



## Frankenstein

*Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797 - 1894)*

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Read by:	Caden Vaughn Clegg	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, the wife of Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, is the author of the timeless classic *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*. Published anonymously in 1818 and later published under her name in 1823, the novel is a strange, exotic and brilliant investigation into subjects deemed to be the forbidden knowledge of their time – creation, creativity, the nature of life, the life force, and the existence and nature of the soul.

*Frankenstein* is the story of a doctor on a quest to discover the secret of life who steals bodies from graves to try to create life from the parts and instead creates a monster. It is both a Gothic and Romantic novel, full of dark wanderings, night visions, death and destruction. As unintended consequences multiply and overwhelm Dr. Frankenstein, he is driven to avenge the dead and repair the damage – the result of having gone a step too far beyond the jurisdictions of 19th century science. Yes, there's terror here, worthy of Boris Karloff, but there's even more terror in Frankenstein's consideration of those forbidden things we keep to the side, safe, and locked away in the dark.

**Mary Shelley** (August 30, 1797 – February 1, 1851) was an English writer best known for her 1818 Gothic novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. She was born into a prominent liberal intellectual family. Her mother, feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, died shortly after her birth. She was raised and educated by her father, the philosopher, atheist and anarchist William Godwin. She became romantically involved with the Romantic poet and philosopher Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1814, with whom she bore a child that died soon after birth. They married two years later in London after the suicide of Shelley's first wife, Harriet, and unsuccessfully attempted to gain custody of Percy's children. The couple lived abroad much of the time thereafter and enjoyed the company of a large group of accomplished friends, most notably the poet Lord Byron. It was during this time that Mary wrote *Frankenstein*. She and Percy had two more children that died soon after birth before the birth of their fourth and only surviving child Percy Florence in 1819. Her husband Percy drowned in a sailing accident during a storm in Italy in 1822.

She returned to England and dedicated her time to editing and promoting her husband's work, raising her son, and her career as an author. She died of a brain tumor at age 53 after a decade of health problems. Recent decades of scholarship has enlarged the view of Mary Shelley's work beyond Frankenstein and her involvement with her husband's work, revealing her to be a radical thinker with a focus on cooperation, sympathy, and the greater participation of women as ways to improve society.