

FRANKENSTEIN #1

Unofficial Screenplay

Based on the film directed by
GUILLERMO DEL TORO

Transcribed by

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INT. HARLANDER'S STUDIO - EVENING

A grand studio with walls covered in paintings. There is a piano and a portrait set up decorated with skulls, and a camera.

SERVANT (O.S.)
Baron Victor Frankenstein, sir.

The SERVANT and VICTOR enter.

HARLANDER
Welcome.

VICTOR
Herr Harlander.

HARLANDER
A young art, photography. Already a passion of mine. Did you bring the papers?

Victor hands him a black folder.

HARLANDER (CONT'D)
Oh, thank you.

Harlander places the folder on a piano. He examines the sketches.

HARLANDER (CONT'D)
You're extraordinary.

VICTOR (O.S.)
Thank you.

Victor inspects the camera and peeks into the lens.

Sitting on the piano bench, Harlander flips through a book of anatomic illustrations and notes.

HARLANDER
You're using the nervous system to deliver the surge of energy.

Victor studies a photographic plate of two skeletons.

HARLANDER (CONT'D)
Are you not?

VICTOR
Correct.

HARLANDER

And thus the sustainability of the
life force you command is very
brief, wanes, evaporates.

VICTOR

How so?

Victor seats himself beside Harlander.

HARLANDER

At the lecture, you ended your
demonstration out of pride. But
really, because the galvanic life
force was already fading, was it
not?

VICTOR

Are you yourself a surgeon, sir?

HARLANDER

Yeah, once upon a time- an army
surgeon. Not a particularly skilled
one, either. But it allowed me to
secure the rudiments of my fortune,
I own a few ammunition factories.

VICTOR

An arms merchant.

HARLANDER

A realist. Are you familiar with
the Evelyn Tables?

VICTOR

Of course. Acquired by Sir John
Evelyn, there are four planks,
meticulous dissection, some of the
oldest in Europe, presenting the
nerves, veins and arteries of
cadavers. What?

HARLANDER

Yes. But there's a fifth one. The
most compelling one.

Harlander walks up to a large, draped display and lifts the
drape, revealing a wooden board the size of a grown man. It
is covered with nodules lacquered onto the wood.

HARLANDER (CONT'D)

Exquisite, is it not? Flesh
rendered onto wood.

Harlander knocks on the display.

HARLANDER (CONT'D)

The cadaver lies on the plank, is peeled away layer by layer, and the remaining tissue is lacquered with resin onto the wood. It showcases the lymphatic system--

VICTOR

(entranced)

--Yes.

Victor glides his fingertips along the vessels.

HARLANDER

Muslim medics called it the secret circulatory system. It moves a mere three liters of fluid, but it's a vast network.

VICTOR

Oh, it's remarkable.

HARLANDER

Yes... Now for us, for you, the important variation is here- the ninth configuration. A very delicate, almost ethereal structure surrounding the heart. It can distribute, but also store energy.

Victor points to the heart.

HARLANDER (CONT'D)

Yes, if you can access that without destroying the surrounding tissue--

VICTOR

No. Not through the front.

Victor turns Harlander around. He traces along Harlander's spine, maintaining view of the display.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

The back, spinal column, thoracic curvature.

HARLANDER

Of course.

VICTOR
Flow of energy, scarring and
regeneration beyond anyone's
imagination.

HARLANDER
Life eternal.
(turns to Victor)
I will endow your pursuit with
unlimited resources.

VICTOR
And in exchange?

HARLANDER
No need to become indelicate. We're
searchers for truth and
transcendence, kindred spirits. I
may in time ask you for a favor but
it's mostly the privilege to record
your process for posterity.

VICTOR
I work alone.

HARLANDER
I'm very quiet.

VICTOR
I shall consider it. I'll consider
it.

Victor steps away from Harlander.

HARLANDER
Baron.

Victor pauses.

HARLANDER (CONT'D)
Don't pretend to be reasonable now.
It would be such a shame.

Victor nods, then exits.