

FRANKENSTEIN (Dover-Thrift Edition) Letter summaries to assist students

Letter I (Dec. 11) Page 1: Robert Walton, narrator of the story, is writing a letter to his sister, Margaret Saville, in England. He is writing from St. Petersburg, Russia. He is preparing for a journey to the North Pole, an unexplored territory. He hopes to be the first to reach the region and hopes to discover a passage that will assist other explorers in the future. He is seeking fame and acknowledgment for his troubles. He has dreamed of this for many years and is willing to die in order to succeed in his endeavors. Though his father had forbidden him the seafarer's life, he has studied much on the subject and is ready to make history. He previously worked as a poet, but has now inherited enough money to pursue his passion. He has spent six years preparing for this journey. He tells her that he is in Russia and will soon purchase a ship and hire the men to begin his journey. He will sail in the month of June. He says that he hopes to succeed, but knows that he may fail.

Letter II (March 28) Page 4: Writing from Archangel, Russia, Robert Walton pours out his heart to his sister. He has never had, what we would call, a best friend. He very much desires another man as a companion. This is not a homosexual tendency, but the true need for a friend of his own social standing that he can tell everything to; a man to encourage him on his quest for glory and recognition, for greatness. He tells Margaret about the lieutenant and the master that he has hired to run his crew. He speaks well of them both, but goes on to tell her why these men are not suitable companions for him. He speaks of his enthusiasm to begin his journey and closes the letter with hopes to see her upon his return, but warns her that he may not make it back for many years or not at all.

Letter III (July 7) Page 7: Robert Walton writes that he is at sea. He tells of a few minor problems that the crew has encountered, but states that he is happy and excited. He promises to not do anything rash or to bring about danger. He ends quickly, reminding her that he is following his passion.

Letter IV (August 5) Page 8: He and his crew are nearly surrounded by ice and they are in a dangerous situation. Walton and his men see a man (a rather large man) on a sledge with dogs. The ice breaks up, but because of the risk of darkness and large chunks of ice, they decide to wait until morning before continuing North. Upon waking the next morning, Walton discovers his men speaking with a man on a floating chunk of ice. He, too, is on a sledge with dogs. However, only one dog remains alive. Walton's men are trying to talk the man into coming aboard their ship. This is not the same man as Walton saw on the day before. The man is near death and comes aboard. The stranger is with them for several days before he is able to speak. Walton moves the stranger into his personal cabin (room). The stranger is told about the large man that was seen on the day before he was found by the crew. Walton tells his sister that he feels a connection with the man. He thinks the two of them could have been very close friends if he had known him before the stranger was overwhelmed by misery.

(August 13) Page 11: The stranger continues to get better (in health) and Walton continues to grow closer to him. They speak of their personal goals and passions. Walton tells his sister that he is more and more fascinated by this man.

(August 19) Page 13: The stranger tells Walton that he had planned to never tell anyone his story, "the memory of these evils should die with me." The stranger tells that his passions in life have led him to much misery. He is going to tell Walton his story in hopes that it will keep Walton from making the same mistakes. He only fears that Walton will not believe him. The stranger states that he will begin his narrative to Walton on the next day. Walton tells his sister that he plans to write down, as much as he can, everything that the stranger tells me.

NOTES:

- As Chapter 1 begins, keep in mind that this is the stranger telling his story to Robert Walton.
- The stranger is Victor Frankenstein, the creator of the monster.

