***Frankenstein***

*Comprehension Check Questions*

**Prologue**

1. Who wrote the prologue to *Frankenstein*? For what purpose was it written, according to the author?

2. What stories inspired the idea of writing the “ghost stories” that summer?

3. Describe the conversation that triggered the author’s “waking dream.”

4. Why does the writer say that *Frankenstein* is not “a mere tale of spectres or enchantment”?

5. Which other works about human nature inspired *Frankenstein*’s author?

6. Summarize where and under what conditions Mary Shelley began writing *Frankenstein*.

**Letters**

1. Show how the Letters frame the upcoming story of Frankenstein.

2. Analyze how Robert Walton’s life and travels adhere to the ideals of Romanticism.

3. Explain how Walton educates himself for his sailing adventure.

4. Predict how successful Walton’s voyage will be to find an Arctic passage, and the problems he could encounter on his adventure.

5. What does Walton desire when he writes the second letter?

6. Explain why Walton feels particularly fortunate to have secured the master of his ship.

7. Show how the shipmaster’s failed love story adheres to the ideals of Romanticism.

8. Infer how Walton’s “belief in the marvelous” makes him an ideal listener of Frankenstein’s story.

9. Formulate how the setting of the fourth letter is typically Romantic.

10. Tell what the sailors first see in the distance.

11. Describe the man who boards the ship.

12. Explain why the man is in the Arctic.

13. Analyze how the man fulfills Captain Walton’s desires.

14. Generalize why the man agrees to tell Walton his story.

15. Evaluate why the man cautions Walton against his “search for knowledge and wisdom.”

16. What is Walton’s duty as the man tells his story?

**Chapter One**

1. Tell how Victor Frankenstein’s parents met.

2. Summarize how Mary Shelley interjects her social interest of caring for the poor into *Frankenstein*.

3. Show how Shelley portrays the women, Caroline and Elizabeth, in Chapter One.

4. Describe Victor’s childhood.

5. Explain how Elizabeth comes into the Frankenstein home.

6. Assess how Victor feels about Elizabeth.

**Chapter Two**

1. Tell about Victor’s social tendencies and how he interacts with friends.

2. Contrast Victor’s academic interests with those of his friend, Henry Clerval.

3. Infer Victor’s meaning when he says of his desire to learn about science: “I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but, swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys.”

4. Which authors and topics does Victor become obsessed with reading?

5. Generalize how Victor learns about alchemy and natural science. How does this fit with the characteristics of Romanticism?

6. Describe Victor’s experience with lightning. How was it a turning point in his life?

7. Explain Victor’s destiny. Locate a quote from the novel to support your answer.

**Chapter Three**

1. Tell what Caroline Frankenstein hopes for Elizabeth and Victor’s future.

2. Summarize Elizabeth’s response to Caroline’s death.

3. Explain why Henry Clerval’s father disapproves of education.

4. Deduce what Victor means when he states, “Chance—or rather the evil influence, the Angel of Destruction, which asserted omnipotent sway over me from the moment I turned my reluctant steps from my father’s door. . .”

5. Examine how Victor interacts differently with M. Krempe and M. Waldman.

**Chapter Four**

1. Evaluate Victor’s assertion, “In other studies you go as far as others have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder.”

2. What specific aspects of biology does Victor study?

3. Explain how Victor thinks that his creation will regard him.

4. Analyze how Victor violates his own advice: “A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquility.”

5. Generalize why Victor “shuns his fellow-creatures” while working on his creation.

**Chapter Five**

1. How does Victor react when his creation comes to life? Explain your feelings about his reaction to his creation. Were you surprised? Why or why not?

2. Describe how Victor’s dream takes on the mood of a horror story.

3. Show how the passage from Coleridge’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” applies to Victor Frankenstein.

