

Frankenstein – the movie monster returns

Films are based on a book written 200 years ago by an 18-year-old girl.

BY MOYA IRVINE



1 HORRIBLE PALE skin, stitches running across his unnaturally high forehead, sunken eyes, bolts in his neck to keep his head on. Frankenstein's monster is one of the world's best known horror figures. And soon, yet another film will tell the story of one man's attempt to create life from death.

2 'Victor Frankenstein' stars James McAvoy as the scientist whose experiment goes horribly wrong, and Daniel Radcliffe as his brilliant assistant Igor. The

film, described by makers 20th Century Fox as a "thrilling twist on a legendary tale" will be released in the US next month and in December in Germany.

3 The legendary tale the studio refers to is the original story written by a young girl called Mary Shelley in the 19th century. The story of her life and how she came to write Frankenstein is as fascinating in its own way as her famous book.

4 Mary Shelley was born in 1797, the daughter of William Godwin, a famous writer and radical thinker, and Mary Shelley Wollstonecraft, who is often seen as the world's first feminist. Mary never got to know her mother, as she died just 11 days after she was born.

5 Mary's behaviour as a young woman would be considered unconventional today; in those days, it was absolutely scandalous. In 1812, at the age of 15, she fell in love with the poet Percy

Victor Frankenstein (James McAvoy) with his friend and assistant Igor (Daniel Radcliffe) in a scene from the new film.

PHOTO: Alex Bailey
© Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation



The monster we all know and love: Boris Karloff in the 1931 movie. PHOTO: Getty Images

Bysshe Shelley. Although he was married, they ran off to Paris in 1814. Mary had a little girl by Shelley in 1815 but the baby died after just 12 days.

6 Mary and Percy got married in 1816 after the poet's wife drowned herself in London. Percy Shelley drowned while sailing off the coast of Tuscany in 1822, shortly before his 30th birthday. Mary was a widow at the age of 24. Only one of the four children she had survived to adulthood.

7 The idea for Frankenstein came in the summer of 1816. Mary and Percy were visiting the famous poet Lord Byron at Lake Geneva in Switzerland. The weather that summer was too cold and wet to do much outside, so the friends amused themselves by reading German ghost stories. Then Lord Byron suggested they write their own ghost stories.

8 At first, Mary Shelley couldn't think of a story. But one night, after midnight, unable to sleep, she had a waking dream. This is how she described her experience: "I saw with shut eyes, but acute mental vision – I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together." She also saw how this horrible creature "on the working of some powerful engine" showed signs of life.

9 With Percy Shelley's help as an editor, she turned this dream into her famous novel. Frankenstein was first published on January 1, 1818 and was an immediate success.

10 Mary Shelley doesn't describe the creation of the monster in great detail. She tells the reader that Victor Frankenstein got his materials from the "dissecting room and the slaughterhouse" and doesn't say exactly how the monster came to life. Frankenstein had wanted him to be beautiful, but the finished product looks pretty horrible. He has a "dull yellow eye", "yellow skin" and "straight black lips". He is, says Frankenstein, "a miserable monster".

11 A very clever monster, too: he learns to speak and teaches himself to read. He isn't bad by nature, but becomes violent after he is rejected because of his horrible appearance.

12 Moviemakers have added lots of details to make Mary Shelley's creature even more horrible. Perhaps the best-known monster is the one played by Boris Karloff in the 1931 film. He has the classic flat head, stitches and neck bolts. By today's standards, that film is tame, but 80 years ago, it was a real shocker.

13 The latest film tells the story from the perspective of Frankenstein's assistant Igor, a character that doesn't even appear in Mary Shelley's novel. Daniel Radcliffe, who plays Igor, said in a recent interview that he is proud of the film, which is "funny and romantic and full of violence". And he promises: "There are some really dark moments." Just what horror fans want to hear!

