



Motionhouse

# CHARGE

ELECTRIFYING DANCE CIRCUS

## SCENE 5: FRANK

### Questions

Is the dancer tense or relaxed?

Where is his focus – what does he look at?

How would you describe his facial expression?

Are his movements smooth or disjointed and awkward?

What image appears in the film and how does the dancer react to it?

What sort of sounds can you hear and how do they make you feel?

What happens when he tries to stand and walk?

Try to describe the atmosphere created.

| SIGNIFIERS | DESCRIPTION   | EFFECTS   |
|------------|---|---|
| VISUALS    | Giant Moon  | Quiet, still, very lonely<br>Frankenstein   |
| SOUND      | Long, sustained synthesised notes with metallic sound effects, eventually fills out into thicker, echoing harmonious chords.<br>Weird sounds are added like those generated when wet fingers circle the rims of wine glasses<br>A quick little drum riff – ‘ticka-tacka ticka-tacka’ – is tapped out to begin a busy rhythm that segues into the next scene | Haunting, eerie suspense. Horror films<br>Calculated evil<br>Tension dissolves into busyness and the hope of safety & re-assurance in numbers   |
| MOVEMENT   | Unnatural, awkward positions & shapes<br>Sharp, disjointed body part isolations.<br>He watches each hand, arm, foot that moves.<br>His attention switches suddenly and quickly as if the movements of each body part are leading his brain rather than responding to instructions.<br>When he finally stands, he looks around at emptiness                  | Uncomfortable as though experiencing his body for the first time and having to work out how to coordinate all the parts together to allow him to sit, stand & walk.<br>He is alone & isolated |

## Summary of meaning, mood and significance

A lightning storm, a body gaining consciousness; awkward, disjointed movement; a stumbling struggle for balance; a grown man wandering about like a lost child: frightened, all alone and with no idea where he is or what has happened; a giant moon.

The legend of Frankenstein is one of the most gruesome stories ever imagined. A mad scientist builds a giant monster out of body parts stolen from a graveyard. He sews and bolts the parts together in his laboratory, then brings the creature to life using the electricity from a bolt of lightning. The story was written over 200 years ago at a time when scientists were making momentous discoveries about electricity. Some scientists were even stealing bodies from graveyards and using electricity to make them move in grotesque public demonstrations. Mary Shelley was only 18 years old when she began to have vivid, horrifying dreams of a man/monster being brought to life by lightning. She would have heard about the body snatching – she may even have witnessed a demonstration.

One night, after sharing her dream with a group of friends, Shelley had a chilling experience when a bright stream of moonlight spilled into her bedroom through the shutters: *“I saw — with shut eyes, but acute mental vision, — I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world.* ...

*The idea so possessed my mind that a thrill of fear ran through me, and I wished to exchange the ghastly image of my fancy for the realities around. I see them still; the very room, the dark parquet, the closed shutters, with the moonlight struggling through ..., I could not so easily get rid of my hideous phantom; still it haunted me. I must try to think of something else. I recurred to my ghost story, my tiresome unlucky ghost story! O! if I could only contrive one which would frighten my reader as I myself had been frightened that night!”*

Frankenstein became one of the greatest novels ever written.

The viewer is now in possession of two parallel narratives: the modern-day Becky/Danny estrangement story hinted at in the opening strop duet (and echoed in Zoetrope) and Mary Shelley’s 18th century fictional horror Frankenstein. The commonality is biological electricity.