished and peers out.)

It's racing across the ice like a demon. It looked almost human. That's why you're here. We've got to bring him in.

VICTOR. Let him stay out there. Perhaps, the ice'll break and he'll perish.

WALTON. Look, man, in my village, each winter, good men have been killed by storms that wrecked their boats. Storms generated by the polar ice. I've come up here to put an end to those storms. To try to release the tropical paradise that lies under the pole and turn the earth back to Eden once again. That creature out there wasn't nourished on ice and emptiness. He's come from that lush Eden.

VICTOR. That demon wasn't born in Eden. He was created in a laboratory.

WALTON. A laboratory? *(WALTON is shocked for a moment, then realizes:)* He's your creation?

VICTOR. My failure.

WALTON. No. Magnificent! *(He grasps VICTOR by the hand.)* A miracle! *(Shaking VICTOR's hand excitedly:)* Life, man, you created life! It's incredible! It's beautiful! Beautiful!

(WALTON "freezes" as the word "beautiful" echoes another time or two. The lights are shifting.)

Scene 7

(The light and lovely bells. A YOUNG WOMAN rushes joyously on. It is the glorious, young woman, the one VICTOR brought to life

from his mother's grave. As she circles around VICTOR and the frozen WALTON:)

YOUNG WOMAN. Beautiful.

VICTOR'S VOICE. Yes.

(She picks up the sheet and playfully drags it around and over VICTOR's shoulders.)

YOUNG WOMAN. Beautiful.

VICTOR'S VOICE. *(Laughing:)* Yes.

(She goes to the coffin throwing one end of the sheet in. MOTHER, in long black dress, silver hair and mummy mask, rises up holding the sheet.)

YOUNG WOMAN. Beautiful.

(MOTHER comes out of the coffin.)

VICTOR'S VOICE. Yes.

(As the two of them extend the sheet to its full dimensions and go to an upstage entrance:)

YOUNG WOMAN. New life.

MOTHER. New world.

(The CREATURE, hidden by the sheet, steps into the entrance. Keeping him hidden by the sheet, they lead the CREATURE to the creation table. As the CREATURE lies down on the table, MOTHER and the YOUNG WOMAN billow the sheet over him.)

YOUNG WOMAN. New life.

MOTHER. New world.

BOTH. Forever. *(They are gone.)*

Scene 8

(Lights. WALTON has transformed into PROFESSOR. VICTOR tries to pull away, but PROFESSOR holds tight.)

PROFESSOR. So good to see you, Frankenstein, so good. You don't mind my dropping by like this?

VICTOR. You'll excuse me, professor.

PROFESSOR. We can't sit down, together, just for a moment? You must have some wine.

VICTOR. I've given up sipping wine.

PROFESSOR. How long has it been since you've talked to anyone?

VICTOR. Are you worried about my sanity, or the effect on the vocal chords? I go out once a week for groceries. Would you like the shopkeeper's name?

PROFESSOR. You've got a fever.

VICTOR. My blood is boiling because I'm alive.

PROFESSOR. Let me make you some tea.

VICTOR. *(Laughs.)* You'd like to stay, wouldn't you? To observe, penetrate, steal! But I don't care. Stay. See how the world will be changed.

PROFESSOR. I'm going to get you a doctor.

VICTOR. No! The experiment is about to begin, professor. I'm about to produce the data you demanded. I went to the graveyard, you see. I dug up those rotting bodies. Dug them up at every stage of dripping, stinking decomposition. When was the life fully gone? One day? Two? A week? When the flesh on the fingertips was brittle, that of the genitals still had some spring to it. Was life a matter of moisture leaving the system? If I rehydrated a corpse, might it still possess some life? And of course, what was it that might bring the rehydrated lifeless organism back into our world? Was it purely some form of energy? Or was it something else entirely? Some intangible divine spark. But if it was that, how was it that every species of animal on earth was capable of creating that spark inside its own body? Perhaps, all I needed was to transfer my own sexual

energy to the corpse. Distill the spark from my own body and inject it—inject it—into a dead, bloated corpse. Like you.

(The PROFESSOR exits.)

VICTOR. Poor professor. You'll never understand.

(The musical high-pitched bells begin. VICTOR goes to the creation table. The CREATURE lies there, lifeless, under the sheet.)

VICTOR. *(Almost praying:)* I have taken human bodies and torn them apart, but I have not meant to commit a crime against life. I have built a new being and though it is large, I have not done this to affront the living. I have done it to make my work easier—and more beautiful. And the being that I hope will come forth from this work, I know, will feel the love I have given. I pray my work and his life will be a benefit to all humankind.

(VICTOR presses his hands to his heart. The bells continue, but underneath, now, we also hear the thumping sound. VICTOR places his hands firmly on the CREATURE's heart. Thunder, lightning, etc. The CREATURE, faced wrapped in bandages, starts to rise.)

Yes. Yes. *(Triumphant:)* Yes!

(He embraces the CREATURE. The CREATURE sits limp, arms at its side. VICTOR pulls away. He takes one of the CREATURE's hands.)

Cold. *(He feels for a pulse.)* Yes.

(He kisses the CREATURE's hand. The fingers tentatively start to move. VICTOR, overjoyed, presses the hand to his cheek.)

You are—

(The CREATURE's hand drops limp. He sinks back onto the table. VICTOR presses himself to the CREATURE, listening intently for a heartbeat. VICTOR pounds on the CREATURE's chest. No response. He pounds again. A flash of lightning. The CREATURE starts to rise once again. VICTOR laughs excitedly, pulls slightly away to look at the CREATURE.)

You are the most beautiful creature ever to—

(As VICTOR talks, the CREATURE's hands slowly move to VICTOR's neck, then his face.)

(Laughing:) We have conquered death! You and I! No one will suffer. No one will cry. Children will be at peace, wanting to grow, loving life. Because of us! Frankenstein and his—

(VICTOR's hands have gone to the CREATURE's face. He begins to unwrap the bandages.)

You must see me. You must see the world! And they must see you. The miracle. The one who will give every sick and pain-wracked being the hope to —

(The bandage is off. VICTOR sees the CREATURE's face for the first time. It is horrid, grotesque.)

No.

(All sounds stop. A very long moment with everything frozen. The CREATURE breaks the freeze, blinking its eyes, then touching its hand to its face. The thumping sound begins.)

(Very softly:) No.

(The CREATURE stops and listens for the sound, the word it has just heard. It rubs its ears.)

(A little louder:) No.

CREATURE. *(Reaching out its arms toward the sound:)* N—n—

VICTOR. *(Louder:)* No.

