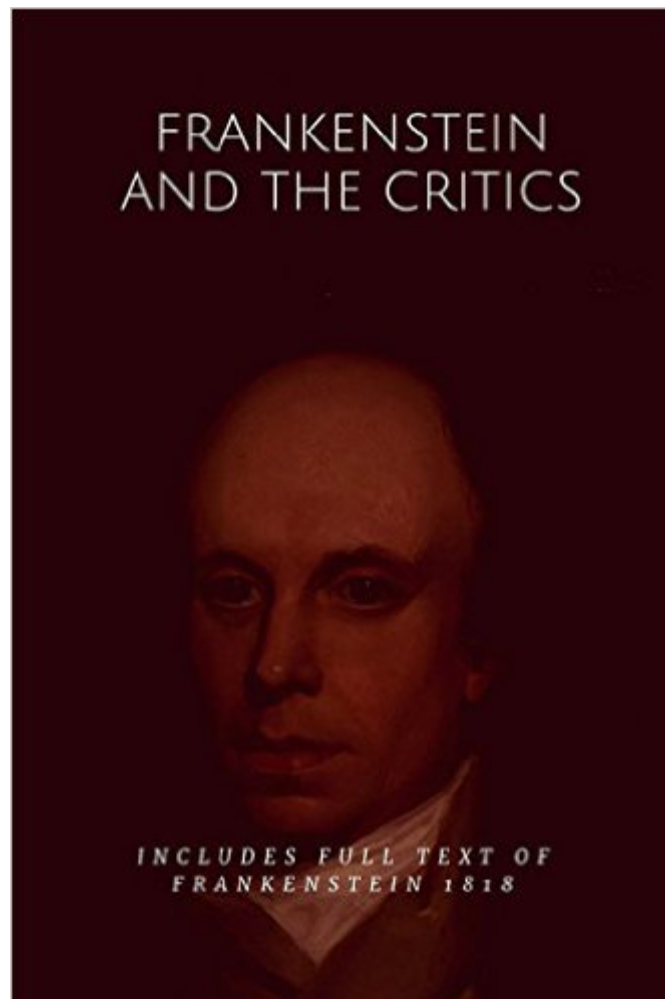


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# Frankenstein And The Critics: Includes Unabridged FRANKENSTEIN 1818



## Synopsis

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld my man completed ..." The summer of 1816 was by all accounts a cold and wet one. After the April 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora on the island of Sumbawa, part of what is now Indonesia, global temperatures dropped and a rainy, monsoon-like drizzle settled in over Northern Europe. In a holiday villa on the shores of Lake Geneva, a young English poet and his lover, the guests of another poet, discouraged from outdoor pursuits, sat discussing the hideousness of nature and speculating about the fashionable subject of "galvanism". Was it possible to reanimate a corpse? The villa was Lord Byron's. The other poet was Shelley. His fiancée, 19-year-old Mary Shelley (nee Godwin), was in post-partum distress. When Byron, inspired by a book of supernatural tales, suggested that each member of the party should write a ghost story to pass the time. Initially, Mary Shelley didn't feel up to Byron's challenge. Then, she said, she had a dream about a scientist who "galvanises" life from the bones he finds in charnel houses: "I saw a man with shut eyes, but acute mental vision. I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion." Young Mary took the prize, with her tale of eccentric scientist Victor Frankenstein, who creates a grotesque creature in an unorthodox scientific experiment. Frankenstein became a bestseller and a Gothic classic that still resonates with readers almost two centuries later. Like many great works of art, Frankenstein was initially misunderstood. The first reviews were decidedly mixed. An anonymous review in *The Literary Panorama and National Register* published June 1 1818 dismissed Shelley's work as "a feeble imitation of one that was very popular in its day." Other periodicals were kinder. Writing in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* on 20 March 1818, Walter Scott praised the unusual Gothic Romance as a "tale, though wild in incident, is written in plain and forcible English, without exhibiting that mixture of hyperbolic Germanisms with which tales of wonder are usually told." • *Frankenstein and the Critics* presents a selection of the most prominent reviews from the time of Frankenstein's publication. Also included is Mary Shelley's uncensored 1818 text often labeled 'Frankenstein 1818' presented in its unabridged entirety. This is the original, 1818 text. In 1831, the more traditionally first "popular" edition in one volume appeared. This version of the story was heavily revised by Mary Shelley who was under pressure to make the story more conservative, and included a new, longer preface by her, presenting a somewhat embellished version of the genesis of the story. This edition tends to be the one most widely read now but many scholars prefer the 1818 text, arguing that it preserves the spirit of Shelley's original publication.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is regarded as a classic, and is among the finest works in English literature. Most people have read it, or at least know the story. Most of us think it's a great story. In fact, when I was in high school and had to read this, none of the kids complained! That was certainly not a common occurrence. Suffice to say, *Frankenstein* is a masterpiece, and the majority of readers come to see it as such. I took great interest in this version because of the inclusion of reviews from the early days of this great novel. Of the reviews presented, only three of them look favorably upon the writing, and one of those is written by Shelley's own husband. The negative reviews vary in their level of intensity, but all of them have some cutting remarks to make. One is downright nasty, going so far as to suggest it must have been written by a woman! I hate to think what reviewers would have said had they known it was in fact crafted by a woman. Another actually said, "when we did not hurry over the pages in disgust, we sometimes paused to laugh outright". This book is a must-have for fans of Shelley's iconic work. Though some of us might be angered by what these critics had to say, it's fascinating to see how her contemporaries viewed her work. I would also recommend this to budding authors and artists of all types. It's proof positive that no matter how amazing your work, there will always be critics out there ready to knock it down. Shelley has the last laugh, though. As the inventor of the original horror story and mad scientist, she will never be forgotten, but her critics have.

