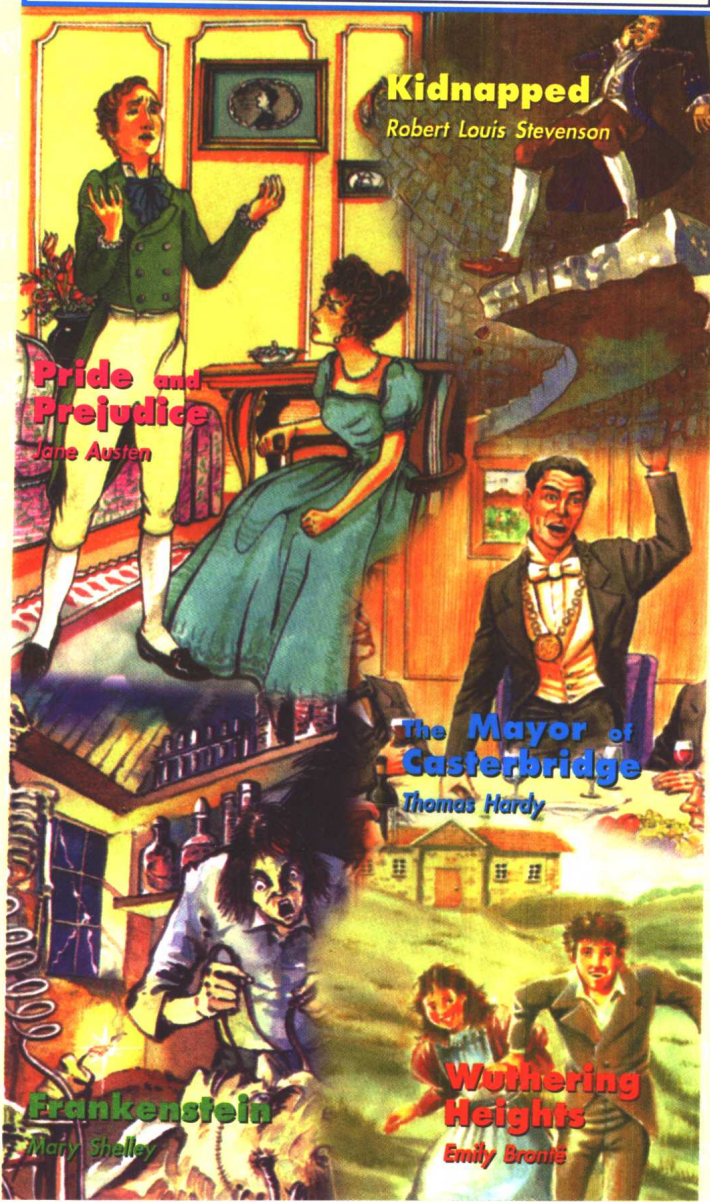


Oxford Progressive English Readers

上外—牛津英语分级读物

第五级

上海外语教育出版社 牛津大学出版社



Integrated Progress in English Reading

上外—牛津英語分級讀本

第五級

上海外語教育出版社 上海牛津大學出版



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弗兰肯斯坦

Mary Shelley
Syllabus designer: David Foulds
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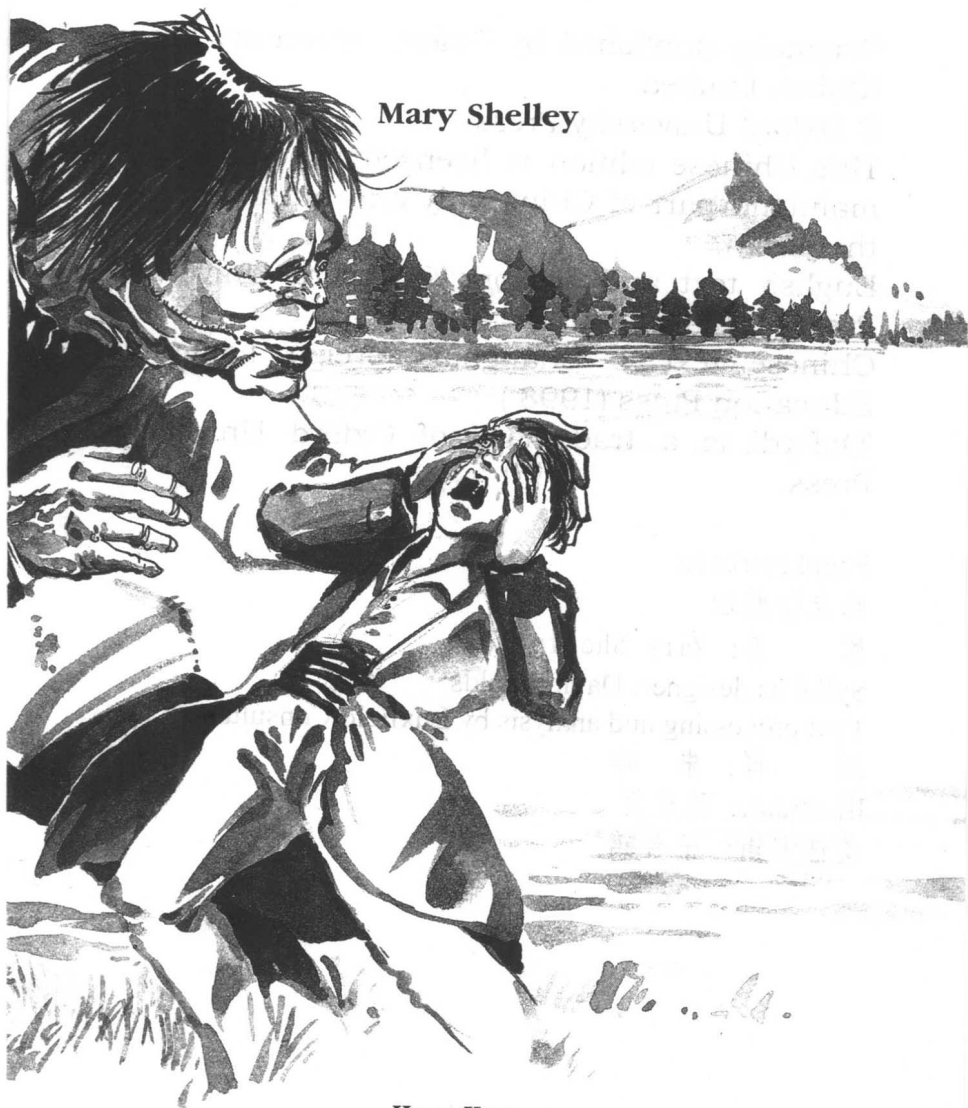
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Frankenstein

Mary Shelley



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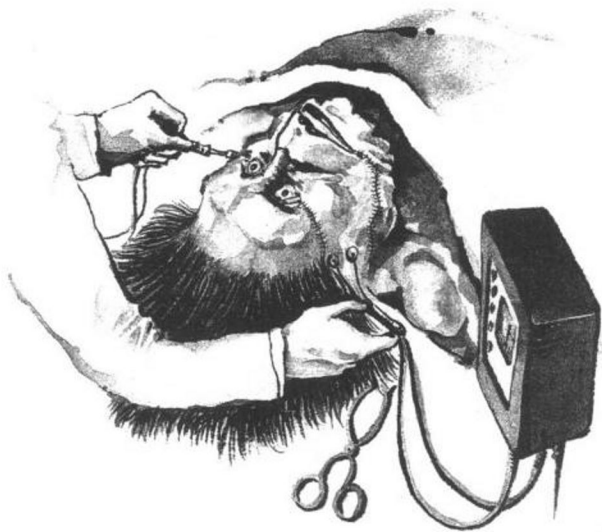
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LETTERS FROM AN EXPLORER

Letter 1

From Robert Walton to his sister, Mrs Margaret Saville.