CREATURE. *(Stiffly, awkwardly moving toward the sound, toward VICTOR:)* N—no

(VICTOR continues to utter “no” as he backs away. The CREATURE continues to move after the sound, trying to grasp the sound with its hands. The thumping grows louder and faster as the awkward, stumbling chase proceeds. VICTOR backs away offstage; the CREATURE follows. VICTOR returns through another entrance; he is frantic. He looks to see if the CREATURE has followed. There is nothing. Pause. Then, the CREATURE appears like a lost, confused child. VICTOR screams. A flicker of recognition on the CREATURE's face.)

CREATURE. *(Smiling:)* N—no.

(It starts toward VICTOR. Finally VICTOR is backed against a wall. The CREATURE comes toward VICTOR but then continues past him and exits. VICTOR collapses.)

Scene 9

(As the lights shift, the bells begin, but they are now somehow distorted. The glorious YOUNG WOMAN (the beautiful, young “MOTHER”) floats onto the stage. VICTOR opens his eyes, sees her, is relieved. He noiselessly rises. As he goes to her—)

VICTOR’S VOICE. You’re the one.

(He reaches for her; she gently circles round him. He reaches again, this time, taking her in his arms.)

YOUNG WOMAN. *(In a voice like the Creature’s:)* No.

(As his hand touches her face, her face becomes distorted, seems to be crumbling.)

YOUNG WOMAN. *(Like the CREATURE:)* No. Noo. *(And continues throughout.)*

(VICTOR releases her. Her body now also becomes distorted. VICTOR backs away. Her hand outstretched, she pursues him. He grasps her by the throat. He snaps her neck. He carries her limp body to coffin and places it behind the coffin. He collapses.)

Scene 10

(The lights shift. The sound of someone tapping on wood. Pause. Then, the sound again. We realize it is someone knocking on the door.)

ELIZABETH. Victor? Victor, it’s me.

VICTOR. Elizabeth! *(They run to each other.)*

ELIZABETH. Justine and I had so much trouble finding this room. But you’re alive. Thank god. I dreamt you were dead. So did

William. It's been months, Victor, months since we've heard from you. Do you know what's it's done to Father?

VICTOR. I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH. He was certain something had happened. Sure you would have written unless—

VICTOR. I'm sorry—the work—

ELIZABETH. The work? That's all it's been? I could destroy every laboratory in Europe. Why did you leave the university? What are you doing here? *(He doesn't respond.)* What's wrong? Victor, look at me. What's wrong?

(He holds her tightly.)

VICTOR. Nothing. I love you.

(She looks at him, slightly surprised. She smiles.)

ELIZABETH. It's been harder than I'd imagined being without you.

(She kisses him. When they break, she touches his face as he touched the young woman's face in his dream. The YOUNG WOMAN (JUSTINE), who has remained on stage, laughs—the laugh is normal and friendly. VICTOR is startled.)

JUSTINE. I'm sorry, miss. I couldn't wait in the carriage, any more. You'd been so long.

VICTOR. Who are you? What are you doing here?!

ELIZABETH. Victor, it's Justine.

JUSTINE. It's good to see you, Mr. Victor. I'm glad you're all right. Shall I fetch the bags, now? Your mother is smiling in her grave, sir.

(She tries to pat him on the cheek.)

VICTOR. Leave me alone! Don't touch me!

ELIZABETH. Victor, what is it?

VICTOR. Can't you see? It's horrid, deformed.

ELIZABETH. You're burning up.

VICTOR. No.

ELIZABETH. Come lie down.

VICTOR. I'm freezing.

ELIZABETH. We'll take care of you.

JUSTINE. Have no fear, sir.

VICTOR. Stop it! Go away!

ELIZABETH. Victor, please.

VICTOR. It's still here! We've got to run!

JUSTINE. You need rest, Mr. Victor.

VICTOR. Leave me alone!

JUSTINE. *(To ELIZABETH:)* Help me.

VICTOR. Leave me alone!!

(JUSTINE with ELIZABETH's help has grabbed VICTOR, trying to get him to the bed. VICTOR struggles. JUSTINE slaps him. He is shocked for a second.)

JUSTINE. I'm sorry, Mr. Victor.

VICTOR. Justine?

JUSTINE. Yes, it's me.

(He hugs her.)

(To ELIZABETH:) You see, just like with babies.

VICTOR. *(Looks around:)* Is it really gone?

ELIZABETH. There's no one here but us.

(He slowly begins to laugh. They laugh, too.)

VICTOR. Gone, gone.

(His laughter is building, growing wild.)

ELIZABETH. Victor?

VICTOR. Gone! Gone!!

ELIZABETH. Victor, stop. Stop it!

(Suddenly at the height of his laughter, the thumping starts. He stops abruptly. He frantically looks around. He collapses.)

Scene 11

(The lights shift. The thumping sound, transformed. VICTOR is in bed. ELIZABETH and JUSTINE are frozen by his side. Slowly, the CREATURE approaches VICTOR. His voice is almost child-like.)

CREATURE. Everything was confusion. Sight and sound, smell and touch, all came at once. I struggled to find something fixed, secure. *(He has reached the bed.)* Then, one sound came louder.

(VICTOR sits up in the bed.)

VICTOR'S VOICE. No.

CREATURE. I moved toward it. But it moved away.

VICTOR'S VOICE. No!

CREATURE. Again it came and again I followed.

VICTOR'S VOICE. No!

CREATURE. But the more I pursued, the more it retreated.

VICTOR'S VOICE. *(Fainter:)* No!

CREATURE. I longed to call, "Stop! Please. Please!"

VICTOR'S VOICE. *(Faintly:)* Nooo.

CREATURE. But I knew not how to speak.

(The CREATURE drops to his knees by the bed and tries to hold back his tears as the sound of wind and rustling leaves rises.)

Then, suddenly I found myself in a cold, dark place filled with so many sounds that I trembled. I was terrified and I ran. Ran until I collapsed.

(VICTOR is embracing the CREATURE, comforting him.)

VICTOR. Sshh.

CREATURE. Alone. Alone in the forest. Even the animals ran from me. Learning what to eat, how to survive, all alone. Everyone runs from me.

VICTOR. No more.

CREATURE. The first man I remember—I approached him cautiously, yet when he saw me, he screamed and ran.

VICTOR. I won't run.

CREATURE. I reached out to each new one, and each ran.

VICTOR. It's all right, now.

