

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
Frankenstein

Text guide by: Myra Hardy

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TSSM

ACN 099 422 670

ABN 54 099 422 670

A: Level 14, 474 Flinders Street Melbourne VIC 3000

T: 1300 134 518

F: 03 90784354

W: tssm.com.au

E: info@tssm.com.au

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SAMPLE

AUTHOR NOTES

Mary Shelley's Life

Mary Shelley was born Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin on August 30, 1797, in London. Her father, William Godwin, was a writer and philosopher; her mother, Mary Wallstoncraft, was an educator and a feminist who wrote *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Shelley's mother died shortly after her birth; as a result, from 1801, her father and stepmother, Mary Jane Clairmont, raised her and her older half sister, Fanny Implay. Shelley did not get along with her stepmother, who had her own daughter educated but saw no need to educate Shelley. Despite this lack of education, Shelley was an avid reader. She could often be found reading in her father's library. Shelley liked to daydream and found a creative outlet in writing: her first poem, *Mounseer Nongtongpaw*, was published in 1807.

In 1814, Shelley started a relationship with a married man, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Percy Shelley was a student of Mary's father. In the same year that they started their relationship, Mary and Percy fled to England before travelling around Europe. They faced many challenges during this time, including financial difficulty and the loss of their first child. In 1816, Mary's half-sister, Fanny, committed suicide and so did Percy's first wife. Mary and Percy married in December 1816.

Mary and Percy Shelley's marriage was full of challenges: they lost two more children and there was frequent adultery. The pair only had one child survive to adulthood, Percy Florence, born in 1819. At the age of 24, Mary Shelley was widowed when her husband drowned while sailing in the Gulf of Spezia. To support herself and her son, Mary Shelley continued to write and to promote her husband's poetry.

In 1851, Mary Shelley died of brain cancer in London. Her body was buried alongside her mother and father and with the cremated remains of Percy's heart.

Frankenstein

Shelley's work on her first novel, *Frankenstein*, started in the summer of 1816 when she, along with a group of friends, sought to entertain themselves on a rainy day by writing their own horror stories. When *Frankenstein* (also called *The Modern Prometheus*) was published in 1818, it was done under the name of an anonymous author. Many people suspected that Percy Shelley wrote the novel since he had written the introduction. The novel was a huge success. From the publication of the second edition onwards, Mary Shelley was named as the author of *Frankenstein*.

Frankenstein is Shelley's most famous novel and has led to many adaptations. It was adapted into a film starring Kenneth Branagh and Robert De Niro in 1994 and inspired the other films, *Young Frankenstein* and *I Frankenstein*.