0-1 TO BE based on nach der Vorlage sein — **pale** blass, bleich — **stitch** Stich — **forehead** (fɔːrɪd) Stirn — **sunken eyes** (sʌŋkən) hohle Augen — **bolt** Bolzen, Schraube — **attempt** Versuch — **to create** (kriːeɪt) erschaffen

2 to star in der Hauptrolle zeigen — **scientist** (saɪəntɪst) Wissenschaftler — **thrilling** packend — **twist** Wendung; h.: Version — **legendary** (ledʒəndəri) — tale Geschichte — **to release** (rɪˈliːs) veröffentlichen; in die Kinos bringen

3 to refer to (rɪˈfɜː) sich beziehen auf — **original** (əˈrɪdʒənəl) ursprünglich — **century** (ˈsentʃəri) Jahrhundert — **in its own way** auf seine/ihre Art — **Wollstonecraft** (wɒlstənkrɑːft) — **feminist** (ˈfemɪnɪst)

4-5 behaviour (bɪˈheɪvjə) Verhalten — **to consider** halten für, betrachten als — **unconventional** (ʌnkənˈvenʃənəl) — **in those days** damals — **scandalous** (ˈskændələs) — **to fall in love** sich verlieben — **poet** (pəʊt) Dichter — **Bysshe** (bɪʃ)

6 to drown (draʊn) ertrinken — **off the coast** vor der Küste — **Tuscany** Toskana — **widow** Witwe — **adulthood** Erwachsenenalter

7 Byron (ˈbaɪrən) — **Lake Geneva** (dʒɪnɪvə) Genfer

See — **ghost story** Geistergeschichte — **to suggest** vorschlagen

8 at first zuerst — **waking dream** Wachtraum — **experience** (ɪkˈspɪəriəns) Erlebnis — **acute** (əˈkjʊt) scharf, intensiv — **mental** (ˈmentəl) — **vision** (vɪʒən) Sicht — **unhallowed** (ʌnhæləʊd) unheilig — **arts** Künste — **to kneel** (niːl) sich hinknien — **to put together** zusammenbauen, -fügen — **creature** (kriːtʃə) Wesen — **engine** Motor; Maschine — **sign of life** Lebenszeichen

9 editor Redakteur; Lektor — **to turn into** machen zu; verwandeln in — **to publish** veröffentlichen — **immediate** sofortig

10-11 dissecting room (dɪˈsektɪŋ) Sezierzimmer — **slaughterhouse** (ˈslɔːtə-) Schlachthof — **pretty** ziemlich — **dull** glanzlos — **miserable** (ˈmɪzərəbəl) erbärmlich — **by nature** von Natur aus — **violent** (ˈvaɪələnt) gewalttätig — **to reject** (rɪˈdʒekt) ablehnen — **appearance** (əˈpiərəns) Erscheinung; **to appear** erscheinen

12-13 to add hinzufügen — **tame** zahm — **perspective** (pəˈspektɪv) — **character** (ˈkærɪktə) Figur — **novel** (ˈnɒvəl) Roman — **recent interview** (rɪˈsɪnt) vor kurzem geführtes Interview

COMPREHENSION

1. The original Frankenstein story was written by Mary Shelley in the 19th century. Create a profile of Mary Shelley by referring to the following dates.

1797	
1812	
1814	
1815	
1816	
1818	
1822	

2. Mary Shelley suffered many heavy blows in her life. Find three examples in the article.

3. Describe how the idea for *Frankenstein* came in the summer of 1816 by completing the following text. Use these words: cold – creature – ghost stories – life – outside – poet – put together – shut – student – Switzerland – vision – waking dream – wet – write

Mary and Percy were visiting the famous _____ Lord Byron at Lake Geneva in _____. The weather that summer was too _____ and _____ to do much _____, so the friends amused themselves by reading German _____. Then Lord Byron suggested they _____ their own ghost stories.