CREATURE. Finally, I happened upon a village. I saw a man go to the door of a house and knock soundly upon it. A woman emerged. The two embraced and entered the house together. I knew my chance had come. I went to the door. I knocked soundly upon it. When the woman appeared, I opened my arms to embrace her. She shrieked.

VICTOR. No.

CREATURE. The man appeared. He began shouting and hitting me with a stick. From I know not where others came—all shouting and beating upon me until I ran, ran to save my life...

VICTOR. No!

(The CREATURE is sobbing; he seems a small, defeated child. VICTOR is holding him tightly. The CREATURE breaks away.)

CREATURE. *(His voice is changed:)* I do not run, now. I walk—with a purpose.

(He exits as the lights shift.)

Scene 12

(Music. VICTOR gazes after the CREATURE.)

ELIZABETH. You look very sad.

VICTOR. I keep feeling I've lost something.

(ELIZABETH *turns away.*)

JUSTINE. (*Whispering:*) Don't be discouraged. He's improving.

ELIZABETH. It's as if we're not even here.

JUSTINE. He needs you. Talk to him. (*JUSTINE exits.*)

ELIZABETH. Justine says the lake is lovely here. Victor? You're well enough to go out, now, you know?

VICTOR. (*He shivers.*) I'm so cold.

(*Silence.*)

ELIZABETH. I'm thinking of going home to Father. You don't really need me any longer. Justine can stay with you. Make sure you eat until you've got your strength back.

VICTOR. Do you think I care about food?

ELIZABETH. I'm sick of this, Victor. Sitting by your side, day and night, caring for you —

VICTOR. I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH. And you don't even notice.

VICTOR. I do.

ELIZABETH. You've lost something!

VICTOR. I'm sorry, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. I'm here, Victor, right here.

VICTOR. I know. It's because of you I've gotten better. You remind me there's a world beyond myself.

ELIZABETH. Then why won't you go out and see it?

VICTOR. It takes time.

ELIZABETH. No, Victor. It only takes getting out of bed.

(*They stare at each other for a moment.*)

VICTOR. You're right.

(*He stands, a little unsteady. He starts to collapse. She catches him.*)

VICTOR. You don't mind helping an invalid?

ELIZABETH. I don't mind. I'll call Justine.

VICTOR. *(Stops her:)* I think just the two of us would be nicer.

ELIZABETH. We could send her home to Father. To tell him you're on your feet again.

(They laugh as she touches his face.)

Scene 13

(Sound. The lights shift. The CREATURE speaks as he approaches them.)

CREATURE. Lovers gently stroking each other's flesh. Brothers innocently playing with their sisters. Parents laughing and caressing their children. I have seen how human beings may comfort each other, but I have had none of this pleasure.

(He reaches to stroke ELIZABETH's face, but VICTOR jumps in between the two of them.)

VICTOR. No!

CREATURE. Perhaps, I may touch you?

(He reaches towards VICTOR. VICTOR draws back.)

I once saw a father who loved his children. An old man. A gentle man—like you. I watched his family for months from a hiding place. I imagined they were my friends. Then, one day, when the old man was alone, I got up enough courage to make myself known to him. I hoped he wouldn't run from me. He was blind, you see. He said my voice was sincere, and I threw myself at his feet. But his son and daughter returned and saw me. They screamed with horror and beat me violently with sticks. I could easily have throttled them, but I retreated. I lay in my hiding place and sobbed as they gathered up the old man and fled. But when night came, rage and revenge beat through my soul. I set fire to their house and as I watched it burn to the ground, I howled. I declared everlasting war against humanity, most of all against him who had formed me.

(FATHER enters, searching.)

FATHER. William? William?

(From another place, JUSTINE enters also searching.)

JUSTINE. William?

CREATURE. (Strokes VICTOR's face:) We no longer run from each other.

FATHER. William?

CREATURE. (He towers above VICTOR:.) We walk—

JUSTINE. William?

CREATURE. With a purpose.

(He goes to JUSTINE.)

JUSTINE. Oh, my god!

(He puts his finger to her lips to silence her and lifts her into his arms.)

FATHER. My baby, my poor little baby.

(The CREATURE kisses JUSTINE gently.)

JUSTINE. I'm guilty.

(The CREATURE exits carrying JUSTINE.)

CREATURE. A purpose.

Scene 14

(The lights shift as VICTOR watches the CREATURE exit. ELIZABETH is looking in a different direction—toward the "house." Neither of them is aware of FATHER.)

ELIZABETH. It's wonderful just seeing the house again, isn't it? Whenever I come back, I think of the first time. A ten year old who'd just lost her parents.

VICTOR. Something's wrong.

ELIZABETH. It's all right, Victor. We're home.

(FATHER takes a step toward them.)

FATHER. My children.

ELIZABETH. Father?

VICTOR. What is it?

FATHER. My children... *(He is weeping.)*

VICTOR. What's happened?

FATHER. William, Victor. William's dead.

ELIZABETH. No.

FATHER. We were walking in the fields. He went off to play. When he didn't return... We found him in one of the caves.

ELIZABETH. No. God, no.

(The three of them hold onto each other for a moment.)

VICTOR. How did it happen?

FATHER. I can't.

VICTOR. Tell me, Father. Please.

FATHER. That child, that sweet, innocent child.

ELIZABETH. I'm so sorry.

FATHER. I keep seeing that beautiful face—and those black marks on his neck.

VICTOR. Nooo!

ELIZABETH. Victor.

FATHER. I understand, Victor. I want to strike out at something, too. But we can't.

VICTOR. We can, Father. We must find him and tear the heart from his ugly body.

FATHER. No, Victor. I felt that too. I wanted to tighten the noose and watch the neck snap. But now that they've caught her—

VICTOR. Her?

FATHER. Justine. Our beloved, trusted Justine.

ELIZABETH. No. It can't be. She loved William. She raised him.

FATHER. I couldn't believe it either at first. But—she was gone the whole night William disappeared. When she returned, she was feverish, in a daze. And then, we found the locket William was wearing when he was killed, the one with the picture of your mother, Victor, in Justine's apron pocket. She'll be tried, today. It's as if another child's being taken from me.

VICTOR. She is innocent, Father. As innocent as William himself was.

FATHER. I wish it were so. But all the evidence is there.

VICTOR. She is not the murderer.

ELIZABETH. We must go to the court, Victor. We must tell them.

Scene 15

(The thumping sound. Lights shift; garish, grotesque. ELIZABETH and FATHER have frozen. The thumping transforms into a gavel pounding. JUSTINE slowly enters.)

VICTOR. I am the one! I am responsible!

JUSTINE. God bless you, sir, but I have confessed.

VICTOR. I am the murderer.

