

By the end of studying **Chapter 12** I need to know:

Plot: The monster starts watching the De Lacey family closely enjoying how close they are. He begins to perform acts of kindness for them to help ease their poverty. He expresses a desire to join the family, but feels he is too ugly.

Ideas: The monster is beginning to learn how to speak from his observations of the De Lacey's. He is shocked to see his own reflection in a pool, showing that he is beginning to understand the reactions of mankind towards him.

Vocabulary	Viands - foodstuffs Despondence Demeanour Conciliating Venerable Deformity Ardently
Context (To inform interpretation)	Romanticism - This chapter further extends the presentation of the ideal family, despite their emerging apparent poverty. We also see that the monster is able to recognise that he should not steal from them as a result of their poverty and instead begins to help them. This reflects again the philosophy that it is mankind that creates good or evil responses from others through their actions.
Themes	<p>Family - The De Lacey's are poor 'in a very distressing degree' and 'suffered the pangs of hunger' often. However they still hold family as more important and do not allow this to stop them being warm-hearted and loving towards each other. This is in direct contrast to Victor's treatment of his own family earlier in the novel, where he allows his obsession with creating life to lead him to illness and away from his family support.</p> <p>Science vs Nature - In this chapter we see that Shelley presents a certain ironic parallel between Victor and the creation as they are both exploring human life through observational study; Victor for the prolonging of life, the monster to develop his understanding of how mankind behaves. Obviously, we are led to further empathise with the monster using science for the 'right' reasons in stark contrast to that of Victor.</p> <p>Prejudice = The monster sees his own reflection and perceives himself as having 'miserable deformity'. This in turn leads him to believe that the De Lacey family will turn away from him, combining his past experiences and his newfound knowledge of himself. He hopes that in time he will be able to prevent the prejudice through his 'gentle demeanour and conciliating words'.</p> <p>Isolation = The monster is still only an observer of the family and whilst he longs to join them, he is still too frightened.</p>
Deeper understanding	We see the monster view himself as deformed in comparison to the beauty which he perceives in the De Lacey family, despite the fact that to the reader he has many admirable qualities, such as the recognition of the poverty that the family are in and his quest to help them by completing tasks for them during the night. He is referred to by the family as the 'good spirit' demonstrating that the family recognise his worth without seeing him. However, this leaves the reader feeling uneasy as they are very aware that all reactions the monster have proven to be full of horror, and whilst we wish to see the monster treated well, we are fully aware that this may not happen regardless of his good deeds. His reaction to his own reflection results in despondence and a sharing of mankind's prejudice towards himself. Seeing his reflection also convinces him that 'I was in reality the monster that I am.' His use of the present tense here affirms for the reader that the monster is now a self-fulfilling prophecy as he becomes what he believes he is.
Quotes and references	<p>The ass and the lapdog - Jean de La Fontaine (1621-95), Fables 4.5. The ass sees the lap-dog petted for fawning on its master, tries the same trick and is beaten.</p> <p>'good spirit'</p> <p>'miserable deformity'</p> <p>'I was in reality the monster that I am'</p>

Reading:

Read to the punctuation.

Links across the text:

Victor is presented as a scientist in a negative way as he uses it to develop his obsession with creating something inhuman from corpses. Here, the monster uses science for observation of the De Lacey's with a view to befriend them.

	'...but how was I terrified when I viewed myself in the transparent pool!'
Terminology	<i>Character development</i> - How the character of the monster is developed and presented for the reader, evoking empathy and sympathy for his position, in stark contrast to the feelings evoked by Victor about the monster's murders. We almost forget what he has done prior to this.