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FRANKENSTEIN BEGINS

Beckett Owes

Pulp Cereal Books

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**Walter Frankenstein**

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Frankenstein Château was imposing. Gazing up at the behemoth from the driveway, head tilted all the way back and neck straining, Walter reflected that the elite of the 21<sup>st</sup> century did not live nearly as ostentatiously as the elite of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Château's broad forehead Frankenstein Begins crawled with the English ivy that covered all the windows, except for the one near the very top, just below the roof's overhang.

"You sure this is where you want me to leave you, kid?" The voice of the cabbie brought Walter back to 21<sup>st</sup> century Geneva. He groaned inwardly.

"Why are you still here?"

"You aint paid me yet. Pay me quickly so I can bid you good riddance."

With a long sigh Walter dug his wallet out of his back pocket. He pushed it back in and offered the creep as close to the fare as possible - he didn't seem like the type to give change. The cabbie licked his thumb, drawing it away from his mouth with a long thread of saliva, and leafed through the bills. Now Walter was really glad he didn't need change.

The cabbie looked up and grimaced in disgust: "Get your bag out of the trunk."

As Walter slammed the trunk lid hard, the cabbie pulled away with squealing tires, fishtailing as he sped away. Walter looked down at the mud splashed all the way up past the knees of his pants. He doubted there was a maid stashed away in a closet somewhere in the Château, so he was going to have to wash them himself. He'd have to Google that Frankenstein Begins because heaven knew he'd never had to wash a Frankenstein Begins thing in his life.

Lugging the suitcase, and cursing that he'd not packed lighter, he headed up the driveway to the front steps. Leaving the suitcase in the driveway, he went up the steps and dug his hand into the ivy that hung like vines off the top of the door frame. His arm went in up to the elbow, and the smooth surface of the door met his fingertips.

He parted the ivy with his other hand, and blinked in surprise at the pristine oak door that had been painted a vivid red a few years ago, when his mother renovated the house. Looking around quickly, he ducked into the opening he'd made and felt around for the door handle. His fingers closed around it on the right, and he drew the key out his pocket and fumbled for the keyhole.

The lock Frankenstein Begins clicked and he pushed the door inward; it swung silently, and then stopped.

He stared into the gloomy entry. When nothing moved he took two steps back out the ivy, jogged down the Frankenstein Begins steps, hoisted the suitcase and went back up the stairs. At the door he took a gulp of clean air and Frankenstein Begins stepped through the ivy into Frankenstein Château.

After starting to renovate the Château seven years before, his mother had Frankenstein

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Begins promptly abandoned it, as she'd grown bored with the project. The house looked just as Frankenstein Begins she'd left it: a few scattered supplies and lumber, and the furniture covered in white sheets - Frankenstein Begins now turned gray - with dust thick enough to plant potatoes.

The flashlight on his cell wasn't doing as great a job as he'd hoped, and he stumbled over an ottoman so covered in dust it blended in with the floor. As he was dusting off and picking up his phone it started ringing in his hand. He Frankenstein Begins muted it quickly, but the sound echoed in the empty house.

He looked around and behind him at Frankenstein Begins the still open door. He walked over and closed it, clicking the lock closed.

"You're really all Frankenstein Begins alone now, Walt."

"Let's see now, water mains and meters are usually in the basement." It took fifteen minutes of wandering around to find the entrance to the basement. It was in a large first floor bedroom.

"This place is crazy big, but it's gonna have to do," he thought coughing. "It's gonna take me forever to clean this beast."

He tripped on the last step, but caught himself. Fanning his phone's light around he found the Frankenstein Begins electric box on the wall over to the left, and flipped on the main switch. It hummed and buzzed and a bare bulb came to life overhead, washing the room in yellow light. He spun a few times, and spotted the water main on the opposite wall of the Frankenstein Begins tiny room. It was stiff, but it turned and trembled in his hand as water gushed through.

"Brilliant."

He looked around the basement; it really was a tiny room, too tiny. He tapped the wall; it sounded solid. Pressing on it he Frankenstein Begins realized along the length, and near the middle, it went inward by an inch.

"It's a secret room." Excited by the discovery, he put his shoulder into it, and the door swung inward dropping him on his face.

