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Faridoon Babu, a Gothic Romance; Adapting Frankenstein by Mary Shelley into  
Pakistani Setting

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Abstract

The research aims to look into the universality of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. Gothic literature, sometimes known as Gothic fright, is a vague style of writing that evokes dread and eerie feelings. The term alludes to the Gothic architecture prevalent in early Gothic fiction settings throughout the European Middle Ages. *Frankenstein* was a story written and set in 1818, whereas, *Faridoon Babu* is set in 1960. This adaptation of a British story set in Pakistan explores the cultural transition and historical impact of the location on characters, events, psychology, social and religious beliefs, and aesthetics. The genre shifts from Gothic Science Fiction in *Frankenstein* to Gothic Romantic Narrative in *Faridoon Babu*. The research explores human emotions such as pain, vengeance, love, empathy, ambition, and creativity, with varying implications between the two locations. The study encourages academics to share stories from their home regions to preserve and introduce their history to the global community.

**Keywords:** Gothic, adaptation, Frankenstein, Pakistan, Romance

### The Story Adaptation

Rahib was born into an affluent Sheikh family in Lahore, yet he chose not to live a lavish lifestyle. He'd been riding horses with his servant for the last six years, enduring the cold, thirst, starvation, and sleep deprivation. Rahib pondered whether it was appropriate to risk his servant, Tabaedar's life for his ambition, forcing them to discover oceans and regions never before explored. As he looked for a place to rest in the pouring rain, a sheet of fog began to lift, revealing an extraordinary sight: Rohtas Fort, perched on a hill in the Tilla Jogian Range. Sher Shah Suri ordered the construction of Rohtas Fort because it was strategically located between the plains of Punjab and the Afghan hills, preventing Humayun from returning to India while he was exiled in Persia. Rahib extolled the splendor of the fort while recounting its history to Tabaedar. Sher Shah Suri's demise

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allowed Humayun to retake control of the Punjab territories. Tabaedar, you are aware that Jahangir briefly held his court at Rohtas Fort while Akbar also stayed there for one night. Following that, Afghan Durrani kings fought to battle with Sikh kings to seize the fort. Up until the British occupied the area in 1849, the Sikh Empire utilized the fort as its administrative center.

Tabaedar did his best to understand his thoughts and said, "*Gi Shahb gi.*" "*Shahb gi, look there!*" Tabaedar exclaimed as they passed by the *Kachi Kahani* (Kahan River), pointing to a location half a mile distant. It's a dude on a donkey. "How did the man get to the middle of this frozen *Kachi Kahani*?" The mystery figure vanished as Rahib gazed, leaving them stunned. They continued on their journey to the fort, passing through a ravine where *the Kachi Kahani* met a seasonal stream known as Parnala Khas. Rahib noticed a similar man in the middle of the Parnala Khas, struggling to paddle with a board of wood and pleading for aid. He appeared to be on the edge of committing suicide.

When Rahib attempted to save him, he responded, "Thank you Pi Jaan, but where are you headed?" "I'm just a step away from death," he said, "and I'm heading north, to Kashmir." The stranger consented, and they soon arrived at Bagh, a village on the fringes of the fort where their ancestors had brought flowers to welcome the Mughal emperors as they approached the Rohtas Fort. Rahib escorted him to the doctor, then told his son to refill his hookah with hot coal and serve the guests. "Frozen legs, body too thin, bones showing through his skin," the doctor said to Rahib, "cover him and serve him with *yakhni* (soup)." The doctor directed them to Shaho Di Hatti, a modest local cottage/rest stop. It was already dark when they arrived. Shah Bano, the owner, directed his son to bring a desi (organic) chicken from the backyard and provided them with blankets to adequately cover the foreigner. Tabaedar gathered the wood logs and started the fire.

The chamber was quickly made cozy, the chicken was cleaned, and the soup was set on fire. "*Puttar, (son) who is this faqeer (beggar)?*" she asked Rahib. "I found him in the middle of the Parnala, I am ignorant of his identity and know nothing except what his looks predict," Rahib said. Shaho served them with *Saag* (mustard spinach) and hot freshly baked roti (bread). Rahib believed he'd gone insane after the strangers didn't say anything for two days. He had a dark, concentrated look in his eyes and was continuously gnashing his teeth. His garments were green with various colored patches

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sewn on them. His ears were pierced, and he wore colorful *Baliis* (earrings) made of randomly cut native stones. His bangles, which are roundly cut, shine in the dark. "How did you get stuck in the water?" Rahib inquired. "There is a painful secret that I can't share with you right now, but I will soon," the stranger murmured.

