Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Dr. Victor Frankenstein is a young biology student who is irrepressibly curious; he desires to be a great man– one who discovered something new and gave a gift to mankind through his research. One day, he has the idea to make a human being by putting together different parts and using electricity to bring it to life; he wants his creation to be perfect, but, to his great dismay, it looks monstrous. Horrified, he runs away and tries to forget about it– until it starts ravaging his family; and he has a choice: to either attempt to understand why his creation became a villain, or to reject it, as all other human beings have. This becomes a lifelong internal battle on Frankenstein's part, with the issues being revenge and what makes us human.

Wow… this book is tragic. There is a reason why I listed "tragedy" as a secondary genre: because it truly is one. The end made me sob for so many reasons. I won't spoil what happens, but I felt like so much grief and pain, for both Dr. Frankenstein and his creation, could have been avoided, and yet it seemed inevitable that it would all end in sorrow and regret. The fact that poor Robert Walton, who had only expected to sail to the Arctic, had to be a witness to all of this pain, struck me as tragic; and I cannot imagine what he must have thought of the whole situation afterward. We do not see his reaction to the end of the story, so we will never know.

The book can be a bit heavy-handed with its philosophy of human nature; sometimes, it is directly stated by the characters, who often go on esoteric monologues. However, it fits so naturally into the characters' personalities and situations that it never bothered me when I read it. If you prefer more subtle themes, though, you may not like it; it is very clear what it is ultimately about. It is not as much of a horror book as I expected; in fact, it is mostly about Dr. Frankenstein, his family, his own thoughts, and his attempts to run away from the monster he let loose into the world. For a Regency-era book, it reads very smoothly, and I found that I almost never struggled with the complexity of the language. Perhaps this is because it was in 1st-person POV and it was emotionally charged, as opposed to Jane Austen's rational 3rd-person POV prose.

In all, if you prefer psychological horror to "slasher" horror, you will like *Frankenstein* very much; it will also appeal to you if you like philosophy. It can be rather pleasant to read at times, but in other parts of it, your heart will break for both Dr. Frankenstein and his monster, and your sense of sympathy will be challenged, since the two are opposed to each other. They both have their own stories, though, and readers can deeply understand both of their motivations.