

*It's Alive!*

*Frankenstein at 200*

Online Teacher Curriculum

The  
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# SECTION 2

## Mary Shelley's Family and Friends

The  
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Journal of C. Clairmont written in  
the year 1814.

August, 1814

We took a walk in the Eg - and climbed  
one of the highest of the hills - As we descended  
a most violent storm of rain came on, and we were  
wet through. The sky was entirely black and the  
rain poured in torrents. One long strip of red  
light alone marked where the sun had set.  
I said, look there how the Sun in parting, has  
bequeathed a lingering look to the heavens, he  
has left desolate." I thought this a most beautiful  
thought. When we reached the valley it was  
a very pretty sight to look on the lights from the  
cottages reflected in a small clear stream that  
flowed a bank beneath them. We went to bed  
directly as our clothes must be dried in the night.  
They are the only ones we have got with us.

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August. Rise at four. Misty  
morning and the wind bleak & cold. A peasant  
takes us in his cart to Sugencourt, where we

Claire Clairmont, *Journal*, in *Shelley and His Circle*, edited by Kenneth Neill Cameron, Cambridge, MA, 1970 [1814], Vol. 3, pp. 342-75. The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

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Engraved by J. Dawe

William Godwin

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George Dawe (1781–1829) after James Northcote (1746–1831), *William Godwin*, 1802, mezzotint. The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations



John Keenan (active 1791–1815) after John Opie (1761–1807), *Mary Wollstonecraft*, 1804, oil on canvas. The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

Dover, May 3. 1816

No doubt you are anxious to hear the state of my  
concerns. I wish that it was in my power to  
give you a more favourable view of them than  
such as I am compelled to present. The limited  
condition of my fortune is equalled by me, as I  
imagine you will know, because among other ~~the~~  
designs of a similar nature I cannot at one spot  
see in prospect of all that would be sufficient  
for the comfort & independence which it is so  
unjust that you should not have already derived  
from society.

Chancery has decided that ~~I~~ & my father  
may not touch the estate. It has decided  
also that all the timber, worth it is said  
£60,000 must be cut & sold, & the money  
paid into court to abide whatever equities  
may hereafter arise. This you already  
know from Harry, -

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 - 1822)  
Autograph letter signed : Dover, to  
William Godwin, 1816 May. The  
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All this would be very nearly to the situation  
I described to you in March, so far as relates to  
your share in the question. I shall receive  
nothing from my father except in the way of  
charity. But his concerns are very doubtful, &  
annuity transactions are confined within an obvious  
& very narrow limit.

My father is to advance me a sum to meet  
as I have alleged engagements contracted during the  
dependence of the late negotiation. This sum is extremely  
small, & is swallowed up, almost, in such of my  
debts & the liquidation of such securities as I have  
been compelled to state in order to obtain the money at  
all. A few hundred pounds will remain; you  
shall have £300 from this source in the course  
of the summer. I am to give a good security  
for the sum, & the affair at present stands that soon  
the debts are to be drawn in the course of 6 weeks  
& 2 months & that I am to return for their  
signature & to receive the money. There can be no  
doubt that, if my application in other quarters should  
not be discovered by my father, the money will be  
in readiness for you by the time that Heriot's  
circumstances occur.

I am afraid nothing can be done with Bayard. He

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permitted to lend me 500 on my mere bond of course  
be faster, & this future presents no good augury of  
his future performance. Still the negotiation is open,  
& I cannot but think that the only, or at least the  
best chance for success would be your interference.  
Perhaps you would dislike to be mistaken for my  
personal friend which it would be except you should  
appear, provided you acquiesce in this suggestion. I  
am confident that it would be a most favourable  
circumstance. It is necessary, I must remark, that  
secrecy should at present be observed.

Rayward has also an offer in hand. He says  
he thinks he can get me 500 on that point.

Further beyond Mr. Rayward knows that I  
have left England, & as I must in all probability  
very certainly return in a few weeks to sign these  
deeds if the people should agree, or at least to get  
the money from my father, I thought it might be  
their intention to know that I was abroad. I informed  
them that I was gone for a fortnight or three weeks  
into the country. I have not seen Mr. Rayward nor  
lodgings in Marchmont Street.

The motives which determined me to leave England  
& which I stated to you in a former letter have

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continued since that period to push on me with  
accumulated force. Continually detained in a  
situation where what I esteem a prejudice does not  
permit me to live on equal terms with my fellow  
creatures I resolved to commit myself by a decided  
step. I have therefore taken many to Geneva,  
where I shall devise some plan of settlement  
& only leave me to return to London & re-engage  
with myself to business. ~~What a long time~~  
~~what a long time I have spent in this~~  
~~deliberation & what a long time I have~~  
~~spent in this deliberation & what a long~~  
~~time I have spent in this deliberation~~

Dear friend - I know not, perhaps forever!  
when, when, to see no friend, to do no office of friendship  
to engage in nothing that can soothe the sufferings  
of a spirit almost like remorse which under such  
circumstances every one feels who gives their attention  
I suspect you, I think well of you, better perhaps than  
if of any other person whom Religion concerns, you  
were the first blasphemer who first awakened, & who still  
as a blasphemer to a very great degree occupies my  
understanding. It is an unfortunate for me that the  
heart of your character which is least excellent I should have  
been most by my convictions of what was right to do.  
But I have been too insignificant, I have been unjust to

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you - forgive me - from those letters which contain  
the records of my sickness, & believe that however  
what you necessarily call for & how we separate  
us, I shall always feel towards you as the  
most affectionate of friends. - M. B. Shelley.

Address - Post Office - Genoa.

I have written a great haste, expecting  
every moment to hear that the packet sails.

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*Godwin Esq  
41 Leinster Street  
London*

MA 406.6

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 - 1822)  
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Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, lock of hair, enclosed in a letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, 7 January 1815. The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations



Miniature portrait of Percy Bysshe Shelley as a boy, undated, watercolor and opaque watercolor on ivory. The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., AZ079