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 1 – PAGE 14:

- 1) What was the name of Victor's father's close friend?
- 2) How did Caroline Beaufort become the wife of Victor's father?
- 3) Once married, what did Victor's parents do with their lives (how did they spend their time)?
- 4) How did Elizabeth come to live with Victor and his parents?
- 5) Victor expresses deep, personal feelings for Elizabeth. He states, "my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only." What do you take this to mean?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 2 – PAGE 18:

- 1) Who is Henry Clerval to Victor Frankenstein?
- 2) Victor speaks of his passion for learning. What subject did he most wish to learn about?
- 3) What did Henry Clerval like to learn about?
- 4) Victor found and studied books by Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Albertus Magnus. Who were these men and what type of things did he discover by reading their books?
- 5) At the end of Chapter 2, Victor speaks about witnessing a tree explode during a storm. He suddenly changes his thoughts about his subject of study because of this event. What does he now plan to study?
- 6) In the last paragraph of the chapter, Victor states to Robert Walton, "It was a strong effort of the spirit of good; but it was ineffectual. Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction." What is this paragraph an example of when considering literary devices used in writing?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 3 – PAGE 23:

- 1) When Victor turned 17, there were plans made to send him to Ingolstadt. Why is he being sent there?
- 2) Elizabeth became sick. What illness did she suffer?
- 3) Who took care of Elizabeth during her illness?
- 4) What happened to Caroline?
- 5) What did Caroline ask of Victor and Elizabeth?
- 6) Henry wanted to go with Victor to Ingolstadt. Why was he unable to go?
- 7) Victor speaks with one of the professors of Natural Philosophy (M. Krempe). They discuss the authors that Victor read many years before. What is M. Krempe's impression of the books that Victor has read?
- 8) Victor refuses to attend any lectures by M. Krempe. Does he attend lectures of other professors?
- 9) Does M. Waldman seem to have the same feelings about Victor's previous readings as M. Krempe?
- 10) What does Victor ask for from M. Waldman?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 4 – PAGE 29:

- 1) At the beginning of Chapter 4, how long has Victor been at Ingolstadt?
- 2) How many times has he visited family and friends back home in Geneva?
- 3) After tireless work both day and night, after months of watching dead bodies decay, after months in the graveyards and charnel-houses, what does Victor discover how to do?
- 4) Remember, Victor is talking with Robert Walton. Is Victor willing to tell Walton what he discovered while at Ingolstadt? Why or why not?
- 5) What must Victor do before he can show the world his great discovery?
- 6) Where is Victor doing all of his work/experimentation? Be specific!
- 7) While Victor is diligently working in his lab, who (or what) is he neglecting?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 5 – PAGE 34:

- 1) Is Victor successful in his pursuit?
- 2) Is he happy with his results?
- 3) Victor goes to his bedchamber and sleeps, but suffers from a bad dream. Tell me everything you can recall about this dream.
- 4) Where does Victor go the next morning when the gates are opened?
- 5) Whose familiar face does he see while out?
- 6) Why is this person at Ingolstadt?
- 7) What is Victor's appearance, according to the visitor?
- 8) What happened to Victor shortly after his guest arrived?
- 9) What does the visitor ask of Victor once he begins to recover?
- 10) There is a letter waiting on Victor when he begins to recover. Who has sent this letter?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 6 – PAGE 40:

- 1) From the letter, Victor learns that his father has but one request. What is the request?
- 2) How old is Victor's brother, Ernest?
- 3) What does Ernest wish to do as a career?
- 4) Who is Justine? What are her circumstances? How did she first come to live with the Frankensteins? Why did she have to return to her mother? How was Justine treated by her mother? What happened that allowed Justine to return to the Frankenstein home a final time? Who was Justine's role model?
- 5) Who is William?
- 6) How many brothers does Victor have?
- 7) What is one of the first things that Victor did after he was well enough to leave his room?
- 8) How does Victor react to the praise of his professors?
- 9) What does Henry plan to study at the university?
- 10) Has Victor yet confided in Henry his secret of the creation of the monster?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 7 – PAGE 46:

- 1) When Victor returns to Ingolstadt, who has written a letter to him?
- 2) William has been murdered/killed. In what way was he murdered?
- 3) Why does Elizabeth blame herself? Explain fully.
- 4) When Victor arrives at Geneva, the gates of the town are locked for the night. What does Victor decide to do while he waits for morning?
- 5) There is a terrible storm and in the lightning, Victor sees a figure in the trees. Who is this person?
- 6) Who, in Victor's mind, murdered William?
- 7) It has been six years since Victor left Geneva for Ingolstadt. How long has it been since Victor first created the monster?
- 8) Justine is being accused of William's murder. Why?
- 9) Who are the only two people that believe Justine is innocent?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 8 – PAGE 54:

