

Study Questions: *Frankenstein*

Chapter 1

1. Victor opens his narrative by describing in great detail the story of his parents and how he lived his childhood. Summarize his descriptions, using appropriate quotations from the text to give your answer authority.
2. Shelley's descriptions of Elizabeth—she is “more than [Victor's] sister” and she is Victor's “promised gift” allude to several issues. What are they?

Chapter 2

3. Henry Clerval serves as a foil to Victor in this chapter. He also balances Victor's character. Give some examples from the text that shows how Shelly accomplishes this compare/contrast technique. How does this develop a theme?
4. Victor tells us “in drawing a picture of my early days, I also record those events which led, by insensible steps, to my after tale of misery” (21). List these events as he recounts them in the chapter.

Chapter 3

5. Elizabeth and Caroline both contract scarlet fever. What does the disease signify symbolically?
6. M. Waldman's lecture on philosophy is described by Victor as “the words of fate, enounced to destroy me” (29). What does this statement tell us about Victor's personality?

Chapter 4

7. What benefits does Victor think he will produce when he creates a human being? List those that will mostly benefit him and those that he believes will benefit mankind.
8. When Victor stops writing home, his father accuses him of neglecting both his studies and his family. What does the older, sadder, and wiser Victor—the narrator of the story—think about his father's complaints?

Chapter 5

9. What was your reaction to the way Victor treated his just born creature? Do you think his feelings are justified? Why or why not?
10. Analyze the meaning of Victor's dream about Elizabeth.
11. Why does Victor consider his creation his “enemy”?

Chapter 6

12. What parallels do you see between the stories of Elizabeth and Justine? What differences?

13. Shelley describes the literary studies of Clerval and Victor in this chapter. How does this description add to our understanding of each of these characters?

Chapter 7

14. After Victor learns of his little brother William's murder, Clerval attempts to console him. Victor says "the words impressed themselves on my mind, and I remembered them afterwards, in solitude" (49). What is ironic about this passage?
15. Victor thinks the Creature murdered William. List the reasons why Victor comes to this conclusion. Also, list elements of Mary Shelley's description of the setting that reinforces Victor's feelings of guilt and doom.

Chapter 8

16. What circumstantial evidence is given at Justine's trial that proves her guilt? What are the elements of her defense?
17. What is your opinion of Victor Frankenstein at the end of this chapter?

Chapter 9

18. Does Shelly encourage the reader to feel sympathy for Victor's depression or does she encourage the reader to feel disgust at his self-pity? Explain how she does this.
19. What is the symbolic meaning of Victor journeying to the Alps?