

The Adam of Dreams – A Frankenstein Story

By Erik Radvon

“This multiple god revealed to him that his earthly name was Fire, and that in this circular temple (and in others like it) people had once made sacrifices to him and worshiped him, and that he would magically animate the dreamed phantom, in such a way that all creatures, except Fire itself and the dreamer, would believe it to be a man of flesh and blood.” Jorge Luis Borges, “The Circular Ruins”

Page One

Full page splash.

ART: **Int. Church.** The angle is low to the ground and we see a disheveled man, **DOCTOR FRANKENSTEIN**, kneeling in a pew on the left of the page. A large, gothic Cross hangs from the wall and dominates the upper right of the page, a bank of flickering candles underneath it. A large window provides a view of the outside, a flash of lightning captured in its panes.

CAP: Forgive me Father, for I have **sinned**.

CAP#2: I am a man of **science**, my Lord, and I have not prayed to you often. Yet now, at the **end**, I understand you. Please hear my last confession.

CAP#2: Created in your image, I have done as **you** have done.

CAP#3: I have created **life**.

CAP#4: And I have **abandoned** it.

SFX: **KRA-KOOM**

End Page One.

Page Two

Three panels in the center, with two strips containing small inset panels top and bottom.

Strip 1, Four Insets

- Inset1.1 ART: Completely black.
- Inset1.2 ART: A spark in the center of the blackness.
- Inset1.3 ART: A flicker around the spark, the birth of a flame.
- Inset1.4 ART: Full ignition, a powerful flame.

Panel One

ART: **Int. Laboratory.** Frankenstein is decanting bubbling liquid from one beaker to another. A large wooden table/slab is visible in the background, empty at this time but will eventually hold the body of Frankenstein's monster. Include at least one large window in the lab.

CAP: The idea came to me seemingly from nowhere, like a whisper carried by the wind.

Panel Two

ART: Close-up of Frankenstein's sketch book as the doctor works in the background. There is a picture of a humanoid figure, with arcane symbols and scratchy handwritten notes all around it. A spark of electricity is drawn on the page near the head of the figure.

CAP: The unexpected muse engaged me at once, and suddenly the disparate strands of my life's work in alchemy and galvanism coalesced into a singular purpose—I would create a **man**. I would create **life**.

CAP#2: Why? Because I **could**.

Panel Three

ART: Lightning flashes in the laboratory, painting Frankenstein as a black silhouette against electric purples and blues.

CAP: Was it any different for **you**, my Lord?

Strip2

Inset2.1 ART: Completely black.

Inset2.2 ART: A white spark—the Big Bang.

Inset2.3 ART: A cloud of cosmic energy, the rough shapes of galaxies forming.

Inset2.4 ART: A spiral galaxy.

End Page Two.

Page Three

Nine panel grid.

Panel One

ART: Overhead, bird's eye view of the large wooden table in Frankenstein's lab. Frankenstein and **IGOR**, his hunchback henchman, stand on opposite sides. A large figure-- Frankenstein's monster which will be called **ADAM**-- is on the table, draped with a cloth from head to toe.

CAP: I understand **now**, my Lord, after the fact. I see with crystal clarity the terrible knowledge you sought to shield us from.

Panel Two

ART: No longer overhead. We see Frankenstein in the background next to the table. The camera is pulled out to expose a pile of caskets in the corner of the lab. Igor is holding a detached length of a human arm above one of the open caskets.

CAP: I've learned there is no **true creation** in this universe you've established. There is only **transmission**.

CAP#2: There is only taking energy from **one vessel** and transporting it to **another**.

Panel Three

ART: Closer-in on the table. The sheet is partially lifted, exposing a nub, to which Frankenstein is attaching the length of arm using thick stitches.

CAP: I stand **staggered** by what my dream of creation has taken from me. Friends, family, lovers—all **gone**. How I have paid for my hubris.

Panel Four

ART: Close-in on the forearm as it protrudes out from under the sheet covering the rest of Frankenstein's monster. Frankenstein and Igor are in the background, uncoiling a length of thick black cable.

