

Frankenstein: Knowledge Organiser

Themes:

Religion: Victor goes against God by creating the monster- and so the novel warns against 'playing God', something that scientists during the Enlightenment were doing.

Family: Walton & Margaret/ Victor & Elizabeth/ The Frankensteins/ Victor & the monster/ the De Lacys.

Women: All seen as weak and powerless- Margaret and Elizabeth are ignored by their male counterparts, Justine accepts her death.

Prejudice: The monster suffers prejudice from Victor, the DeLacys, the cottagers, the villagers of.... and even William (a young boy). Safie's father suffer prejudice/ injustice in Paris because he is Turkish- his business fails, home repossessed and thrown into debtor's prison. Victor describes the peasants Elizabeth grew up with in a negative manner.

Innocence: The monster is initially innocent until he learns destruction through man- Felix, hearing tales of the Roman Empire etc. Justine's innocence.

Ambition: Victor's ambition to create the monster- is ambition always good? Walton's ambitions- are they realistic?

Loneliness: Some self-imposed (Victor/ Walton), some not (Elizabeth/ the monster)- consider the impact loneliness has on characters.

Background Information:

Feminism: Mary Shelley's mother was Mary Wollstonecraft- a feminist who wrote 'The Vindication of the Rights of Women'

Romanticism: The text is a Romantic text- as it commonly features discussions over the beauty of nature. Elizabeth (and partially Clerval) possess values of the Romantic Era. The Romantics believed in the power of God and the beauty of nature. It was a reaction to the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment: A period of History which involved the development of new ideas and scientific discovery. Both Victor and Walton possess values of the Enlightenment. During this time, people began questioning the reality of power and God. It also led to the **Industrial Revolution**.

Plot Summary: (There are 3 narrators: Walton/ Victor/ The Monster)

Letter 1: Robert Walton writes to his sister, Margaret about how he's reached St Petersburg and has bought some sailors to take him to the North Pole.

Letter 2: Walton is lonely on his journey.

Letter 3: Walton briefly tells his sister he is safe.

Letter 4: The ship has been caught in ice; whilst it's stuck he sees a creature travelling on a sled across the ice. Later, he finds a stranger in the sea who promises to tell him his story.

Chapter 1: Victor relates his early life and how his mother adopted Elizabeth.

Chapter 2: Victor develops a love for Science, whilst Elizabeth reads poetry.

Chapter 3: Victor arrives at Ingolstadt to start his studies.

Chapter 4: Victor spends hours in graveyards and charnel-houses to learn how to reanimate dead bodies.

Chapter 5: The monster wakes. Victor is horrified by what he has created and runs out, abandoning it. Clerval arrives in Ingolstadt; Victor falls into a fever.

Chapter 6: Victor, recovering from his fever, receives a letter from Elizabeth telling him to come home. Victor introduces Clerval to the university and spends his time around nature.

Chapter 7: Victor receives a letter from his father saying his younger brother has been murdered. Victor returns to Geneva and hears that Janine has been arrested- he sees the monster outside Geneva and realises he was the killer.

Chapter 8: Justine is sentenced to death, even though Elizabeth and Victor believe she is innocent- she is hanged.

Chapter 9: Feeling guilty, Victor goes walking in the mountains.

Chapter 10: Victor is confronted by the monster.

Chapter 11: The monster relates how scared he was when he woke up; he wandered through the mountains and discovered some cottagers.

Chapter 12: Hiding in the barn next door, the monster observes his neighbours and begins to learn language and the names of the young man (Felix) and woman (Agatha).

Chapter 13: The monster realises the cottagers are unhappy. One day a woman arrives Called Safie- who Felix is in love with. As Safie speaks Arabian, Felix has to teach her; the monster listens and learns too.

Chapter 14: The monster learns the family were once wealthy.

Chapter 15: The monster learns about his origins. Upset, he tries to make friends with His neighbours by speaking to DeLacy (the old man who is blind)- but is interrupted by Felix, who scares the monster away.

Chapter 16: The monster swears hatred to Man, and to Victor. He travels to Geneva and strangles William- and frames Justine. He claims his crimes are caused by loneliness and demands to Victor that he creates him a companion

Chapter 17: Victor initially refuses but eventually agrees to creating the companion. The Monster tells Victor he'll be watching him.

Chapter 18: Victor puts off creating the monster, and decides to marry Elizabeth once he's finished with the monster. In the meantime, Victor and Clerval go on a two year tour and land in London.

Chapter 19: Victor goes to the Orkneys alone to create the companion.

Chapter 20: Victor destroys the companion in front of the monster, the monster swears revenge on Victor's wedding night. Victor is caught in a storm and ends up charged in Ireland charged with murder.

Chapter 21: Victor learns Clerval's been murdered. Victor is found innocent of the crime.

Chapter 22: Victor returns home, marries Elizabeth and goes off on honeymoon.

Chapter 23: The monster murders Elizabeth on her wedding night, Victor vows revenge.

Chapter 24: Alphonse dies; Victor spends the rest of his life chasing the monster. Victor Completes his story and dies from hypothermia. That night, Walton discovers the monster crying over Victor's death. He says he will kill himself. Walton abandons his mission to reach the North Pole.

Characters:

Victor Frankenstein: The creator of the monster

Elizabeth Lavenza: Victor's step-sister/ wife-to-be

The monster: Victor's creation, which he abandons

Henry Clerval: Victor's best friend

Robert Walton: Attempting to reach the North Pole

Margaret Saville: Walton's sister

Justine Moritz: A friend of the Frankensteins

Alphonse and Catherine Frankenstein: Victor's parents

Earnest and William Frankenstein: Victor's brothers

M. Waldman: Victor's favourite professor at Ingolstadt

M. Krempe: A professor at Ingolstadt

Felix, Agatha and DeLacy: The cottagers that monster spies on

Safie: Felix's wife

Beaufort: Alphonse's friend and Catherine's father

Symbolism and Motifs:

Imagery of age: The description of the monster is deliberately 'old': 'shrivelled complexion', 'a grin wrinkled his face', 'black lips': to connote how Victor has created old life, rather than something new.

The Sublime: A Romantic view/ notion that nature was powerful enough to heal (Victor escapes to nature to calm his internal conflict and guilt).

Light: Walton heads to the 'country of eternal light', where the 'sun is forever visible'. Frankenstein experiences a 'sudden light... so brilliant and wondrous' when creating the monster. These are all references to the Enlightenment. When the monster wakes, his first sensation is 'light pressed upon [his] nerves' but it is dangerous: it burns him when he gets too close (linking to the dangers of the Enlightenment and scientific advancement).

Ingolstadt: Victor calls Ingolstadt the 'land of knowledge'- and is symbolic for the Enlightenment. It's the place where the monster's created. Strangely, there are no female characters in the 'land of knowledge'.