

Nick Dear's

FRANKENSTEIN

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY MARY SHELLEY

UNIT 1
THE BEGINNING

THE UNDERSTUDY

DRAMA & THEATRE RESOURCES

UNIT 1

THE BEGINNING



READ

Scenes 1-3

Pages 3-4

Lines 1-55

DISCUSS

What mood is suggested by the opening stage directions?

What cues are you given for design?

What are the challenges going to be for designing this scene?

In what ways is the CREATURE described / portrayed as an animal? A child? A monster?

What is immediately suggested about the Victor / Creature relationship in Scene 3?



VOCABULARY

dingy
garret
25

dingy = gloomy, dark,
dirty
garret = a room in the
roof like an attic,
often with sloped
ceilings

incoherently
43

unclear, confusing,
making no sense

repulsed
40

disgusted, driven
away

ghastly
43

causing horror or fear

sprawled
41

spread out in an
awkward way

appalled
44

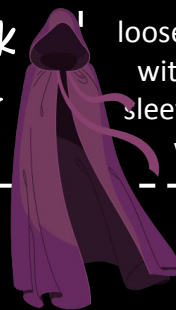
horrified, disgusted,
shocked in a bad way

babbling
43

speaking rapidly in a
way that can't be
understood

cloak
52

loose outer garment
with hood but no
sleeves - covers the
whole body





ANIMAL

Instincts

QUICK
Starter

UNIT 1
THE BEGINNING

We might find it useful to draw on the animal world in finding different ways to bring the CREATURE'S birth and first moments to life.

Pick an animal that you think might inspire a portrayal of the creature.

Find a video of it behaving naturally and just observe it for a few minutes.

What is its posture? How does it move? When does it move and why? Try to focus on the tiniest details

Lee Strasberg introduced the animal exercise into an actor's training and preparation for a role. It is still taught today in many drama schools and often helps to build a deeper physical characterisation of any role.

Marlon Brando famously observed apes for his role as Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Lee J Cobb who played Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* watched elephants so he could create 'the weight of the world on his shoulders'.

("The Animal Exercise for Actor's Character Development")

Now put the video away and begin experimenting with your own movement:

- ➡ *How is your animal shaped? Think about the curve in its back. How does that affect the way it moves?*
- ➡ *Does your animal have fins, hooves, paws, or hands?*
- ➡ *Does your animal have a tail?*
- ➡ *Does your animal have fur, feathers, scales? Is its skin smooth, bumpy, hot or cold? Think about how its skin feels.*
- ➡ *What is the shape of your animal's ears? How about its nose? Does it have a snout? What about its mouth? Does the shape of its nose and mouth make eating and drinking easier or more difficult? Where are its eyes located? Do they face front or are they farther on the sides of its face?*

UNIT 1

THE BEGINNING



PRACTICAL

Exploration

WORK IN PAIRS



One person will play **CREATURE** and one will play **VICTOR**. This performer can also help to direct CREATURE until Scene 3.

Experiment with how you can create an exciting opening for this production working from Scene 1 to Scene 3.

How do you want the audience to feel?

How can you create that impact?

SCENE 1: Birth

SCENE 2: First steps

SCENE 3: Meeting Victor

In the National Theatre version, these first 3 scenes take up about 12 minutes of the performance. Use the stage directions as guidance – but use your creativity to build on that.

OPTION:

Add one or two more people to each group to act as sound and lighting designer, depending on what facilities you have. This may help your exploration enormously.

OR one person can do this for all the groups if that works better for you?

[Heartbeat Sound Effect](#) ❤️ [Slow](#),
[Fast](#), [Creepy](#), [Irregular](#), [Normal](#) - [Free Download](#) | No Copyright

SET AND COSTUME/MAKE-UP DESIGN DESIGN TASK



There is a vertical frame on which something like a human form is suspended. It moves. Rubber tubes, like drips, are inserted into it at various points."

"Something like a human form"

"Rubber tubes, like drips, are inserted into it"

"Naked and leaking blood as he rips the tubes out of his veins"

"Spurts of blood come from the sutures in his skin"

Design your own set piece for your creature to emerge from. It is going to be very hard to do something different to the NT version if you have seen that as it's a really exciting design. But see that as your challenge: how can you do something different?

Design your own costume / make-up for the actor playing creature. Again, it will be hard not to draw on what you might have seen from the NT - and it might be worth noting they gave the actor a small loin cloth so he wasn't completely exposed. What will you do? Most importantly, you will shift away from any cliches we've come to accept from popular culture.

WRITING TASK

(Short question training)



1 MARK = IDENTIFY

1 MARK = REASON

1. Identify one element of lighting design for Scene 1 and give a reason for your choice. [2]

2. Identify one sound effect you would use in Scene 1 and say why. [2]

1. SAMPLE ANSWER

I would have a series of huge flood lights facing the audience, so that when there are 'flashes' or 'blasts' of 'brilliant light' I can blind them with light to make them feel empathy with the creature.

2. SAMPLE ANSWER

I would have a loud heartbeat as suggested by the text, underscored by the 'moving water' sound we hear when in a pregnancy scan to enhance the idea that this is a birth of some kind - but slightly distort it so it's unusual.



TOP TIP!

Get used to writing succinct (brief, to the point) answers for the short questions. Many students spend too much time on these at the start of the paper and regret it.

Free SAMPLE

This is a taster of our full set of (editable) slides and many other outstanding resources available at www.the-understudy.org

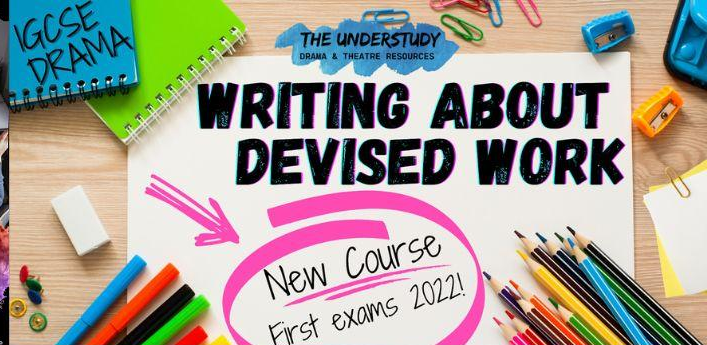
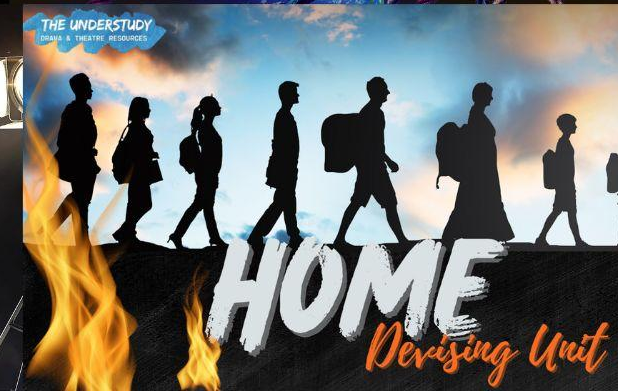
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"GAME-CHANGER"
"AWESOME" "A GIFT & A GODSEND" "FANTASTIC"

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IMAGES

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