ELIZABETH. *(Still frozen:)* You're not, Victor. It's the shock.

JUSTINE. I lost my little boy in the mountains. I don't remember what happened.

VICTOR. I built the creature who did this.

JUSTINE. *(She opens her arms, crying:)* My poor little boy.

(The CREATURE enters. As he comes to JUSTINE, falls to his knees and embraces her.)

FATHER. *(Still frozen:)* It's nothing any of us did.

VICTOR. *(To JUSTINE:)* It was him, not you.

JUSTINE. They found me in a fever, almost out of my mind. *(To the CREATURE as if he were William:)* The locket you were wearing was in my apron.

CREATURE. I put it there.

JUSTINE. I must have torn it from your neck.

(She strokes the CREATURE's face.)

VICTOR. I did this.

ELIZABETH. *(Frozen:)* You need to rest.

VICTOR. I wanted him to be beautiful.

JUSTINE. *(To the CREATURE:)* How could I have wrapped my hands round this poor sweet child's neck? There must be evil within me. There's hatred and violence in us all, god knows.

FATHER. *(Frozen:)* You're a good son.

CREATURE. *(Stroking JUSTINE's face:)* I saw you sleeping in the barn. You looked so beautiful, so peaceful. I wanted to—hold you. I put the locket in your apron. I meant to destroy you.

VICTOR. I'm guilty.

ELIZABETH. *(Frozen:)* You're imagining it to save Justine.

VICTOR. *(Tearing the CREATURE from JUSTINE's arms:)* Look! Here is the murderer!

(VICTOR thrusts the CREATURE at ELIZABETH and FATHER. They do not react.)

Look at his face. Look at the ugly, evil hatred that drips from it. The palpable violence that flows from the bloated skin. And I—I am the one who created him. I am the one who tore him from the grave.

FATHER. *(Backing away:)* No one can bring a corpse to life.

VICTOR. I put myself into this ugly, evil body to make it live.

ELIZABETH. *(Backing away:)* You're imagining it.

VICTOR. This is me.

ELIZABETH. No.

(FATHER and ELIZABETH continue to back away from him.)

FATHER. Even if there were such a creature—

ELIZABETH. Even if you brought me face to face with it—

FATHER. I couldn't believe it.

(VICTOR releases the CREATURE.)

ELIZABETH. No one could believe it.

FATHER. No one.

VICTOR. But—

ELIZABETH. No one.

VICTOR. Wait.

FATHER. No one.

VICTOR. Wait!

(They are gone.)

FATHER'S and ELIZABETH'S VOICES. *(Echoing off:)* No one.

(VICTOR turns to JUSTINE.)

VICTOR. I'm sorry. I can't help you.

(The CREATURE turns to JUSTINE.)

VICTOR and CREATURE. I'm sorry.

(The sharp sound of a gavel pounding as JUSTINE turns abruptly facing the audience. She stands stiffly, lit by a spot, very afraid.)

VICTOR. No one would believe me.

(One sharp pound of the gavel. JUSTINE's hands snap behind her back as if they are tied there. She closes her eyes, quickly speaking her prayers under her breath. Then, suddenly, very loud, the rush of wind and the wooden clacking of a trap door swinging open as JUSTINE's head snaps to the side and her body goes limp. The slow squeaking of the door swinging on old, worn hinges. The CREATURE goes to her. The zing of a taut rope being cut. JUSTINE

collapses; the CREATURE catches her. Sound of the trap door being firmly shut. JUSTINE stands opening her eyes.)

JUSTINE. *(Reaching toward the CREATURE:)* My child.

(The CREATURE takes her hand.)

We shall be together forever.

(As they descend into the coffin, the lights shift back to “normal.”)

Scene 16

(ELIZABETH is with VICTOR.)

ELIZABETH. What is it? Why wouldn't you speak at the trial?

VICTOR. She's dead, Elizabeth. What's the use?

ELIZABETH. I pleaded with them to show mercy. They were willing to listen.

VICTOR. She had confessed.

ELIZABETH. If you, William's brother, had—

VICTOR. It wouldn't have done any good.

ELIZABETH. And so you let her be killed—because you imagine it wouldn't have done any good?

(VICTOR is silent, brooding. ELIZABETH watches him for a moment.)

ELIZABETH. The fever's gone, but you're worse.

VICTOR. Perhaps, I'll be dead soon.

ELIZABETH. Talk to me, Victor.

VICTOR. Will talking bring them back to life?

ELIZABETH. Will anything? Is bringing them back all that will satisfy you? Victor—darling—look at me.

(She takes his hand and puts it on her face.)

ELIZABETH. Feel how warm I am. Tears don't stop our hearts from pumping. Our bodies are wise, Victor. They're eager for life, even when our souls are struggling. . . . Let's go away. You've always loved the mountains. The cold, fresh air. The glistening ice.

(She touches his face.)

VICTOR'S VOICE. The mountains.

(The lights start to shift as the wind softly begins to blow.)

ELIZABETH. We could walk and walk.

VICTOR'S VOICE. *(Moving away from her:)* Walk and walk.

ELIZABETH. *(Reaching towards him as she backs offstage:)* And we'd be together again.

Scene 17

(Wind rushes. The lights have shifted. ELIZABETH is gone. VICTOR is alone. He takes a deep breath. He stands on the top of the platform and looks out as if seeing an expanse. He closes his eyes and opens his body to the elements.)

VICTOR. O wind.

(He kneels, placing his hands, then his face against the ground.)

O ice, beautiful ice. Let me share your strength.

(He lies on his back. He closes his eyes. Pause. The CREATURE appears. He carries a large stick. He slowly moves toward VICTOR. He hovers over VICTOR, clutching his stick tightly. He kneels by VICTOR's side and places his stick on the ground. He reaches towards VICTOR's face—his neck? His hand comes to rest on VICTOR's cheek. VICTOR opens his eyes, then sits up abruptly.)

CREATURE. Be calm, Frankenstein, I beg you. Hear me out before you vent your hatred on my head.

(VICTOR jumps up, sees the CREATURE's stick, grabs it and swings violently at the CREATURE. With ease, the CREATURE blocks the blow. The CREATURE wrests the stick from VICTOR's

grasp as VICTOR is thrown to the ground. The CREATURE looms over VICTOR.)

CREATURE. Remember you made me more powerful than your self; and though in the beginning I was hideously awkward, I am master now of my strength. Still, I am your creature and I will obey if you will only do your duty by me.

VICTOR. I have no duty to a murderer.

