

# STUDY GUIDE

# FRANKENSTEIN: A Living Comic Book

A living comic book for the whole family!

From the team that brought you *BOOM* and *BOOM X*, this electrifying new stage production blends immersive comic book design and playful theatrical techniques to *reanimate* the sci-fi classic for a new generation. This new family-friendly spin on the literary classic, *Frankenstein* confronts modern issues of climate change, artificial intelligence, and our relationship to technology... monsters of our own making! When a young graphic novelist named Mary discovers the journal of Dr. Victor Frankenstein, she's drawn into his uncanny story of secret experiments to conquer death. She discovers that we all need to face our own fears... before they face us!

Geordie, Kidoons and WYRD Productions present

**FRANKENSTEIN**

in association with The 20K Collective and the Segal Centre for Performing Arts

By Craig Francis and Rick Miller and Paul Van Dyck

Adapted from the novel by Mary Shelley

Directed by Craig Francis and Rick Miller

# THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Theatre etiquette is a set of rules that explain how to behave when watching a play to be respectful to the cast and crew and the other patrons (spectators).

- Arrive on time and use the bathroom before the start of the play to avoid interruptions.
- Stay in your seat and do not chat with your friends during the play.
- Do not use electronic devices (phones, tablets).
- Feel free to clap or laugh when you are impressed or amused; it lets the actors know that you are enjoying yourself!

# MEET THE AUTHOR



Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was an author who wrote the novel behind the play you are about to watch, *Frankenstein*, in 1818. The only child of William Godwin, a social philosopher, and Mary Wollstonecraft, a feminist, she was born in 1797, married poet Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1814 and would go on to write several novels and a travel book throughout the course of her life. Mary Shelley died in 1851 at age 53.

Adapted from [Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley by Kids Britannica](#)

## Frankenstein: A Living Comic Book

Written & illustrated by Craig Francis

Adapted from the play by Craig Francis, Rick Miller  
& Paul Van Dyck and the novel by Mary Shelley

*Frankenstein* was originally written by Mary Shelley in 1818 when she was only 18 years old! She wrote it as a novel, but has been adapted many times for films and plays over the years.

The play you are going to see has been co-created by Craig Francis, Rick Miller and Paul Van Dyck. This production of *Frankenstein* uses immersive comic book design and theatrical techniques to reimagine the classic story.