4. Explain how Victor reacts to Henry Clerval’s arrival in Ingolstadt.

5. Surmise what the monster does after leaving Victor’s laboratory.

6. Explain the favor that Henry asks of Victor.

**Chapter Six**

1. Summarize Elizabeth’s letter to Victor.

2. Relate how Justine comes to live with the Frankenstein family.

3. Visually or descriptively illustrate William Frankenstein.

4. Analyze how Victor feels after he reads Elizabeth’s letter.

5. Generalize how M. Waldman and M. Krempe speak of Victor when he and Clerval visit them. What is the irony of this?

6. What do Victor and Clerval begin studying together?

7. Assess how Clerval affects Victor and his mood.

**Chapter Seven**

1. How does William die?

2. Why does Elizabeth blame herself?

3. How long has it been since Victor has been home?

4. Contrast Victor’s feelings about the Swiss landscape during the day with how he views it at night.

5. Examine how the author utilizes the lightning motif as Victor returns home.

6. How does Victor talk himself out of pursuing the beast?

7. Do you believe that Victor could have prevented William’s death if he had come home sooner? Why or why not?

8. Explain what Victor mistakenly believes when he tells Ernest, “The murderer discovered! Good God! How can that be? Who could attempt to pursue him? It is impossible; one might as well try to overtake the winds, or confine a mountain stream with straw.”

9. Specify the evidence that is used to charge Justine with the crime.

10. Why does Elizabeth refuse to believe that Justine is guilty?

**Chapter Eight**

1. Tell why Victor does not announce the real murderer, nor confess to the crime himself.

2. Discuss how the evidence against Justine builds.

3. Examine the accuracy of Justine’s assertion, “I believe that I have no enemy on earth, and none surely would have been so wicked as to destroy me wantonly.”

4. Explain how Elizabeth defends Justine.

5. Why does Victor claim he is suffering worse than the accused?

6. Do you believe that Justine would have been convicted of William’s murder if she had not confessed to it? Why or why not?

7. Tell why Justine confesses to William’s murder.

8. Evaluate Victor’s decision to keep his suspicions regarding William’s murder to himself. Do you agree or disagree with the decision he made? Provide details to support your answer.

9. Mary Shelley wrote Chapter Eight as a commentary on what was, in her opinion, a flawed legal system. Provide examples of how Justine may have received an unfair trial.

**Chapter Nine**

1. Tell how Victor responds to William’s and Justine’s deaths.

2. Summarize what Victor does at night after the rest of his family has gone to bed.

3. Show the irony in Victor’s desire to “extinguish the life which I [he] had so thoughtlessly bestowed.”

4. Explain why Victor feels that he is the “true murderer” of William and Justine.

**Chapter Ten**

1. Locate a quote that conveys the Romantic belief in nature as a healing force.

2. Compare Shelley’s description of the setting to Victor’s mood.

3. Examine why Mary Shelley inserts the last stanza of Percy Shelley’s “Mutability” into the narrative.

4. Explain how the creature offers an ultimatum to Victor.

5. Generalize how the creature blames humanity for his behavior.

6. What is the creature’s chief complaint?

7. How do you feel about the creature now that you have heard him implore Frankenstein to hear his story?

8. Predict what you think the creature wants from Frankenstein.

**Chapter Eleven**

1. From whose point of view are Chapters Eleven and Twelve told?

2. Summarize the creature’s first experiences when he leaves Ingolstadt.

3. Explain how the creature learns about fire.

4. Analyze how the creature is similar to an infant.

5. Generalize what the creature learns about humans from his first encounters with them.

6. Evaluate the creature’s decision to isolate himself from humans.

7. Describe the family that the creature observes.

**Chapter Twelve**

1. Contrast the creature’s assessment of the DeLaceys’ lifestyle with its reality.

2. Tell how the creature assists the DeLacey family.

3. Calculate how long the creature observes the DeLacey family.

4. Discuss how the creature learns from the family.

5. Explain why the creature wants to learn to speak.

6. Determine the irony in the creature looking upon the DeLaceys as “superior beings.”

7. Create a plan for the creature to introduce himself to the DeLaceys. Assess how the DeLaceys would receive the creature.

**Chapter Thirteen**

1. Whose arrival improves Felix’s spirits? Predict who this stranger is, why she has come, and why she seems to lift Felix’s mood.

