

BRIDE
*A Tale From the House
of Frankenstein*

by Dirk Kuiper

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Story of the Play

Wilhelm Frankenstein, last remaining heir of Victor Frankenstein, has come into the possession of Victor's notes. Having recently suffered the loss of his young wife, he becomes obsessed by the idea of re-creating her by following Victor's methods. A young medical student, Jurgen Bruchner, discovers Wilhelm's plans and begs to help him. However, as the task nears completion, Jurgen begins to have second thoughts about the morality of their work. In a dramatic laboratory scene, the "bride" is created. Having been made of many different parts and memories, Wilhelm attempts to use hypnosis to create a single personality in the bride, now called "Liesl." Jurgen begins to fall in love with her and can no longer stand idly by, resolving to leave. However, before he can do so, he is murdered, and the suspicion falls directly on Liesl. Wilhelm, guilt-ridden, tells Liesl who and what she is, and removes the hypnotic memory blocks. All of her personalities come forth and fight for control. In shock, she flees, undertaking a journey to help her understand her place in the world and eventually leading her to a climactic confrontation with her creator, Wilhelm.

Original Production

Bride - A Tale From the House of Frankenstein was first presented on October 19, 2001, directed and designed by the author, and stage managed by Dan Forehand. It included the following cast:

<i>Professor ...</i> Jeffrey Rhodes	<i>Corpse ...</i> Mallery Laing
<i>Student #1 ...</i> Alan Kouns	<i>Jurgen Bruchner ...</i> Sam Gerace
<i>Wilhelm Frankenstein ...</i> Carl DuPont	<i>Hans ...</i> Joe Bunke
<i>Liesl (The "Bride") ...</i> Naomi Piercey	<i>Baroness Von Byck ...</i> Laura Kroh
<i>Baron Von Byck ...</i> Daniel Hudson	<i>Josef Kernen ...</i> Joseph Bucceri
<i>Madeleine Burkhart ...</i> Nadia Afghani	<i>Bernard ...</i> Tony Salame
<i>Sophie ...</i> Katherine Shaeffer	<i>Creature ...</i> Lara Cockley
<i>Constable ...</i> Charles Sheridan Yatsuk	<i>Sonia ...</i> Jessica Golden
<i>Noble Ladies ...</i> Cari Day, Alison Reid	

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CAST OF CHARACTERS
(9 m, 6 w, extras)

- Wilhelm Frankenstein:** The son of Ernst Frankenstein, Victor's brother, and the last member of the House of Frankenstein. Wilhelm is melancholy since the loss of his wife, but he is driven to somehow replace her.
- Jurgen Bruckner:** A young medical student with somewhat radical ideas. He is full of energy and determined to prove his ideas right, but also has a strong moral compass.
- Baron Rupert Von Byck:** A friend of Wilhelm's, a somewhat stuffy noble.
- Josef Kern:** A refined man in his 30's. A friend of Wilhelm's, one of the bored rich.
- Hans:** A servant of Frankenstein.
- Bernard:** A servant of Frankenstein.
- Professor:** An instructor at the university; an older man who lectures on life and death to the medical students.
- Constable:** An officer of the law investigating a murder.
- Student #1:** A medical student at the university.
- Various Students:** Medical students at the university.
- Bride / Fraulein Liesl:** The creature Frankenstein creates. At first, she is wild and frightened, but later refined, beautiful, the perfect lady. She has moments of madness, or fits, which increase in number as time goes on.
- Baroness Cecile Von Byck:** A friend of Wilhelm's; a lover of gossip and a queen of society.
- Lady Madeleine Burkhart:** A friend of Wilhelm's. A social flirt with an eye for men, but also for romance.
- Sonia:** Sister of a woman from whom Liesl was partially made; a simple, lower-class woman, with the superstitious nature common to her class.
- Sophie:** A servant of Frankenstein.
- Creature:** The first "Bride;" an imperfect, ugly being with no language ability, but with emotions. A hideously deformed woman covered with scars from sutures, unkempt and dirty, but of approximately the same stature as Liesl.
- Young Noble Ladies:** Guests at the Frankenstein Estate.