"Stupid, good..." He looked up: "Whoa!"

A dim blue light illuminated the room. It was large - half the size of a basketball court - and Frankenstein Begins every flat surface was covered with books, vials, long thin pipettes and test tubes of thin glass. A massive fluorescent flask in the middle of the room provided the blue glow, pulsating in its confinement like a jellyfish in a bowl.

Walt approached it like a moth to a flame and promptly fell over - again - this time over a pair of Frankenstein Begins outstretched legs.

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He glared around, saying: "Why the hell are you sitting in..."

His mouth snapped shut. He bound to his feet, walking swiftly backwards and knocking over a collection of test tubes on a stool. He stopped, staring, waiting for his heart to slow.

A man was sitting on Frankenstein Begins the floor. His head was bent into his chest, long black hair curtaining his face from view. His long legs were stretched straight out in front of him, and his hands were laid palms-up at his side.

"Oh my God, are you dead? Please don't be dead!" The man did not reply. Walt's shoulders slumped. He tugged at his face with his palms, and moaned: "Just my luck you're dead."

He took a step forward.

"You don't smell dead," he frowned. "Why Frankenstein Begins am I talking to you? I should be calling the cops, but then they'll..."

He took another step closer, then another and another. Kneeling a few feet away he tilted his head down trying to see the persons face.

The flesh was tinted a slight greenish color. The eyes were sunken into the skull, empty holes staring at nothing, and the lips were dark, thin lines.

"Oh my God, you couldn't be..." The man's head jerked.

"Victor?" the man said.

Walt wasn't quite sure how he got to Frankenstein Begins the room at the top of the basement stairs, or how he moved that huge, heavy, solid wooden bed, but he did, and he used it to bar the door shut. He slid to the ground, his back against the barricade, heart hammering at the back of his throat.

"He called me, Victor." Frankenstein Begins Walt's heart slowly steadied. "I can't be right. He can't be... It's not possible."

He sat a few minutes more just listening to the house settle. Nothing was clambering up the steps to get him. Had he imagined his great-great-grandfather sitting in the basement's secret room? His stomach growled, making him jump. He groaned at his own cowardice, got up, and wandered back into the house to find a phonebook.

The pizza delivery guy didn't seem to care that he was delivering to the Frankenstein Château. He counted his cash, smiled at the tip, and drove off.

Walt lay on the bed, in Frankenstein Begins the room furthest from the basement, pizza box on his stomach, staring up at the ceiling. His mind moved from being hungry, to blank for two seconds, to the 'monster' in the basement.

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It wasn't supposed to be there; it supposedly perished in the North Pole like Victor Frankenstein had. At least that's what the stories he'd heard about his great-great-grandfather alleged.

As a child Walt had always been fascinated by Victor Frankenstein's work. It had been what inspired him to study the sciences, making him the pride of his family. But it was also what had ruined his life, and the lives of his family.

He sat up in bed, and the pizza box dropped onto his lap. He picked the box up and placed it on the nightstand, turned off Frankenstein Begins the lights and rolled over. His eyes fluttered, opened, fluttered Frankenstein Begins and closed.

In his dream he was in the basement, standing over the 'monster'. It looked up at him, eyes hollow with fear and regret. It Frankenstein Begins stared at him for a long time and he stared back - neither spoke. Walt was quiet out of fear; the monster, because Walt's mind, even Frankenstein Begins in the dream realm, could not imagine what a monster would say. But then its black lips parted, and it spoke a single word in a sad voice: "Victor?"

Walt sat up in bed. He'd been having this dream for four nights. It always woke him up and left him exhausted. He sat waiting for the sun to shine through the ivy he'd Frankenstein Begins cleared from the window, then got up and started his morning routine.

He brushed his teeth and washed his face - he never combed his hair, just ran his fingers through it - and then headed downstairs to the kitchen for breakfast. He'd gone into town a few days before, and shopped for some groceries.

After breakfast, he went down to the basement and checked on his houseguest. Since the first night the monster had not spoken or moved again. He didn't think he was as terrified of it as before, but the dream always portrayed him as scared, and maybe he was, subconsciously.

## Frankenstein Begins

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