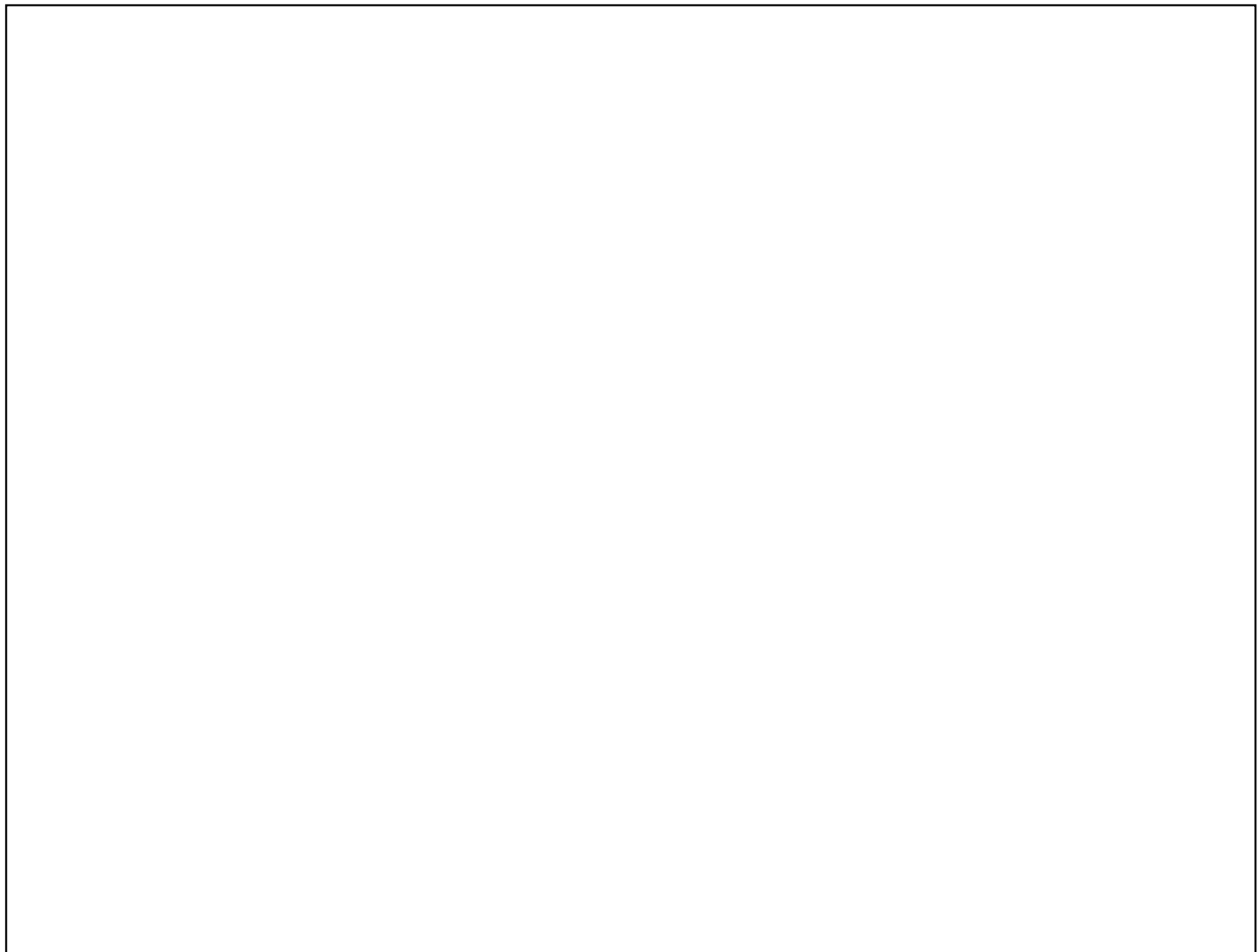
At first, Mary Shelley couldn't think of a story. But one night, after midnight, unable to sleep, she had a _____. This is how she described her experience: "I saw with _____ eyes, but acute mental _____ – I saw the pale _____ of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had _____." She also saw how this horrible _____ "on the working of some powerful engine" showed signs of _____.

4. Describe *Frankenstein's* monster. Look at the following categories.

made of	
eye	
lips	
intelligence	
character	

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

6. Draw a picture of *Frankenstein's* monster.



ANSWER KEY

COMPREHENSION

1.

1797	Mary Shelley was born; parents: William Godwin, a famous writer and radical thinker and Mary Wollstonecraft, who is often seen as the world's first feminist
1812	at the age of 15, she fell in love with the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley
1814	Percy and Mary ran off to Paris although Percy was married
1815	- Mary gave birth to a daughter, the girl died after just 12 days
1816	- Mary and Percy got married - Mary had the idea for <i>Frankenstein</i>
1818	<i>Frankenstein</i> was published on January 1
1822	Percy drowned while sailing off the coast of Tuscany

2.

- mother died when she was 11 days old
- Mary's husband died when she was 24 years old
- only one of the four children she had survived to adulthood

3.

poet – Switzerland – wet – outside – ghost stories – write – waking dream – shut – vision – student – put together – creature – life

4.

made of	materials from the dissecting room and the slaughterhouse
eye	dull yellow
lips	straight black
intelligence	very clever: learns to speak and teaches himself to read
character	is not bad by nature; becomes violent after he is rejected because of his horrible appearance