In the frigid evenings, Shaho was a fantastic storyteller, telling stories of travelers related to her husband, who died a few years ago, and the Sikhs who held Rohtas Fort for years. During the day, she sold fresh flatbread (roti) from her neighborhood oven (tandoor). Shaho informed them that when she was a child, the Sikhs used to attack the villages, and they could hear the voices saying, "Sikhs are here, Sikhs are here, we started running in opposite directions, our ovens kept burning, and we used to come back to an empty kitchen." They removed our food, clothing, *asbaab* (utensils), and even our treats, *gur*, and *ruus* (rusk). *Haye! Haye! Haye!* (Alas) When the Sikhs finally left our hamlet after partition, all the people pursued them, hitting them with sticks, shoes, and whatever else we could get our hands on until they exited the fringes of our communities." The visitor slept peacefully before Shaho finished her stories. His gloomy dreary tempered strangeness was soothed by her tranquil voice. The man said, "My destiny cannot change. I will make you aware of my tragic life. But before I leave this world, I intend to finish one last task."

Tabaedar, who was sitting beside the hot coals with his hands stretched close to the coals to feel the warmth, replied yawning, "Tabaedar is there for you, assign me your task to relieve your distress". Shaho instructed Tabaedar to serve the food and the man then narrated his story. When Shaho quenched the flame and set the pot on the hot coals to allow the oil to bubble and make an enticing layer on top of the pakora curry, she asked Rahib, "What brought you here?" Rahib informed them that he had one brother and one sister, as well as his desire to travel. The stranger burst into tears and exclaimed, "Uff! (oh no) I had a strong thirst for knowledge as well, but I ended up being a miserable man, so please do not make the same mistakes as me, Rahib. It has only brought agony to my loved ones, and my life is a textbook illustration of a failed search." Rahib asked him to tell his story so that he may help.

My name is Faridoon, and I was born into one of the village's respected and humble families, *Boari Garraan*, which is located in the heart of the Tilla Jogian mountain ranges and Rohtas Fort. I grew up in a loving home with two younger brothers, Rashid

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and Shotu, and Chandani, the orphaned daughter of a Kashmiri family. My father's family worked in the *Bhathaa*, a brickmaking factory near our mud dwellings, where all the workers' families lived. Our residence featured a view of Rohtas Fort on one side and the Tilla Jogian Hills on the other. One of my father's closest friends was a well-to-do merchant who used to ride his *phatphatti* (motorcycle) from the village to the city to sell milk, eggs, ghee, and butter. After a terrible sickness killed all of his livestock and chickens, he plummeted from a prosperous status into destitution. *Chacha* Bashir couldn't endure the loss because he was in debt and living in poverty in the same village where he was honored for his status. My father adored Bashir *Chacha* and was profoundly devastated by his departure under the awful circumstances. He wasted no time in pleading with the *Thaekedaar*, the owner of the *Bhathaa*, to lend him money to pay off his debts. Allah Wasaya, my father, not only erased his debts but also invited him and his sole daughter to his home and shared his meals. Jannat Bibi, Bashir *Chacha's* daughter, wanted to leave to work with the females in my father's household to pay off the debts. My father encouraged him to restart his life with his help and accompanied him to the Boar Tree every day after work. My grandfathers and great-grandfathers sat beneath the tree with all of the village's male members for chit-chat. My father went to relax beneath the shade of a Boar tree after wearing a clean turban, *tehband*, and kurta and offering *Asar namaz*, but those who were more ambitious for money toiled to Maghrib prayers.

