

# The Most Unhappy of All Men

to visit the place where William's body had been discovered. To get there I had to take a boat across the lake from where I was staying. The mountains were lit up by flashes of lightning\* – a thunderstorm\* was getting rapidly closer.

As I landed on the shore, the rain started to come down in large, slow drops, and all the while the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, lighting up the mountains around me.

I reached the place where my dear brother had been found. I stopped to watch the storm and I felt as if heaven and earth were mourning\* him, as if the storm was a funeral\* for him. I was lost in these thoughts when a sudden flash of lightning lit up a shape moving quickly into the trees not far from me. I saw it clearly, it was gigantic and deformed\*. I understood instantly that this was the creature, the monster that I had made in my laboratory on that terrible night two years before. I had a sudden, awful realisation. Could he be the murderer of my brother? I started to shake, I had to lean against a tree to be able to stand up. There was no doubt in my mind. No human being could have destroyed that child. He was the murderer! As I watched, he quickly disappeared far into the mountains.

No one can imagine the suffering\* I felt that night.

At first I decided to tell everyone the truth about the monster, but then I realised that no one would believe me. They would think I had gone mad, my story was insane\*. I also saw how strong and fast the

3 My journey home to Geneva was terrible. At first I wanted to get back as quickly as possible, so that I could console my family, after all I had been away for six years, but then I became afraid. I was afraid of something that I could not say. I stayed in Lausanne where the lake was still\* and calm and the mountain peaks\* were covered with snow. This peaceful place helped me overcome\* my terror. After resting for two days I continued on my journey to Geneva.

As I got closer to my home, I felt that I was going to become the most unhappy of all men. When you hear the rest of my story, you will see that I was absolutely right about that, I was absolutely right except for one thing. The horror and grief that I felt at my brother's death was going to get much worse. It was going to be a hundred times worse than I could imagine.

It was night when I reached Geneva. The town gates were shut and so I had to stay in a nearby village, but I could not sleep. I decided

still not moving  
peaks tops (here of mountains)

overcome win against

lightning flashes of light in an electric storm  
thunderstorm electric storm  
mourning sadness at the death of someone  
funeral ceremony where you bury a dead person

deformed distorted  
suffering pain, unhappiness  
insane mad, crazy

creature was. It would be almost impossible to catch him. It was for these reasons that I decided not to say anything to my family about what I knew.



It was very early in the morning when the servants\* let me into the house. I sat in the library waiting for my family to wake. It was my brother Ernest who found me first. He was in tears\* when he saw me. Seeing my brother so upset, the truth of the situation hit me for the first time.

'You must help Elizabeth,' he said. 'She really believes it was all her fault. But, now that the murderer has been discovered – it is Justine, our friend, who is accused\* of William's murder.'

'Justine?' I cried, astonished\*. 'That poor, poor girl. But surely everyone realises it could not be her? Everyone must believe she is innocent?'

'We thought so too, dear brother, but the pendant that William had been wearing was found in the pocket of the dress she had been wearing on the night of the murder.'

'You are all wrong,' I said. 'Justine is innocent. I know the murderer.' At that moment my father came into the library, he seemed old and weak. He was soon followed by Elizabeth.

'I am so glad you are here, Victor', she said. 'You give me hope. I am sure that Justine is innocent, there has to be another explanation.'

'I agree with you, Elizabeth,' I said. 'She will be not be found guilty; I am sure of that.'

But in my heart I was not convinced. Who would believe my story?

servants people who you pay to work in your house  
in tears crying

accused say someone has done something bad  
astonished surprised



Justine's trial\* began later that day. She sat quietly in her seat, dressed in mourning clothes. When she saw us all in the court room she looked as if she was about to cry. Justine was questioned for a long time about the night of the murder, but to the people sitting in the court, her story did not seem believable.

Justine had been at an aunt's house. On her way back home that evening she had discovered that William was missing and immediately joined the search. As night fell, the town gates were shut and she had to spend the night in a barn\*. She had no idea how the pendant had got into her pocket.



'I have no way of explaining it. I did not take it and I have no enemies\*, I know no one who would deliberately\* try to make me seem guilty of this crime.'

The feeling in the court turned against Justine during the trial. Elizabeth was the only person to say what a good person Justine was, how she believed her to be completely innocent. I could not bear\* to be in the courtroom another minute and quickly went back home.