St. Petersburg, Russia, 11th December, 17__

My dearest Margaret,

*You will be very glad to know that I am safe, in spite of
all your fears. I arrived yesterday and feel very confident
about the voyage of discovery that I plan to make.* 5

*London seems a very long way off. Now, every day, when
I walk through the streets of St. Petersburg, a cold northern
wind blows upon my cheeks and fills me with delight. Do
you understand this feeling, my sweet sister? This wind has
come from the North Pole itself and it makes me dream of
that marvellous place, which I shall be the first to visit.* 10

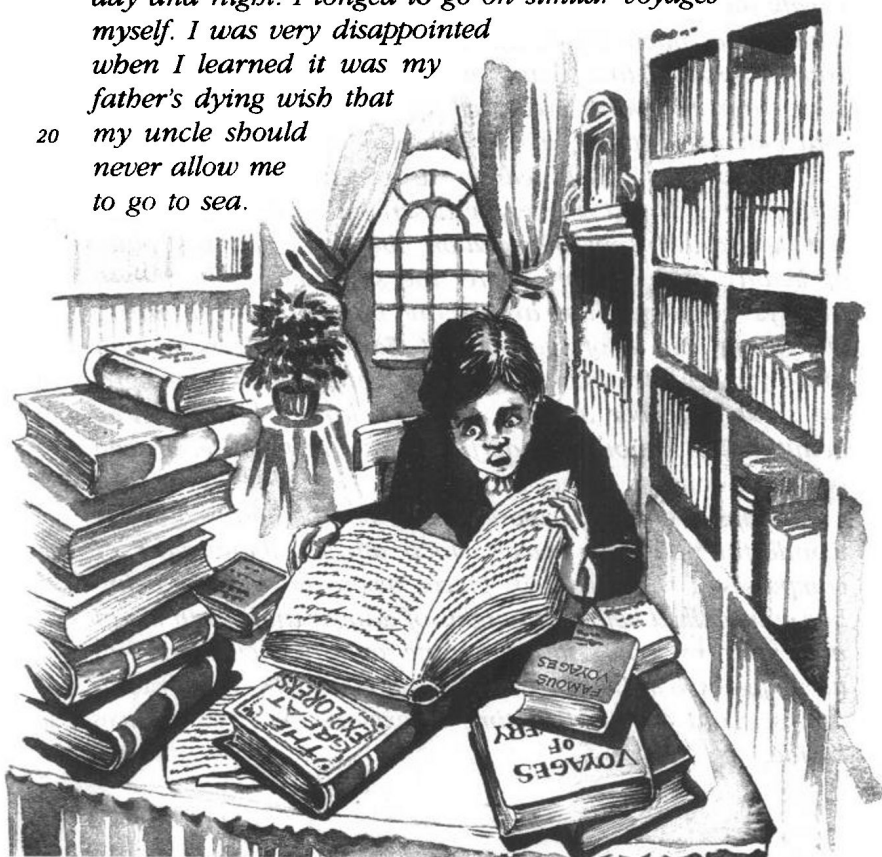
*It is no good people telling me that the Pole is covered
with frost or is just a freezing desert full of loneliness. I do
not believe it. In my imagination, the North Pole is a place
of beauty and delight. There, the sun never sets: it can
always be seen, just above the horizon, brightening
everything with a soft, gentle light. Earlier explorers thought
that snow and frost could not exist there. If they were right,
we shall sail over a calm sea to a land which is more
beautiful and more wonderful than any place ever seen
before: a country of eternal light.* 15 20

*Perhaps, when I am there, I shall be able to discover the
wonderful magnetic power which attracts the needles of
compasses. I shall walk in places where no human being
has ever walked before. Thoughts of danger and death mean
nothing to me now. I feel the same joy and excitement that
a boy feels when he gets into a small boat with some friends
and sets out for the first time to explore the river he lives
beside.* 25 30

But what if all these ideas are wrong? Even so, you cannot disagree, dear Margaret, that by sailing towards the North I shall be able to search for a passage from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, or examine the secrets of the earth's magnetism. These things are certain to be of the greatest value to society.

Ever since I was a child, this expedition has been a favourite dream of mine. I have read all the accounts of the various voyages which have been made in the hope of getting to the northern parts of the Pacific Ocean by sailing through the polar seas. You may remember that our good uncle Thomas's library consisted of nothing but books about all the voyages of discovery.

