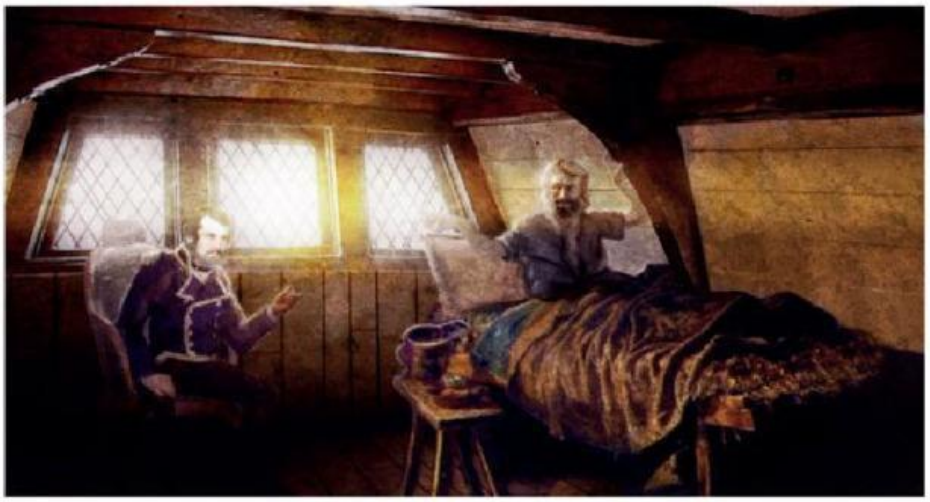
CHAPTER 1

ON A SHIP IN THE ICE



*On a **ship** in the cold Arctic **ice**, Robert Walton's new friend began to tell the story of his **life**.*

My name is Victor Frankenstein. My father, Alphonse, came from Geneva. He met my mother when his best friend, Beaufort, died. Beaufort left his daughter, Caroline, with no money. Where could she live? My father found her a room in his **cousin** Louisa's house. Two years later, he **married** her.

After they married, my father took her to Germany, France, and Italy. I was born in Naples, and for some time I was their only child.

One day, when I was about five, my father was away in Milan. My mother and I visited **Lake** Como. Near the lake, we saw the house of a **poor** family. The man and his wife had five children. Four of these had dark hair and eyes. The fifth – a quiet young girl – had beautiful yellow hair and blue eyes. My mother always wanted a daughter, and was interested in this little girl.

ship you use a ship to go across the water

ice water that is hard when it is very cold

life (*plural* **lives**) you live this

cousin the son (or daughter) of your father's (or mother's) brother (or sister)

marry to make someone your husband or wife

lake a lot of water with land around it

poor without much money; something you say when you feel sorry for someone

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When my mother spoke to the poor woman, she told her the girl's story. Elizabeth Lavenza (that was the girl's name) was the daughter of a German woman and a Milanese man from a good family. When she was born, her mother died. So her father left her with the family by the lake. The poor woman gave the child a bed, milk, and love, and the girl's father gave her money for that. But then the Austrians took him and put him in **prison**, and he died there. Now the girl had no family and no money, and things were far from easy for the poor family.

My mother felt sorry and spoke to the woman. After that, Elizabeth came and lived in our house. I played with her and called her 'cousin'. I was a year older than her, and she was more than a sister to me.

After my younger brother Ernest was born, my mother and father took us all to Switzerland. We had a town house in Geneva, but lived mostly in a country house in Belrive, by the lake. I went to school and made friends with one of the schoolboys. His name was Henry Clerval and his father had a shop in Geneva. I was a happy child. This was before my life changed, before things went wrong.

When I was about thirteen, I found – and began reading – a book by the old **alchemist** Cornelius Agrippa.

'There are many better writers,' my father laughed.

But I found the book interesting. And when I finished it, I read books by different alchemists. 'Perhaps one day I can stop **death**, and people can live for hundreds of years,' I thought. 'Then I can be rich and famous.'

My youngest brother William was born about that time.

When I was fifteen, I remember a big **storm** on the lake one night. I saw the white **lightning** in the dark sky. And

prison a place where people must stay when they do something wrong

alchemist someone who thinks that they can change cheap things into gold, and stay alive for hundreds of years

death the time when someone or something dies

storm lots of rain and bad weather

lightning the light in the sky when there is a storm

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then, suddenly, some lightning hit a big old tree by the lake and broke it in two. A famous **science** teacher was at our house in Belrive at the time, and he told me all about lightning. Suddenly the science of today was more interesting for me than books by dead alchemists.

