Frankenstein

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Frankenstein was written by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley when she was 18 years old

The novel was published in 1818

It was the result of a story-writing contest involving several bored authors

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Born August 30, 1797

Unorthodox parents: William Godwin, a celebrated philosopher and historian, and Mary Wollstonecraft, an early feminist who already had an illegitimate daughter named Fanny

Mary Wollstonecraft died shortly after the birth of their daughter, Mary

William remarried to Mary Jane Clairmont, a cruel, shallow woman who neglected Fanny and Mary in favor of her own children

Mary was frequently whipped

Mary spent hours at her mother's grave, reading or eating meals when the atmosphere at home was particularly bad

William Godwin had a lot of influential friends, especially among the famous writers of the day

The poet Percy Shelley, a devoted follower and friend of William Godwin's, began spending a great deal of time in the Godwin home

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 21, was already married, but he fell in love with Mary, who was 16

Mary’s father was furious and barred Percy from his house; Mary and Percy ran off together to elope with the help of Fanny

Percy’s good friend Thomas Hogg became enamored of Mary

Percy’s wife, Harriet, gave birth to Percy’s son

Mary became pregnant; the child, a daughter, died shortly after birth and Mary fell into an acute depression

The couple began traveling: in the English countryside, in France, Italy and elsewhere

During May of 1816, the couple, with Claire Clairmont (Mary’s step-sister), traveled to Lake Geneva to summer with the famous and scandalous poet Lord Byron, whose recent affair with Claire had left her both pregnant and somewhat obsessed with him

Forced to stay indoors by the climatic events of the "Year Without a Summer" on one particular evening, the group of young writers and intellectuals, enthralled by the ghost stories from the book Fantasmagoriana, decided to have a ghost-story writing contest. Another guest, Dr. John Polidori, came up with The Vampyre, later to become a strong influence on Bram Stoker's Dracula.

Mary claimed to have been inspired by a bad nightmare in which she saw a twisted face peering in a window at her

Returning to England in September of 1816, Mary and Percy were stunned by two family suicides in quick succession. On October 9, 1816, Mary's older half-sister, Fanny Imlay, left the Godwin home and took her own life at a distant inn. On December 10, Percy's first wife drowned herself in London's Hyde Park. Discarded and pregnant, she had not welcomed Percy's invitation to join Mary and himself in their new household.

On December 30, 1816, shortly after Harriet's death, Percy and Mary were married, now with Godwin's blessing. Their attempts to gain custody of Percy's two children by Harriet failed, but their writing careers enjoyed more success when, in the spring of 1817, Mary finished Frankenstein.

Frankenstein was published in 1818

Mary suffered the death of her infant daughter Clara outside Venice, after which her young son Will died too, in Rome

At last came the birth of what would be Mary’s only surviving child, Percy Florence Shelley

The family moved to Italy, and Mary became pregnant again; this time, she almost died of a miscarriage

Percy went sailing in a boat on a lake in Italy and was caught in a storm; he drowned on July 8, 1822, aged 30

After Percy’s death, Mary continued to write several novels, including Valperga, The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck and Falkner. None of these works begin to approach the power and fame of Frankenstein; The Last Man, a pioneering science fiction novel of the human apocalypse in the distant future, is, however, sometimes considered her best work, as is Maria, a novel published posthumously. Matilda is a short novel which was not published until the 1950's. It is perhaps her most controversial work since it involves the taboo subject of incest. Godwin, Shelley's father, refused to publish the work, probably because of its subject matter and its obvious autobiographical undertones.

Mary Shelley died of brain cancer on February 1, 1851, aged 53, in London

CAPTAIN  
ROBERT  
WALTON

The Letters of Robert Walton

The novel begins with four letters from the explorer Robert Walton to his sister, Margaret Saville. Walton, a wealthy Englishman with a passion for the sea, is the captain of a ship headed on a dangerous voyage to the North Pole. In the first letter, he tells his sister of the preparations leading up to his departure and of his desire to accomplish some great purpose: discovering a northern passage to the Pacific, revealing the source of Earth’s magnetism, or being the first man to set foot on undiscovered territory.

