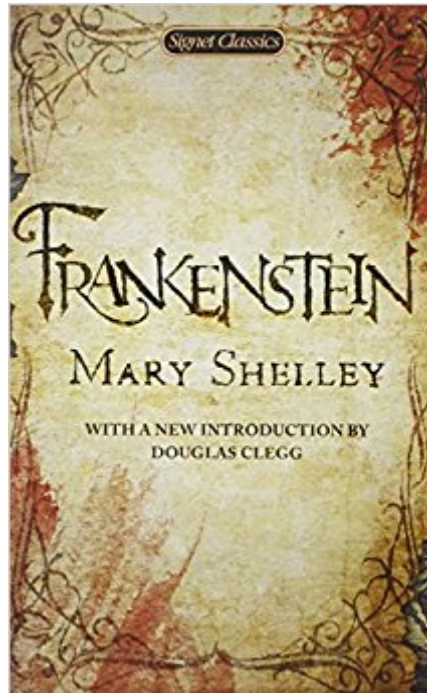




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# Frankenstein (Signet Classics)



## Synopsis

Mary Shelley blurs the line between man and monster in this classic gothic masterpiece. The story of Victor Frankenstein and the monstrous creature he created has held readers spellbound ever since it was published almost two centuries ago. On the surface, it is a novel of tense and steadily mounting horror; but on a more profound level, it offers searching illumination of the human condition in its portrayal of a scientist who oversteps the bounds of conscience, and of a monster brought to life in an alien world, ever more desperately attempting to escape the torture of his solitude. A novel of hallucinatory intensity, *Frankenstein* represents one of the most striking flowerings of the Romantic imagination. ~ ~ With an Introduction by Douglas Clegg And an Afterword by Harold Bloom

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*Frankenstein*, loved by many decades of readers and praised by such eminent literary critics as Harold Bloom, seems hardly to need a recommendation. If you haven't read it recently, though, you may not remember the sweeping force of the prose, the grotesque, surreal imagery, and the multilayered doppelgänger themes of Mary Shelley's masterpiece. As fantasy writer Jane Yolen writes of this (the reviewer's favorite) edition, "The strong black and whites of the main text [illustrations] are dark and brooding, with unremitting shadows and stark contrasts. But the central conversation with the monster--who owes nothing to the overused movie image &#x85; but is rather the novel's charnel-house composite--is where [Barry] Moser's illustrations show their greatest

power ... The viewer can all but smell the powerful stench of the monster's breath as its words spill out across the page. Strong book-making for one of the world's strongest and most remarkable books." Includes an illuminating afterword by Joyce Carol Oates. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Grade 3-7-Large print, short chapters, and an abundance of white space provide an attractive, more-accessible option for readers who are not ready to handle the originals. At best, this approach works as a vehicle to deliver the basic elements of the stories while providing an entertaining, simplified version of the classic at a lower reading level. After all, many of our cultural references would be lost on readers who don't know what Jekyll and Hyde represent, or what consequences the creator of Frankenstein faced. At worst, the sometimes-stilted language reads like awkward translations. What is missing, of course, is the very language that makes these classics so evocative of their time. Victorian London, for example, is captured so much more readily with the elegant and dramatic prose of Robert Louis Stevenson. If presenting Classic Starts, do so with a recommendation: when you are ready, read the originals. There can be no substitute.-Elizabeth Fernandez, Brunswick Middle School, Greenwich, CT Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

If you're reading this review, you only have one question. You're not looking for a book review, you already know it's a classic. You already know this is the most original, and one of the best, and best-written horror stories in literature. You may or may not like the story, but that's a matter of personal taste. A lot of people don't like Shakespeare, but no one questions whether he was a good writer or not. If you don't like the writing style, it's because you aren't familiar with the English of this period. Nearly eighty years before Stoker's "Dracula" ( an idea stolen from Polidori's "The Vampyre", which was an idea stolen from LeFanu's "Carmilla"), this most-original horror masterpiece was born. So, your only question is, "Is this really the uncensored 1818 version? Because I've only seen one other verified version, and it's over twenty dollars in paperback. All the others claiming to be the 1818 version have been disproved." YES, as far as I can tell, it is. The only preface is Shelley's own original. There is no introduction, no commentary or editorial credits whatsoever. There are no illustrations, and the spelling and language have not been edited. Have a good thesaurus handy. So, here it is, the author's original script, no frills, for a bargain price. Which is exactly what I was looking for.