CREATURE. I did not mean to kill your brother. When he wandered into the cave where I hid and I saw his innocence, I hoped he might become my savior. But seeing me, he screamed and shouted. Though I assured him I'd do no harm, he violently cursed me. I grasped him by the throat only meaning to stop those curses.

VICTOR. Murderer! Despicable, evil—

CREATURE. No. I am good. I was created good. By you. Help me share in a bit of human happiness and you shall see my goodness.

VICTOR. Help you?

CREATURE. Help your child. I am wretched. I am miserable beyond all living things.

VICTOR. You dare touch me?

CREATURE. Yes, I dare. I dare to touch you, my father, my mother, my maker. I long to touch some other human being, yet all humanity rejects me. Even you who should be the first to embrace me, spurn me. If you refuse me, what aid can I expect from any other soul? Shall I spend the rest of my days as I have spent so many already: roaming abandoned among the ice and caves of the wilderness? I will not! You will help me! You will comply with my wishes or I will wreak such destruction upon you and your world that even these high ices shall turn red from the flow of blood! ...You have moved me to say what I dared not even think. Your rage has spawned mine just as your hand formed my body.

VICTOR. I curse these hands for having formed you.

CREATURE. You cannot curse them more than I have.

VICTOR. You were my dream. Strong, wise, beautiful—beyond the reach of death's grasp.

CREATURE. Yet, you abandoned me. You threw me out into the dark night. I have seen the wildest of animals care for their young. I have watched the most abject of humans stroke each other's cheeks. But I have had no one. I have had only ice, rock and soil to comfort me.

VICTOR. When you should have had me...

CREATURE. You see that I reason with you, that I feel as deeply as any being. I have taught myself to speak and to read. There is no one who trods the earth with more strength and energy than I. I am the child of which you dreamt.

VICTOR. Oh, God...

CREATURE. Father.

VICTOR. I cannot.

CREATURE. Father.

VICTOR. I gave you life. Let that be enough.

CREATURE. I am alone.

VICTOR. There is nothing I can do for you.

CREATURE. Because I am ugly.

VICTOR. I must go.

CREATURE. Because I am ugly?!

VICTOR. Yes.

CREATURE. Then I should tear your eyes from their sockets so you may see my beauty with your own blood.

(He throws VICTOR aside and turns away.)

VICTOR. Why is it so? You are skin and muscle and bone, tissue, nerve, and blood just as all of us are. I should see you as human.

CREATURE. I am human! I was foolish to hope that we might embrace one another. You cannot give me comfort. None of your kind

can. But I must have a companion. I cannot go on alone. You must help me. You must create another as deformed as myself. She will not deny me.

VICTOR. Another like you.

CREATURE. Yes, a mate. You could create such a being.

VICTOR. No. Kill me, if you like, but I cannot.

CREATURE. There is no reason for any more death. You fear that my mate will cause more destruction. But neither my mate nor I will have any reason to seek humanity. Our only comfort will be from each other. We will be happy knowing that we are of the same origin. The rest of the world will offer us nothing. We shall never seek human contact again.

VICTOR. I have given the world enough misery. I pity you but —

CREATURE. Do not pity me! You have brought a child into the world and he is unhappy. Bring another into the world and there will be joy. You are a scientist who has created life. Use all that your creator has given you and bring forth life again but even more wondrously so your dream is complete. Do this and you will see the goodness and beauty that swells from the depth of my being. I swear to you by the earth that I inhabit and by you, you that made me: with the companion you bestow, I will quit humankind and dwell in the most savage of places—in the desert, on the ice. You will be free of me. My life will flow quietly away, and in my dying moments, I will not curse my maker.

(A slow, sad, sustained sound as the lights shift.)

Scene 18

(A figure— the MATE, covered by a sheet, and ELIZABETH slowly spin on, holding hands. They twirl around VICTOR. The MATE collapses in the CREATURE's arms as ELIZABETH spins off.)

CREATURE. She's waiting for you.

(The CREATURE places the MATE on the table and begins backing off stage.)

CREATURE. What is and what might be. What is and— *(He's gone.)*
(The sound has stopped. The lights shift.)

Scene 19

(VICTOR is alone in the laboratory. The MATE lies there, lifeless, a sheet over her. Her face is bandaged.)

VICTOR. If I give you life, you'll make him happy. There will be peace. Perhaps, the world may even see your power, your beauty, your intelligence. *(His hands are on her heart.)* My life creating yours. My spark touching, flowing into, animating. Giving warmth and breath. There's nothing to fear.

(Lightning. Thunder. The thumping and the bells have begun again. The lights are shifting. She begins to rise just as the CREATURE did at his creation.)

Yes. Yes. Yes!

(The MATE is alive.)

Look at you. *(He begins to unwrap the bandage on her face.)* You're everything we were meant to be. Everything we long for. Everything that fills the world with—

(The bandage is off. Her face is horrid, disfigured. She gently reaches towards VICTOR, beautifully, gracefully. He grasps her hand and kisses it.)

Thank you.

(She sighs audibly, drawing her hand back to stare at it. VICTOR laughs happily.)

You are beautiful.

MATE. *(Trying to imitate his words:)* Oo—ar—

VICTOR. *(Helping her:)* You—are—

CREATURE. Mine.

(The CREATURE is there, dressed elegantly—as if he were attending his own formal wedding. He moves slowly toward her.)

CREATURE. My darling. My love. I shall teach you to move, to speak, to love. Come.

(He reaches his hand toward her. She stares at him uncomprehending.)

CREATURE. This is my hand.

MATE. Hand.

CREATURE. Place yours gently in mine and I shall show you the world.

(She stares at the CREATURE's hand, then her own. She understands. She starts to reach towards him. Music—a stately court dance. They move slowly to each other. Before they touch, they stop. An awkward, yet graceful bow and curtsy. She extends her hand to him as a lady does to a gentleman. He takes it as a gentleman would. The moment they touch, freeze. They emit primitive sounds. They withdraw their hands. They circle each other. A bow and curtsy once again—this time with perhaps a hint of distortion. He extends his hand to her. She takes it. The moment they touch, freeze. Wailing sounds. They withdraw and circle. Again the bow and curtsy—this time, fully grotesque. Now, both hands reach out—grabbing desperately, perhaps almost clawing. The hands clutch each other, freeze. Then, simultaneously, he pulls her to him as she drops to her knees. She clutches him around the legs, her head pressed to his groin. He lifts her in his arms and takes her to the bed. He lays her gently on the bed, then climbs atop, standing upright, straddling her.)