I never went to school, or had a teacher, but you will remember that I loved reading and I studied those books day and night. I longed to go on similar voyages myself. I was very disappointed when I learned it was my father's dying wish that my uncle should never allow me to go to sea.



These ideas faded as I grew older. When I started to read literature, I became much more interested in that. You remember I also became a poet and imagined that I might become famous for my poetry. You know that I failed and that I was greatly disappointed. But just at that time, my cousin died and left me some money, and my thoughts turned back to my earlier interest. 5

Six years have passed since I first decided to prepare for this expedition. I began by strengthening my body in order to stand up to the hardships I knew I would have to face. I went whale hunting several times in the North Sea. I learned to conquer cold, hunger, thirst and lack of sleep. I worked harder than the ordinary sailors during the day, and spent all my nights studying mathematics, medicine and science so that I might be able to meet any danger or difficulty. Twice I worked as an officer in a whaling ship that sailed to Greenland. I felt very proud when the captain asked me to remain with him as his second in command. 10 15

Do you not think I deserve to achieve my aims, Margaret? If I wanted to, I could pass my life in ease and comfort, but I prefer glory to anything that money can buy. My courage is firm, but my hopes are forever changing, and my spirits are often depressed. I am about to start on a long and difficult voyage, and will need to be well prepared for every difficulty; I am required not only to raise the spirits of others, but sometimes to keep up my own, too. 20 25

I shall leave St Petersburg three weeks from now and travel north, by sledge, to Archangel. There I shall hire a boat and employ some men who are experienced whale hunters. I shall set sail in June when the weather will be at its best. And when shall I return? Ah, dear sister, how can I answer this question? If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet again. If I fail, you will see me soon — or never. 30

*Farewell, my dear, excellent Margaret.
Your affectionate brother,* 35

Robert Walton.

Letter 2

Archangel, Russia, 28th March, 17__

My dearest Margaret,

All around us here there is nothing but frost and snow, and the time passes very slowly, yet a second step has been taken towards my expedition. I have hired a ship, and am now busy looking for sailors to come with me. Those whom I have already employed appear to be men I can trust. They are certainly fine, brave fellows.

But there is one thing I have not been able to find, Margaret. I have no friend. When I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be no one to share my joy; if I am disappointed by failure, no one will be there to offer me any sympathy.

I shall write everything down, it is true, but that will be a poor way of expressing my feelings. I need the company of a man who will share my hopes and dreams.

Perhaps you will think I am too romantic, my dear sister, but I feel very sad that I have no friend. I have no one near me who is gentle yet brave, well educated and intelligent, and whose interests are like my own. Here, there is no one to encourage me with my plans, and help me perfect them.

Such a friend would greatly help to improve the faults of your poor brother! I am too anxious to get started on things, and too impatient when there are difficulties. But the worst thing about me is that I have not had a good education. For the first fourteen years of my life, I did whatever I liked. I read nothing except our uncle Thomas's books about famous voyages. It was only when it was too late for me to learn easily that I realized the importance of studying foreign languages. Now I am twenty-eight and I know less than many schoolboys of fifteen. It is true that I have thought more than they have, and that my ideas are more extended and more magnificent than theirs, but these ideas need developing, and I greatly need a friend who will encourage me and guide me in this.

Well, my complaints will do me little good. I shall certainly find no friend on the wide ocean, nor even here in Archangel, among merchants and seamen.

I cannot properly describe to you my feelings, now that our expedition is almost ready to start. It is impossible to give you a true idea of that trembling sensation, half pleasant and half fearful, that seems to run through my whole being. I am going to unexplored regions, to the land of mist and snow, and that is very exciting for me.

I will tell you a secret. I have often thought that my great interest in going on a voyage of exploration has something to do with the poems we read when we were children. There seems to be, inside me, something that I do not understand, driving me towards this. In a practical sense, I have always been a hard worker, and a careful one, too — but besides this I seem to have a special love for the marvellous and the unusual. It affects everything I do. Now it is pulling me away from the common pathways of men and out to the wild and unvisited regions that I am about to explore.

