

CHAPTER 13

A Confession of Murder

I set out to find you, remembering from your notebook that a place called Geneva was your home. Since geography had been part of the lessons Felix had taught Safie, which I learned as well, I knew I had to head in a southwest direction.

My heart was filled with hate. You gave me a body, a mind, and feelings, then cast me out to be scorned by the world. I swore I'd repay the world and you too!

I traveled only at night, with winter fast approaching. Snow fell all around, and the

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ground was icy under my feet. But I continued on all winter, in spite of the weather. With each step, my rage against you grew!

I traveled that way, avoiding villages and sleeping in open fields, until spring. When I reached the Swiss border, I decided to enjoy the warm days and travel in daylight, but keeping hidden by following a path through the forest.

One day, the path crossed a river. As I neared it, I heard voices. I hid behind a tree as a young girl came running by. She was laughing as if playfully hiding from someone behind her. Suddenly, her foot slipped and she fell into the river.

The force of the current quickly pulled her out to the rapids. I jumped in and, with great exertion, saved her. I dragged the unconscious child to shore and had just revived her when a man—her father, I imagined—tore her from my arms and rushed back towards the forest with her.

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As I started to follow them, he placed her on the ground, then turned to me, a gun in his hand. He took aim, then fired several shots. I sank to the ground, writhing in pain from the bleeding flesh and bone in my shoulder. . . . This, then, was my reward for saving the child's life!

I spent the next few weeks in the forest, healing my wounds and eager for revenge. Finally, I was well enough to continue on.

It was early evening two months later when I reached the woods outside Geneva. I was tired and hungry as I sat down under a tree, trying to decide just how I would find you and confront you.

I had just begun to doze when a beautiful young child came running towards me. A glimmer of hope flickered in my heart. Here was an innocent boy who probably hadn't learned to be horrified at ugliness like grown-ups were. Perhaps he could become my friend.

I reached out and grabbed the boy as he

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ran by. As soon as he saw me, he covered his eyes and began to scream. I pulled his hands away from his face and said gently, "I'm not going to hurt you."

"Let me go, you ugly monster!" he cried. "Let me go or I'll call my father. He's an important man and he'll punish you. His name is Alphonse Frankenstein."

"Frankenstein!" I shrieked. "You belong to my enemy. Now I'll have my revenge. You will be my first victim!"

The child continued to struggle and scream terrible words at me. I grabbed his throat to quiet him, but the next moment he lay dead at my feet. I realized then that this would bring misery to you, and I was glad!

As I gazed down at the boy, I spotted a locket around his neck. I picked it up and stared at a picture of a beautiful woman. I knew that a woman of such beauty would never look at me...and my rage at you returned once more.

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I left the murder spot then, still holding the locket, and went on towards Geneva. I soon came to a barn, where I found a young woman asleep on some straw. For a moment, I was terrified that she would waken and see me, and surely be horrified at my ugliness too. And later, she could probably identify me as the boy's murderer.

Even though I had no way of knowing for certain she would do that, I decided to make her suffer anyway. So, I put the locket in the pocket of her apron, knowing that when it was found, it would point to her as the murderer.

Once that was done, I hid and waited until the boy's body was discovered and followed everyone into the city. Later, I learned the girl had been arrested for the murder.

Then I began wandering through Geneva and through these mountains, waiting for the moment when I would come face to face with you. And now, at last, that moment is here!

CHAPTER 14

A Terrible Promise

The creature finished his story, then stared at me, waiting for my reaction.

I was bewildered. One part of me was enraged by his crimes, while another part of me pitied him for the cruel way he had been treated by everyone, including me.

I looked straight into those hideous yellow eyes and demanded, "So now that we're face to face, what do you want of me?"

"I want a friend . . . someone who won't be revolted by my ugliness, but who will be as ugly as I am . . . someone who will understand

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me and have sympathy for me. I want you to create that friend . . . create a wife for me, just as you created me.”

My rage exploded. “Never!” I cried. “I will never create another evil creature to commit the same terrible crimes you have committed. You may torture me or threaten me, but I will never do it.”

“I wasn’t threatening you,” he said in a calm voice. “I was trying to reason with you. Please understand that I tried to love my fellow beings, but all they did was hate me, just as you have done.”

“I still can’t do it . . . I won’t do it!”

The monster then began to rage, twisting his face into forms too horrible for human eyes to look at. “I swear I’ll destroy you just as you have destroyed me . . . unless you agree to my demands!” he warned.

I turned away, but the monster pleaded again. “If only I could be treated with a little kindness from just one person, I would repay

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that kindness to all mankind.”

I was moved by his argument. He was a creature who had feelings . . . deep feelings. And didn't I owe him something since I had created him?

Sensing my anger soften, he continued. “If you agree to make this woman for me, no one will ever see either of us again. We will go away, far across the ocean, to an uninhabited part of South America and live out our lives without doing any harm to man or beast anywhere.”