When I was seventeen, I finished school in Geneva and my father told me, 'Now you must go and learn at the **University** of Ingolstadt.'

Before I could leave, Elizabeth was suddenly ill with a **fever**. She nearly died. But my mother sat by her bed and **looked after** her.

After three days, Elizabeth was well again and could get out of bed. But my mother now had the fever badly. She called Elizabeth and me to her, and spoke quietly to us.

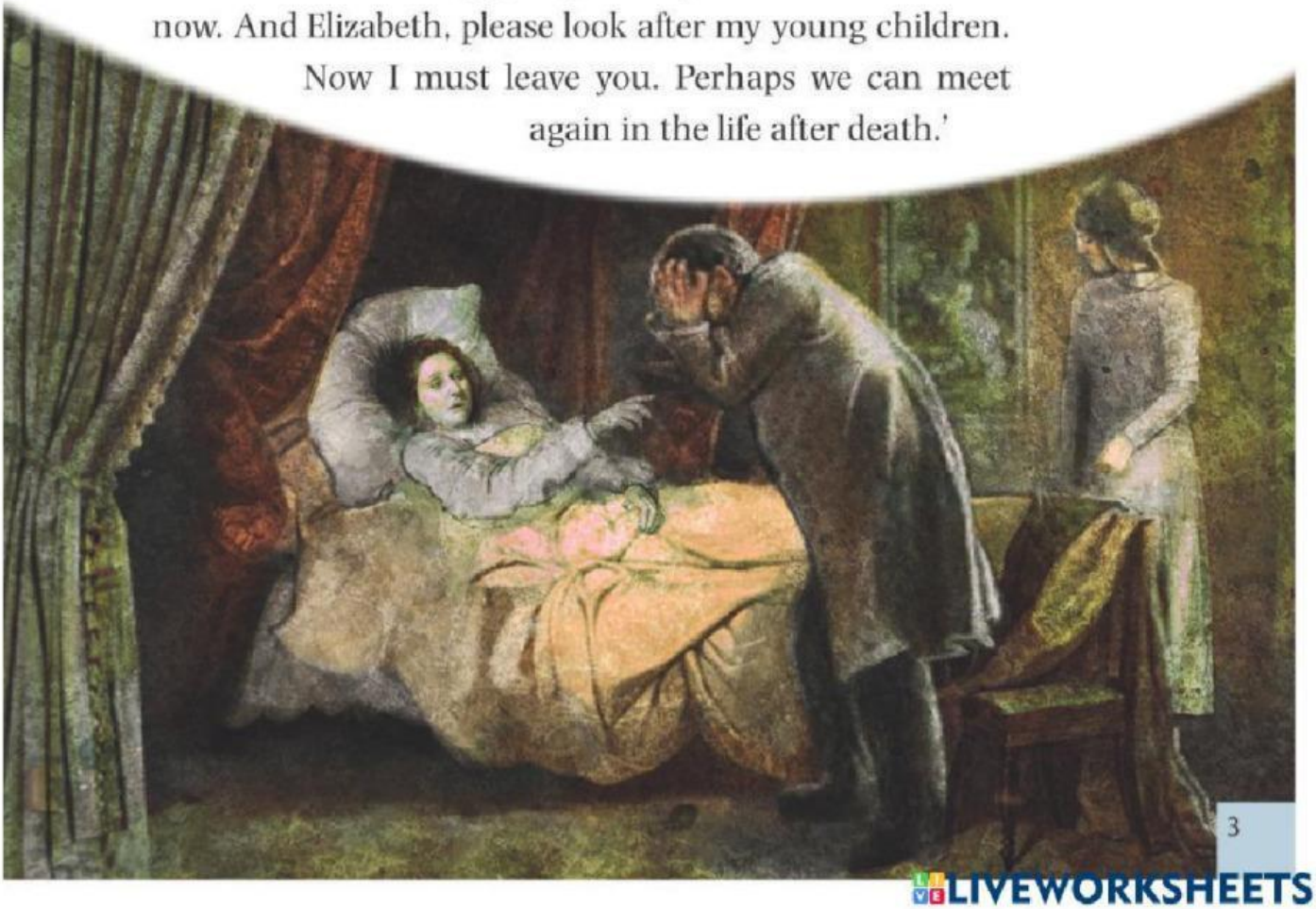
'Victor, I'm dying,' she said. 'Please marry Elizabeth. I wanted to see that happy day, but my husband must see it now. And Elizabeth, please look after my young children. Now I must leave you. Perhaps we can meet again in the life after death.'

