

It Was on a Dreary Night of November

Adapted By

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Loosely based on characters and story from the "Author's
Introduction" in FRANKENSTEIN; OR THE MODERN PROMETHEUS by
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FADE IN:

EXT. SWISS COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Rolling hills stretch on for miles. The Swiss Alps stand tall in the background. Heavy snow is falling from an eerily grim sky as a horse-drawn carriage travels along a bumpy road.

SUBTITLE FADES IN: Geneva, Switzerland - November 1816

INT. HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE - DAY

We hear horses GALLOPING. Wind is HOWLING. The passengers inside, a young wealthy couple, are sitting in the red cushioned seat.

PERCY SHELLEY, 23, wears a yellow overcoat and a ruffled button-down shirt beneath it. The first few buttons are undone, revealing his smooth tanned chest.

He has wavy blonde hair that curls perfectly behind his ears. His strong jawline frames his clean-shaven face. His physique oozes sex and power, in an Orlando Bloom-meets-George Washington kind of way.

Seemingly his only flaw is that he is SNORING, fast asleep with his head pressed against the window, and drooling out of his wide open mouth.

MARY GODWIN, 18, sitting beside him, has bouncy brown ringlets and a youthful face while her calm eyes and busty chest show signs of maturity.

Her petite frame is swallowed up by a blue floral gown while her feet dangle off the seat's edge.

She is clutching her stomach and taking deep silent breaths to try and overcome her motion sickness without waking Percy.

Suddenly, the carriage goes over a bump and Percy jerks awake.

PERCY
(yelling)
Mother, help! The monsters! Don't
let them find me!

Mary laughs and touches Percy's cheek soothingly.

MARY

Relax, my love. It's just us. Your mother is not here...and thank God for that.

Mary grabs Percy's face and kisses him passionately. His drowsiness subsides as he melts into her kiss. Mary pulls away a few moments later, satisfied.

PERCY

(chuckling)

Well, it appears someone is feeling much better!

MARY

I told you, my heaving earlier was simply a result of eating that roast last night. Frankly, your family's hound knows its way around the kitchen better than your cook does.

PERCY

But this was the third morning in a row you've been ill. And, I ate the same roast and felt fine afterwards.

MARY

Oh, really? Because our chamber pot did not smell very fine.

PERCY

(playfully)

Mary, my beautiful bride-to-be, that mouth of yours never ceases to amaze me.

Mary smiles at him and turns away towards the window. Looking quite squeamish again, she closes her eyes briefly and takes a gulp of air.

PERCY

I'm so thrilled we are finally taking this trip. I cannot wait for George to meet you. Being my oldest friend, he is more dear to me than anyone...

Mary looks at him questioningly.

PERCY

Besides you, of course. And he has this natural intuition unlike anyone I've ever known...

Mary strengthens her glare.

PERCY

Except for you, my love. And he's stubborn, just like...

Mary's eyebrows raise.

PERCY

Just like no one, no one at all.

Percy gently touches Mary's knee. Mary rolls her eyes and her face softens.

PERCY

George is an inquisitive man, and I warn you that he may be quite interrogative, but I know he'll see the truth the moment we arrive. He is generous and wealthy in all ways except in love, since Annabella died, but I know he'll love you. I just know it.

Mary leans in closer to Percy, gazing into his eyes.

MARY

Well, I'll be delighted to meet him. Just as I'll be delighted to be back on solid, stationary ground.

Percy smiles and pulls Mary's face into his, kissing her with even more passion than the first time. After many, many minutes, they finally come up for air.

Their eyes and lips remain as close as possible without actually touching.

PERCY

Like I said. Amazing.

CUT TO:

EXT. GEORGE'S ESTATE - NIGHT

The horse-drawn carriage pulls up to an elegant, lakeside manor. The snow is falling and falling.

The majestic home, with ivory-colored walls and forest green shutters, sits alone atop a hill and is surrounded by nothing but woodlands and glistening Lake Geneva.