Faridoon fixed his gaze on Shaho and exclaimed, "Aye Haye Amaan Shaho!" I remember following my father with two *jae namaz* (prayer mats) and a *chatai* prepared by my grandma out of dried date leaves for both of us. Everyone sat on their *chatais* and admired the hand fan constructed of dried date leaves and embellished with multicolored threads and paints. *Chacha* Bashir was uninterested in the conversation; instead, he lay beneath the tree, marveling at the moving leaves and the glimpses of blue heavens that appeared through them. His anguish got more intense, and it took such a solid hold of his mind that he lay on a bed of sickness for three months, unable to exert any effort. Jannat attended to him tenderly, and her bravery rose to support him in his adversity. My father committed himself to Jannat's care when Bashir *Chacha* died in her arms, and Jannat became his wife after two years. Everything was designed to accommodate her needs and desires.

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My mother worked with my father at *Bhathaa*, and she had made friends with Bali, who was also her neighbor. Tufail, Bali's husband, was a retired Subedar who married another woman, Sehai, when his unit was assigned to Bagsar, Azad Kashmir, a small village on the border between Pakistan and Indian-occupied Kashmir. Sehai's mother was from Srinagar and her father was from Bagsar; they remained in Bagsar after the split. Sehai died while giving birth to her daughter, whom she had named as soon as she found out she was pregnant, stating, "If it is a boy, I will name him Nagar, and if it is a girl, I will name her Nagari." Tufail and his daughter returned to their village. Though Bali was devastated when she learned of his husband's marriage, she accepted Nagari, believing that by having Nagari, she had finally gotten rid of her *sokun* (husband's second wife). Bali referred to her as Chandani because she was a ray of light and hope for her during the dark solitary nights. Her name also reminded Bali of his husband's second marriage. Tufail was posted to Gilgit and never returned. He wrote to Bali about his third marriage, but Bali did not respond and instead began working on the *Bhathaa*. She brought Chandani to help her make bricks. Jannat was drawn to Chandani because she stood out with her fair skin, hazel eyes, and light brown hair. Aside from her appearance, she was highly obedient and courteous to others, and her virtues sparked her wish to have a daughter. Bali was unable to adequately feed her with five other children, so she gladly granted Jannat's wish to adopt her, and we grew up together. No term or expression could describe the type of relationship that Chandani had with me; she was more than a sister since she was alone until death.

I formed the strongest friendship links with my schoolmate, Hami, the son of our Thakedaar, a child of talent and imagination who loved enterprise, struggle, gallantry, and romance. He wrote folk tunes and told them while sitting on the *chabootra*. My parents never stopped me from learning because three members of our family, my father, mother, and Chandani, were already working. Chandani was confined at home as she reached her late teens. She was a multi-talented woman who manufactured pottery at home, hand painted it, and sold it in the village when my younger brothers returned from school. She lit the *batti* (oil lantern) adjacent to her *charpai* (local bed) on the rooftop of our house where we slept in summer and knit the *parandas* (hair accessory) and *naraas* (cord to tie trousers) after reciting the *Isha* prayer. She did everything she could to repay

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the generosity of the family's affection for her. When she was exhausted, she would lie on the bed in search of a fallen star, or she would follow a *jugnoo* and grasp it in her palms, place it on her abdomen, and wrap herself in her dupatta (scarf). Nobody could have had a better childhood than me. Shaho retired to her bed, while Tabaedar snored against the wall. Faridoon added, "I went to the Rohtas Fort High School with Hami." Hami was generous, and we shared our parathas (flat bread wrapped in linen). Hami shared his paratha loaded with potatoes or minced meat and a slice of *guur*, and I shared my pickles.

Because Hami was the only child in his family, his father provided him pocket money every Friday, and after *Jumma* prayers, we came to the Bagh Village to treat ourselves to *jalaebi* steeped in warm milk or rusk with fresh honey spread. Thaekedaar sahib was amazed by my thirst for knowledge and desire to learn and told his son to look up to him. When we finished 12th grade, I insisted on my parents asking Thaekedaar Sahib for a loan so that I could finish my schooling. My father was aware of my ambition, but he advised me to learn any skill so that he could support the family. However, my mother persuaded my father, telling him that I had tried my hardest to persuade Faridoon to start helping us in brickmaking because his father is now old, his benevolent mother is not in good health, and hard work is not suitable for the fair and amiable Chandani. But he claims that my hands are insufficient for seeking pleasure in the water and muck, and I am captivated by nature's improbable riddles. My scientific study was derailed when lightning struck an oak tree during a strong storm, reducing it to ashes. I was astounded by its incredible strength and am eager to learn more about the planet, the universe, and the heavens. Thank you, Allah Wasaya! Our son will become a Babu (a knowledgeable person), and we will send him to Lahore (Lahore) to pursue his dream.