science the study of the natural world

university people study here after they finish school

fever when you get very hot because you are ill

look after to do things for someone or something that needs help



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monsieur /məsjə/ Mr, in French

creature a person or animal that somebody makes

part some, but not all, of something

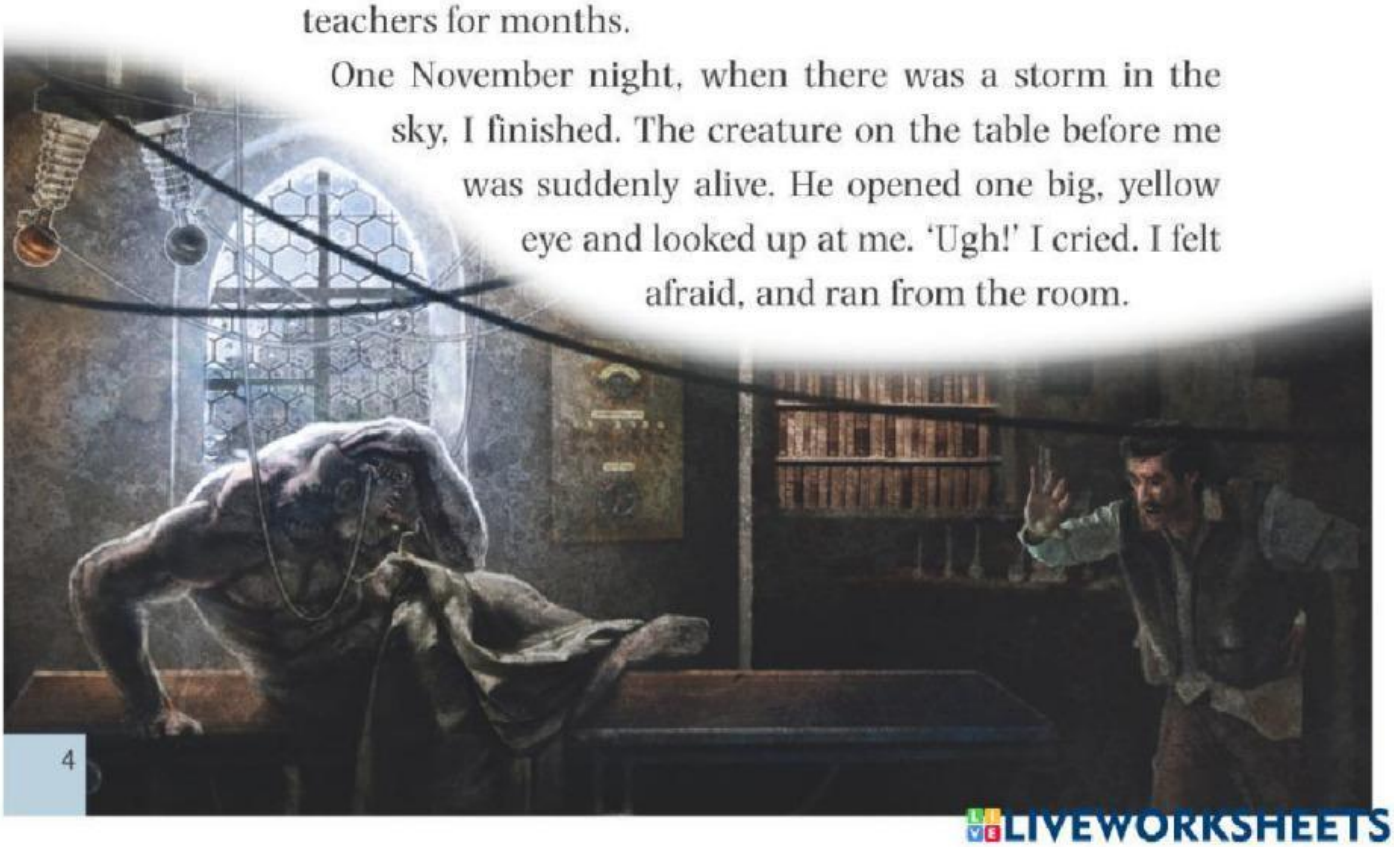
Soon after that, she died. I left Elizabeth, my father, and my brothers in Geneva and went to Ingolstadt.

