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F RANKENSTEIN

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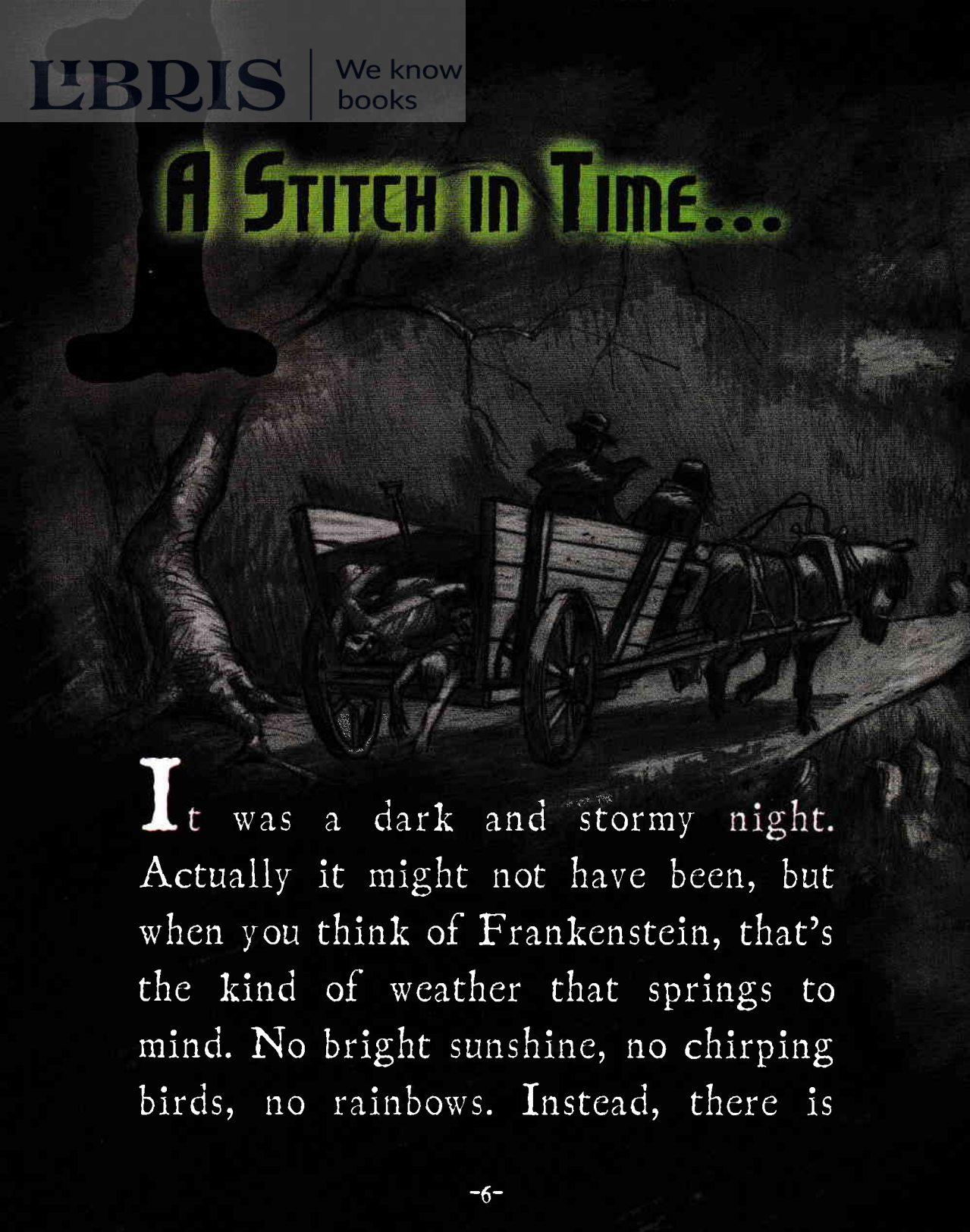
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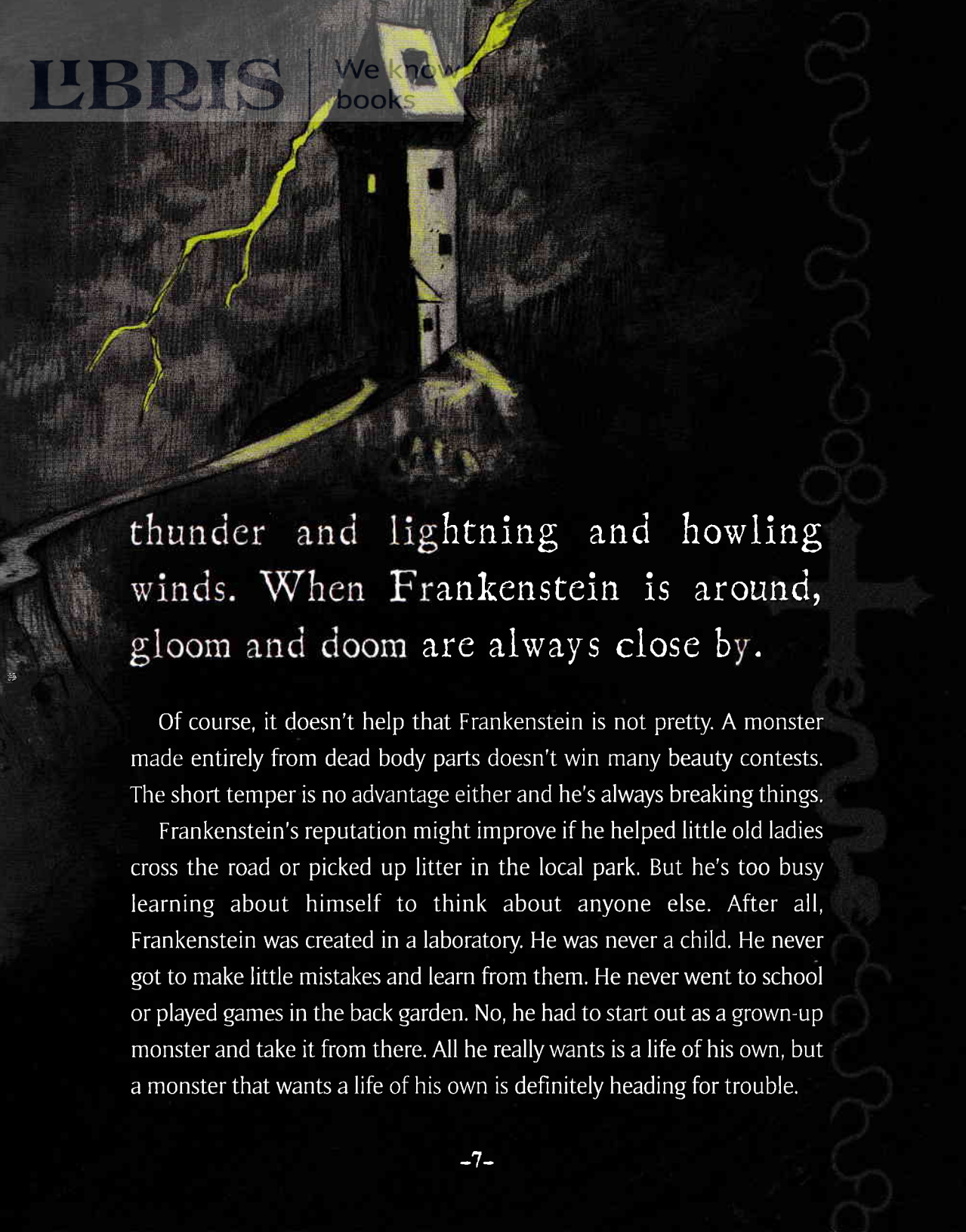
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A STITCH IN TIME...



