

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.

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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

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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.

End of Freeview

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