

POLIDORI / LORD BYRON / MARY / PERCY

POLIDORI: Still can't think of a story, Mary?

LORD BYRON: (with sarcasm) Oh, but she's just a mere girl With a mind full of 'sugar & spice & everything nice!'

MARY: (matching his sarcasm)

Yes, because we women are so very incapable of unhallowed impulses. Our minds were made for more celestial thoughts.

I doubt that an eighteen-year old girl like myself should ever—

Could ever—

Think of anything monstrous, wretched, or even the least bit untoward.

PERCY: You couldn't think of a ghost story, Mary.

MARY: (blows him a raspberry)

PERCY: Miss Clairmont, Lord Byron, Dr. Polidori, so nice of you to show up— This has been a most one-sided competition, indeed. Your ghost stories, as you might generously call them, have failed to produce even the slightest murmur of a heart-beat, a complete lack of spark.

BYRON: Lack of spark? Pish!

PERCY: Miss Godwin, are you willing to spare yourself the breath of this unwinnable competition?

MARY: You'd have me concede?

PERCY: Yes.

MARY: I shouldn't even try?

PERCY: Surely.

MARY: I should give up then?

PERCY: Merely yield to the immutable, inexorable conclusion // that I...

MARY: No.

PERCY: No?

MARY: No.

Never.

Not ever, Mr. Percy Bysshe Shelley.

PERCY: I beg your pardon, my moon, you said so yourself, you couldn't think of one.

MARY: Did I say that or was it you? My beloved Shelley,
It came to me last night in that place between waking and dreaming—

PERCY: My beloved Mary,
Didn't I come to you last night in that place between waking and dreaming?

(Pause)

Perhaps we ought to head to bed and see if mightn't find that place between waking and dreaming, again.

MARY: Buckle up your britches, my darling, I'm about to begin—

LORD BYRON: Oo, I do believe this animated creature has found her spark—

MARY: This story begins with a spark.

It was a dreary night of November Not unlike this one...
Rain pattering at the windows.

Flashes of lightning filled the sky

Thunder rumbling in the distance—

The thing he had patched and sewn together.

A most hideous phantasm of fluid and flesh...

Pallid limbs and lifeless organs

Dug up and rummaged from unwept pauper's graves— Appendages, entrails, and
rank viscera

Torn and trimmed from maggot-eaten corpses

Marrowed bones with sinewy muscle

Gauzy fascia and dermal tissue stretched taut

And sutured to encase the soup of blood and bilious fluids within— A lifeless and unliving lump of gray decay and rot.

And then,

And then...

PERCY: And then?

MARY: The dull yellow eye of the creature opens— Unstaring, Unseeing, Unholy—