

FRANKENSTEIN STUDY GUIDE

Please complete all questions in your notebook. Remember that you must use quotes to earn full credit.

Author's Introduction

The author's introduction was written in 1831, thirteen years after its original publication, when it was re-released.

1. In her introduction, Mary Shelley writes, "It is true that I am very averse to bringing myself forward in print; but as my account will only appear as an appendage to a former production, and as it will be confined to such topics as have connection with my authorship alone, I can scarcely accuse myself of a personal intrusion." How does this line characterize Mary Shelley? What might it suggest about women writers in the early 19th century?
2. What is the tone of this introduction? Explain.
3. How does Mary Shelley compare herself to Percy Shelley in this introduction? With what does she credit him?
4. How does she describe herself in the presence of her husband and Lord Byron at Lord Byron's villa? Again, what does this suggest about her sense of self?
5. What do you make of Mary Shelley's reference to Frankenstein as "my hideous progeny"? What does she mean? How might you relate this idea to her life?

The Preface

6. The 1831 edition of the text contains a Preface which is not included in your book. (See the link to it online if you wish to read it.) It is commonly believed that the preface was actually written by *Percy Shelley* rather than his wife. Consider this in relation to Mary Shelley's introduction. What questions does this raise about the relationship between Mary and Percy Shelley?
7. What is ironic about the writing of the introduction and preface considering Mary Shelley's upbringing?

The Letters

An epistolary novel is written in the form of a series of letters exchanged among the characters. The term epistle can be defined as a literary letter. Although *Frankenstein* is not an entirely epistolary novel, it begins with three epistles.

8. Why would an author choose to write in an epistolary format? How is the epistolary format particularly effective for introducing *Frankenstein*?
9. How does Robert Walton describe his journey? How does this setting create a gothic mood?
10. Robert tells the stranger that he would sacrifice his existence and all his hope for the acquirement of knowledge. What is the stranger's response? What theme of the novel does the stranger's response suggest?

Chapter One

11. How does the stranger describe his family's character traits? Be specific.
12. Why do you think Shelley waits until this point to reveal the stranger's name?
13. Who is Elizabeth Lavenza and how does she come into Victor's life?
14. What diction does Shelley use to describe how Elizabeth arrives in the Frankenstein household?

Chapter Two

12. How are Elizabeth and Victor characterized as children?
13. Who is Henry Clerval and what are his interests and goals?
14. Whose works does Victor pursue in his reading and studies? Why does his father disapprove?
15. What is the significance of the thunderstorm?

Chapter Three

16. Why does Victor's father want him to study at the University of Ingolstadt?
17. What last requests does Victor's mother make before she dies?
18. How does Victor cope with the death of his mother?
19. What realization does Victor make as soon as he leaves his home?
20. Describe Waldman and Krempe. Who does Victor favor? Why?
21. What can we infer about Victor's character from his preference in professors?

Chapter Four

22. What discovery does Victor make while at the university?
23. Why does Shelley interrupt the flashback at this point in the narrative? What is her purpose in bringing the reader back to the present?
24. How does Walton react to the news of Victor's discovery? How does Victor respond to Walton?
25. What warning does Victor give Walton about the discovery?
26. What drives Victor on to the creation of a being like himself? What does this suggest about his character?
27. What details is the reader given on the construction of the creature?
28. Consider the diction of the last paragraph in Chapter Four. What words express a warning of what's to come?

Chapter Five

29. Describe the setting on the night the creature comes to life. What mood is created by the setting?
30. Describe the creature.
31. What is Victor's reaction to his creation? Why?
32. What is the significance of Victor's dream?
33. At this point in the story, which character invites sympathy – Victor, or the creature? Explain.
34. How does Henry's character offset Victor's character at this point in the story?
35. When Victor returns to his apartment with Henry, he finds that the monster has gone. Discuss his response to this. How does it reveal his character?

Chapter Six

36. Who is Justine Moritz? How is she characterized?
37. Shelley can be criticized for her “clunky” exposition in Elizabeth’s letter. What is awkward about Elizabeth’s description of Justine?
38. Why is Elizabeth’s letter important to the story?
39. Why does Victor desert his study of science? What does he pursue instead?
40. How does Victor’s mood and his praise of Henry build suspense at the end of Chapter Six?

Chapter Seven

41. Why does Elizabeth blame herself for the murder of William?
42. Why does Victor come to believe that his creature is responsible for William’s death?
43. Why is Justine accused of the crime?

