

## ACT I

SETTING: *Various locations including the deck of a ship, the ship's cabin, the Frankenstein home in Geneva, Victor's laboratory at school, the DeLacey home, a courtroom, and various woods in Switzerland.*

AT RISE: *The deck of a sailing ship. The middle of the Arctic Ocean. Late July afternoon, 1816. The world is white; the ship is surrounded by ice. Lights up on WOLSEY, leaning over the deck railing, trying to pull the prone body of VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN aboard. HUGHES, on the ice, is pushing from below.*

HUGHES (from below)

You got him?

WOLSEY

I got him! I got him! Whoa!

*(VICTOR's body slips. WOLSEY grabs it tighter.)*

HUGHES (from below)

For God's sake, Wolsey – watch what you're about!

*(WOLSEY hauls VICTOR onto the deck. HUGHES climbs aboard.)*

WOLSEY

Who is he, Mr. Hughes?

HUGHES

No idea. I best fetch the captain.

*(HUGHES crosses opposite and calls off.)*

Captain Walton! Captain Walton, come quickly!

*(WALTON enters.)*

WALTON

What is it, Mr. Hughes? Is the ice breaking up?

HUGHES

No sir...

WALTON

Dammit! If we're delayed much longer, it could cost us this mission.

*(WALTON turns his back on HUGHES, oblivious to the others. He opens his spyglass and examines the terrain for a moment.)*

HUGHES

Yes, sir, but...

WALTON

I've sunk everything I own into this expedition. I am determined to be the first to sail to the northern tip of the globe. I am determined to be the first to discover all its wonders!

HUGHES

Yes, sir, but...

WALTON

I shall make a name for myself in the annals of science. Just imagine how proud my father will be...

HUGHES

Captain Walton!

*(WALTON turns and for the first time sees the others.)*

WALTON

Good God! What's this?

WOLSEY

I found this man on the ice, sir.

WALTON

On the...?! Explain, Wolsey.

WOLSEY

Well, Cap'n, I was keeping watch off the port bow and I hear a sound and I look down and see this fella what's collapsed on the ice. So, I climb down and haul him up, with Mr. Hughes's help. Judgin' by his clothes, he appears to be a gentleman.

*(VICTOR groans.)*

WALTON

Put him in my cabin, Wolsey. Quickly!

*(WOLSEY helps VICTOR up and leads him off. WALTON hands his spyglass to HUGHES.)*

Mr. Hughes – keep a lookout. We need to move as soon as that ice breaks.

HUGHES

Aye, aye, sir.

*(WALTON starts off.)*

Captain?

*(WALTON turns back.)*

How did he get here?

WALTON

I don't know. But I plan to find out.

*(WALTON exits into the shadows. Lights up on WALTON's cabin. VICTOR is laid out on the bed. WOLSEY stands at the foot of the bed, staring. WALTON enters.)*

WALTON

That will be all, Wolsey.

*(WOLSEY exits. WALTON shakes VICTOR's shoulder.)*

Sir?

*(VICTOR gasps and sits up.)*

Easy now.

VICTOR

Who are you?

WALTON

Robert Walton, Captain of the *Prometheus*.

*(VICTOR looks around wildly.)*

VICTOR  
What am I doing on a ship?

WALTON  
One of my men found you collapsed on the ice...

VICTOR  
The ice! I can't stay here. I must go...

*(He tries to get up. WALTON holds him down.)*

WALTON  
You're in no shape to go anywhere. Sit back.

*(VICTOR sits back, exhausted.)*

What is your name, sir?

VICTOR  
Frankenstein. Victor Frankenstein.

WALTON  
What are you doing in the middle of the Arctic Sea, Victor Frankenstein?

VICTOR  
I have to find him...

*(Once more he tries to get up. Once more, WALTON stops him.)*

He's getting away!

WALTON  
Do you mean to say that there's another man out on the ice?

VICTOR  
Yes.

WALTON  
We'll send up a signal flare. He'll find his way to our ship...

VICTOR  
He won't come.

WALTON  
If he refuses to come, he'll die.

VICTOR  
Not that one. He'll never die.

WALTON  
He's a mortal man, isn't he?

VICTOR  
Please. I must...

*(He tries once more to get out of bed. Once more WALTON stops him.)*

WALTON  
If you go out on that ice, you'll be dead within the hour.

VICTOR  
Then you must go after him.

WALTON  
Me?!

VICTOR  
You and all your men...

WALTON  
All my...? I...

VICTOR  
Help me! I beg of you. He must be caught!

WALTON  
Why? What's he done? Who is he? Where did he come from? How can I help if you won't...?

VICTOR  
*(Interrupting)*  
I swore I would share it with no one. But someone must know, someone who... you are a man of curiosity, yes?

WALTON  
Yes. Yes, I am.

VICTOR  
Very well. But in order for you to comprehend my story completely, I must begin with my childhood in Geneva...