It was a dark and stormy night. Actually it might not have been, but when you think of Frankenstein, that's the kind of weather that springs to mind. No bright sunshine, no chirping birds, no rainbows. Instead, there is



thunder and lightning and howling winds. When Frankenstein is around, gloom and doom are always close by.

Of course, it doesn't help that Frankenstein is not pretty. A monster made entirely from dead body parts doesn't win many beauty contests. The short temper is no advantage either and he's always breaking things.

Frankenstein's reputation might improve if he helped little old ladies cross the road or picked up litter in the local park. But he's too busy learning about himself to think about anyone else. After all, Frankenstein was created in a laboratory. He was never a child. He never got to make little mistakes and learn from them. He never went to school or played games in the back garden. No, he had to start out as a grown-up monster and take it from there. All he really wants is a life of his own, but a monster that wants a life of his own is definitely heading for trouble.

Are we being fair? Is Frankenstein really a bad man? Of course, he's a monster – there's no getting around that. Still, as monsters go, he could be worse. He doesn't suck people's blood like a vampire or destroy entire cities like Godzilla. He doesn't rip people apart like a werewolf or burn villages to a crisp like some wandering dragon.

Why do we give him such a hard time? Well, the main thing is all those stitches. There's the general impression that he's a dead person brought back to life, but this is not strictly true. He's actually parts of several dead people sewn together and brought back to life!

Frankenstein, like vampires and ghosts, belongs to a long monster tradition of dead things coming back to life. That's what makes them so scary. Humans, it seems, prefer dead things to stay dead.

WOULD TWO HEADS BE BETTER THAN ONE?

The idea of mixing and matching body parts has been around for a long time. In ancient Greek mythology, for example, the Minotaur was a man with the head of a bull. Okay, he did not have the best reputation (he liked to eat helpless young men and women). He was kept a prisoner in a stone maze called a labyrinth, but still... nobody

Some mixed creatures in Greek myths, such as the half-man and half-horse centaurs, were warriors and heroes.



ever made fun of the Minotaur or tried to burn him alive.

Then there was the sun god Ra from Egypt. Ra had a falcon's head on a man's body, but nobody seemed to mind. In fact, many Egyptian gods and goddesses had animal heads. Lions, jackals,

The Egyptian god Ra
(above, right) has a
falcon's head on a man's
body. In this tomb painting,
Ra performs a ritual on a
mummy (left).