

Frankenstein, Volume II, Chapter VII – an extract.

"The winter advanced, and an entire revolution of the seasons had taken place since I awoke into life. My attention at this time was solely directed towards my plan of introducing myself into the cottage of my protectors. I revolved many projects, but that on which I finally fixed was to enter the **dwelling** when the blind old man should be alone. I had **sagacity** enough to discover that the unnatural **hideousness** of my person was the chief object of horror with those who had formerly **beheld** me. My voice, although **harsh**, had nothing terrible in it; I thought, therefore, that if in the absence of his children I could gain the **good will** and mediation of the old De Lacey, I might by his means be tolerated by my younger protectors.

"One day, when the sun shone on the red leaves that **strewn** the ground and diffused **cheerfulness**, although it denied warmth, Safie, Agatha, and Felix departed on a long country walk, and the old man, at his own desire, was left alone in the cottage. When his children had departed, he took up his guitar and played several **mournful** but sweet airs, more sweet and mournful than I had ever heard him play before. At first his countenance was **illuminated** with pleasure, but as he continued, thoughtfulness and sadness succeeded; at length, laying aside the instrument, he sat absorbed in reflection.

"My heart beat quick; this was the hour and moment of trial, which would decide my hopes or realize my fears. The servants were gone to a **neighbouring** fair. All was silent in and around the cottage; it was an excellent opportunity; yet, when I proceeded to execute my plan, my limbs failed me and I sank to the ground. Again I rose, and exerting all the firmness of which I was master, removed the **planks** which I had placed before my **hovel** to conceal my **retreat**. The fresh air revived me, and with renewed determination I approached the door of their cottage.

"I knocked. 'Who is there?' said the old man. 'Come in.'

"I entered. 'Pardon this **intrusion**,' said I; 'I am a traveller in want of a little rest; you would greatly oblige me if you would allow me to remain a few minutes before the fire.'

"'Enter,' said De Lacey, 'and I will try in what manner I can to relieve your **wants**; but, unfortunately, my children are from home, and as I am blind, I am afraid I shall find it difficult to **procure** food for you.'

"'Do not trouble yourself, my kind host; I have food; it is warmth and rest only that I need.'

"I sat down, and a silence **ensued**. I knew that every minute was precious to me, yet I remained **irresolute** in what manner to commence the interview,

when the old man addressed me. 'By your language, stranger, I suppose you are my countryman; are you French?'

"No; but I was educated by a French family and understand that language only. I am now going to claim the protection of some friends, whom I sincerely love, and of whose **favour** I have some hopes.'

"Are they Germans?'

"No, they are French. But let us change the subject. I am an **unfortunate** and **deserted** creature, I look around and I have no relation or friend upon earth. These **amiable** people to whom I go have never seen me and know little of me. I am full of fears, for if I fail there, I am an **outcast** in the world forever.'

"Do not despair. To be friendless is indeed to be unfortunate, but the hearts of men, when **unprejudiced** by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity. Rely, therefore, on your hopes; and if these friends are good and amiable, do not **despair**.'

"They are kind--they are the most excellent creatures in the world; but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good **dispositions**; my life has been **hitherto** harmless and in some degree beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a **detestable** monster.'

"That is indeed unfortunate; but if you are really **blameless**, cannot you undeceive them?'

"I am about to **undertake** that task; and it is on that account that I feel so many **overwhelming** terrors. I tenderly love these friends; I have, unknown to them, been for many months in the habits of daily kindness towards them; but they believe that I wish to **injure** them, and it is that prejudice which I wish to overcome.'

"Where do these friends **reside**?'

"Near this spot.'

"The old man paused and then continued, 'If you will unreservedly **confide** to me the particulars of your tale, I perhaps may be of use in undeceiving them. I am blind and cannot judge of your **countenance**, but there is something in your words which **persuades** me that you are sincere. I am poor and an exile, but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way **serviceable** to a human creature.'

"Excellent man! I thank you and accept your generous offer. You raise me from the **dust** by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow creatures.'

"Heaven forbid! Even if you were really criminal, for that can only drive you to desperation, and not **instigate** you to virtue. I also am unfortunate; I and my family have been condemned, although innocent; judge, therefore, if I do not feel for your misfortunes.'

"How can I thank you, my best and only **benefactor**? From your lips first have I heard the voice of kindness directed towards me; I shall be forever grateful; and your present humanity assures me of success with those friends whom I am on the point of meeting.'

"May I know the names and residence of those friends?' "I paused. This, I thought, was the moment of decision, which was to rob me of or **bestow** happiness on me forever. I struggled vainly for firmness sufficient to answer him, but the effort destroyed all my remaining strength; I sank on the chair and **sobbed** aloud. At that moment I heard the steps of my younger protectors. I had not a moment to lose, but seizing the hand of the old man, I cried, 'Now is the time! Save and protect me! You and your family are the friends whom I seek. Do not you **desert** me in the hour of trial!'

"Great God!" exclaimed the old man. 'Who are you?'

"At that instant the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and **consternation** on beholding me? Agatha fainted, and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung, in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground and struck me violently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sank within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained. I saw him on the point of repeating his blow, when, overcome by pain and **anguish**, I quitted the cottage, and in the general **tumult** escaped unperceived to my hovel."

amiable: likeable, friendly

anguish: pain, suffering

beheld: looked at

benefactor: helper, someone who does good to another

bestow: to give

blameless: without guilt, innocent

cheerfulness: happiness, good humour

confide: tell, recount

consternation: fear, surprise, shock

countenance: face

desert: abandon

deserted: lonely, abandoned

despair: to give up hope

detestable: hateful, ugly, horrible

dispositions: prospects, abilities
dust: dirt, earth, ground here used as a metaphor for poverty
dwelling: habitation, home, house, living-place
ensued: followed
favour: help, support, friendship
good will: good intentions, support
harsh: hard, rough, ugly
hideousness: ugliness
hitherto: until now
hovel: very small and uncomfortable hut, house
illuminated: lit up
injure: hurt
instigate: incite, encourage
intrusion: interruption, uninvited entrance
irresolute: undecided
mournful: sad
neighbouring: nearby, in the next town or village
outcast: thrown out, rejected person
overwhelming: overpowering, strong
persuades: convinces
planks: pieces of wood
procure: find, obtain
reside: live
retreat: hiding place
sagacity: wisdom, intelligence
serviceable: helpful
sobbed: cried, wept
strewed: covered, lay upon
tumult: commotion, chaos
undertake: carry out, begin
unfortunate: unhappy, unlucky
unprejudiced: without prior opinion or bias, not influenced by former beliefs
wants: needs