The next morning, after spending a hellish night, I returned to the court. My lips and throat were dry and I could hardly speak, but I found out what I had been most afraid of. Justine had been found guilty and was to be hanged\* for murder.



trial where it is decided if someone is guilty or not  
barn large building  
enemies opposite of friends

deliberately with intent, because you chose to do something  
could not bear was impossible for me  
hanged killed with a circle of rope around your neck

I felt sick. I tried to convince the men at the court that she was innocent, but I could not change their minds. How could I begin to tell them the truth? They would have thought I had gone completely mad and I would still not have saved Justine. The next day, Justine was hanged and I entered a new level in my own personal hell. Two innocent people, my young brother and our sweet Justine, were dead because of me, but as I began to think more clearly, I also saw that the grief and suffering of Elizabeth, my father and all those around me was also my fault. These innocent people were all the victims of my arrogant\* search for knowledge.



I was unable to sleep at night. I wandered around like an evil spirit\*, losing my reason\* in my grief and horror. Even when we left Geneva to go to our house in the country, I felt little improvement in my heart. I had begun my research in Ingolstadt thinking that I was doing something wonderful. I believed that my discoveries would help the whole world. Instead, I was now tortured\* by feelings of guilt. I spent as much time as I could on my own, it was the only way I could find any peace at all. I lived my days in deep, dark, death-like solitude\*.

We went to our holiday home in Belrive. I could not bear to be with anyone, so every night I took a small boat out on to the lake. I would wait until everyone had gone to bed and set out in my boat on the still, moonlit\* lake with the mountains around me. Many, many times I thought about diving\* into the silent lake and in that way

arrogant thinking you are more important than other people  
evil spirit had supernatural ghost  
losing my reason becoming insane, mad  
tortured made to feel extreme pain

solitude state of being alone/ on your own  
moonlit with light from the moon  
diving going head first into the water

end my suffering. The only thing that stopped me was the thought of how my death would affect Elizabeth and my father. I loved them both very much and I did not want to make things worse for them. Another thought also came to me. If I died, then Elizabeth, my father and my brother Ernest could also be attacked and killed by the monster. There would be no one to stop him. Every day I lived with the fear that I would hear that the monster had killed someone else. There was no news of this kind, but I had a strong feeling that the story was not yet over\*. When I thought about the monster I became filled with rage\* and hatred\*. I would have climbed the highest mountains in the Andes to be able to throw him off the top and so free the world forever of this evil creature. I wanted to see him again so that I could avenge\* the deaths of William and Justine, so that I could destroy what my hands had created.



Our house was the house of mourning. Everyone was grieving and crying. There was no happiness of any kind. My father looked weaker and older by the day. Elizabeth despaired\*. She was no longer the happy, innocent young woman she had been, her suffering and worries weighed her down\*.

'When I think about the death of Justine, dear Victor,' she said to me one day, 'I no longer believe in the goodness of the world. She was found guilty but I know she was innocent. I know it in my heart. If lies can look like the truth, then what hope is there left in the world? William and Justine were killed, but the murderer is free to walk the streets.'

over (here) ended, finished  
rage great anger  
hated the opposite of love

avenge punish someone because they have done a bad thing  
despaired were without hope  
weighed her down felt heavy to her

These words made me ill. I had not been the one to kill William and Justine, but it was me who was the real murderer because I had created the monster. Elizabeth saw how terrible I looked and took my hand in hers.

'My dearest friend, you must calm yourself. Sometimes, when I look at you there is a despair and a desire for revenge\* in you which frightens me. Please remember your friends around you. We love you, but we don't seem to be able to help you. If you let us love you, then all will be well.'

Hearing her words, I pulled her close and held her tight to me, as if I were afraid of losing her forever.



Some days I did not feel too bad, I was able to live normally. On other days the only way I could survive the way I was feeling was to go on long journeys through the mountains.

On one of these trips, I decided to go away for a few days up into the valley of Chamoni. It had been one of my favourite places as a young man. On my way, I passed beautiful green fields, picturesque\* villages and ruined castles, until I reached my destination, where glaciers\* reached down towards me.

I spent the night in an inn in the village and slept well after my long journey. The next day, I wandered around the village. I walked through forests of tall trees. After a time, I began to feel peace enter my heart for the first time in many months.



revenge act of punishing or hurting someone because they did something bad to you

picturesque pretty  
glaciers great rivers of ice

MARY SHELLY

The next day, I decided to climb up to the highest mountain in the valley; the mountain of Montanvert.

After some time, I reached one of the glaciers and decided to cross it. When I reached the other side I found shelter\* in a small cave and stood looking back out over the glacier. The light mist had started to lift. In the distance I suddenly saw a huge figure jumping over the ridges\* and crevices\* of the glacier and coming straight towards me with superhuman speed. As he approached, I realised to my horror who it was. It was the creature come to find its maker.



**shelter** place where you can stay out of the wind, snow or rain

**ridges** higher areas of ice  
**crevices** deep, long breaks in the ice