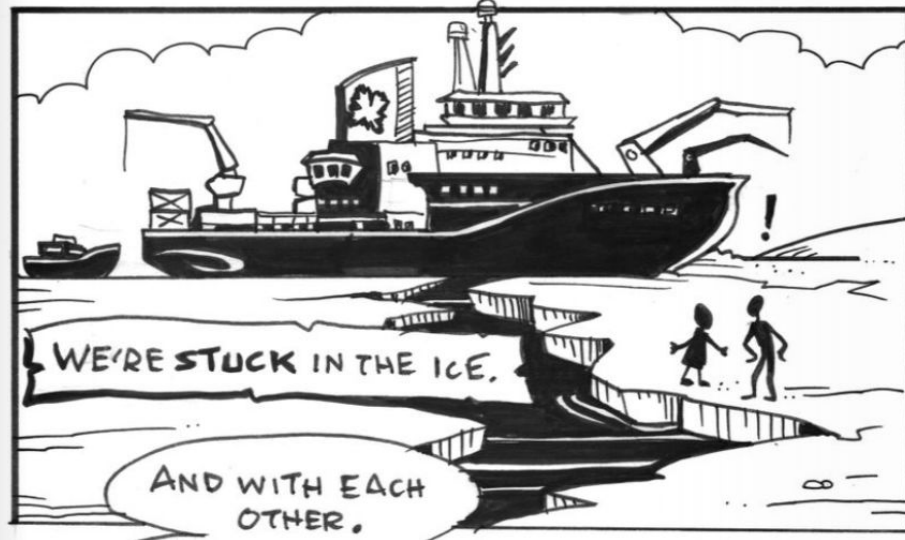
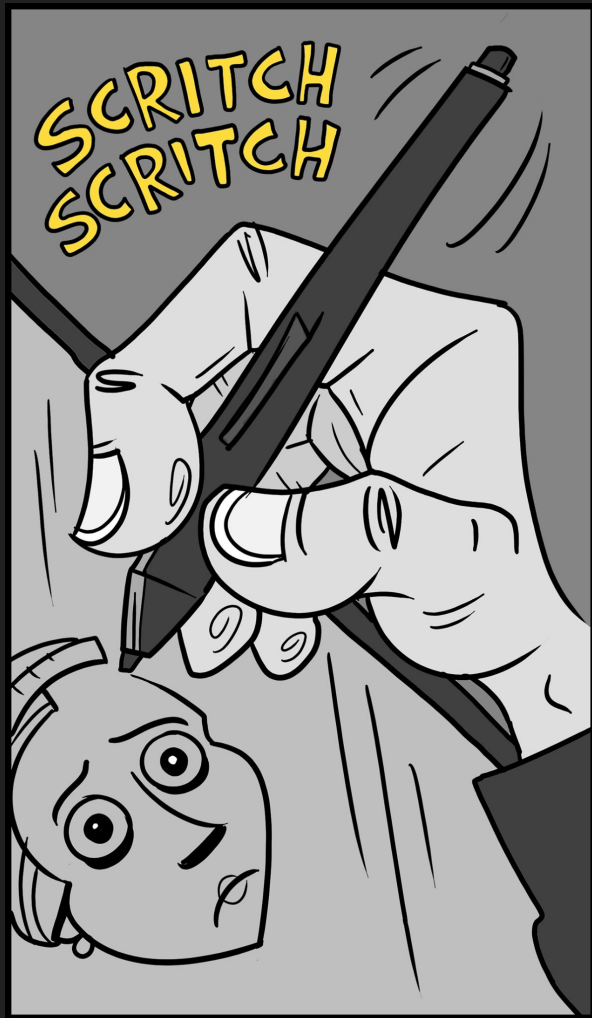






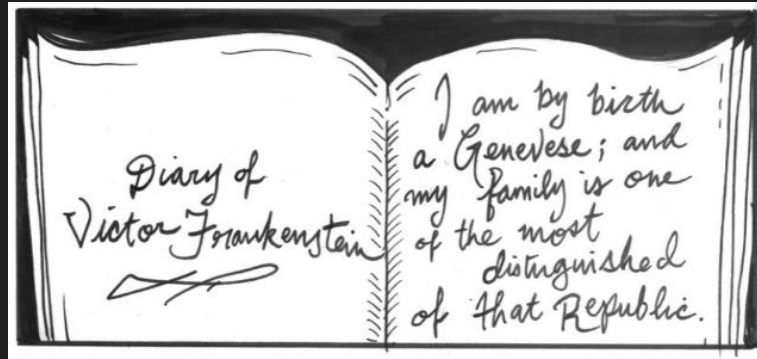
## Meet Mary, our narrator...

Mary, a young graphic novelist, drops out of art school when she thinks her self-portrait project is a failure. At the same time, Mary's father, a scientist and pioneer in artificial intelligence, abandons a robotic brain project he'd been working on. With plans suddenly changed, Mary goes with her father to the Arctic, to work on his next big project: fighting climate change.