CAP: I wonder, as I now kneel before you **hollowed** and **ravaged** by my own doing—was it the same for **you**, my Lord?

Panel Five

ART: Back to the overhead shot as in panel one, this time Igor and Frankenstein are attaching the thick black cables to opposite sides of the monster's neck area. The monster is still covered.

CAP: Were **you** as repulsed by your monster as I am of mine?

Panel Six

ART: Outside, the roof of the lab. We see lightning strike a large metal ball attached to a pole. Thick black cables are connected to the base of the pole.

CAP: What did **you** lose in the fire of creation, my Lord?

SFX: **KRA-KOOM**

Panel Seven

ART: Back inside the lab. Igor is in the foreground, flipping a large switch. Show sparks flying from the switch. Frankenstein is next to the table in the background, looking down on his still covered monster.

CAP: Questions upon endless questions in a world without answers.

Panel Eight

Art: Our POV is on the table now, the camera is low showing the monster from the waist up. Electric arcs and sparks fly from the black cables attached to the monster's neck. The monster's arms have jolted out from underneath the covering sheet.

CAP: Save for one answer. Your **final** answer for us all, my Lord.

CAP#2: Where there is **life**, there must surely be **death**.

Panel Nine

ART: Very close-up on the eye of the monster. It's opened wide, jumpstarted into existence. In the dark pupil, we see a white spark.

CAP: Lord, please forgive me for what I have done. For what it—
he-- has done.

CAP#2: Please forgive...

End Page Three.

Page Four

Full page splash.

ART: We see Frankenstein's monster Adam in full reveal. The creature is massive, much larger than either Frankenstein or Igor. Adam is completely bald and in fact hairless across his body. His skin is extremely pale in the face and arms/legs. The torso area is weirdly translucent, with veins, arteries, and organs partially visible.

The creature is roaring to life in a massive rush of frightened rage, animalistic in its instinct yet tempered by something childlike and very much human in his eyes.

CAP: ...my **son!**

ADAM: **RAAAAAAAAAAHHHGG!!!**

CAP#2: Yes, my Lord, he was very much **alive**.

CAP#3: I harnessed the fire of your heavens and, like you, rendered my own **Adam**. I can call him that **now**.

CAP#4: As life soared into the creature, however, the ecstasy of my dream instantly dissipated. Seeing it there, real and howling, brought the cold wind of reality rushing back unto me.

CAP#5 The fever dream of creation subsided. The locomotion of the creature brought the strange mechanical design of my own being into grotesque focus as never before, turning my rapture to repugnance.

CAP#6: In truth, my Lord—In that moment I was so overwhelmed by the horrible truth that I could not bear the sight of the **thing**.

Page Five

Five panels.

Panel One

ART: **Ext. laboratory, night.** Frankenstein storms out of the laboratory, Igor chasing behind him.

CAP: I dreamt of the creature for weeks before committing the deed.

IGOR: Doctor, your creation! It came to **life**, jus' as you planned!

FRANKENSTEIN: Keep it **away** from me, Igor!

IGOR: But, **Doctor**—

FRANKENSTEIN#2: **Away!**

Panel Two

CAP: I saw him take form in my mind. Just a heart at first, then veins and muscles and bones.

ART: Adam is hunched down in the laboratory, looking around like a frightened animal.

ADAM: Hurr...hurr...

IGOR(off panel): He's like a **newborn babe**, Doctor. You can't jus' leave 'im on his own like this!

FRANKENSTEIN(o.p.): I--I can't look upon **it**, Igor!

Panel Three

CAP: I see now, far too late, that things ripped from the nether world of dreams have no place in this reality.

ART: Close on Frankenstein's face, filled with regret, something akin to an alcoholic who's woken up from a drunken stupor.

FRANKENSTEIN: Do you realize what I've done, man? Do you realize what that **thing** is?

IGOR: It's what you wanted, innit Doctor? Didn't I fetch the best parts for you?