But to return to dearer thoughts: shall I meet you again, after having travelled across immense seas and returned by the most southern parts of Africa or America, dear Margaret? I dare not expect to be so successful, yet, at the same time, I cannot bear to think about failure.

Continue for now to write to me whenever you can. Perhaps I shall receive your letters at a time when I need them most to encourage me. I love you very dearly. If you never hear from me again, remember me with affection.

Robert.

Letter 3

30

At sea, 7th July

My dear sister,

I am quickly writing a few lines to say that I am safe and well, and on my way to the North Pole. This letter will

reach England on a merchant ship which is now sailing home from Russia. I am in good spirits, and my men are brave and loyal. They are not at all frightened by the huge sheets of ice that we see floating past us every day. We are
5 already very far to the north, but the winds from the south breathe warmth over us, which I had not expected.

So far, everything has gone wonderfully well. I will not take any foolish risks, but I am more than ever determined to succeed.

10 Heaven bless you, my sister,

Robert.

Letter 4

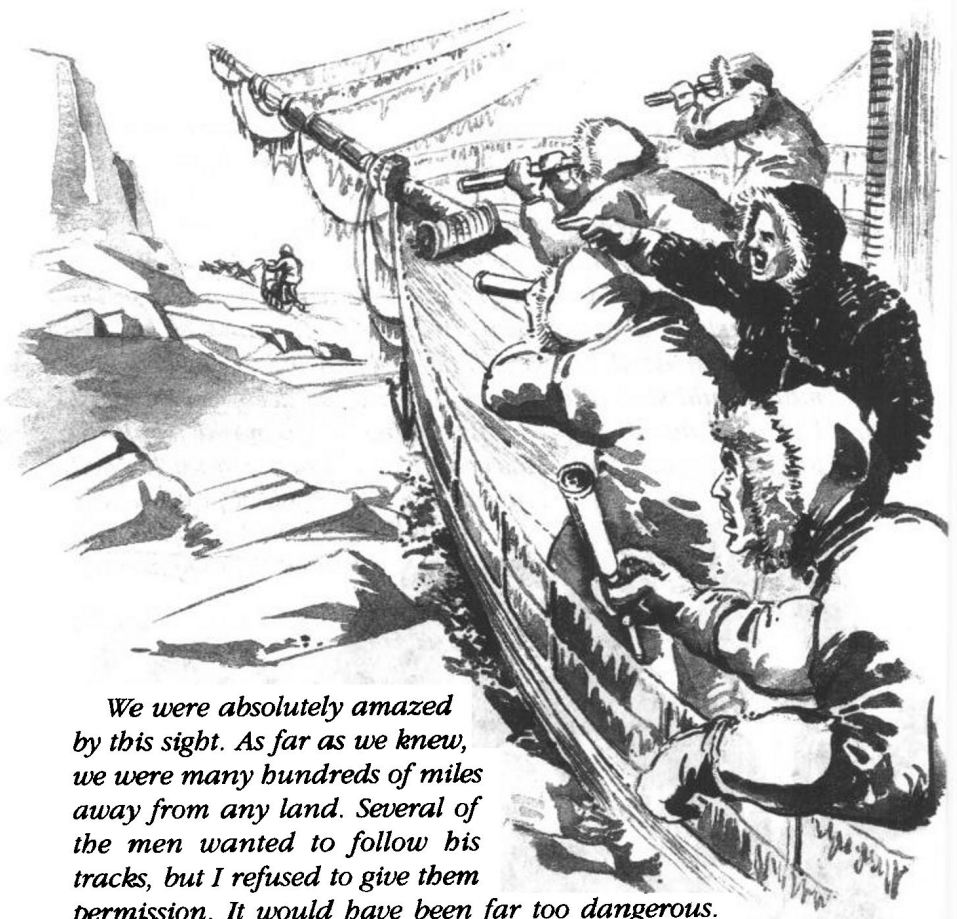
At sea, 5th August

My dear sister,

15 A very strange event has taken place. I must keep a written record of it, even though there is no way, at the moment, of sending these letters to you.

