



Transcript for *She Made a Monster: How Mary Shelley Created Frankenstein* (Knopf Books for Young Readers, an Imprint of Penguin Random House) Preview Video

Preview (0:00 – 7:14)

Hi everyone! It's Colleen from the KU Natural History Museum; and I am here to remind you about tomorrow's Story Book Science, here on Facebook Live at 10am. Now I will be reading the book *She Made a Monster: How Mary Shelley Created Frankenstein*. Now this book is written by Lynn Fulton, and it is illustrated by Felicity Sala. And it is being read with permission from Knopf Books for Young Readers, which is an imprint of Penguin Random House. So thank you to them for the permission to read this book!

Now this book is about Mary Shelley, and Mary Shelley was a writer from London, England, who created a very famous science fiction tale called *Frankenstein*. Now maybe you've heard of *Frankenstein* before; and when you think of *Frankenstein*, what do you think of? Do you think of a monster that's green and tall with some bolts in his neck? Maybe he looks like this. Now this is what people think of when they think of *Frankenstein*. But *Frankenstein* isn't this monster or this creature. *Frankenstein* is actually the scientist that created the creature. The creature doesn't have a name. So Victor Frankenstein, the scientist, created this creature and brought it to life. But he didn't think about what he was doing. He didn't think if it was right or if it was wrong. And when the creature came to life, Victor Frankenstein abandoned it. He ran away! So how do you think that made the creature feel? Its creator left it!

Now *Frankenstein* is this science fiction tale. So what it means is that it's not a real story. It didn't actually happen. But it's based in scientific practices that do occur and happen in the world that we live in. So what can we learn from *Frankenstein*?

Well, we can learn about ethics. And when we talk about ethics, we're talking about determining what is right and what is wrong. We can also learn about the importance of taking responsibility for our actions. So when we talk about *Frankenstein*, the scientist, we can talk about how he didn't take responsibility for his actions. He didn't do anything once he created life. He just abandoned it. And when we talk about *Frankenstein* and all the things we can learn in the book, we can apply that to our world too!

So one really great example about ethics and how scientists need to take responsibility for their actions is how scientists at the museum prepare specimens. Now I have a specimen that I'd like to share with you. So I'm going to grab that now. And this specimen right here, this is a cotton rat. Now the scientist that prepped this cotton rat, that prepared it, had to practice good ethics. So it had to determine what is right and what is wrong and make sure that their actions, the consequences of them, were good. So the scientist, when it collected the specimen, it had to make sure that it was collected from a place where they had permission to collect it or they weren't taking it from a country or a group of peoples. Then, when they prepared the specimen, they had to make sure that they prepared it in a very careful way so that its fur was still there and all of the different components of its body like its hind limbs and its forelimbs. And the scientist also had to practice good ethics when it was storing the specimen. So it had to make sure that it was in a safe place and that it was protected from things that might harm this like beetles and other sorts of bugs.

So the scientist who prepared this specimen had to practice good ethics. They had to do what was right. And because they practiced good ethics, the consequences of their actions were that this specimen has been around for a very long time. And you and I and other folks can learn so much about this specimen!

Now this specimen, it's from 1947. So it's quite old. And we can still study it. We can still look at its fur. We can still look at its whiskers, at its ears, at the forelimbs and the hind limbs. So we can still study this specimen because the scientists who prepared it practiced good ethics, and the consequences of those actions are helpful!

Alright. So I'm going to put this back.

Now sometimes, scientists have to practice good ethics, even if the scientist who prepared a specimen didn't practice good ethics. So that means that specimens sometimes have to be returned. So scientists from a long time ago, sometimes they took things without asking. And that wasn't right. That was wrong. And because of that, the actions that they took taking a specimen without permission, it hurt people. That was the consequence of their action. So scientists today have to return things in order to do what is right.

And scientists constantly have to ask themselves what is right and what is wrong. Sometimes scientists have hurt people because of their actions, because they didn't do what is right. And sometimes it was because scientists lied. And they were lies that hurt people because they were either saying that some people are better than other people. And those lies had consequences, and those consequences hurt people. Sometimes it's because they did medical exams and procedures, and they lied to people. They didn't tell them the truth about what they were doing. And because they lied, the consequence of that action was that they hurt people. And lying isn't right, is it? No. Lying is wrong. And the consequence of lying is that it hurts people. So scientists have to work really hard to make sure that they do what is right and act in a way that doesn't hurt people but instead helps people. Alright?

Now tomorrow, we'll talk a little bit more about the importance of ethics in scientific research when we read the book *She Made a Monster*. So I hope that you join me tomorrow, and I'll see you then! Bye!