FRANKENSTEIN#2: *Sigh*... You did exactly as I asked, Igor.

FRANKENSTEIN#3: The blame lies with me. **I'm** the one who created that **wretch!**

Panel Four

CAP: I see now that it was all a **mistake**, Lord. A dreadful **mistake.**

ART: Frankenstein has made his way to a small stable adjacent to the laboratory. He is saddling a horse. Igor has followed behind.

IGOR: Wretch? Master, I don't understand what you're saying. This is your creation, your **Adam!**

FRANKENSTEIN: Don't call him that! It's a **vile insect**, nothing more!

IGOR: I can see you aren't in your right mind, Doctor. Why don't you calm down and let me—

Panel Five

CAP: I saw the truth the moment of the creature's birth. Everything--the creature, me, Igor, the Earth itself and all of the heavenly bodies—it became so apparent to me that it's all some kind of terrible monster, **stitched** together from the remnants of **your** being, my Lord.

ART: Frankenstein has mounted the horse. Our POV is over Igor's shoulder, as he looks at the bitter and twisted doctor in the night air. The breath coming out of the horse's nostrils is visible.

FRANKENSTEIN: You want to help me, Igor?

FRANKENSTEIN#2: **Kill it.**

FRANKENSTEIN#3: Kill it with **fire.**

End Page Five.

Page Six

Seven panels.

Panel One

ART: Wide shot of Frankenstein riding on horseback through the moonlit night.

CAP: It's clear to me now that I've been **mad** all along.

CAP#2: The dreamscape that lured me to breathe life into the creature was nothing more than the workshop of my own **demon**-- An internal **Satan** hissing at me like the **Serpent** in Eden, my Lord, driving me to to commit sin and bite the apple of your knowledge.

Panel Two

ART: Back in the laboratory. Igor stands in the doorway, looking in at the huddled Adam. Igor holds a torch in one hand and a heavy burlap blanket in the other.

CAP: My mind, my soul feels the fire now. It feels the ancient fire that has always charred humanity-- the hellfire of dreams lost in the cold vacuum.

IGOR: H-h-hey, there friend. It's ok now.

ADAM: Errgh?

Panel Three

ART: From Igor's POV. He's a few steps closer to Adam now. Adam is rising up slightly.

CAP: I see my restless nights, tangling with the dream of my Adam, as a kind of wizard's illness. My unconscious mind fashioned him together as if carrying out orders given by some unseen taskmaster.

CAP#2: Surely it wasn't **you**, my Lord?

IGOR: **Easy**—easy now, fella. Jus' your pal Igor here with a blanket for you.

ADAM: Rrrrr...

Panel Four

ART: Still from Igor's POV, Adam has risen up now and his enormous size is now apparent. His face has turned from childlike fear to a dark and concerning scowl.

CAP: I thought by riding away my son would not exist without me. I thought I could simply **outrun** what I had done and it would **vanish** in the night air.

IGOR: It's okay, lad. Your **father** will be back soon—

ADAM: **RRRRR...**

Panel Five

CAP: That is the foolish thinking of **estranged fathers**, is it not my Lord? You have left us here on this rock, yet we still **propagate** and **toil** in your absence. We still **love** and **dream** and **wage war**.

ART: Adam leaps with furious speed at Igor, his face is pure rage.

IGOR: **No—don't!**

ADAM: **RRRAAAARRR!**

Panel Six

ART: Close-up of Adam's eye. Reflected in his pupil, we see him clutching Igor with both hands. Igor's face is filled with terror.

IGOR: Nononono! Not like **this-**

IGOR#2: Not like th-

Panel Seven

ART: Wide shot of the exterior of the laboratory.

SFX(Igor): **AAAIIIIIIEEEEEEEEEEEEEE--*!**

End Page Six.

Page Seven

Six panels.

Panel One

ART: Adam is perched on the sill of the laboratory's large window, the moon and stars awaiting him outside. He now wears the burlap blanket as a kind of tunic. His hands are stained with blood, going up to his elbows. He has left bloody palm prints on the wall next to the window.