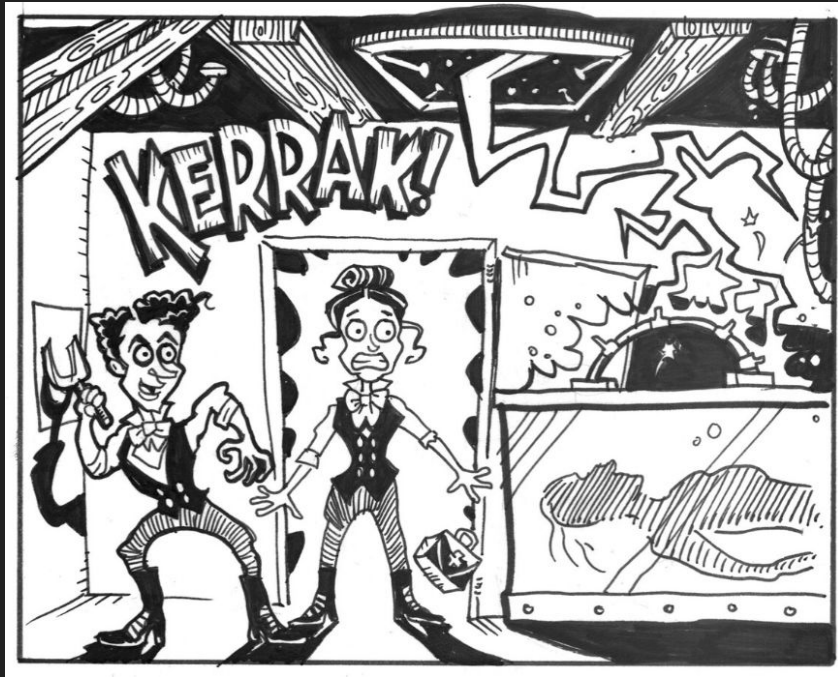




One day, while on a walk, Mary finds a peculiar book frozen in the ice: it's a journal written 200 years ago by a certain Victor Frankenstein, a young man from a wealthy Swiss family.







Victor, whose mother died when he was a child, became obsessed with fighting death. He studied natural science and medicine, and their endless possibilities. He created a monster by stitching together human body parts and bringing it to life, horrifying his friend Elizabeth, and himself, in the process...

Unable to face the Creature,  
Victor—like Mary and her father 200  
years later—abandoned his project.





The problem was that Victor's Creation had feelings. It followed him. It found him. It taught him an important lesson...

*Frankenstein* is a story about our relationship with technology, facing the monsters we create, as well as love, loss and forgiveness.

# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

# PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. Would you want to live forever? Why or why not?
2. Do you ever feel lonely? What do you do when you are lonely?
3. What do you know about artificial intelligence (AI)? What are the benefits of AI? What are the potential risks?
4. What do you know about climate change? How can scientific discovery help with climate change?
5. What would you do if you felt like the project or artwork you were working on was a failure? Why?
6. What are possible reactions people might have when they are facing something that scares them? What do you do?



# Climate Change and Artificial Intelligence

In the play, Mary's father is attempting to address climate change with the help of artificial intelligence... Is that actually possible? Let's find out!

Climate change often refers to how the surface of the Earth is getting rapidly warmer over time. Visit the NASA's Climate Kids to learn more about climate change and to answer these questions.

- What is climate change?
- Why is it an important issue for humans to address?
- What can humans do to contribute to improve this situation?



# Climate Change and Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence or “AI” is the ability for a computer to think and learn. With AI, computers can perform tasks that are usually completed by humans, such as learning and problem-solving.

- How does technology affect your life? Our society?
- How do you think artificial intelligence can help humans address the issue of climate change?

Watch *Four ways AI can help tackle climate change* by **BBC Ideas** to hear Simon Redfern from the University of Cambridge explain how AI can help us understand, adapt to and even reduce climate change.



# POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

# POST-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. Why did Mary drop out of art school? Would you have done the same? Why or why not?
2. Why did Mary's father abandon his robot?
3. Why did Victor abandon his creature?
4. How did the Creature learn to talk? Read? What else did he learn from Delacey?
5. After he finds him, what did the Creature want Victor to make for him? Why?
6. This play is a multimedia experience, which means the artists used many theatrical techniques (sound, visuals, special effects, costumes, props, video projections, etc.) to bring the story to life. Discuss these techniques and which you enjoyed the most.