Henry Clerval wanted to go to university there, too. But his father said 'no'. Work was more important than university for Henry's father.

So I began my student life without Henry. I took cheap rooms in an old house in town when I arrived. Next day, I met two important university teachers – **Monsieur** Krempe and Monsieur Waldman. Monsieur Krempe laughed at my talk of alchemists. I didn't like him. Monsieur Waldman didn't laugh, and I liked him a lot. Through him, I began to be very interested in science.

I looked carefully at lots of dead bodies. What makes life? What brings death? In the end, I found the answers to these two important questions. After that, in my rooms in town I began to make a **creature** from **parts** of dead bodies. I worked day and night. My face was now white, and I was ill. I forgot my family, my friends, and my teachers for months.

One November night, when there was a storm in the sky, I finished. The creature on the table before me was suddenly alive. He opened one big, yellow eye and looked up at me. 'Ugh!' I cried. I felt afraid, and ran from the room.



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After some hours, I met Henry Clerval in the street.

'What are you doing here, my friend?' I asked him.

'I arrived this morning. I'm a university student,' he answered. 'My father said 'yes' in the end. But what's the matter? Are you ill?'

'I'm tired from work,' I said.

'Then let's go to your rooms at once,' said Henry.

'Is the creature waiting there?' I thought. But there was no creature when we arrived.

I went to bed at once. I had a fever. Henry stayed and looked after me for months. When I was well again, Henry put a letter from Elizabeth into my hands. I read it with interest.

Cousin Victor,

Henry tells us all about you. You're well now, and I'm happy for that! Here, your brother Ernest is now fifteen and little William is five. Your father is well and we have a new person in the house – Justine Moritz. Her family is dead and she now lives with us. She's a nice young woman and a good ***servant****, too.*

Please write soon.

Elizabeth Lavenza

servant a person who works for someone rich

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ACTIVITIES

READING CHECK

Choose the best words to complete each sentence.

a Victor tells Robert Walton his story in the *Arctic* / *Antarctic*.
b Victor's father, Alphonse, came from *Paris* / *Geneva*.
c Alphonse married his best friend's *sister* / *daughter*, Caroline.
d Victor was born in *Naples* / *Milan*.
e Caroline took a poor *girl* / *woman* into her family in Italy.
f Elizabeth Lavenza's father died *at sea* / *in prison*.
g Victor had *two* / *three* young brothers.
h Henry Clerval was Victor's best friend at *work* / *school*.
i When Victor was seventeen, his mother *died* / *ran away*.
j Victor was a science student at *Ingolstadt* / *Milan* University.
k When his creature came alive, Victor felt *afraid* / *excited*.
l Victor ran from his rooms, but the monster *stayed* / *died*.
m After Clerval arrived, Victor was ill for *days* / *months*.
n Later, he read *his father's* / *Elizabeth's* nice letter from home.
o It spoke of Justine Moritz, the Frankensteins' *new* / *old* servant.



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ACTIVITIES

WORD WORK

Use a set of three words in the sky to complete each sentence.



a On a ship in the ice, Victor tells the story of his life.

b At fifteen, Victor saw a ..... with ..... on ..... Geneva.

c When ..... Elizabeth was ill with a very bad ....., Mrs Frankenstein ..... her.

d Did Victor ..... his ..... Elizabeth after his mother's .....?

e At Ingolstadt ....., ... Krempe laughed at Victor because he found ..... interesting.

f Because he was interested in ....., Victor made a ..... from dead body ..... .

GUESS WHAT

What happens in the next chapter? Tick five boxes.

a Victor stops being a science student at Ingolstadt. ☐

b Victor marries Elizabeth. ☐

c One of Victor's brothers dies. ☐

d Victor sees his creature near Geneva. ☐

e Victor tells his family about the creature. ☐

f The creature kills Victor's father. ☐

g Justine Moritz goes to prison. ☐

h Justine Moritz dies. ☐

i Victor kills the creature. ☐

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