

Frankenstein

By Mary Shelley, retold by Margaret Turner

Summary

Whole novel:

- Victor Frankenstein lives in the city called Geneva in Switzerland.
- He has a younger brother, William.
- William's mother died when he was 18 years old, and only his father is alive.
- Victor wants to marry his childhood friend, Elizabeth.
- Victor is set to study at the German University of Heidelberg.
- Henry Clerval, Victor's best friend has to stay in Geneva to help with the family business.
- Victor studies science at the University and becomes obsessed with the "secret of life".
- He wants to find out how to create life.
- Soon he pays people to dig up dead bodies, which he cuts up and uses to make a new body.
- Victor's idea is to use lightning to bring the dead body back to life.
- He connects wires from the roof to the new body and it comes to life.
- His creation is ugly with dry, yellow, wrinkled skin.
- Victor runs away from the monster he has created.
- Lightning strikes his laboratory and it is destroyed by a fire.
- Victor decides to study languages with Henry instead.
- He hears that William is murdered.
- On his way back to Geneva he sees that the monster is still alive.
- He knows that the monster killed William but he keeps it a secret..
- The monster and Victor meet and the monster says that because of his ugliness he cannot make friends.
- The monster asks Victor to make him a female companion so that he will not kill people.
- Victor agrees so that the monster will not kill his family.
- Henry finds out that Victor is making a new monster and stops him.
- The monster kills Henry and kills everyone Victor loves in order to make Victor's life as miserable as his own.



Chapter-by-chapter summary

Chapter 1

Victor Frankenstein was born in 1810 in Geneva. When he was 12 his brother, William was born. Elizabeth moves into their house after her parents have died. When Victor is 18 his mother dies. She wished that he and Elizabeth would marry. Victor regrets ever leaving Geneva. His friend, Henry Clerval stays at home to run the family business.

Chapter 2

Victor goes to the German University of Heidelberg where he studies medicine and chemistry because he is interested in the mind and the body. He wants to know the secret of life: could a person come back to life? He paid men to dig up bodies and he cut the bodies up in his lab. He bought blood, as well as dead bodies from the hospital and graves. He made a big man with a handsome and kind face and a strong body. He connected the body to wires which were attached to the roof. When there was a storm the lightning brought the body to life. The monster looked ugly, he had yellow skin, yellow eyes and thin, black lips. Victor ran away from the monster. A fire broke out in the lab and Victor became unconscious.

Chapter 3

The fire destroyed Victor's house and work. He told Henry that his work was wrong and decided to quit science and study languages with Henry instead. He thought that the monster was destroyed. He received a letter from his father telling him that William had died. Victor returned home after four years. He stayed at a village 1km from Geneva where William was murdered. He saw the monster and knew that he was alive and that he had killed William. He knew that his father wouldn't believe him so he decided to keep what had happened a secret.

Chapter 4

Elizabeth and Victor's father thought that the young nanny killed William. The police found the picture of Victor's mother in the girl's hand. Was girl was hung before Victor could reach her and tell the police the truth. Victor cannot stay home because he feels too guilty. He climbs to the top of the Swiss mountains. The monster comes to Victor in the mountains and tells him that he wasn't born evil but because of his ugliness he was hated and wants to stop killing.

Chapter 5

The monster tells Victor about what happened to him after he escaped the fire. He said that he saw his reflected in a pool of water and upon seeing himself, he hated himself and Victor for making him. He said that he found a cottage with two young people and an old man. He brought them fire wood and befriended the old man because he was blind. The girl saw him and fainted. The monster was shot by her brother and ran away. The monster also saved a girl who had fallen into a river but when her friend saw the monster he grabbed the girl away, shot the monster and fled. The monster also saw William and wanted to befriend him but he screamed and the monster strangled him after hearing his surname.

Chapter 6

Victor promises to make the monster a female companion. Victor returns to Geneva after being away for two months. His father wants him to marry Elizabeth. Victor tells Elizabeth to wait for him to get back. He decides to go to Henry in Strasbourg to make the female monster.

Chapter 7

Henry discovered that Victor was making a female monster. He was against it because he was afraid that the two monsters would reproduce and that the female would be more evil than the male monster. Victor and Henry started removing the wires from the monster and cutting her up. The monster saw what they were doing and choked Henry. The monster started a fire in the lab and fled with Victor.

Chapter 8

Victor awoke in the hospital. His father told him of the fire and Henry's death. Victor returned home and married Elizabeth. On their wedding night the monster found them and killed Elizabeth. Very soon after his father died because of the news of Elizabeth's death. Victor lived alone then and visited the graves of his deceased relatives. The monster found Victor at the graves and told him that he was happy and that Victor should follow him.

Chapter 9

Victor followed the monster for a very, very long time. Victor lived off the welfare of other and small prey which he had killed. Eventually Victor became hungry and tired. The monster had led Victor to a cold and icy place. Victor accepted that he was the one who was responsible for the monster's actions and for the deaths of so many people. The monster finally felt free after Victor's admission of guilt. The monster built a fire and decided to kill himself. Victor remained in the cold and icy place to die in misery and sadness.

Important terms:

Anti-climax	The final scene, the ways in which Victor and the monster die.
Flashbacks	When a character remembers something, the way in which the monster remembers how he became evil.
Foreshadowing	When something is predicted in the novel, when Victor says that he should never have left Geneva in chapter 1.
Sub-plot	A story which is not the main story in the novel, Victor and Elizabeth's relationship.
Conflict	Tension within one character (internal) or tension between characters (external).
Internal conflict	Victor's secret about William's death.
External conflict	When Victor and Henry disagree about him creating the female monster.
Round characters	Characters who change over time, Victor and the monster are round characters.
Flat characters	Characters who remain quite the same over time, William and Elizabeth.
Themes:	
	1. Love, family, friendship
	2. Friendship vs loneliness
	3. Ugliness vs beauty
	4. Happiness vs unhappiness
	5. The pursuit of knowledge
	6. The dangers of irresponsible scientific experiments
	7. The disastrous effects of secrecy
Ironic twist	Victor's obsession with the secret of life and trying to help others to have better lives ends up destroying his own life and the lives of his loved ones.
Suspense and surprise	From the start of the novel we know that something bad is going to happen because Victor regrets his actions. When Victor finds out that the monster is alive and that he is a murderer this also creates danger and suspense.

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As well as the KNOW YOUR FACTS activity on PAGE 54 in your reading book.