The CARRIAGE DRIVER halts the carriage, steadies the horses, and hops down from the driver's seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE - NIGHT

The carriage driver opens the carriage door. Mary exits first, and he grabs her hand to help her down. Mary breathes in the fresh air with relief.

Percy hurriedly exits behind her.

PERCY

(to the driver)

Thank you, lad. I admit I thought it was odd that George sent us his driver to bring us here when mine is more than capable of making such a trip, but I know George is a man of status who values high security. His property's whereabouts are safe with us.

CARRIAGE DRIVER

Good, sir. Will do, sir. I hope you and the lady have a marvelous stay, sir.

The carriage driver scrambles back in the driver's seat and rides away into the darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Percy places a hand on Mary's back and guides her into the shelter of the front porch. Despite the cold, Mary is flushed and sweating.

Percy lifts his fist to the door. Before he can knock, the door swings open, revealing GEORGE BYRON.

George, 25, is tall and slender, with stiff black hair and brooding eyebrows. Wearing a perfectly tailored suit, SHINY SHOES, and charming smile, his grand presence matches his grand house.

GEORGE

Percival! My god, how is it possible to have aged so disgracefully in the last three years?

PERCY

Ah, how I've missed your jests! Let us in Georgie, it's hostile out here!

Mary's sickly demeanor has worsened.

GEORGE

I can tell. The good-looking lady is not looking so good.

As if on cue, Mary vomits all over George's SHINY SHOES. Percy is stunned. George looks down at his shoes, both disappointed and amused.

GEORGE

(beat)

Please, come in, and do excuse the mess.

CUT TO:

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

The parlor is decorated with posh decor and a large fireplace. Above the mantel, an oil painting hangs of a beautiful couple very much in love.

George is sitting in an armchair - wearing different shoes - and intently staring at Mary, who is lying on her back on a velvet couch as his HOUSEMAID dabs her forehead with a cloth.

Percy is sitting on the end of the couch with Mary's feet propped up on his lap. In an effort to help, he tries to massage her feet but she kicks him off.

Mary sits up and is surprisingly upbeat.

MARY

(to the housemaid)

I feel much better, thank you.

HOUSEMAID

Let me help you sit up, madam.

MARY

(confidently)

That's not necessary. I'm fine.
Truly, I can sit up just fine on my
own.

George motions the housemaid to leave. She nods, smiles, and walks down a nearby staircase, disappearing out of sight. Mary sits up with ease and swivels her feet off of Percy and onto the floor.

GEORGE

(beat)

Well, Mary, I'm glad to see you're feeling better. However, I find that your statement was not entirely true and as Percy knows I rarely hold my tongue. So I must say that I believe you did not just sit up *entirely* on your own, so, tell me, how long have you been carrying a child?

MARY

Excuse me?

PERCY

Excuse me?

GEORGE

You're evidently nauseous, your skin is as pale as Percy's bare arse, and well...

George looks at Percy.

GEORGE (CON'T)

Do excuse me, dear friend, but I could not help but notice that your girl's bosom is more mountainous than the Alps.

Mary and Percy peer down at her chest, then peer at each other. They begin to laugh hysterically.

MARY

(laughing)

A child?

PERCY

(laughing)

A child?

GEORGE
(laughing)
A child!

Their laughter continues to build and then fades down.

PERCY
Wait, Wait, Georgie. You're not a
doctor. How do you know this?

GEORGE
Well, in the spirit of sharing
news, I have something to tell you.
It's actually why I asked you both
to come here.

Mary and Percy look at each other, confused, then both look
at George, confused.

GEORGE
There's a reason I've been living
at this manor for the last few
years. I could have stayed in
London in the house I built for
Annabella. But there was nothing
there for me. Not anymore. But
here, here it's spacious. It's
quiet. It's secluded. It's
essentially perfect...

PERCY
Perfect for what, George?