I felt compassion and sympathy for him and for the life I had forced on him. But then, when I turned back to look at him, I felt my horror and hatred return. Then reason took over and I figured that by doing what he asked, I would be protecting all mankind from the evil he was capable of inflicting.

Finally, after a long silence, I said, “I will do as you ask, but only if you swear that as soon as I have created this woman, you both will

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leave Europe forever.”

“I swear that you will never see us again!” he cried. “Now go to your laboratory immediately and begin your work. I shall be watching you all the time, even though you won’t see me. You can be sure that I will reappear when the woman is finished.”

Then he turned and left, perhaps afraid that I would change my mind. I watched him descend the mountain faster than any eagle could fly over it. Soon, he had disappeared in the snow and ice.

It was dusk when I started down the mountain, weeping bitterly and raging at myself. We had been talking the entire day, and it took me the entire night to make my way down into the valley.

I reached Chamounix at dawn and left immediately for Geneva. I knew I had to begin my dreaded work as soon as possible.

CHAPTER 15

Beginning a Second Creature

My wild appearance frightened my family, and they became even more alarmed when I refused to answer any of their questions about what had happened to me. I couldn't tell them. I knew only that because I loved them, I had to save them from the monster.

Days and weeks went by, and I couldn't seem to get up enough courage to begin my work. The very thought of it filled me with horror, even though I feared the fiend's revenge if he were disappointed. But I also knew this new work would require many months of

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study before I could even begin.

During these weeks, my health began to improve, and my father was delighted. He came to me one day and said, "It is time to end our mourning and go on with our lives, my son. You know it was your mother's fondest wish, and mine as well, that you and Elizabeth would marry one day. I hope this can happen soon, as I'm growing older and I'm not in the best of health."

"Father, I love Elizabeth and want to marry her," I assured him. But my mind was racing with thoughts of the promise I had made, a promise that had to be kept first. I had to create a wife for the creature before I could be assured of happiness with my own wife. If I didn't, I might be bringing untold misery on my family and on myself.

During my weeks at home, I had read about some new studies on the human body being done in England. It seemed a good idea to do my work there rather than in my father's

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house, where I would fear a thousand horrible accidents . . . or my reactions . . . or even my loss of sanity during my loathsome task. No, I had to do this work far away from the people I loved.

So, I told my father, "I still have some scientific studies I need to complete in England, and after that, I would like to spend some time traveling in order to regain my health completely. Then I will certainly look forward to marrying Elizabeth."

My father and Elizabeth were delighted to see my new attitude and encouraged my trip. But because they still had some concerns about my health, they quietly arranged for my dear friend, Henry Clerval, to travel to England with me.

Henry and I left Geneva at the end of September and traveled through France, Germany, and Holland before crossing the Channel into England.

A stay of four months in London was enough

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time for me to learn about the new studies on the human body and enough time as well for me to buy all the materials and medical instruments I would need.

After that, we spent the next two months traveling through the English lake country and visiting friends in Scotland. By then, I realized that I had already been putting off starting my work for too many months. I began to fear what would happen if the monster learned of my delay. Was he planning some revenge on my family? Or was he following Henry and me? I began to panic.

I became so possessed that I feared days when no letter came from my father or Elizabeth. I became so possessed that I often refused to leave Henry's side for a moment and followed him everywhere.

Finally, I made my decision how and where to start. First, I told Henry, "We've been enjoying our friends here in Scotland for a while now, and I want you to spend more time here.

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I, however, need some time by myself, perhaps a month or two. Then, when I return, I'll be the old Victor you've always known. I'll be much better company, I promise you."

"Really, Victor," he protested, "you know I'd much rather be with you, no matter where you're going. But if you need to be alone, I'll respect your wishes. Just hurry back."

I left Henry then and headed for the Orkney Islands, a barren island group off the coast of Scotland. I chose an island that was little more than a rock, with only five people living on it.

I rented a small, miserable hut. It had two squalid rooms, a thatched roof that had fallen in on the house, plaster that was hanging away from the walls, a door that was off its hinges, and a few pieces of broken furniture.

I had the necessary repairs made and set up one room as a laboratory. Then I finally settled down to begin my work.

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As the woman's body took shape, however, I began to hate my work more and more each day. Sometimes, I couldn't force myself to go into my laboratory for days at a time. Other times, I worked day and night to finish a particular part of the body.

I thought back to the first creature I had made and recalled how enthusiastic I was, an enthusiasm that blinded me to the horror of what I was doing. But now, I was doing it in cold blood, and I could barely look at my hands as they worked.

I became restless. I grew nervous. I raised my eyes constantly, fearing to see the monster appear in front of me.

Still, my work was proceeding well. I was close to completing it. Why, then, did such a sickening sense of foreboding fill my heart? ... This foreboding, this feeling that something evil was about to happen, began to haunt me day and night.