2. Describe how Safie’s presence facilitates the creature’s ability to speak and read.

3. Show how the creature demonstrates his fear of encountering humans.

4. Infer what the creature learns of the human spirit from Volney’s *Ruins of Empires*.

5. What else does the creature learn about?

6. How does this knowledge make the creature ponder his place in the universe?

7. Evaluate how the creature’s reflections demonstrate his innate humanity.

**Chapter Fourteen**

1. Describe the De Lacey family’s background.

2. Summarize the circumstances that caused the De Lacey’s ruin.

3. Discuss how the Turk uses Safie to ensure Felix’s assistance.

4. Examine how Safie sought to reject the cultural expectations placed on her.

5. Explain the irony of Safie’s father not wanting her to marry Felix, a Christian.

6. While Felix is in Italy courting Safie, what happens to his father and Agatha? Why? What happens to the De Lacey family as a result of Felix’s actions?

7. Evaluate if the De Lacey family should or should not have assisted the Turk in his escape. Provide details to support your answer.

8. Compose a letter which Safie writes to her father telling of her intention to marry Felix.

**Chapter Fifteen**

1. Contrast how the creature feels when reading *The Sorrows of Werter* and *Plutarch’s Lives*.

2. Examine how the creature sees himself as different from Adam in *Paradise Lost*.

3. Explain how knowledge heightens the creature’s frustration with his situation.

4. Generalize how the creature thinks the DeLacey family will respond to his advances.

5. Tell what occurs when the creature meets the DeLacey family.

6. Evaluate the approach the creature takes to introduce himself to the DeLacey family. Would the creature have improved his chances of being accepted by the family if he had done anything differently? If so, what could have helped?

**Chapter Sixteen**

1. Quote the passage when the creature experiences a turning point in his relationship with humans. What is your reaction to his statement? How do you think the creature will change from this moment of insight?

2. After much thought, how does the creature believe he should have done things differently? What does the creature decide to do?

3. Tell about what the creature sees the next morning, and what he decides to do as a result.

4. Explain why the creature wants to meet Victor.

5. How does the incident with the DeLacey family change the creature?

6. Summarize the creature’s encounter with the drowning girl. How does this incident further fuel the creature’s hatred for mankind and need for revenge?

7. Describe why the creature chooses to kill William.

8. Tell why the creature places the locket in Justine’s pocket.

9. Describe the demand the creature makes of Victor.

**Chapter Seventeen**

1. Tell how Victor first responds to the creature’s demand.

2. Discuss how the creature convinces Victor to make him a mate.

3. Examine how the creature believes companionship will help his temperament.

4. Explain how the creature plans to stay abreast of Victor’s progress.

5. Compare the creature’s feelings to those of Captain Robert Walton at the beginning of the novel.

6. Recommend whether Victor should or should not create a mate for the creature. What are the advantages; what are the drawbacks?

**Chapter Eighteen**

1. Tell why Alphonse Frankenstein thinks Victor is depressed.

2. Summarize why Victor feels that he cannot marry Elizabeth at this time.

3. Demonstrate how Victor manipulates his father so he has the time and liberty to create a female creature.

4. Analyze why Victor feels that his family will be safer if he leaves Switzerland.

5. Generalize how the setting and scenery of his journey finally affect Victor’s mind and spirits.

6. Assess how Victor feels about Clerval’s friendship and companionship.

**Chapter Nineteen**

1. Quote the passage(s) that tells how Victor views his life in regards to the monster and his demand.

2. While Clerval and Victor are in London, how does Clerval occupy his time?

3. Describe how Victor views the process of creating a female creature.

4. To what is Shelley alluding in Victor’s assertion: “But I am a blasted tree; the bolt has entered my soul; and I felt then that I should survive to exhibit what I shall soon cease to be—a miserable spectacle of wrecked humanity, pitiable to others, and intolerable to myself”? What does Victor mean?

5. Detail why Victor cannot bear to hear Henry speak of Chamounix.

6. Explain why Victor sometimes fears for Henry’s life while on their journey.

7. What does Victor ask of Henry? What does Victor wish to do on his own?

8. Formulate how Victor’s selection of the Orkney Islands mirrors his feelings about the task he plans to complete there.