- 1) What were some of the evidence against Justine at her trial?
- 2) Where did Justine spend the night of William's murder?
- 3) How does Justine plea before the court?
- 4) Who is the only person to stand up for Justine in court?
- 5) Who goes to visit Justine?
- 6) Later, Justine changes her plea. Why does she do this?
- 7) What happens to Justine the next day?
- 8) Who is the real murderer of William and Justine?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 9 – PAGE 61:

- 1) Victor is dealing with the emotion of sadness because of the loss of William and Justine, but he (unlike the other members of his family) is also dealing with what other emotion?
- 2) The Frankenstein family goes to their second home in Belrive. What does Victor often do once all the other members of his family are asleep?
- 3) Victor contemplates suicide. What keeps him from following through with this deed?
- 4) Victor travels to the valley of Chamounix. He begins the journey on horseback, but because of the rugged terrain, he must change his mode of travel. How does he travel through the rest of his journey?
- 5) Once Victor arrives in the village of Chamounix, he spends some time looking out the window, “watching the pallid lightnings that played above Mont Blanc, and listening to the rushing of the Arve, which pursued its noisy way beneath.” What is the Arve?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 10 – PAGE 65:

- 1) Victor now plans to travel to the summit of Montanvert. He is taking this trip because he has fond memories from other trips and hopes the trip will bring him happiness. Who goes with him on this trip?
- 2) Who visits with Victor while he is there?
- 3) How does Victor greet this person – what emotions does he feel by this visitor?
- 4) How does the visitor react to Victor?
- 5) The visitor states, “Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery?” Has the visitor suffered enough?
- 6) Victor is the creator to the creature/monster that he created. What relationship comparison does this situation align with in our society concerning relationships?
- 7) The visitor asks one favor of Victor. What does he want Victor to do for him?
- 8) Where does the visitor live?
- 9) Does Victor go with him?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 11 – PAGE 70:

- 1) The monster is now telling Victor about his life. Remember, Victor is telling all of this to Robert Walton, who is telling it to his sister in letterform. This is the perfect example of what literary device?
- 2) What were the first foods and drink that the monster consumed after first being created?
- 3) Where did the monster live after he was created?
- 4) The monster is much like a child. What important lesson did he learn from the fire?
- 5) What was the reaction of the shepherd when the monster entered his hut?
- 6) The monster goes into a village. What is the reaction of the people?
- 7) After his visit to the village, the monster is able to find shelter. Describe this shelter.
- 8) The monster calls his new home a hovel and then calls it a kennel. How is he able to stay warm in his home?
- 9) How many people live in the cottage that is attached to the monster's hovel? Describe them.
- 10) What seems to be the overriding emotion of the cottagers?
- 11) "Night quickly shut in; but to my extreme wonder, I found that the cottagers had a means of prolonging light by the use of tapers, and was delighted to find that the setting sun did not put an end to the pleasure I experienced in watching my human neighbors." What are tapers?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 12 – PAGE 77:

- 1) What disability does the old man seem to suffer from?
- 2) The monster discovers one of the elements of life that brings sadness to the cottagers. What is the social status of the cottagers?
- 3) What does the monster do to help the young man of the cottage?
- 4) The monster learns the cottagers' names "during the space of several revolutions of the moon..." What does "several revolutions of the moon" mean?
- 5) What are their names?
- 6) How does the monster discover how he looks to others?
- 7) What must the monster be able to do in order to introduce himself to the cottagers and to become friends with them?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 13 – PAGE 81:

