**PRINCESS FRANKENSTEIN**

(a 10 minute black comedy by Claire Booker)

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**Character** Frankie - an effervescent young woman.

**Set** A prison cell containing a simple table and chair, plus slop bucket.

*Lights rise on Frankie.*

They say you’ve got to kiss a lot of frogs before you meet your prince. Well, I’ve certainly dissected a boat-load of them. (*pause*) Of course, I’m not blind to the ethics of it. Frogs twitch, even after they’re dead. They kind of flap their legs, like they’re saying “no, no, no, just one last swim.” It used to break my heart. (*pause*) In the days when I had a heart.

At the end of each class, I’d look at all those lonely bits of frog on the dissecting table and try and sew them back to life again. Gradually Miss McGregor toughened me up. (*Scottish accent*) “Science takes no prisoners, Frankie. Remember that.” (*laughs*) Ironic, isn’t it?

(*sound of women’s voice outside*) It’s weird - everybody in here being female. Even my lawyer. (*checks her watch*) . . . late again. She’ll sit here, cold as a fish, banging on about emotional trauma this, mitigating circumstances that. Ok, so Dad took a hammer to Mum when I was at Uni. Or was it the other way round? Honestly, I can’t remember. When you’re a student, your parents, you can take them or leave them, can’t you?

No. If anyone got me to this point, it’s Nick. (*pause*) It’ll be funny seeing him in court next week. (*pause*) Always so dependable. Nick was brilliant about the crazy hours I put in. I was a red-hot ticket by third year med school. Already talk of a career in neuro-surgery. Some men would have felt threatened by that. Not Nick. He was happy if I was happy. But - and isn’t there always a ‘but? - dull, dull, dull. ‘’Geek’ ran through Nick like a stick of rock. And whilst we’re on the subject of rock-hard objects, there was disappointment in that department too.

‘Frankie, this must stop’, I tell myself after a year of being mucked around by a string of absolute bastards. What’s so wrong with Nick? I take a long hard look at him. There he stands - a total bean pole, arms like the Angel of the North, stark naked, wearing his prize possession – the ‘bald cap’ worn by Sebastian Shaw as Darth Vader in ‘Return of the Jedi’. I tell him straight: ‘Nick, you could be perfect, if you were 6 inches shorter, better hung and had an engaging personality’. That’s when it hits me, like a bolt of lightning. There must be some way to scoop the geek out of a man? (*manly voice*) “Do you want mash with your fish fingers, Frankie?” I watch him lope away towards the kitchen. ‘Yes, I think, yes, yes, yes. Go at him with a scalpel, Frankie. Turn him into something that sings to you!’

That thought-worm buried itself deep in here (*taps her head*). Why not isolate the prime attributes of individual men I know and merge them into one awesome, ground-breaking specimen? Pioneering yes, but not impossible. China’s already on the brink of head transplants. It’s a no brainer. The Big Idea had arrived.

I drew up a list of donors. Best overall body and most endowed on the Speedo front – definitely Ozzie lifeguard, Jack. Sense of humour and personality? Gunter, hands down. And the recipient? Nick, of course – off the scale for loyalty.

I needed life-support machines, a functioning theatre, organ transport, at least three specialist surgeons. Crowdfunding can only go so far. To misquote Newton – ‘I have stood on the shoulders of pygmies.’ Not one medical foundation took me seriously. In the end, I was forced to tell Nick I had a wasting disease. He takes it upon himself to raise £1.2 million by running 15 marathons in 50 days. It almost kills him, but the money floods in.

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