GEORGE
(beat)
Life-changing work, my friend.
Research. I have been funding
research experiments to quite
literally change life. Create life.
Recreate life from death. That's
why I knew, Mary, of your
condition. I know when new life has
been created. It's obvious. Signs
of life are everywhere, but to you
they are commonalities that go
unnoticed. But I, for years, have
been witnessing my scientists
galvanize life. You've heard of
Blandeau's galvanism
demonstrations, yes? All over the
papers. It's juvenile really, his
work on frog legs. Zapping them
into motion. Shocking frogs to

(MORE)

GEORGE (cont'd)
 shock people. Purely for
 entertainment. It's child's play.

Mary and Percy's bewilderment has transformed into fear.

PERCY
 Georgie, are you...are you drunk?
 What in God's name are you saying?

Georgie bursts out in laughter. A fraudulent, ghoulish
 laugh.

GEORGE
 No, Percy, of course I'm not.
 You've just arrived and we've
 simply just sat down. I'd never
 present myself in such a state in
 front of subjects with such
 potential.

MARY
 Subjects?

Percy slides closer to Mary and wraps his arm around her,
 clutching her tightly.

PERCY
 George, what exactly are we doing
 here?

GEORGE
 You're here, Percival, to help me
 test the next phase in our
 research. To test if love travels
 into death and is able to be
 brought back to life. And you're
 going to help me complete it
 successfully.

PERCY
 But, why? Why are you doing this?

Mary glances at the large painting of the couple above the
 mantle.

MARY
 For her.

GEORGE
 Precisely. My Annabella. Death
 found her a month before our
 wedding day. After her life was
 (MORE)

GEORGE (cont'd)
taken from me, I felt like I myself
was no longer living. A life
without love equates death. When I
read your letter and learned you
had found the love and future that
could have been mine, I knew I had
to meet Mary. She would be a worthy
subject to use to recreate my love
and my future with Annabella.

PERCY
I won't let you. We've just learned
she is with child! You will not
touch her. You've lost your mind.
You cannot bring death upon a
pregnant woman.

GEORGE
You're wrong. Annabella was with
child, and death found her. And
Mary will not die. Her life and the
life forming within her will simply
be transferred.

PERCY
Transferred by what?

GEORGE
It is not a question of what, but a
question of whom. Come with me. And
do not try any escape, because
there isn't one.

George rises from the chair and directs Mary and Percy to follow him down the staircase into a lower level of the house.

Mary and Percy cling to one another and do as he says.

Beat.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT LABORATORY - NIGHT

The floor is a wide open space containing operating tables and wired machines. It is dark and lit only by candlelight.

George guides them to two operating tables in the middle of the room. One is empty, and on the other a figure covered in a white sheet lies upon the table.

All that is visible is hair draping over the end of the table. It is long and black, reminiscent of the woman's hair in the painting above the mantel. The figure is the body of Annabella.

Mary and Percy stand above the table, frozen.

Suddenly, the housemaid reenters the room. The carriage driver is with her. Both have changed clothes and are dressed uniformly in laboratory coats.

GEORGE

I don't believe you have been formally introduced to our researchers. They will be conducting the transfer. Percy, from this point on, you're no longer needed.

The man we knew to be a carriage driver approaches Percy with a needle.

CARRIAGE DRIVER

Thank you for your visit. I hope you've had a marvelous stay, sir.

MARY

No! Leave him alone!

The woman we knew to be a housemaid approaches Mary and injects her with a needle forcefully. Mary slumps over and is lifted onto the empty operating table and covered with a sheet.

PERCY

Stop! You're maniacs! Maniacs! You cannot take her...

The man we knew to be a carriage driver plunges the needle into Percy's neck. Percy continues to yell out as he begins drifting into unconsciousness.

PERCY

No! I won't let you! This is all a nightmare! You can't be doing this. I'm still asleep. I must be asleep...

GEORGE

Shhhh. Quiet, please. Our work is about to begin.

Percy falls unconscious and slumps to the floor.

11.

FADE OUT.