

Frankenstein

Study Guide

Volume I

Letters

Vocabulary

ardent

emaciated

wretched

paroxysms

1. The novel begins with a series of letters in which the narrator of the novel is writing his thoughts and plans to his sister. Where is the narrator going? Why has he chosen to make this voyage? Of what does the narrator dream? What is his goal?
2. Walton says he is a “Romantic.” What is a Romantic person like?
3. What evidence does Walton provide of his Romantic leanings?
4. Aside from personal glory, what two benefits to mankind does Walton hope to achieve?

10. What is foreshadowed at the end of Chapter 2?

Chapters 3 & 4

1. How is the story of Victor's mother's death ironic?

2. What does Victor contemplate in the first hours of his departure? How do these thoughts indicate his future?

3. Why does Victor not want to study the contemporary scientists suggested by M. Krempe?

4. What ultimately changes Victor's mind about new chemists?

Chapters 5 & 6

Vocabulary

carnage

salubrious

1. How is the night that the creature is born an example of Gothic prose?
2. What is ironic about the creature's physical appearance?
3. What is Romantic about the creature's physical appearance?
4. How does Dr. Frankenstein feel about his creation? What does he do after the creature comes to life?
5. What event is foreshadowed in the beginning of Chapter V?

11. How is Victor's recovery an example of Romanticism?

12. How does Shelley create suspense toward the end of these chapters?

Chapters 7 & 8

Vocabulary

perdition

languid

obdurate

wantonly

ignominious

1. What function do letters serve in this and previous chapters?

2. What briefly lifts Victor's spirit on his journey home? Why is this significant?

3. Why does Elizabeth believe that she is responsible for William's death?

9. Do you think Frankenstein is as guilty as he feels he is? Of what do you think he is guilty, if anything?

10. How do the reactions of Victor and his family to William's murder illustrate Romantic principles?

Volume II

Chapters 1 & 2

Vocabulary

diabolical satiated augmented precipitous

1. What keeps Victor from killing himself at the beginning of this chapter?

2. How does Victor become a disenfranchised member of society himself?

8. What do you think the creature will ask of Victor? Why?

9. What does the creature say made him a “fiend?” What is Romantic about this?

10. What does the creature claim is the basis of Victor’s debt to him?

11. What does the creature promise to Victor if Victor will fulfill his duties as creator?

Chapters 3 & 4

Vocabulary

slaked purloined debilitated

1. What technique does Shelley employ to provide the reader with the creature’s story?

7. Why is the creature confused to see his cottagers crying?

8. Why does the creature work so hard to learn their language? What does that reveal about his character?

9. What does the creature say he discovers about himself? What feelings does this discovery cause?

10. Why is the creature's appearance relevant? What "science" is Shelley discrediting?

11. What evidence does Shelley provide of the creature's innate goodness?

12. Why does the creature ask for a mate?

Chapter 9

Vocabulary

detrimental

1. What, according to the creature, is the cause of his wickedness and what will be the remedy?
2. What does Victor suggest is a creator's obligation to his creation?
3. Follow Victor's and the creature's lines of reasoning in their debate over the creation of the companion. Whose reasoning is most sound?
4. Why does Victor refuse to make a female monster? Do you feel he is justified in his refusal?

5. What is the “sympathy” that the creature long for?

Volume 3

Chapters 1, 2 & 3

Vocabulary

appalling indolence sophisms calamity
reveries penury

1. What is different about his solitude at the beginning of Chapter 1 from his solitude while first creating the monster?

2. What does Victor’s father think is the cause of Victor’s present anxiety?

3. What are some of the reasons Victor feels he must go to England to complete his task?

3. What does the word “acme” mean in the following context: “Mine has been a tale of horrors; I have reached their acme, and what I must now relate can but be tedious to you”?

4. What is different about Victor’s reaction to Elizabeth’s (and his father’s) death from the rest?

5. Victor, in his anger, says to the magistrate, “How ignorant art thou in thy pride of wisdom.” What is the irony in this?

6. In Chapter 6, Victor says his calmness is brought by despair. At the beginning of Chapter 7, he says his calculating revenge brings him calm. What does this change say about his character after the deaths of his wife and father?

7. What does the creature want Victor to do now? How does that show a difference in the creature’s character from the point when he wanted a companion?

13. Explain how Victor is similar to a romantic hero.

14. How does Victor depart from the typical tragic hero?