My father consented when Thaekedaar Sahib pledged to shoulder my financial responsibilities. Thaekedaar sahib sent us off at the railway station, and we went to Punjab University Lahore, where I got into Biology and Hami got into Punjabi Literature. At university, I want to push science and its incredible powers to their limits to sustain human existence and help all of humanity. I divided my room due to Hami's passion for singing and creating folk songs. Though he frequently invited me to his gatherings, I was always too busy to go. Our lecturer assigned us to research the preserved bodies before they were buried. Hami knocked on my door the next morning, telling me that he had

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received his father's letter and that my mother had died. Hami suggested we travel, but my ambitions were very important to me at the moment. The anguish was excruciating, yet seeing my mother seemed meaningless because she was not present. I couldn't sleep the entire night, and then it hit me: what if the dead could come back to life? Is it my responsibility to unearth secret human realities that scientists have never investigated? I kept researching the secrets, and after finishing my degree, I opted to teach at the Rohtas Fort School, the same school where Hami and I had passed Intermediate.

Hami opted to stay in our village, where he planned to educate his villagers, practice his bansuri (flute), write Punjabi poetry, and assist his father with his business affairs. I had begun teaching, and even though it took only half an hour on the motorbike to reach the Boar village, I chose to stay in the fort's dormitories. I didn't think about sleep or food. Rahib! I'll take you to the fort tomorrow morning so you can see my nasty unguided ways and how my desire turned everything upside down. After finishing my lessons, I shut myself up in my room, the seasons meaning nothing to me, spring, winter, autumn, summer, all seasons passed, and working like a maniac. Even Chandani and my father's letters could not break my concentration. Hami wrote them on my family's behalf and brought them to me once a month. I joined the pieces of the dead body and worked rigorously till I brought the creature to life working in the lantern, the work was completed. It was raining heavily; the lightning and the sound of rain knocked the carved wooden windows adding the horror to unfold. The creature's motionless pale-yellow eyes opened, and his chest swelled strangely. I loathed myself for creating such a horrible and frightening creature for the human eye. I began running until I reached a regal *baoli*, or step well, near the Kabuli gate made of deeply cut limestone. It walked sixty steps in sixty seconds and bathed in chilly water in the same chamber where the royal family bathed. "Emperor Jahangir rested here for a single night when he was traveling to Kashmir," my Master Gi said in my head. The Rohtas Fort was built in a fissure, and its strength cannot be comprehended, according to Jahangir.

As I shivered from the cold, I heard *Azaan*, a call to prayer, from a modest Shahi Masjid near the Kabuli gate. I entered the prayer chamber and was struck by the ornate stone carving, which had a sunflower theme and the phrase "Allah" in Arabic calligraphy. The spherical carvings of the Six *Kalimas* in *Naskh* writing surrounded by lilies on the mosque's outside wall temporarily distracted me from the terrifying beast. I was taken

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aback by the holistic beauty I saw till the cries of the *namazis* disturbed my thoughts. They screamed *Daeo, Daeo* (monster), *Daeo*. Everyone dispersed, and I took refuge in the mosque. I dreamed about Chandani standing at the Mori gate (also known as the Kashmiri gate), which opened to the north and faced Kashmir. She lost her footing and fell from the top of the hill as crimson tears flowed down her face. I awoke, began sprinting towards my town, and arrived at the Boar village by sunrise. When I saw Chandani, I felt comforted. I spent a few days with my family, but Hami suspected something was amiss. He questioned, but I had nothing to say to him.

I became engaged to Chandani, and she told me that the *chabootra* where Hami played his *bansuri* (a bamboo transverse flute) and *suag* Punjabi traditional romance tales is next to their house, and she has memorized Heer Ranjha's story. It was Chandani's favorite story since she saw herself as Heer and me as Ranjha. "Faridoon!" she said to me. "Imagine if I were a Heer and Qaido killed me; would you become a Jogi like Ranjha?" I agreed with a smile. I accompanied Hami to hide from the monster so that he could disperse somewhere or be slain by villagers because he had intended to stay in Lahore for a month to perform on the *bassant* holiday. As soon as we arrived in Lahore, Hami began performing at various events and fairs. The brilliant colors reminded me of our village's mustard fields, and every song by Hami transported me to Chandani's world. I became enthralled by the *bassant* festivities and began to look forward to my marriage. After we returned home, I learned that my younger brother, Shotu, had been slain by an eight-foot-long *Daeo*.