9. Judge Victor’s emotional state as he begins to create a female monster.

**Chapter Twenty**

1. What are Victor’s concerns about creating another monster?

2. Explain why Victor destroys the creature he is forming.

3. Examine how the creature conveys the power he believes he has over Victor.

4. Infer what the monster means when he tells Victor, “I shall be with you on your wedding-night.”

5. Generalize how Victor feels after the monster threatens him.

6. Evaluate Victor’s decision not to create a female monster. Do you think he is making the right decision? Why or why not?

7. What does Victor do with the remains of the female creature?

8. Describe what Victor does when he becomes tired while sailing.

9. Predict why the people in the village think Victor is responsible for the death of a gentleman in the town.

**Chapter Twenty-One**

1. How does the dead body’s appearance relate its cause of death?

2. Summarize why the townspeople think Victor is the murderer.

3. Who has been murdered?

4. Show how Victor responds to Clerval’s death upon seeing his body and how he behaves while in jail.

5. Explain how Mr. Kirwin helps Victor.

6. Formulate what “destiny of the most horrible kind” Victor thinks “hangs over” him.

7. Explain how Victor is acquitted of Clerval’s murder. How long was Victor incarcerated?

8. Discuss Victor’s emotional response to his acquittal.

**Chapter Twenty-Two**

1. Examine Victor’s assertion, “William, Justine, and Henry—they all died by my hands.”

2. Discuss the meaning of Victor telling his father, “A thousand times would I have shed my own blood, drop by drop, to have saved their lives; but I could not, my father, indeed I could not sacrifice the whole human race.”

3. Show why Elizabeth thinks Victor is depressed and troubled.

4. Infer what Victor thinks will occur between him and the monster on his wedding-night. What other outcomes does Victor fail to consider?

5. Devise a plan for Victor to tell Elizabeth about the monster.

6. Predict what Victor foreshadows in his comment, “But, as if possessed of magic powers, the monster had blinded me to his real intentions; and when I thought that I had prepared only my own death, I hastened that of a far dearer victim.”

7. Tell how Victor tries to protect himself from the monster.

**Chapter Twenty-Three**

1. How does Shelley utilize nature to foreshadow ominous happenings at the beginning of this chapter?

2. Describe how the monster is with Victor on his wedding-night.

3. Show how Elizabeth’s death intensifies Victor’s concern for his other loved ones.

4. How does the creature inadvertently kill Alphonse Frankenstein?

5. Formulate how Elizabeth and Alphonse’s deaths change Victor’s focus in life.

6. Explain why the magistrate does not think that he can offer much help to Victor.

7. Assess how Victor’s comment that the creature “may be hunted like the chamois, and destroyed as a beast of prey” relates to his perception of his creation.

8. What is ironic about Victor’s statement: “…how ignorant are thou in thy pride of wisdom”?

**Chapter Twenty-Four**

1. Tell where Victor travels. Where is he going, and why?

2. How does Victor feel as if he is being guided by a “spirit of good”?

3. Describe how Victor and the creature’s roles have reversed.

4. Point out why the creature leaves Victor hints and marks regarding his trail.

5. Infer the creature’s meaning when he tells Victor, “My reign is not yet over. . . you live, and my power is complete.”

6. Generalize the creature’s state of mind and how he views humans while on his journey.

7. Evaluate Victor’s sanity and ability to make rational decisions as he pursues the creature.

8. What natural event threatens Victor’s safety?

9. Interpret Victor’s thoughts when he repeatedly refers to “guiding spirits.”

**Continuation**

1. Why are Felix and Safie’s letters important to Walton?

2. Summarize the situation aboard Walton’s ship.

3. Relate how Walton has spent most of his time since Victor boarded the ship.

4. Summarize Frankenstein’s speech to the crew.

5. How does Victor’s speech parallel his quest for the creature?

6. Analyze why Walton decides to take the ship south.

7. Assess Victor’s statement, “In a fit of enthusiastic madness I created a rational creature, and was bound toward him, to assure, as far as was in my power, his happiness and well-being.” Why is this statement surprising?

8. If Victor had not died, what do you think he would have done?

9. Who does Walton find with Victor?

10. Discuss how the monster feels now that Victor is dead.

11. Examine the creature’s belief, “I was the slave, not the master, of an impulse which I detested, yet could not disobey.”

12. Infer why the creature leaves Walton’s ship.