- 1) What season is it as Chapter 13 begins?
- 2) Who comes to visit? Who is she there to see? Where is she from?
- 3) What emotion does Felix now express?
- 4) How does the monster plan to learn the language of the cottagers?
- 5) Not only is the monster learning to speak and read (the science of letters), but what else is he learning as Felix teaches Safie?
- 6) The monster begins to realize that he owns no money, no friends, and no property. That knowledge, along with the knowledge that he is hideous in comparison to others around him, begins to sadden him. The monster is learning that knowledge is a good thing, but that too much knowledge can also cause...
- 7) The monster learns of the typical make-up of families. What does this knowledge teach him of his own life? Who are his parents? When was he a child, growing and learning as life progressed?
- 8) At the end of Chapter 13, the monster refers to the cottagers by an important name. What does he call them?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 14 – PAGE 86:

- 1) What is the old man's name?
- 2) What was the family's social status while living in France?
- 3) Who was the cause of their ruin?
- 4) What did Felix want in return for helping Safie's father, Mahometan?
- 5) Who helped Safie's father escape from prison?
- 6) Why did Safie's father not want Safie to marry Felix?
- 7) What happened to De Lacey and Agatha while Felix was away?
- 8) What was the final punishment for Felix, Agatha, and De Lacey?
- 9) In what country do the cottagers now live?
- 10) How does Safie find her way to Felix? Why did she not follow the orders of her father?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 15 – PAGE 90:

- 1) While gathering firewood for the cottagers, what does the monster find that is useful to him?
- 2) The monster, after reading Paradise Lost, compares himself to two Biblical characters. Who are they?
- 3) The monster also speaks of papers that were in the clothing that he took from Victor's apartment on the night that he became a living creature. What were these papers?
- 4) What is the mood of the cottagers now?
- 5) The monster speaks of Adam having Eve, the devil having his followers, the cottagers having each other. Who does the monster have? Do you believe that the monster deserves to have someone in his life? Should he, at the very least, have his creator to turn to in times of need?
- 6) How does the monster plan to first approach the cottagers?
- 7) The monster enters the cottage and has a conversation with De Lacey. How does this meeting go before others intrude?
- 8) What happened after Felix, Agatha, and Safie return to the house? How do each of them react to seeing the monster?
- 9) Where does the monster run to for safety?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 16 – PAGE 97:

- 1) Do you, at this point in the story, feel any sympathy for the monster?
- 2) Has Victor treated him poorly? What should Victor have done with him or for him?
- 3) What does the monster discover on the morning after returning to his hovel?
- 4) What does the monster do to the cottage before leaving that place forever?
- 5) Where does the monster plan to go next?
- 6) The monster witnesses a little girl fall into a river. He saves her life. There is a man with the little girl. How does the man repay the monster for saving the girl?
- 7) What does the monster confess doing next?
- 8) Was this event done on purpose or by accident?
- 9) How did the portrait of Victor's mother end up in Justine's clothing?
- 10) Why did the monster stay close to the murder scene for several days?
- 11) As the chapter closes, what does the monster ask Victor to do for him?
- 12) Should Victor do this? What exactly does he owe the monster?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 17 – PAGE 104:

- 1) The monster states that he had a “right” to a female partner. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- 2) Does Victor agree to do this for the monster?
- 3) What does the monster promise to do if only Victor will make him a mate?
- 4) What are some of Victor’s fears/concerns?
- 5) What points of the monster’s argument force Victor to reconsider?
- 6) What is Victor’s final decision?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 18 – PAGE 108:

- 1) Victor returns to Geneva. His father notices that Victor is healthier now, but still sad. His father asks him if he is in love with another woman. What is Victor’s reply to this question?
- 2) Does Victor intend to marry Elizabeth?
- 3) Victor’s father wants the two to marry immediately. Why does Victor wish to postpone the wedding?
- 4) Where will Victor go before he marries Elizabeth?
- 5) Who will travel with him?
- 6) Victor fears that the monster might harm his family and/or Elizabeth while he is gone. What is the one thing that soothes these fears?
- 7) Close to the end of chapter 18, Victor, speaking of Henry, states:

“And where does he now exist? Is this gentle and lovely being lost forever? Has his mind, so replete with ideas, imaginations fanciful and magnificent, which formed a world, whose existence depended on the life of its creator; has this mind perished? Does it now only exist in my memory? No, it is not thus; your form so divinely wrought, and beaming with beauty, has decayed, but your spirit still visits and consoles your unhappy friend.