*Frankenstein* plus the period literary criticism. This is an important edition for anybody who is doing

a research piece on Frankenstein (or perhaps a thesis). It saves a huge amount of time browsing archives to find the literary responses. Definitely a plus for anybody who's into Frankenstein especially in an academic sense.

What an intriguing collection of texts! I've always loved "Frankenstein", and here in this book, the author have gathered the most prominent reviews from the time of Frankenstein's publication. There are nine contemporary reviews included in this book, and there's also some wonderful Frankenstein image galleries and numerous links to various free audio recordings of 'Frankenstein 1818.' I never knew about these before and they were truly fascinating to read about and listen to. I especially enjoyed the inclusion of Mary Shelley's uncensored 1818 text which was presented in its entirety. Again, a fascinating and enlightening read!

This edition of Frankenstein gives the reviews of the critics at the time of the book's initial publication, early 1800s. Interestingly, the critics of the day did not all look on the book with favor. Today it is a classic and may be assigned as a high school or college paper. This edition will save research time for students who have such an assignment. Readers will be interested in the written language of that time compared to our current writing style. Most will think the critics of that day were more interested in their own writing than critiquing others.

Frankenstein and the Critics is a great essay about the world of the famous Shelley's monster. I found it extremely compelling and full of insights, information and aspects not often known by the majority of the horror readers. The book goes through some reviews of Shelley's novel, given sparks from different readings. I also appreciated very much the image gallery and Shelley's 1818 text. In particular, I found the gallery section really nice and well curated. Five stars and recommended to all Frankenstein aficionados.

I loved reading the reviews of Frankenstein from the early days. Only three were positive, and one was written by Shelley's husband. Looks like reviews have invented nothing. The negative reviews can be as nasty as any here in : "when we did not hurry over the pages in disgust, we sometimes paused to laugh outright". If they could have done it, they'd have added "ONE STAR!"

A fan of the old Frankenstein story, I felt as though I was offered a treat - an original manuscript as it was published in the beginning of 19th century. I enjoyed every word of it, but to read the original

reviews of the contemporary critics was the most delightful part of the experience. For fans of classic horror, don't miss it!

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the original text of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein—a classic story that most of us are familiar with its later versions. It was also very interesting to see the image gallery and read the reviews—favorable and not—of the critics at the time of the book's initial publication in the early 1800s.

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