

Frankenstein Chapter 20-23

Chapter 19 The “fiend” is following

a. Continue to travel through England- nature becomes a tranquil medication

b. Victor begins to feel anxious-sends Henry away

1. Solitude is a Romantic notion: now Victor can go to a remote island and create his “monster bride”
2. Orkney: a very remote island where Victor is creating.
3. There are only “three miserable huts” to accommodate his needs.
4. Victor is filled with “obscure forebodings of evil that make my heart sicken in my bosom.”

Chapter 20 Introduces us to Victor's fatal mistake: he tears apart the Bride that the Creature so earnestly demanded. He cannot stand to agree to the monster's demands, as he fears the couple will procreate and spawn horrible little monsters that wreak havoc on the world. The Creature, upon seeing this happen, warns Victor that “I will be with you on your wedding night!” This threat chills Victor to the core and he becomes paranoid and fearful of the Creature's next move. He then leaves the Orkney Islands along with the many pieces of Bride that he's torn apart and resolves to sail away in the ocean and dispose of the body. He wakes in the middle of the boat on the shores of Ireland with a magistrate and townspeople accusing him of murder!

Themes addressed: Revenge, Grief, The consequences of ambition

Chapter 21 Victor is taken to a building upon the Irish coast where he is interrogated about the murder. He knows little of what they speak of and he is confused as to how he is a part of this. Magistrate Kirwin suggests he take a look at the body to determine his reaction to it. Nothing could prepare him for what he saw—lying on the table was Henry Clerval. Victor is so stunned by what he sees that he falls severely ill. He knows the Creature did this to his friend. Three of his family members have now died. He doesn't want to live anymore.

“How many brides and youthful lovers have been one day in the bloom of health and hope, and the next a prey for worms and the decay of the tomb! [...] But I was doomed to live; and, in two months, found myself as awaking from a dream...”
(157)

While in prison

- Victor is treated warmly by Mr. Kirwin
- Kirwin has sympathy for Victor, but believes he is a murderer
- He tries to make his stay as comfortable as possible because he has trouble believing Victor would do such a thing
- His nurse believes he should burn in hell for the murder
- Victor feels wretched and tormented by grief
- Kirwin explains a visitor is there to see him and Victor believes it is the Creature
- He reacts with such fear and emotion that Kirwin is perplexed by his actions
- Victor is greatly relieved to see his father.

Victor's father helps nurse him back to health, but Victor cannot wait for his and his monster's death. He waits for the moment when all of his destruction can finally end. He is later ordered to court and it is proven that he was indeed in Orkney when the body was found, so he was freed of charges and left to return home.

- Home did not seem a fitting place for Victor
- He feared seeing Elizabeth
- He constantly recounted the night he made the monster come to life
- He begins taken laudanum (a powerful drug) to relieve his paranoia and keep him awake. It only makes him delusional—he even shouts that he is the murderer of all family members. His father doesn't understand.

Points to remember: suicide, drug use, hallucinations, Victor coming to terms with his mistakes

Chapter 22 Victor and his father rest in Paris a few days before returning home. Victor is tired and skeletal, as he has had no sleep and is plagued by his own madness. He begins to hate man and refuses to see any amusement in their travels, “I abhorred the face of man.”

Upon returning home he finds a letter from Elizabeth. She is concerned that Victor does not love her and that he indeed loves another. She wants to know if he wants to be set free from any “obligation” he has ever felt to marry her. She is

concerned that in his travels and experience he has come to see the world and see her differently. Ironically, Elizabeth does not know that Victor is incapable of loving anyone anymore.

- When Victor finally sees Elizabeth he is relieved of his paranoia.
- He feels stronger and more in love around her
- He forgets his past for brief moments
- He agrees to marry Elizabeth in ten days, but knows he is sealing his fate. Remember, the creature said, "I will be with you on your wedding night!"

Things to note: Victor tells his father, "how little you know me... they all died by my hands..." Hands symbolize Victor's misdoings. He did create the creature, so he therefore is the murderer.

When V. and E. wed there is a deep contrast between the joy of their wedding and the threat of the creature

Victor is torn between his secret and his family—he tells E. he will reveal his secret after the wedding... FORESHADOWING.

Chapter 23 On his wedding night V. stands guard outside their bedroom, fearing the monster's presence. Unfortunately, he forgets how agile and witty the creature is—he makes do on his promise and sneaks into the bedroom while V. is out. He strangles Elizabeth and leaves her for dead. Victor can hear the screams and knows that her fate is sealed.

"I began to reflect on their cause—the monster whom I had created, the miserable demon whom I had sent abroad into the world for my destruction. I was possessed by a maddening rage when I thought of him, and I desired and ardently prayed that I might have him within my grasp to wreak a great and signal revenge on his cursed head."

- Victor's father also dies from all the despair he has endured
- Victor is resolute to kill the demon
- He calls on local authorities and tells them his story (the entire story) and claims he will spend the rest of his life seeking the creature out if that is what it takes. He wants to die, searching for his son (ironic).

Victor says, "How ignorant art thou in thy pride of wisdom! Cease; you know not what it is you say." He says this to the authorities. Irony that he would claim someone else's pride got in the way of their wisdom!

Things to consider: The storm—there is a storm that takes place before the murder—something bad was inevitably going to happen

Victor feels "exhausted" and mad after a murder; each incident of murder throws him off several months, but the monster waits for him to get better before hurting him again. This is a quality of Gothic fiction, the psychic communication between characters.

In Geneva, Victor's father learns of his daughter-in-law's demise and he dies of a broken heart a few days later. **Victor's mind turns from a victim to a seeker of revenge, to avenge the deaths of his friends and family at the hands of his creation.** He says, "I have but one resource, and I devote myself, either in my life or death, to his destruction."

Even when Victor talks to the magistrate, **he mentions that he feels the monster is still lurking around. This is a common thread that goes through the novel. The monster knows where Victor is at all times,** and Victor can sense when the monster is very close. This is another mysterious, Gothic element.

Questions:

1. What are the connections between father and son here? Include V. and his father and V. and the creature.
2. How does the symbol of storms play into these chapters?
3. How is Victor reborn in this section of the novel?
4. What is ironic about him chasing after his son?