Pardon the gush of sorrow; these ineffectual words are but a slight tribute to the unexampled worth of Henry, but they soothe my heart, overflowing with the anguish which his remembrance creates. I will proceed with my tale.”

What do you take these two paragraphs to mean? Why do you believe Victor would speak of Henry in this manner? Where do you believe Henry to be? Do you believe the two men to still be friends?

NOTE: The chapter ends with the two men arriving in England.

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 19 – PAGE 114:

- 1) Henry is ready to meet lots of important and talented people in England. What will Victor spend his time doing with in England for several months?
- 2) There are times, during the journey, that Victor is so worried about Henry that he refuses to be away from him. What causes Victor to worry so much about Henry?
- 3) Once the two men arrive in Perth, what does Victor tell Henry about his plans?
- 4) How long does Victor tell Henry he will be gone?
- 5) Victor travels to the remotest of the Orkney Islands. What does he plan to do there?
- 6) This island is very secluded and there are only _____ people living on the island.
- 7) Where does Victor stay while on this island?
- 8) How is this creation different from Victor's first experience of creating a living being?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 20 – PAGE 120:

- 1) How long has it been since the first monster was created?
- 2) One night, Victor finds himself thinking about all the possibilities that could take place once he has created the female monster. He lists about five or six reasons why he should not continue in his work. Name just two of the problems that a female monster could cause.
- 3) What does Victor do with the work he has accomplished?
- 4) Who is watching him while he does this?
- 5) Later, while Victor is in his apartment, the monster comes to visit. He claims that Victor is his slave and that Victor must obey him. He calls himself Victor's master. Why would the monster feel that he has so much power over Victor?
- 6) Does the monster deserve a mate?
- 7) With foreshadowing, what threat did the monster express to Victor as he left the apartment?
- 8) What does Victor take this to mean?
- 9) What does Victor do with the work of female monster that he had created?
- 10) Victor falls asleep in the boat, gets lost on the water, and finally finds land. How is he treated upon his arrival on land?
- 11) Where (what country) has he arrived?
- 12) Who is Mr. Kirwin?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 21 – PAGE 128:

- 1) What is Victor being accused of doing?
- 2) Victor is taken to the inn to see the body of a dead man. Who has been murdered?
- 3) How long does Victor lay near death?
- 4) When Victor awakens, where is he?
- 5) Victor discovers that Mr. Kirwin has been kind to him. Name one thing that Mr. Kirwin has done for Victor while he was sick and unconscious?
- 6) Who has come to visit Victor?
- 7) Victor goes on trial. Is he found guilty or innocent?
- 8) Victor very much wants to leave Ireland. Where is he anxious to go?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 22 – PAGE 136:

- 1) Victor tells his father that he is responsible for three deaths. Who does he say died by his hands?
- 2) Victor claims to be a murderer many times in front of his father, but he never explains what he means. Why do you think Victor never confessed everything to his father?
- 3) Victor receives a letter from whom before he leaves Paris?
- 4) The person that writes the letter asks Victor an important question. This person also confesses something to Victor. What was the question and what was the confession?
- 5) Victor writes the person back immediately and tells the person what?
- 6) Victor also tells the person that he has a huge secret that he will soon confess. When does Victor say he will tell this person his secret?
- 7) After his arrival back in Geneva, Victor still suffers from great sadness and misery. Who is the one person that can comfort and soothe him?
- 8) When will Victor and Elizabeth marry; in how many days?
- 9) Victor arms himself to protect himself against the monster. What weapon(s) does Victor now carry?
- 10) Victor gets married to Elizabeth. What threat from the monster keeps running through Victor's mind?
- 11) "...it was agreed that Elizabeth and I should commence our journey by water, sleeping that night at Evian, and continuing our voyage on the following day." Where are they going (not a location but what type/kind of trip)?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 23 – PAGE 143:

