

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.