CREATURE. Now, it is my seed that shall give life. We shall make a race of our own to inherit the deserts of the earth. A race of demons to rule the icy wastes of this glorious globe. A race of gods who live above and beyond the limits of mere humanity. And when we have filled the voids of this world with our grandeur, our progeny shall trample the human anthills which sprawl at their feet.

(Lightning. Thunder.)

VICTOR. *(Screaming:)* Noooo!

Scene 20

(The lights have shifted. The music has stopped. The lifeless MATE lies still on the table. The CREATURE is nowhere to be seen. VICTOR is alone in the laboratory.)

VICTOR. No. Oh, god, no. *(Covering her with the sheet as if to protect her:)* No, no, no. He is not such a monster, but still... *(He touches her face gently.)* Still. I am responsible. *(He takes out a knife. He kisses her.)* Forgive me.

(He stabs her. He stabs her again. A red stain spreads over the sheet. He collapses over the body and sobs quietly. The CREATURE appears. He sees the MATE. He smiles contentedly and sighs.)

CREATURE. *(Softly:)* Beautiful.

(VICTOR looks up at the CREATURE.)

VICTOR. I'm sorry.

CREATURE. *(He sees the bloody sheet.)* No. Nooo!

(He rushes to VICTOR, pushing him from the MATE, knocking him to the floor. He clutches the lifeless MATE, wrapped in the bloody sheet.)

CREATURE. You must live. *(Kisses her.)* Live. *(Kisses her.)* Live.

(She is still. He emits a single, long, deep wail.)

VICTOR. I'm sorry.

(The CREATURE looks at VICTOR for the first time.)

VICTOR. If you kill me, you'll have no one.

CREATURE. I have no one, now.

VICTOR. You have me. If I'm gone—

CREATURE. I'll have no hope to blind me.

VICTOR. Let us try, at least. Let us—

CREATURE. Did you love her? Have you loved me? You know how to create life but not how to bring joy. You know how to end

life but not how to make it full. You know all the grand secrets but none of the simplest, essential ones. You know nothing.

(The CREATURE is about to snap VICTOR's neck.)

CREATURE. No. Why should I relieve you of your suffering? I can snap your neck whenever I wish. I shall let you live for now. You shall be the one with the tormented dreams. From this moment, the light of day shall become hateful to you. Your life shall be as mine.

(He lifts the MATE in his arms and starts to go.)

VICTOR. We may still find a way.

CREATURE. When you take your bride and the sheet turns red—like this, then we shall find a way. I shall be with you on your wedding night.

(The CREATURE exits, carrying the MATE.)

Scene 21

(Music. The lights shift as FATHER and ELIZABETH twirl on, dancing, waltzing together—perhaps the music is a jolly version of what the CREATURE and MATE danced to.)

FATHER. Finally, Victor. Finally.

ELIZABETH. I'm so happy.

VICTOR. My wedding.

FATHER. It's what your mother always dreamed of.

(The CREATURE and MATE waltz on. They are happy, smiling.)

MATE. It's what we've all dreamed of.

CREATURE. Our chance to be together.

VICTOR. No.

FATHER. You're not going to spoil the party, are you, Victor?

ELIZABETH. Come dance with us, Victor.

(She and FATHER take him by the hands, circling around.)

CREATURE. Yes.

MATE. Come dance with us.

(They break into the circle, the CREATURE taking VICTOR's hand, the MATE taking ELIZABETH's.)

VICTOR. *(Trying to break away:)* I can't.

FATHER. *(Holding tight:)* Of course, you can.

CREATURE. You must.

ELIZABETH. It's fun.

MATE. Yes.

FATHER. We need to enjoy ourselves.

CREATURE. Yes.

ELIZABETH. Together.

VICTOR. Together.

MATE. Yes.

FATHER. Enjoying life.

VICTOR. Yes.

MATE. A new life.

VICTOR. Yes.

ELIZABETH. A new world.

VICTOR. Yes.

CREATURE. All as one.

ELIZABETH, MATE, FATHER, VICTOR. All as—

(The music stops with a harsh chord. The CREATURE pulls VICTOR out of the circle, grasping him by the neck about to kill him, holding VICTOR just as he did in the previous scene. ELIZABETH and the MATE are still, clasping each other's hands. FATHER stands apart and transforms into the PROFESSOR.)

CREATURE. Here's my wedding gift.

(The CREATURE begins to twist VICTOR's head.)

PROFESSOR. My god, Frankenstein, you've done it! A corpse brought to life! Fantastic! Your experiment has succeeded.

CREATURE. Not yet.

PROFESSOR. He even speaks!

VICTOR. I don't want to die.

PROFESSOR. You've proved you can change the world.

VICTOR. Let me go.

PROFESSOR. How can you stop now? You're so close.

CREATURE. You must save me.

PROFESSOR. A wedding's your only hope.

VICTOR. I can't.

ELIZABETH and MATE. Then all will be lost.

(ELIZABETH and the MATE, holding hands, circle around, spinning slowly away from VICTOR, just as Elizabeth and "Mother" did in Scene 4.)

ELIZABETH and MATE. Our lives lost.

PROFESSOR. Take your bride, my boy.

ELIZABETH and MATE. The world lost.

PROFESSOR. Take her.

ELIZABETH and MATE. All love lost.

(They are about to spin off the stage.)

VICTOR. Stop, stop.

(They stop.)

I will.

(ELIZABETH and the MATE spin once more and separate. ELIZABETH is propelled off stage; the MATE rushes headlong toward VICTOR. At the same time, the CREATURE thrusts

VICTOR *towards the onrushing MATE. VICTOR and the MATE run past each other, the MATE jumping into the CREATURE's wide open arms and VICTOR falling into the PROFESSOR's. The CREATURE and MATE exit as the PROFESSOR embraces VICTOR.*)

Scene 22

(The lights shift. PROFESSOR transforms into FATHER.)

FATHER. My son, my son is back!

VICTOR. I'm going to make you happier still, Father. I would like Elizabeth's hand in marriage.

FATHER. *(Unable to believe the good news:)* No?

VICTOR. Yes. Would you be so kind as to grant me the honor?

FATHER. *(He clasps VICTOR in his arms:)* Ah, Victor, Victor. You don't know the joy... I'd stopped hoping . . . We shall have a celebration like this town's never imagined! *(Exiting:)* Elizabeth! Elizabeth!

Scene 23

(The lights shift. A FEMALE FIGURE, completely covered by a sheet, enters. At first, she moves like some specter or ghost; then, she starts to giggle. She and VICTOR laugh and tickle each other as they fall into bed. They are both under the sheet, kissing. The kiss ends.)