Last Monday we were almost completely surrounded by ice. It had closed in on us from all sides, and there was
20 hardly any water in which the ship could float. Things were beginning to look dangerous, especially as we were also surrounded by a very thick fog. We decided to wait patiently and hope for a change in the weather.

About two o'clock, the mist cleared away. We could see
25 huge and uneven plains of ice stretching out in every direction. They seemed endless, and some of my companions groaned with despair. I too, was beginning to be worried, when a strange sight suddenly attracted our attention. We saw a vehicle moving quickly across the ice, drawn by dogs
30 — a sledge. It was about half a mile away and heading northwards. The driver who guided the dogs had the shape of a man, but was as tall as a giant. With our telescopes, we watched the speedy progress of this traveller until he disappeared behind some distant slopes.



We were absolutely amazed by this sight. As far as we knew, we were many hundreds of miles away from any land. Several of the men wanted to follow his tracks, but I refused to give them permission. It would have been far too dangerous.

About two hours after this event, we heard the sea move beneath the ship. Before night the ice broke and we were free. However, we decided to remain where we were. It was dark and we were afraid of crashing into huge masses of ice which were beginning to float all around us. I took advantage of this delay and went to rest for a few hours.

The following morning, as soon as it was daylight, I went up on deck and found all the sailors crowded on one side of the ship. They were talking to someone in the sea. I looked down and saw a sledge, similar to the one we had seen the day before. It had floated towards us during the night on a large piece of ice. Only one of the dogs was left alive. Inside the sledge, however, was a human being. The sailors were trying to persuade him to come aboard our ship.

This man was a European. He did not look anything like that other traveller we had seen the day before. As I approached, the first mate said, 'Here is our captain. He will not allow you to die in the middle of this sea.'

- 5 *As soon as he saw me, the stranger spoke to me. 'Before I come on board your ship,' he said, 'would you please tell me in which direction you are going?'*

I was amazed by his question! When the ice melted, this man would sink and drown beneath the deep, cold waters!

- 10 *I would have thought the first thing in his mind would be to get onto our ship. However, I told him we were headed towards the North Pole. Upon bearing this, he seemed satisfied and agreed to come aboard.*



- 15 *Good God, Margaret! If you could have seen this man, you would have been as shocked as I was. He looked dreadful! His arms and legs were frozen and his body was almost a skeleton. I have never seen a man in such a terrible*
- 20 *condition. We carried him below into a cabin, but as soon as he was removed from the fresh air, he fainted. We had to carry him back onto the deck. There we restored him to life by forcing him to swallow a small amount of brandy.*

Next we wrapped him up in blankets and placed him near the chimney of the kitchen stove. Gradually he recovered and had a little soup.

Two days passed before he was strong enough to speak. I had great trouble stopping the men from bothering him with their questions. One, however, asked him why he had come so far over the ice in his sledge. 5

The stranger's face became very sad and he replied, 'I must find the one who runs away from me.'

'Was he travelling on a sledge, like yourself?' 10

'Yes,' he replied.

Then we told the stranger about the giant we had seen. This made him very excited and he asked us many questions. He wanted to know in which direction 'the demon', as he called him, had set off. He wanted to know if I thought the breaking up of the ice might have destroyed the other sledge. He kept wanting to go up on deck to look for signs of wreckage, but we forced him to remain inside, as his health was still very bad. 15

Since then the stranger has gradually improved, but he is very silent. When anyone except myself enters the cabin, he seems to be anxious, as if he expects to hear some bad news. Yet he is so caring and gentle that the sailors are all interested in him, and I, myself, begin to love him as a brother. His deep grief fills me with sympathy. He must have been a very noble creature in his better days. 20 25

I said in one of my letters, my dear Margaret, that I would find no friend on the wide ocean; yet now I have found a man who in happier times, I would have gladly called the brother of my heart. 30

13th August

The stranger and I have become friends. He is a gentleman and comes from a good family. All the crew admire him. During one of our conversations, he asked me why I wanted to find the North Pole. I told him how I had a hunger for adventure and knowledge. I told him that I was prepared 35