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: *Medical Lecture Hall, University at Ingolstadt, 1834*

Scene 2: *A Sitting Room at the Von Byck Estate*

Scene 3: *The Graveyard*

Scene 4: *The Laboratory on the Frankenstein Estate*

Scene 5: *The Dining Hall in the Frankenstein Mansion*

Scene 6: *The Ballroom in the Frankenstein Mansion*

ACT II

Scene 1: *A Corridor in the Frankenstein Mansion*

Scene 2: *The Ballroom*

Scene 3: *A Road in the Country*

Scene 4: *The Laboratory*

SETTINGS

The play can be staged elaborately or very simply. In order to facilitate scene shifts, all of the scenes in the House of Frankenstein can be in front of the same group of flats, merely changing the properties and dressing. The rationale is that the walls would be similar throughout the estate, so the addition of different tapestries, paintings, tables, etc. will define different locations. The graveyard is simply suggested by a headstone. The road in the country is likewise established with a tree stump for the actresses to sit upon. In the end, put all of your money into the laboratory, adding all the extra set dressing and lighting effects that you can. Various medical implements are strewn about, and electrical cables and machinery are in evidence against the walls. A stairway leading up to the bell tower is visible to one side, and a stained glass window is located center stage, over what was formerly the altar. Jars containing organs and body parts are also visible. This should definitely be your most elaborate set, but it could also be done simply if necessary, stripping it to the bare essentials.

****See additional production notes at the end of the script.***

ACT I

Scene 1: A Medical Lecture Hall, The University At Ingolstadt

(AT RISE: STUDENTS sit in a rising, semi-circular arrangement, looking down on a table. A PROFESSOR stands near the table. Upon the table is the shrouded shape of a body. The professor addresses the students.)

PROFESSOR: We began this lecture series, scholars, with the origin of life; with conception, gestation, and birth, the emergence of a human being from the darkness. On this day, we conclude this study with a descent back into that darkness, that silence to which we must all one day return. Today, we look on death.

(HE throws the cover back to reveal the face of a young woman, pale and ghostly. There are several quiet gasps throughout the hall and the STUDENTS glance nervously at each other.)

PROFESSOR: *(Continued.)* I hear whispering, scholars, and I sense ... apprehension in the air. Would someone care to articulate the reason for your lack of focus?

STUDENT #1: *(Standing.)* Sir. It's only that ... well, sir, she does not appear ... the other examples have been

PROFESSOR: I believe what you are trying to say is that she does not seem as *dead* as the other corpses which you have seen. Yes, I grant you, she retains about her a sense of the beauty that must have been hers. *(Gesturing to corpse's face.)* Her face does not appear ravaged by disease, nor are there any mortal injuries apparent. And yet, her skin is cold, the light of life is absent from her eyes, no breath stirs from her lungs. And it is for just such reasons I have brought her to you. Her history is very simple to explain, though not to understand. This poor child took ill two nights ago, from no cause that could be determined.

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PROFESSOR: *(Continued.)* She apparently suddenly felt faint and was comatose within an hour, a sleep from which she would never awaken. She died, scholars, and I cannot tell you why. It is beyond our understanding. Death comes to us all, you see, whether in our old age or in the flower of our youth, suddenly and without warning. We could not save this poor child ... yet someday, one of you might have that knowledge. This is our great task: to remove and prevent the misery of illness, to repair the damage of time, and to put off the darkness as long as we are able. I hope in your continued studies you will learn what is needed to help you in what, at the risk of sounding less than scientific, I choose to call our sacred task as physicians. Are there any questions before we dismiss?

JURGEN: *(Stands.)* Sir. In regard to this lecture series, there is a rumor circulating regarding the patron who financed it—

PROFESSOR: As has been said before, the patron has chosen to remain anonymous. The university is grateful for the support and for the opportunity to bring the finest medical minds from throughout Europe here to Ingolstadt. You should concern yourself with your studies, Mr. Bruckner, and not with these rumors.

JURGEN: Sir. I mean no disrespect, but it is well known that the House of Frankenstein supplied the capital for the expenses—

PROFESSOR: As I just stated—

JURGEN: —and when you consider the rumors associated with the name Frankenstein—

PROFESSOR: How dare you broach that subject? I warn you, Mr. Bruckner, this institution will not continue to tolerate these flights of fancy. We study medicine here, not black magic and faerie lore, and these ideas of yours—

JURGEN: Professor, please! Everyone has heard of Victor Frankenstein's attempt to create life, and more than a few believe it was a creation of his that hastened his death at so young an age. Why else would the family have suppressed the journals and notes found after his death?

End of Freeview

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