I was devastated, so I determined to kill him and began looking for him. He came out the next day when I was far away from my house and began ranting at me. He forced me to listen to his story and began saying, "You abandoned me, Master Gil" Everyone who looked at me despised me. People abused me everywhere I went, so I hid in the fort's underground *qaid khana* and studied the language by listening to the Master gi teach the Urdu language in the class. When everyone had gone to bed, I went to the langar khana to eat. Please own me; you created me; don't abandon me." As I urged him to leave, he kneeled and begged me to create a female *Daeo* of the same form, promising that he would take her with him and leave the place. He requested that I accept responsibility for his acts and express sympathy. I assured him I'd never do it again because I was already



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kicking myself for making him. *Daeo* became infuriated and murdered my younger brother, Shotu, in retaliation. While returning home from the burial, Hami informed me that it has been decided to relocate the school from Rohtas Fort because students and teachers claim the location is haunted. I attempted to track him down and murder him, but nothing worked. I decided to travel to Lahore with my brother, Chandani, and my father. We packed our possessions and went before sunrise; after a few days, I married Chandani. When I got home from work one day, I discovered that all of my family members had died. In total despair, I departed. I fainted on the spot and awoke in Hakeem Sadaqat's residence. I didn't have the energy to go to the burial, and it took me months to recover. Thaekeedar Sahib couldn't take the loss of his only son and died within a year. I fainted on the spot and awoke in Hakeem Sadaqat's residence. I didn't have the energy to go to the burial, and it took me months to recover. Thaekeedar Sahib couldn't take the loss of his only son and died within a year.

Because of Shotu's death, I married in a very easy way, and Chandani accepted. She was more bonded to Shotu because she stayed with him at home. Shotu sold her *parandas* and *naraas* and accompanied her to meet Bali everywhere she went. On our wedding night, I promised Chandani, though the wedding took place in haste and miserable circumstances I would fulfill all her demands to which she replied, "Faridoon! Will you take me for my honeymoon to Tilla Jogian, I grew up watching the distant peaks of Tilla Jogian while making bricks and have always dreamt of seeing them with you." I told her there was nothing special about the place, they are just ordinary hills but she insisted, "Don't you know Hami composed Waris Shah's *Heer Ranjha*, he said that Deedho Ranjha spent his time on the rebound from heartbreak, sublimating his love and passion in the spiritual world, went there for consolation to his former love. He had his ears pierced there, following the tradition of Guru Goraknath's followers, and became a Jogi. Tilla Jogian is named after him." I agreed to take her to Tilla Jogian for a honeymoon, and she further insisted, "Faridoon! Can you please call me Nagari? My mother missed Srinagar so much, that she named me Nagari" I agreed to her demands.

I decided to drive to Tilla, but on the way, I felt lonesome and alone, recalling sentimental recollections of our school days. Haye! We no longer have a high school in our neighborhood; the *Daeo* also took that away. On our first day of school, Master Gi

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questioned our names and their meanings, to which I replied that Faridoon means "three times stronger." Master Gi then told me that Faridoon also means "alone." When I arrived in Tilla Jogian, our village reminded me of the mud dwellings Nagari used to build; her friends came to *gudda* and *guddi* (dolls), and their wedding ceremony was held in the doll's house. The Tilla's height and sublimity exceeded my brain, and I began to lose myself. As I approached the person singing, I heard bansuri music followed by Waris Shah's *Heer*. Nagari's words rang in my ears. He was selling green ragged garments patched with multicolored clothes, stone earrings, and roundly carved bangles that lit up in the dark, and as he laid his *potli* (a loose garment bag) on the floor and presented his wares, he vanished, but the bansuri singing and music remained. I wore the garments, bracelets, and earrings as his tool pierced my ears. Two nights passed, the song persisted, I was fatigued and sleep-deprived, I began running in anxiety, and I became caught in the Parnala Khas.

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