

Exhausted and beaten, I finally returned to Ingolstadt and retreated into my home in a state of utter and stupid anxiety. Elizabeth remarked upon the redness of my eyes. I said the distance from her during my expedition and my worries of her health had made me weep. Her own eyes melted, and she told me she too had wept for me. We hugged.

In truth, I did worry for her health, and indeed, Elizabeth's illness had worsened by degrees. At last, I implored her to seek a physician, and she consented. The day she consulted the doctor is one I shall not forget for the remainder of my days. She had departed late that morning, leaving me alone with my ill humour.

Upon inspection of the mailbox just before noon, I discovered a letter addressed to me. The envelope was inscribed with the insignia of the Schweizerische Akademie der Technischen Wissenschaften, the agency to which I had committed my last hopes and dreams. With trembling hands, I tore it open:

To Herr Frankenstein, Ingolstadt

Zürich, Jan. 6th, 20--

The Selection Board has received your grant application and has considered it carefully. I regret to inform you that we are unable to offer funding for your research. It is not possible to appeal the Selection Board's decision, as it was based on a peer review and interpretation of your research proposal. Many excellent proposals were received, but regrettably only a few could be accommodated. We appreciate your interest in the Akademie, and wish you every success in your work.

Bettina Rüfer, D.Phil

Chair, SATW Selection Board

I cried out like a wounded beast in a sick and stupid rage. "Daemons! Foul *daemons*, they all are! Oh, by *God*..."

A startled neighbour turned my way, and some children in the street pointed and mocked. In a blind rage, I crushed the cursed letter and threw it to the ground.

At that moment, I heard the tram screech to a halt at the stop near our abode. I turned and saw Elizabeth disembark from the vehicle and trot gaily towards our gate.

"Oh, Victor!" exclaimed she as we embraced. So great was her excitement that she remarked not upon my sour visage. "Sweet Victor, I have the most wondrous news."

"What now?"

"I am with child!"

A knot formed in my bosom. For a moment only did I feel the disconcerting stir of faintness. "With *child*, you say?"

"Yes, Victor. I am *pregnant*!"

It was more than any mortal man could possibly endure. Darkness consumed me; I fell senseless to the ground.

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We Shall Be Monsters

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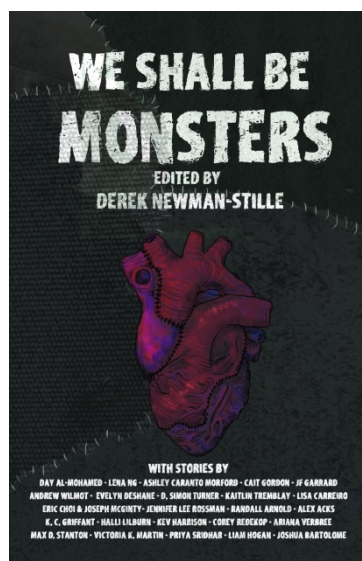
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Edited by multiple Prix Aurora Award winner [Derek Newman-Stille](#) and published by [Renaissance Press](#), *We Shall Be Monsters* commemorates the bicentennial and legacy of the ground-breaking and genre-changing novel *Frankenstein: Or, the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. *We Shall Be Monsters* features twenty-four stories and poems by diverse authors from around the world, ranging from direct interpretations of Shelley's text to innovative explorations of stitched, assembled body, and narrative experiments in monstrous creations.

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