Chapters 1-5 Active Reading Assignment

Follow along in the reading as part of class and answer the questions independently by typing your responses into this document. Please italicize your responses. When you are finished, upload the document to turnitin.com. for a grade.

**Chapter 2**

1) How are boyhood friends, Victor Frankenstein and Henry Clerval, different from one another?

2) Summarize the following passage from p. 23.

“No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself. My parents were possessed by the very spirit of kindness and indulgence. We felt that they were not the tyrants to rule our lot according to their caprice, but the agents and creators of all the many delights which we enjoyed. When I mingled with other families I distinctly discerned how peculiarly fortunate my lot was, and gratitude assisted the development of filial love” (Shelley 23).

3) What is Victor referring to when he says: “It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn”?

4) Describe the natural phenomenon Victor witness when he was fifteen. What specific ideas did it bring into his mind? Quote and cite a portion of the text to answer the second part of this question.

5) Explain the concept of galvanism as it was understood at the time of the writing of this novel. How do you think the experiments of Luigi Galvani inspired Mary Shelley?

**Chapter 3**

6) Explain, in detail, the circumstances surrounding Caroline Frankenstein’s death. How does this advance the helpless women theme?

7) Where does Victor go immediately after his mother’s death?

8) Highlight the portions of this passage that apply to the themes of isolation and alienation.

“I threw myself into the chaise that was to convey me away and indulged in the most melancholy reflections. I, who had ever been surrounded by amiable companions, continually engaged in endeavouring to bestow mutual pleasure—I was now alone. In the university whither I was going I must form my own friends and be my own protector. My life had hitherto been remarkably secluded and domestic, and this had given me invincible repugnance to new countenances. I loved my brothers, Elizabeth, and Clerval; these were "old familiar faces," but I believed myself totally unfitted for the company of strangers. Such were my reflections as I commenced my journey; but as I proceeded, my spirits and hopes rose. I ardently desired the acquisition of knowledge. I had often, when at home, thought it hard to remain during my youth cooped up in one place and had longed to enter the world and take my station among other human beings. Now my desires were complied with, and it would, indeed, have been folly to repent” (Shelley 30).

9) How was Victor isolated as a child? How is Victor now isolated as an adult?

10) What do Professors Krempe and Waldman impress upon Victor? What do they tell him about the knowledge he possesses and what must change?

11) “Such were the professor's words—rather let me say such the words of the fate—enounced to destroy me. As he went on I felt as if my soul were grappling with a palpable enemy; one by one the various keys were touched which formed the mechanism of my being; chord after chord was sounded, and soon my mind was filled with one thought, one conception, one purpose. So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein—more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation” (Shelley 33).

What theme is Mary Shelley developing in this passage? How can you tie this to Robert Walton?

Chapter 4

12) Paraphrase the following:

“Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery; yet with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries” (Shelley 36).

13) Quote and cite the line that indicates that Victor has succeeded in his quest to create life.

14) What creature does victor choose to create? Why this creature? Why must it be so large?

15) Quote and cite the line that indicates Victor wants to create an entire race of beings and that he wants to be their god?

16) Highlight all portions of the following text that portray Victor as a ‘mad scientist”. Pay attention to diction and detail.

“My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement. Sometimes, on the very brink of certainty, I failed; yet still I clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realize. One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I had dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance, that only made me feel with renewed acuteness so soon as, the unnatural stimulus ceasing to operate, I had returned to my old habits. I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion” (Shelley 39).

17) Does Victor enjoy the act of creation? Quote and cite a line that supports your answer.

**Chapter 5**

18) What does Frankenstein’s creature look like? Find five specific details that describe him physically.

19) Summarize Victor’s dream after he runs away from the creature the first time.

20) When Victor wakes up from his dream the creature is standing over him. What three specific actions does the creature do? How do you interpret each of these actions? Are they aggressive and brutal or gentle gestures of desire for affection?

21) How are Victor’s first memories of his parents different from the creature’s first memory of his parent/creator?

22) Who finds Victor in the streets? Why is Victor reluctant to return to his apartment? What do they find when they get there?