Chapter Eight

44. How does Victor react to Justine’s trial? What does this show about Victor’s character?
45. Why does Justine confess to having murdered William?
46. Why doesn’t Victor do more to save Justine?
47. What warnings for the future does Victor give after Justine’s death?
48. How do you feel about Victor as a character at this point in the novel?

Chapter Nine

49. Why does Victor leave home and where does he go?
50. How does his trip affect his spirits?
51. Melodrama is literature or drama characterized by exaggeration. How can this chapter be described as melodramatic? Find a line or lines that appear melodramatic.

Chapter Ten

52. Why does Victor decide to climb the glacier Montanvert? How does this scene illustrate Romanticism?
53. What impression does the monster give when he speaks?
54. What request does the monster make of Victor? Why?
55. Why does Victor agree to listen?

Chapter Eleven

56. What are the monster’s first memories?
57. What is the purpose of the footnote “The moon”?
58. How does the creature say he learned to live in the world?
59. How did people react to the creature when he first entered the village? How does he respond?

Chapter Twelve

60. Why does the monster decide to keep himself hidden from the peasants in the cottage?
61. What kind of knowledge does the monster get from the cottagers?
62. Why is the creature horrified when he sees his own reflection in a pond?

Chapter Thirteen

63. Who is Safie?
64. How does Safie’s arrival benefit the monster’s education? How and what does the monster learn about the human race?
65. How do the monster’s emotions change as he gains more knowledge?

Chapter Fourteen

66. Describe Safie's connection with the DeLacey family.
67. What is the significance of Safie's story to the novel?

Chapter Fifteen

68. What are the first books the monster reads, and how do they affect him?
69. What is the significance of the papers the monster finds in his clothing?
70. What plan does the monster make?
71. What happens when the monster reveals himself to the cottagers?
72. What is Shelley suggesting about humankind through the DeLaceys' reactions?

Chapter Sixteen

73. What happens to the DeLaceys?
74. Why does the monster set fire to the cottage?
75. Where does the monster decide to go after burning the cottage? Why?
76. What happens on his journey that further hardens his heart against humans?
77. What happens when the monster reaches Geneva?
78. Is the monster still a sympathetic character at this point? Why or why not?
79. At the end of Chapter Sixteen, what changes about the monster's relationship with Victor?

Chapter Seventeen

80. How does the narration change in Chapter Seventeen?
81. How does Victor initially react to the monster's demand? What reasons does he give for his reaction?
82. How does the monster reason with Victor? What persuades Victor to consider his proposal?
83. What would you do in Victor's position?

Chapter Eighteen

84. What are Victor's feelings when he returns to Geneva?
85. What does Victor's father want him to do? Why? How does Victor respond?
86. What can the reader infer from the change in verb tense on p.135?

Chapter Nineteen

87. How are Henry and Victor again compared in this chapter?
88. Why does Victor settle on the Orkney Islands as the place where he will work?

Chapter Twenty

89. Why does Victor destroy his second creation?
90. How does the monster react to the destruction of his "bride"?
91. What is suspenseful about the end of Chapter Twenty?

Chapter Twenty-One

92. Who has been murdered? When Henry finds out who was murdered, what causes him to become a suspect?
93. How does Victor handle his experiences in prison?

Chapter Twenty-Two

94. What confession does Victor make to his father? What is his father's reaction?
95. What does Elizabeth ask in her letter to Victor? What does she offer him? Why?
96. What does Victor assume are the monster's next plans?

Chapter Twenty-Three

97. How does Elizabeth die?
98. How further grief does Victor face?
99. What does Victor tell the magistrate? What is the outcome of the conversation?
100. What character traits do all the monster's victims share? What might Shelley be telling her readers by making these people victims?

Chapter Twenty-Four

101. What happens when Victor visits the graves of his father, William, and Elizabeth?
102. How does the monster encourage Victor during the chase?
103. What is meant by the phrase "Walton, in Continuation"?
104. How is Victor able to justify his early treatment of the monster?
105. Before he dies, what final advice does Victor offer Walton? What does this show about Victor's character?
106. Is Victor a dynamic or static character? Explain.
107. Why does the monster suffer over Victor's death?
108. Name at least three themes of *Frankenstein*. (Consider: What lessons are taught? What is Shelley's purpose in writing the text?)