This, of course, is the classic monster story. It is Gothic and pre Victorian in style. As such, it is distinctly different than a modern flowing narrative. Speaking for myself, I found it more interesting and educational than enjoyable. The story seems, at times, to drag and becomes tedious. It is also Gothic to the point of being occasionally ghastly. The violence is described in a manner that is not graphic. As an example, Dean Koontz authored a "novelization" of the screenplay for the movie "Funhouse". The reason I mention that work is it is about a physically large being acting violently. In that novelization the actual violence is much more graphically depicted. The violence in "Frankenstein" is less graphically depicted, but if anything, somewhat more repugnant. Mary Shelley was the wife of the iconic poet Percy Shelley. They and friends were considering writing a ghost story. As a result Mary Shelley composed this work. This, of course is a monster story as opposed to a ghost story and is an early example of such a story. The story makes many references to other classic works of literature. These references include, the poem of "The Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Paradise Lost", Plutarch's Lives, "The Sorrows of Young Werther" by Goethe, and other works. As such this story can also serve as a basis of for further study. I reread "The Ancient Mariner" and read for the first time the Goethe work as a result of "Frankenstein". I enjoy the study of literature but am a self taught student and not a scholar. Therefore take this with a grain of salt. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein predates Edgar Allan Poe. I have never been able to figure out who inspired Edgar Allen Poe stylistically. This work reminds me of the writing of Edgar Allan Poe, although I prefer much of the writing of Edgar Allen Poe to this work. But I cannot help but wonder if Mary Shelley was an influence of Edgar Allen Poe. Additionally, very favorite author is George Eliot, birth name Mary Anne Evans. In 1859 George Eliot published an early science fiction novella titled "The Lifted Veil". I wish to emphasize that "The Lifted Veil" is NOT one of my favorite works of George Eliot. However I cannot help but again sense the influence of Mary Shelley in "The Lifted Veil". Please, if one has never read George Eliot, do not let this be the only work of hers that one reads. It is not representative of the vary best of George Eliot. In summary I am very glad that I read this work. But I cannot say that I really enjoyed it as a pure reading experience. I definitely prefer the Gothic works of Edgar Allan Poe to "Frankenstein". Thank You...

Where do I begin? Shelley's masterpiece is easily the greatest work of literature in the English canon. Rather than give a broad summary, I will simply say that this novel will change the way you think about life and science. Frankenstein's hubris shadows his work and the creature will make you think twice about the meaning of creation and our roles in the world. If you are an English major, you will read it eventually. If not, read it anyway! Also, this Norton edition is fantastic. Between having the

first edition in print and additional resources and scholarly essays, this book is well worth the purchase.

We all know the basic story - a doctor unleashes a monster on the world after creating it from scratch parts and some electrical magic. This original novel takes us right into the head of that "mad" doctor. What led up to the creation? Why was he so obsessed with the creation? What made him turn on his progeny? And, we also are let right into the mind of the creature, who, abandoned, makes his own way in the world, rejected, scorned, feared. How does he survive? How does he learn? Who does he love? And what does he do to try and influence the good doctor to make this right? It's all here. Mary Shelley was only 18 when she wrote her novel. Her vocabulary and prose are amazing for someone so young. The story begins in an unusual way - a man writing to an unknown loved one describes his journey leading up to a sighting of the "monster". We're then transported into the life of the young Dr. Frankenstein, writing his long journal entry about his fateful decision to create life from "nothing". He foreshadows terrible things, of which most of them come true. We meet Dr. Frankenstein's family - those he loved and grew up with. His father, brothers, and beloved adopted cousin, Elizabeth, whom he later vows to marry. They all play their parts in this macabre story. All throughout, we think, "Stop it, Dr. Frankenstein. You must be able to find a way to stop this madness." But, events rush headlong just to where the doctor predicts they will.

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