CAP: Igor was only the first to be **engulfed** by the inferno of my **hallucination**.

Panel Two

ART: Frankenstein on his horse, galloping through the night.

CAP: I see now, Lord, that it's **all** a hallucination.

Panel Three

ART: Abstract shot of Frankenstein's dreamscape. The background is a blend of orange and red ethereal clouds. The faint outline of a human heart (anatomical, not Valentine's Day) is superimposed over the dreamscape.

CAP: This is where it happened. In the space behind my eyes.

Panel Four

ART: Same, now the heart is more fully rendered, with a thicker outline and some traces of muscle and arteries forming. The colors are more intense.

CAP: This is where your devil came to me, my Lord, and whispered "Why not make it **real**?"

Panel Five

ART: Same, pulled out to widen the shot. The heart is now connected to a cardiovascular system, contained by the faint outline of a man. Small flames dance around the heart itself. The background colors are tumultuous, like a strong summer thunderstorm.

CAP: The more I dreamt, the more real it became. I found my lab filled with crude materials fetched by Igor to physically make my Adam. The material—the **bodies**—were destined for dust, I told myself. I would make them something **more**. I would give them **new purpose**.

Panel Six

ART: Dreamscape still. We are looking straight-on at a human skull, its mouth open in a grotesque way. Fire is all around the skull.

CAP: The moment I saw it move, I understood my own **fate**. I understood the **fate** of us **all**.

CAP#2: My Lord, I can already feel the approach of the inferno. Soon it will wrap me in its clutches.

End Page Seven.

Page Eight

Nine panels. Please reproduce the strips of insets from Page Two above and below.

Inset Strip 1

Panel One

ART: Back to the Church. Frankenstein is kneeling before the cross, deep in prayer. Candles fill the church with warm light.

CAP: You know already of what followed Adam's birth, my Lord.

Panel Two

ART: Pull the view back a bit. Frankenstein has risen from the pew and is moving toward the votive candles. We see a shadow—the shadow of Adam-- in the church window.

CAP: You know how I fled that night. You know how Adam followed. You know of the blood and anguish we both left in our wake as we chased each other from continent to continent.

Panel Three

ART: We're looking head-on at Frankenstein as he lights a candle. The votive candles dominate the panel and frame Frankenstein.

CAP: If you don't know this, my Lord, I shall tell you—I am **tired** of running.

Panel Four

ART: We're behind Frankenstein now. He has his arms outstretched in front of the bank of candles.

CAP: This Northern chapel will be my point of departure. I can sense Adam somewhere out in the arctic. Please watch over him, my Lord.

Panel Five

ART: Frankenstein has thrown himself onto the bank of candles, igniting his clothing and hair.

CAP: Take me back into your dreamscape, my Lord.

CAP#2: Let me fall asleep again.

Panel Six

ART: We're close on Adam. He perched in the church window, watching with a blank face. He is older than when we first saw him, and his face is weathered and bears many scars. He wears a black cloak. He is half in shadow, half illuminated by the blaze inside the church.

CAP: The pain is as temporary as this life. I welcome it.

CAP#2: I see now. I see the illusion of it all. I see the dream.

CAP#3: Please take care of him, my Lord. Please take care of my s--
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Panel Seven

ART: The body of Frankenstein is slumped before the cross, smoldering in a bonfire. Adam stands next to the body in vigil, cloaked in black, looking like Death himself. We do not see his face.

Panel Eight

ART: Ext. church. Wide. The chapel is a small building in a rocky and mountainous landscape covered in snow. Adam is trudging through the snow. Flames are jumping out of the church's door and windows.

Panel Nine

ART: Same, Adam is closer to us now. From beneath the cloak we see half his face exposed. A stream of tears reflects the moonlight.

End Page Eight.

“He walked toward the sheets of flame. They did not bite his flesh, they caressed him and flooded him without heat or combustion. With relief, with humiliation, with terror, he understood that he also was an illusion, that someone else was dreaming him.” – Jorge Luis Borges, *The Circular Ruins*