

## Short Review: “Frankenweenie” (1984) by Dr. John L. Flynn



**Frankenweenie** (1984). Walt Disney Studios, b/w, 29 min. Director: Tim Burton. Producer: Julie Hickson. Screenwriter: Lenny Rips and Tim Burton. Based on the novel *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. Cast: Barret Oliver, Shelley Duvall, Daniel Stern, Paul Bartel, Sofia Coppola, and Sparky.

Tim Burton's twenty-nine-minute short was made at Disney Studios as an affectionate tribute to James Whale and Boris Karloff, but went on to become one of the best shorts made from the Mary Shelley classic. Scripted by Lenny Rips from an original idea by Burton, the film was a gentle remake of the 1931 “*Frankenstein*.” When his dog Sparky is killed in a tragic accident, Victor Frankenstein (Barret Oliver) carries his beloved pet to a makeshift attic laboratory, and jerry-rigs some electronic equipment. Miraculously, the equipment works, and the patchwork dog is brought back to life. Frankenstein tries to keep the dog a secret from his parents (Duvall and Stern), by hiding him in the attic, but Sparky breaks free and begins haunting the neighborhood. Despondent that he may again lose his dog to the frenzied neighbors, Frankenstein retreats to the tattered windmill on an abandoned miniature golf course and awaits the inevitable. Like “*Young Frankenstein*” (1974), Burton’s first film is not a parody of the

original but rather a black-and-white pastiche, lovingly recreating the suspense and dramatic situation of James Whale's earlier film.

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