- 1) Victor plans to go look for the monster. What does he tell Elizabeth to do?
- 2) What does Victor hear while he is out looking for the monster?
- 3) What happens to Elizabeth while Victor is out looking for the monster?
- 4) Who is watching Victor while he is with Elizabeth?
- 5) Why does Victor resolve to return immediately to Geneva?
- 6) What happened to Victor's father? What caused this?
- 7) Who does Victor go to for help in apprehending the monster?
- 8) Does this person believe Victor? Do you believe that he will actually, with all his power, help Victor?
- 9) What does the man believe to be Victor's true torture?

FRANKENSTEIN – CHAPTER 24 – PAGE 149:

- 1) What keeps Victor alive and moving (what emotion)?
- 2) Victor went to visit three people. Where did he have to go to visit them and whom did he go to visit?
- 3) Who else is there with Victor on that night?
- 4) What does he do when he hears what Victor says to the three people that he went to visit?
- 5) Sometimes, when the monster feared that Victor would lose his track of the monster, what would the monster do to keep Victor chasing him?
- 6) The monster tells Victor, "I seek the everlasting ices of the north, where you will feel the misery of cold and frost, to which I am impassive." Why would he want to go north where Victor will have a hard time with the temperatures if he truly wants Victor to continue to chase after him?
- 7) Besides the villagers, who often helps Victor on his journey? Who else does Victor call on for help with his mission of destroying the monster?
- 8) Once Victor gets to the ice and snow, how does he travel?
- 9) When Victor reaches the ocean, how far behind the monster is he?
- 10) What does the monster steal from some villagers near the sea?
- 11) What happened to one of Victor's dogs? What caused this?
- 12) What separated Victor from the monster when he had almost caught up to him?
- 13) What does Victor ask of Robert Walton, if Victor should die?

LETTERS – AUGUST 26 – PAGE 155:

- 1) Victor blamed the monster for all the misery of his life and all the deaths that happened. Who was truly to blame for all the deaths?
- 2) Remind me, to whom is Robert Walton talking?
- 3) What proof did Victor have or what proof was witnessed by Walton?
- 4) Walton asked Victor many times to reveal how he brought life to the monster; Victor always refused. Why?
- 5) How long does it take for Victor to tell his story to Walton?

LETTERS – SEPTEMBER 2 – PAGE 158:

- 6) Walton writes, “I write to you, encompassed by peril, and ignorant whether I am ever doomed to see again dear England, and the dearer friends that inhabit it.” What is wrong with Walton and his men?
- 7) If Walton dies, what does Margaret have to keep her happy?

LETTERS – SEPTEMBER 5 – PAGE 158:

- 8) What do the sailors insist that Walton do if the ice should break up?
- 9) Who gives a rallying “pep talk” to Walton’s men about being heroes instead of cowards?

LETTERS – SEPTEMBER 7 – PAGE 160:

- 10) Does Walton consent to the request of his men?

LETTERS – SEPTEMBER 12 – PAGE 160:

- 11) How long does Victor have to live, according to the ship’s surgeon?
- 12) What are Victor’s regrets at this moment in his life?
- 13) Victor asks Walton to do what if he should come in contact with the monster?
- 14) Who comes to visit the body of Victor Frankenstein?
- 15) What is the visitor’s reaction to Victor’s death?
- 16) The monster states, “Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all human kind sinned against me?” Does he have a valid point? Who else should share the blame?
- 17) Does Walton do what Victor asked him to do? Does Walton destroy the monster for Victor?
- 18) What does the monster tell Walton about his plans for himself? What will the monster now do after the death of Victor?