

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797-1851): Originally Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. Technically not Mary Shelley until her actual marriage in Dec. 1816. Wrote *Frankenstein* in late 1816 and 1817.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797): Mary's mother. Feminist educator and political writer, most famous for *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). Died after giving birth to Mary.

William Godwin (1756-1836): Mary's father. Political Activist and writer. Espoused Rationality as key to social progress. Most famous for writing *Political Justice* (1793) which attacked the institutions of organized religion, marriage, and centralized government. Seen as father of Anarchism. After wife's death, continued as barely successful bookseller. Basically disowned Mary after her elopement until she was married (which occurred after she wrote *Frankenstein*).

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822): Became one of the most famous English Romantic Poets. Eloped with 16 year-old Mary in 1814. Believed in the ideals of free-love. Died in 1822 after drowning.

Harriet Shelley (1795-1816): First wife of Percy Shelley. Eloped and married Percy in 1811. Was pregnant with second child when he eloped with Mary. Committed suicide in 1816.

Frances "Fanny" Imlay (1794-1816): Mary Wollstonecraft's first daughter. Committed suicide in Oct. 1816.

Claire Clairmont (1798-1879): Mary Shelley's stepsister, daughter of Mary Jane Godwin. Accompanied Mary and Percy during elopement and lived with them for many years after. Had an affair with Lord Byron that led to her insisting that Mary and Percy follow him to Switzerland where they visited and Mary conceived of *Frankenstein*.

Important Dates surrounding *Frankenstein*:

Born: 30 Aug 1797

1814

July 28 - Percy and Mary eloped

1816

3 May - Mary Godwin, Percy Shelley, Claire Clairmont depart for Switzerland to visit Byron.

16 June - Mary begins *Frankenstein*

9 Oct - Fanny Imlay commits suicide

10 Dec - Harriet Shelley commits suicide

30 Dec - Mary Godwin and Percy Shelley marry

1817

Apr-Dec Mary Shelley finishes *Frankenstein*

Sources:

The Cambridge companion to Mary Shelley / edited by Esther Schor. Cambridge, UK ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2003

Mary Shelley / Miranda Seymour. London : John Murray, 2000

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley : an introduction / Betty T. Bennett. Baltimore, Md. : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998

Mary Shelley : a literary life / John Williams. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan ; New York : St. Martin's Press, 2000

Mary Shelley in her times / edited by Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran. Baltimore, Md. : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000