FEMALE FIGURE. You see, my darling, there was nothing to fear.

(VICTOR pulls the sheet from over them. He—and we—see that it is the MATE, horrid, perhaps still bloody. He backs away from her. She exits laughing.)

Scene 24

(The lights shift. ELIZABETH, laughing, enters.)

ELIZABETH. Father just told me. Oh, Victor, finally, finally.

VICTOR. Yes.

ELIZABETH. I told him the sooner, the better.

VICTOR. Yes, of course.

(She looks at him hard for a moment.)

ELIZABETH. I don't want this out of some foolish sense of duty. Not to me or Father or mother's memory or whatever else you imagine—

VICTOR. It's not.

ELIZABETH. It's not?

VICTOR. No.

(She looks at him, probing.)

VICTOR. I want to marry you.

ELIZABETH. You might have said you loved me.

VICTOR. I do.

ELIZABETH. But you're not happy.

VICTOR. I am.

ELIZABETH. I will not marry you, Victor.

VICTOR. Elizabeth, I—

ELIZABETH. I don't want more misery. I've spent my whole life shouldering burdens. All I want now is some simple happiness—and if you can't give that to me—

VICTOR. There is no simple happiness. Elizabeth . . . I created a human being. I brought a corpse back to life. He was the one who killed William. And now, he has sworn to kill me on my wedding night. But his revenge is just. I've denied him, literally taken away

the comfort and joy from his life. Even after I discovered how miraculous he was. He taught himself to speak, to read, to reason.

ELIZABETH. He killed William.

VICTOR. There's goodness within him. I want to redeem that.

ELIZABETH. And he's coming to kill you. We must flee. We must—

VICTOR. No. I ran from him at his birth. I must wait for him, now. I love you so much. And because of that I say to myself, we should not be wed. But I must have a wedding to confront him. I ask you to marry me because you are the only bride my heart has ever longed for. He is the shadow over our union. But our union shall be nothing but joyous.

ELIZABETH. Then let us embrace the danger. Let us run through the storm, laughing at the lightning. If we're struck, we'll be in each other's arms, full of life and each other till the final moment.

(They are in each other's arms. They kiss.)

Scene 25

FATHER. Yes, yes!!

(Wedding music blares. The lights shift.)

Truly a match created in heaven. The sight will bring God to his knees with joy. I say to you, my children, be happy. You are bound to each other by love and that's a bond which lasts a lifetime.

(Music. The same that the CREATURE and MATE danced to. VICTOR and ELIZABETH dance it as a mirror of the CREATURE and the MATE: where there was distortion, there is playfulness; where there was base desire, there is tenderness. As they dance, the CREATURE appears as a huge shadow. He dances along with them. The dance ends. VICTOR sweeps ELIZABETH into his arms and carries her to the bed. The CREATURE is gone.)

Scene 26

(VICTOR lays ELIZABETH on the bed and starts to climb atop the bed, just as the CREATURE did. He and ELIZABETH are both laughing.)

ELIZABETH. I've never done this before you know.

VICTOR. I should hope not.

ELIZABETH. A little experience, though, does make one ever so much better, they say.

VICTOR. Elizabeth! I'm shocked!

(He mock turns away. She has an idea and puts the sheet over her head.)

ELIZABETH. *(Sneaking up on him:)* I just hope you won't be disappointed.

(She begins tickling him, just as the Mate did in Scene 23. VICTOR turns laughing, then sees her under the sheet. He draws back. She pokes her head out from under the sheet.)

ELIZABETH. Victor, darling, there's nothing to fear.

VICTOR. It's time.

ELIZABETH. You've done all you can. We'll hear him if he comes.

VICTOR. *(He's gotten out a pistol. He kisses her.)* You are beautiful.

(He starts to go.)

ELIZABETH. Let me come with you. I'm not afraid.

VICTOR. I must do it alone. I love you.

ELIZABETH. I love you.

(He exits. She waits. The lights dim as if a cloud has covered the moon. From an entrance different from where VICTOR exited, a hand slowly appears. A FIGURE stealthfully enters in the darkness. ELIZABETH turns abruptly.)

ELIZABETH. Victor? Victor, is that you? Victor?!

THE FIGURE. Sshh.

ELIZABETH. Victor?!

THE FIGURE. *(From the dark:)* You must be quiet.

ELIZABETH. Oh, Victor, thank god.

VICTOR / THE FIGURE. Everything depends on this moment. You must be calm.

ELIZABETH. I will.

VICTOR. Good.

(Suddenly, a crashing noise, off.)

VICTOR. *(Rushes off after the noise:)* Now.

(Pause. Another, much larger, FIGURE glides to the bed. It clasps ELIZABETH from behind, by the shoulders. She starts to scream.)

THE LARGE FIGURE. Sssh.

ELIZABETH. Oh, Victor, just hold me. Hold me.

(She closes her eyes, turns and collapses against the figure, holding her face up to be kissed. The clouds pass from the moon and we see the CREATURE in his elegant wedding dress holding ELIZABETH. He kisses her. The kiss ends. She opens her eyes. Before she can scream, the CREATURE places his fingers to her lips. With great effort, she keeps control of herself. She touches his face.)

CREATURE. Why do you touch me?

ELIZABETH. He made you.

CREATURE. He did not make me. I have no mother or father.

ELIZABETH. You have him.

CREATURE. Oh, yes, I have him.

ELIZABETH. He could still love you.

CREATURE. You perhaps could.

ELIZABETH. You must leave him alone.

CREATURE. I shall.

(He takes her face in his hands and forces a kiss. He snaps her neck. He lays her gently on the bed.)

CREATURE. I shall.

(He withdraws into the shadows and watches. VICTOR enters. He sees ELIZABETH sprawled on the bed.)

VICTOR. No. Nooo. No.

(He cradles her in his arms, just as the CREATURE cradled his dead MATE.)

Scene 27

(Sound as the lights shift. The MATE enters. She goes to ELIZABETH.)

MATE. I've been waiting for you. You're so beautiful. Shall we run through the storm together? *(Trying to take ELIZABETH from VICTOR's arms:)* There's nothing to fear. *(Stroking VICTOR's face:)* I love you.

(As the MATE strokes VICTOR's face, the dead ELIZABETH rises from his arms, going almost into the MATE's. ELIZABETH and the MATE move away from him together in a kind of billowing, eerie dance. ELIZABETH faintly echoes the MATE's words.)

MATE. Let us run through the storm.

ELIZABETH. Run.

MATE. One forever.

ELIZABETH. One.

MATE. Sharing our dreams.