# POST-SHOW QUESTIONS

7. Discuss the different fathers in *Frankenstein*. Describe their characteristics as fathers and their relationships with their child (or creature).
  - Victor's dad, Alphonse
  - Mary's father
  - Victor ("father" of the Creature)
8. Which character do you relate to the most? Why?
9. At the end of the play, the Creature writes "I forgive you" as the last entry in Victor's journal? What was he forgiving him for?
10. According to you, what lessons can we learn from this story?



# JOURNAL WRITING

Choose one of the following journal activities. Remember to date your entry, use “Dear diary,” as an opener and feel free to use a personal, informal tone when writing, as if you were writing for yourself only.

1. Mary learns about Victor’s life and the time period in which he lived by reading his journal. Write a journal entry about your daily life that includes information that would help someone living in a different time period or a different part of the world understand you and your society.
2. Write a review of the play as a journal entry. Make sure to include information about the plot, the actors, the special effects, how you felt while watching it and whether you would recommend the play to your friends.

# SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

When Victor's mother dies, he becomes obsessed with achieving immortality using his scientific knowledge. Similarly, Mary's dad wants to fix climate change by using advanced technology. Both attempted to fix a problem with scientific discovery and innovation.

Select and describe a personal or world problem that you would like to fix and explain how you would address it using scientific or technological innovation. Just like science-fiction writers, feel free to stretch or even make up the science behind your invention.



# SCENARIO: FACING OUR OWN MONSTERS

One of the themes of the play *Frankenstein* is the importance of facing our monsters before they face us. While Victor's monster was an actual creature, monsters can also be our fears or mistakes. In groups of 2-4 students, create and write or perform a scene in which a character either faces a long-time fear or creates an unideal situation they must face and fix.



**BAFF!**

# DESIGN YOUR OWN COMIC BOOK

IT'S ALIVE!

The writers and producers of *Frankenstein* used interesting comic book and graphic novel techniques to bring the story to life. Using some of the techniques you have learned, design your own comic strip. First you will brainstorm and select the scenes, including actions and dialogue, and develop a storyboard, before completing the final comic strip product.

Here are some comic strip techniques to explore:

- Speech bubbles or thought bubbles
- Onomatopoeia (a word that imitates the sound it is describing)
- Captions in the top left corner to indicate time or location, or any other narrative information

# QUOTATION STATION: Women in Medicine

VICTOR	What's wrong?
ELIZABETH	It's the university, they're refusing to give me a degree. They said I could study medicine all I want, but I'll never be a doctor.
VICTOR	Why would they do this?
ELIZABETH	Because I'm a girl.
VICTOR	But you're the best student I know.
ELIZABETH	Better than you?
VICTOR	Absolutely.

Back in the 1800's in Europe, women were not allowed to become doctors.

1. Why might that be? What did people think?
2. Is it fair? Do women make lesser doctors?
3. This is an example of *sexism*, which is when people treat someone unfairly based on their gender. Can you think of other examples of sexism?
4. What can you say if you witness someone acting sexist or saying something sexist?



# QUOTATION STATION: Friendship

CREATURE

I am alone and miserable; humans are repulsed by me. But...someone as deformed and horrible as myself would not run away from me.

VICTOR

You want me to disfigure someone so they look like... you?!

CREATURE

No, ding dong! I want you to make me a companion—

1. Why does Creature want a companion? What could a companion provide him with?
2. Humans are social creatures that crave human interaction. Share a time when you felt lonely. Why did you feel this way? What did you do?
3. When and how did Creature learn about the value of friendship?

# QUOTATION STATION: Facing Our Monsters

MARY                      We create, and we can learn from our creations.

VICTOR                    The world is full of monsters... monsters of our own making. And running away from them is no longer an option.

CREATURE                We all have the choice to face our fears. Before they face us!

1. What did Victor learn from the Creature? Is that a lesson he can apply to other situations in his life?
2. What does Victor mean when he says the world is full of monsters of our own making? How does this apply to humans and climate change?
3. Why can't humans run away from climate change? What can we do to face it?