*(Music under as lights comes up on ALPHONSE FRANKENSTEIN, standing on another part of the stage. Geneva.)*

VICTOR (cont.)

My father, Alphonse Frankenstein, was a well-respected magistrate – a confirmed bachelor who swore never to marry. Then he met my mother....

*(CAROLINE BEAUFORT enters. ALPHONSE sees her and stares.)*

Caroline Beaufort was the daughter of a friend. It was love at first sight.

*(ALPHONSE crosses to her and takes her hand.)*

Despite the difference in their ages, they wed a few months later...

*(ALPHONSE pulls a ring out of his pocket and holds it out.)*

CAROLINE

Oh Alphonse – it's beautiful.

ALPHONSE

My father had it made especially for my mother. Look here.

*(He indicates a spot on the ring.)*

CAROLINE

The Frankenstein crest.

*(He slips it on her finger.)*

I'll cherish it – and you – forever.

*(They kiss.)*

VICTOR

Two years later, I was born...

*(VICTOR enters the scene, still narrating. ALPHONSE and CAROLINE turn to him. He addresses the next to them.)*

My earliest memory is my mother's tender caress and my father's smile. As their son, I received nothing but love and kindness.

As it should be.

WALTON

Yes.

VICTOR

You were an only child, then?

WALTON

For a time. My mother wanted a daughter, but all efforts in that direction failed. Then, when I was five years old, we took a family trip to Italy. That is where we found Elizabeth.

VICTOR

Elizabeth?

WALTON

*(Lights up on ELIZABETH LAVENZA. VICTOR crosses to her.)*

Elizabeth Lavenza, an orphan, just a year younger than myself.

VICTOR

*(CAROLINE crosses to ELIZABETH.)*

The moment my mother laid eyes on Elizabeth, she offered to adopt her.

*(CAROLINE extends her hand. ELIZABETH takes it.)*

You finally had a sister.

WALTON

A sister. A friend. Everyone adored Elizabeth, but the two of us... we became inseparable.

VICTOR

*(VICTOR takes her other hand.)*

A lovely family.

WALTON

And not yet complete. Two years later, when I was seven, my mother gave birth to my brother William.

VICTOR

*(WILLIAM enters the scene. He takes VICTOR's other hand.)*

WALTON

A sister *and* a brother. As an only child, I envy you. So much to love.

VICTOR

So much to lose.

WALTON

What do you mean? What happened?

VICTOR

I happened.

*(The FRANKENSTEINS disappear. VICTOR watches them go.)*

WALTON

Go on.

VICTOR

My childhood was idyllic...

*(WALTON melts into the shadows. The audience becomes the recipient of the narration.)*

Though Elizabeth and I adored each other, we couldn't be more opposite...

*(ELIZABETH enters as a young girl. She carries a rock.)*

ELIZABETH

Victor, look at this rock I found near the river.

*(VICTOR enters the scene, takes the rock from her, and examines it.)*

VICTOR

This is a sedimentary rock. Sedimentary rocks are formed by the accumulation of small particles that undergo a cementation process on the floor of the ocean.

ELIZABETH

Huh.

*(She takes the rock back.)*

I just thought it was pretty.

*(She continues to examine the world around her.)*



VICTOR

*(Narrating)*

While Elizabeth contemplated the appearance of things, I delighted in investigating their causes...

ELIZABETH

I love the autumn, don't you, Victor? Watching the leaves change from green to orange...

VICTOR

Actually, the orange pigment in the leaf has always been there – we just can't see it because of the chlorophyll, which is the green pigment that combines with sunlight to create food for the tree. But in autumn, when there is...

*(ELIZABETH reaches out and strokes his hair.)*

...there is... uh... uh...

*(He can't speak over his accelerated heartbeat and stirrings of an erection. She pulls her hand back. She is holding a leaf.)*

ELIZABETH

There was a leaf in your hair.

VICTOR

Oh...

*(ELIZABETH strokes his hair again.)*

ELIZABETH

I never realized before how soft your hair is.

VICTOR

Is it...?

*(She keeps stroking his hair, fascinated with the texture.)*

Uh, what was I talking about?

ELIZABETH

Chlorophyll...

VICTOR

Yes, right... chlorophyll. As I was saying...

Victor? ELIZABETH

Hmm? VICTOR

*(She pulls her hand away.)*

Can't you appreciate the beauty in a thing without investigating its scientific origins? ELIZABETH

I... well... VICTOR

That's what I thought. Poor Victor. ELIZABETH

*(She turns away. Unseen, CAROLINE enters behind them.)*

I think *you* are beautiful! VICTOR

What? ELIZABETH

You're beautiful. And I don't care how or why. I just know that you are. VICTOR

Thank you. ELIZABETH

*(She kisses him then exits. He is stunned.)*

Are you in love with her? CAROLINE

Mother – I didn't see you there. VICTOR

She's in love with you. CAROLINE

How do you know? VICTOR