

November 6, 2015
Murphy 1

Name
Frankenstein

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley starts with Robert Walton's letters to his sister as he ventures toward the North Pole, where he comes across the protagonist Victor Frankenstein, who tells the tale of his life and sorrows. Victor begins by describing a happy upbringing, which led him to university in Ingolstadt, where he seeks fame through scientific discovery. Here Victor creates a creature of dead human remains, hoping to enhance life. Unfortunately, the creature's appearance causes Victor to abandon the creature out of fear, forcing the creature into exile. While learning to survive alone, the creature observes a family who, unknowingly, teaches him language and love, but he is rejected by this family once he reveals himself to them. With the full realization of the tragedy and injustice of his abandonment, the creature begins a vengeful quest to destroy his creator's loved ones. The climax of this story occurs when the creature murders his third victim, Victor's new bride, Elizabeth. Victor chases the creature to the point where he meets Robert's ship, and is rescued, only to perish days after sharing his story. In the end, after expressing some remorse for all that has occurred, the creature escapes again into the vast, frigid arctic.

The Creature- enraged, hideous, compassionate, lonely

Victor Frankenstein- inquisitive, arrogant, selfish, crazy

Robert Walton- kind, prideful, selfless, fair

Elizabeth Lavenza- considerate, innocent, accepting, loving

1. In the beginning, Victor abandoned the monster he had created, due to fear. Describe this character's motivation and how it propels the conflict between the creature and Victor?

A. Victor was initially motivated by his love of science and desire to enhance human life as he was inspired by the philosopher's stone. He allowed his pride to overcome his respectful endeavors and created a being, with a mind and heart, without full thought of his existence in this world. Though he had put the creature together and provided him life, he abandoned the creature prematurely and with prejudicious fear of his physical appearance. This rejection from his creator eventually drove the creature to a vengeful, murderous rage. The conflict between Victor and his creation was the main conflict in the novel, which would have likely been resolved had Victor created the creature's companion.

2. This story is told through a series of letters, and layers the events using flashbacks. Why does Mary Shelley allow the characters to describe their backgrounds and the important events of their lives, in first person point of view?

A: In order to get a fair perspective of this entire story, we have to hear from each character. We have to understand how and why Victor created his creature, and we have to understand the significant role of the loved ones in his life. A third person narrator may not have been able to bring us so deeply into the hearts and minds and motivations of each character. Certainly, had one of these characters been the first person narrator, his bias and hate for the other would have clouded our perspective of the other. Additionally, seeing the creature from his “birth” and understanding his struggles as he portrayed them, helps the reader to connect and empathize with this “monster.”

3. After creating the monster, Victor flees in fear due to the creature’s physical appearance. If you were Victor would you run from the creature or stay and care for him? Explain how your actions would affect the creature’s actions differently, changing the conflict.

A: I can see why Victor fled. I can only imagine how terrifying it must have been to see this hideous creature come to life. Still, having created it, and knowing that it was my responsibility I believe that I would have eventually come back to it. After speaking to the creature, like Victor, I know I would have felt empathy, but would it have been enough to overcome the pain and anger of losing William? That is something I do not know. In real life we make decisions everyday and sometimes they hurt others. Sometimes they create conflict. Sometimes they make conflict worse. I would love to say that I would not have abandoned this creature with such prejudice in my heart, but I truly do not know. After things start to unravel, I don’t know that I would have created another creature of his kind. So, my actions may have led to the same conflict as Victor’s.

Chapter 23, p. 191

Speaker: Victor to the magistrate

“How ignorant art thou in thy pride of knowledge.”

This is the most important passage in the novel because Victor’s words to the magistrate, after Elizabeth’s murder reveal one of the major themes. Ironically, it was Victor’s “ignorant...pride” which was the catalyst to all of the story’s conflict. This line also shows that Victor never learned from his mistakes. The theme we learned from

Victor's own "pride of knowledge" is that too much pride in oneself often leads to a fall. Victor took his pride to his grave, never achieving his goals of scientific prestige nor avenging the deaths of his loved ones. His pride blinded him to the needs of others causing extensive destruction.

This is one of my favorite books of all time. I love the way Shelley unravels the story through letters, which flashback to events through the first person perspective of a variety of characters. The imagery and author's tone made for an exciting, fun read. I think the message was a good one and reminded me to be careful of judging people before truly giving them a chance. I would recommend this novel to any and everyone. However, it is a challenging text, with a lot of difficult vocabulary, so I would recommend strong readers in grades 7 and up read this book.