ELIZABETH. One.

MATE. Embracing the danger.

ELIZABETH. Forever.

MATE. In each other's arms.

ELIZABETH. One.

MATE. Full of life.

ELIZABETH. Full of—

ELIZABETH and MATE. Life. Forever!

(They have reached and climbed into the coffin. They look into each other's eyes. They laugh and start to "play.")

ELIZABETH. *(Very "girlish," almost giggly:)* You might have said you loved me.

MATE. *(Girlish, giggling:)* I love you. *(To VICTOR, still giggling:)* I love you.

ELIZABETH. *(To VICTOR, serious:)* I love you

(The MATE pulls ELIZABETH into the coffin.)

Scene 28

(The lights shift.)

VICTOR. Why? Why didn't I see? . . . Forgive me, Elizabeth.

(The CREATURE emerges from the shadows.)

CREATURE. How can she, Frankenstein? She is merely a lump of rotting flesh, now.

VICTOR. *(Attacking the CREATURE:)* You—

CREATURE. *(Holds VICTOR close to him:)* I'm sorry. My condolences. But she can't forgive you: she's a corpse. And corpses are incapable of feeling and speaking, you know. Unless by some miraculous good fortune, they receive the divine seed of re-animation. Why don't you give her that seed, Frankenstein? Why don't you bring her back? Then, perhaps, she'll forgive you. And, then, perhaps, she can become my mate. You can fulfill your promise to me and your wedding vows, both at once.

(The CREATURE drops the limp VICTOR on the ground.)

VICTOR. Leave me alone.

CREATURE. No. Never.

VICTOR. You've had your revenge.

CREATURE. Oh, I understand the depth of your loss all too well. But you have not reached the bottom yet. When all humanity ceases to exist for you, then, then you shall be my equal.

(FATHER enters, weeping. He weakly drags himself to the coffin.)

FATHER. Elizabeth, Elizabeth.

(He is in despair. He drops to his knees by the coffin. His head rests against the coffin as he sobs.)

VICTOR. Father.

FATHER. My daughter, my darling girl.

VICTOR. Father.

CREATURE. Let him have a moment for his own grief before he's forced to share yours.

(FATHER's sobs have stopped. He is still.)

VICTOR. *(Alarmed, rushes to him:)* Father! Father!

CREATURE. *(Laughs.)* We are soulmates. Your world is turning to ice!

VICTOR. Nooo!

(VICTOR grabs the pistol and rushes after the CREATURE, firing. The CREATURE has disappeared.)

Scene 29

(The lights shift. FATHER has transformed into WALTON and rushes to VICTOR.)

WALTON. What are you trying to do?

(He grabs the pistol from VICTOR.)

WALTON. Do you want to bring the ice down on us? Do you want the whole ship buried and frozen?

VICTOR. He's killed Elizabeth. She's dead.

WALTON. There's no one dead here, yet.

VICTOR. You're dead, too, Father.

WALTON. Look at me, man. Am I your father?

VICTOR. Her death was too great a shock for you. You were buried together.

WALTON. Victor, look at me, man, look at me!

VICTOR. *(Finally truly seeing him:)* Walton. They're dead. All of them. Father, Elizabeth—

WALTON. Victor, that's behind you. It's the ice, now. It's building all around us. Like mountains. Breaking through the surface, rising up like giants trying to strangle us.

VICTOR. He's out there.

WALTON. The crew is about to mutiny. They're sure I've brought them to their death. And if you fire this again, they'll be right.

VICTOR. He'll be destroyed.

WALTON. We'll all be.

VICTOR. No. I've got to find him. I'm the one who's got to destroy him.

(A strange, startling sound, off.)

WALTON. The ice. *(He rushes out.)*

Scene 30

(The lights are shifting. Strange sounds fill the air. VICTOR goes to the coffin. A huge hooded FIGURE is by the coffin; the FIGURE, as if he were a priest, makes the sign of the cross over VICTOR.)

VICTOR. *(Kneeling by the coffin:)* Father, Elizabeth, William. I swear to you, by the sacred earth on which I kneel, he shall follow you to this grave. I swear to you that I will turn his world into nothing but a reflection of his own deformity.

THE HOODED FIGURE. How will you do that, my son?

VICTOR. I will track him down. I will follow him across the entire continent, to the edges of the globe if I have to.

THE HOODED FIGURE. Good.

VICTOR. I will not let him rest. I will not rest—until I have restored his flesh to its home, to the earth, to the cold earth from which I tore it.

(The hooded FIGURE removes his hood; it is the CREATURE.)

CREATURE. Come with me, then. Follow me across the frozen sea.

(VICTOR turns and sees it is the CREATURE.)

CREATURE. Come with me to our icy bed. To the pole.

VICTOR. It will be your grave. I'll tear your life from you—I'll rip open your heart and suck away every last drop of blood.

CREATURE. Not till you have suffered beyond what you can bear. Not till you have lost every drop of humanity. Not till you have given up every hope, every dream. Even that of my death. When you are beyond your limit, when you have not even a self left, nothing but the weakest breath to sustain you, then I will snap your neck and find my grave.

VICTOR. You'll be where you belong.

CREATURE. Where we both belong. We're on the battleground, now.

VICTOR. Good. To the pole.

CREATURE. You never loved me. I opened my arms and you ran from me. You threw me into the cold.

VICTOR. You deserved rejection. You're horrid, ugly, a monster no one could love.

CREATURE. Because you made me so. In your image, dredged from the filth of your soul.

VICTOR. Your evil sucked every virtue from the world.

CREATURE. Yours did. Yours and humanity's.

VICTOR. There is no good in the world.

CREATURE. No compassion.

VICTOR. No beauty.

CREATURE. No forgiveness, no love.

VICTOR. We are all filled with evil. We spew it into the world. We breathe our poisons on each other until we have turned bodies to ashes and the earth to ice.

CREATURE. We're becoming one. No longer human. No longer alive.

VICTOR. I feel your strength surging through me.

CREATURE. Our moment's close.

VICTOR. I feel it.

CREATURE. Yes.

VICTOR. I hate you.

CREATURE. I despise you.

VICTOR. I abhor you.

CREATURE. Now.

VICTOR. Now.

CREATURE. Now.

(There is a tremendous noise, the crashing, cracking, wrenching splitting of ice.)

Scene 31

(The lights shift as WALTON rushes on. The CREATURE remains but is not seen.)

WALTON. The ice is breaking! We're free.

VICTOR. No.

WALTON. Victor, we're saved.

VICTOR. No, everything must be destroyed.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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