

After Victor Frankenstein refuses to create a female companion for his creature, the scientist learns just how murderously violent his monster can be.

Wherever Frankenstein goes, the monster follows. Both end-up in the Arctic where Victor meets Robert Walton, an ambitious explorer whose quest for fame and glory reminds Frankenstein of himself, when he was a student seeking to create life.



Warning Walton not to follow the path of ambition, Frankenstein tells him the story of his life. Repeating that story to his sister, Walton becomes the narrator of Mary Shelley's book.

Aboard ship, Walton cares for the now-ill Frankenstein. Realizing that he is dying, Victor asks Walton to do what he was unable to do: Kill the creature.

After Frankenstein dies, Walton hears commotion in the cabin where Victor lies in his coffin. Investigating the source of the problem, Walton sees the monster and is shocked at his hideousness.

Thereafter, the two have a conversation which leads to the end of the book. As you listen to this regret-filled discussion, think about these topics.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Victor Frankenstein is seriously ill aboard Walton's ship. The doctor gives him only a few hours to live. As he dies, Frankenstein continues to talk about his creature. Are his words what you would expect to hear from him at this stage of his life? If not, how would you have written the final scene of his life?

Why does Frankenstein tell Walton to avoid ambition? Is that good or bad advice? Why?

Is the monster's reaction to his creator's death expected or not expected? Do you think he ever looked-upon Frankenstein as his father? Is the rejection by a father (or a father-figure) worse than rejection by others? Why, or why not?

Why does Walton call the scene at Frankenstein's coffin a "wonderful catastrophe?"

How would you assess the creature's summary of his life on earth? Explain how things may have been different had he been accepted by others.

The last paragraph of the novel is open-ended. Do you think the monster actually intends to end his life, on a funeral pyre, or is he off to to commit more crimes?

Now that Frankenstein is dead, would the creature have any more "reasons" to commit crimes?

As you listen to this audio clip, you can follow along by reading Mary Shelley's words. See an early version of the book, digitized for today's online audience (by Archive.org), which is [opened to the September 12 Letter](#).

You can also [hear Chapter 5](#) (when Victor Frankenstein's creature comes to life) and [Chapter 20](#) (when the monster reacts to Frankenstein's unwillingness to create a female companion for him).

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Credits:

September 12 Letter, from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, read by Carole Bos.

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Frankenstein Dies in the Arctic

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