

By the end of studying **Chapter 23** I need to know:

**Plot:** Elizabeth is murdered by the monster and Victor is determined on revenge

**Ideas:** This is a pivotal chapter as Victor loses everything and becomes ardent on revenge

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| <b>Vocabulary</b>                         | <p><b>Bier</b>- where a corpse is laid before burial <b>acme</b>- culmination or highest point <b>exordium</b> the beginning part of a speech (the opening part of an oration, treatise, etc.). <b>ennui</b> boredom, weariness, dissatisfaction with life (weariness and dissatisfaction resulting from inactivity or lack of interest; boredom). <b>maladie du pays</b> homesickness. <b>Languor</b>- weakness or weariness of body or mind. <b>Invective</b>- insulting, abusive, or highly critical language. <b>Chamois</b>- an agile goat-antelope with short hooked horns, found in mountainous areas of Europe from Spain to the Caucasus.</p>  |
| <b>Context (To inform interpretation)</b> | <p>The setting is important because the storm signals that something evil is going to happen (another Gothic element). Victor feels "exhausted" and mad after a murder; each incident of murder results in him being set back, 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.</p> <p>Reference to Henry Fuseli's painting 'The Nightmare' " <i>Everywhere I turn I see the same figure-her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier</i>"</p> <p>The murder of the bride by the monster in the bridal suite is the central episode in many gothic stories. This again reaffirms the genre of the novel.</p>  |
| <b>Themes</b>                             | <p><b>Women</b>= Elizabeth is again presented as the Damsel in Distress (a typical Gothic feature) This presents her as submissive and powerless. This could be Shelly commenting on the role of women in a patriarchal society.</p> <p><b>The sublime</b>= At the start of the chapter, Victor and Elizabeth are taking pleasure in nature but through the descriptions, there is a sense that something bad is going to happen.</p> <p><b>Revenge</b>= Victor assumed the monster would attack him, not realizing that the monster wanted revenge by subjecting him to the same horror to which he subjected it: isolation. This mistake results in Elizabeth's death.</p> <p><b>Isolation</b>= Now the monster's revenge is complete: Victor is alone (besides Ernest).</p> <p><b>Double/Doppelganger</b>= Victor's curse is similar to the monster's curse of him. They are now essentially the same</p>  |
| <b>Deeper understanding</b>               | <p>Initially Elizabeth and Victor are enjoying life and contemplating the lovely scene of waters, woods and mountains . However in the opening paragraphs the Shelly foreshadows (through pathetic fallacy) and gives the reader a sense of foreboding of the horror to come ' black' 'obscure ' ' wind is rising with violence in the west.</p> <p>This is a pivotal chapter as Victor transforms when he is striped of everything. He develops an obsessive passion for revenge. Now he faces the same predicament as the monster: rejected by humankind, he must seek revenge on his own.</p> <p>Victor's curse is similar to the monster's curse of him. They are now essentially the same.</p> <p>The monster again appears with the moon.</p> <p>The storm heralds the imminent arrival of the monster, and the wedding night scene makes particularly clear Victor's horror of natural sexuality. His comforting words to Elizabeth may be read as his repulsion at the thought of the consummation of their marriage.</p> <p>Leaving Elizabeth alone in the room, apparently to draw the monster's rage away from her, he actually leaves her open to attack-essentially he abandons her.</p> <p>The language used to describe the appearance of the monster at the window, pointing towards the corpse of Elizabeth, echoes the language used to describe that dreary night when he was created, linking death and birth again, taking us back to the nightmare that followed. The fears suggested by that nightmare have now been actualised.</p> <p>Shelley makes no attempt to disguise Elizabeth's future demise in this section: we have no doubt that the "far dearer victim" is Victor's fiancée</p> <p>Victor believes he has grasped the situation, and this arrogant certainty "blinds" him to the truth. (He even announces that the Monster "blinded [him] to his real intentions.") Victor's ambition and his fallibility are inextricable: beset by lofty desires (either for revenge, glory, or the peace of death), he cannot always see the reality of a situation.</p> |
| <b>Quotes and references</b>              | <p><b>'The death of William, the execution of Justine, the murder of Clerval, and lastly of my wife; even at that moment I knew not that my only remaining friends were safe from the malignity of the fiend; my father even now might be writhing under his grasp, and Ernest might be dead at his feet.'</b> Shelley surrounds Frankenstein with so much death, suggesting that he is being punished for his overreaching ambition.</p> <p><b>'The wind, which had fallen in the south, now rose with great violence in the west'</b> Gothic elements linked to weather.</p> <p><b>"Man," he cries, "how ignorant art thou in thy pride of wisdom!"</b> Victor curses the magistrate and all of humanity.</p>   |

**Reading:**

**Links across the text:**

The moon has often been associated with the monster, as it was during the wretch's creation in chapter 4: "the moon gazed on my midnight labours"

And storms, of course. Here's one from chapter 5, again near the monster's creation: "It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils."

Shelley reminds us of Victor's curious position, at once a loving family member and an outcast, and the word "native" is crucial to this quote. It should remind us of Chapter 4, when Victor tells Walton that a "man who believes his native town to be the world" is happier than an ambitious one. Victor is too caught up in his research to belong to his family or his environment; like Robert Walton and the Monster, he is not at home in the world. Shelley does not present this as a desirable state.

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| <b>Terminology</b> | <p><b>Exclamative-</b> sentences that are used to make exclamations- <i>shows Frankenstein's intense agitation (e.g. 'Great God! Why did I not then expire!')</i></p> <p><b>Questions,</b> within the dialogue, to show Frankenstein's agitation (e.g. 'What is it you fear?');</p> <p><b>Repetition-</b> repeating the same words, phrases and/or ideas (<i>e.g. adjective 'dreadful'</i>);</p> <p><b>Melodrama-</b> a sensational dramatic piece with exaggerated characters and exciting events intended to appeal to the emotions (<i>'I could feel the blood trickling in my veins, and tingling in the extremities of my limbs'</i>)</p> <p><b>Pathetic fallacy-</b> the attribution of human feelings and responses to inanimate things or animals (<i>The wind... now rose with great violence</i>)</p> <p><b>Doppelgänger/double-</b> an apparition or double of a living person.</p> <p>.</p> |
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