The Letters of Robert Walton

In the second letter, Walton complains of his lack of friends. He feels lonely and isolated, too sophisticated to find companionship among his shipmates and too uneducated to find a sensitive soul with whom to share his dreams. His is a perilous, lonely pathway. In the brief third letter, Walton tells his sister that his ship has set sail and that he has full confidence that he will achieve his goal.

The Letters of Robert Walton

In the fourth letter, the ship is stuck between huge sheets of ice, and Walton and his men spot a dog sled guided by a huge man about half a mile away. Shortly afterward, the ice sheets begin to break up and free the ship.

The Letters of Robert Walton

The next morning, they encounter another sled stranded on an ice floe. All but one of the dogs drawing the sled is dead, and the man on the sled—not the same man seen the night before—is skeletal, weak, and starving. Despite his condition, the man refuses to board the ship until Walton tells him that it is heading north.

The Letters of Robert Walton

The stranger spends two days recovering, nursed by the crew, before he can speak. The crew is curious, but Walton, aware of the man’s still-fragile state, prevents his men from asking the stranger questions.

The Letters of Robert Walton

As time passes, Walton and the stranger become friends, and the stranger eventually tells Walton his story. At the end of the fourth letter, Walton says that the visitor will start his tale the next day; Walton’s letters end and the stranger’s story begins.

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

The stranger is Victor Frankenstein, a native of Geneva, Switzerland. He feels a sense of kinship with Captain Walton, who is something of a scientist himself, as he is seeking to discover the secrets of magnetism.

ALPHONSE  
FRANKENSTEIN  
and  
 CAROLINE  
BEAUFORT  
FRANKENSTEIN

Victor Frankenstein begins his story. He starts with his family background, birth, and early childhood. Although a citizen of Geneva, Victor was born in Naples while his parents were traveling. Victor’s father, Alphonse, was much older than Victor’s mother, Caroline. Alphonse became Caroline’s protector when her father, Alphonse’s longtime friend Beaufort, died in poverty. They married two years later, and Victor was born soon after.

ELIZABETH  
LAVENZA

Frankenstein describes how his childhood companion, Elizabeth Lavenza, entered his family. Elizabeth was discovered by Caroline on a trip to Italy, when Victor was about five years old. While visiting a poor Italian family, Caroline noticed a beautiful blonde girl among the dark-haired Italian children; upon discovering that Elizabeth was the orphaned daughter of a Milanese nobleman and a German woman and that the Italian family can barely afford to feed her, Caroline adopts Elizabeth and brings her back to Geneva. Victor’s mother decides at the moment of the adoption that Elizabeth and Victor should someday marry.

HENRY CLERVAL

Elizabeth and Victor grow up together as brother and sister, they are best friends, and they call one another “cousin”. Victor’s friendship with Henry Clerval, a schoolmate and only child, flourishes as well, and he spends his childhood happily surrounded by this close domestic circle.

As a teenager, Victor becomes increasingly fascinated by the mysteries of the natural world. He chances upon a book by Cornelius Agrippa, a sixteenth-century scholar of the occult sciences, and becomes interested in natural philosophy. He studies the outdated findings of the alchemists Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Albertus Magnus with enthusiasm. He witnesses the destructive power of nature when, during a raging storm, lightning destroys a tree near his house.

ERNEST  
FRANKENSTEIN  
and  
WILLIAM  
FRANKENSTEIN

Victor has two younger siblings. Ernest is 7 years younger than Victor, and the youngest son is William, who is much younger than Victor.

Caroline’s Death

At the age of seventeen, Victor is preparing to leave his family home in Geneva to attend the University of Ingolstadt, Germany. Just before Victor is to leave, his mother, Caroline, catches scarlet fever from Elizabeth, whom she has been nursing back to health. Elizabeth recovers from the fever, but Caroline dies. On her deathbed, Caroline begged Elizabeth to care for her younger children, Ernest and William, as if they were her own. Caroline also tells of her hopes that Elizabeth and Victor will marry some day.

PROFESSOR  
WALDMAN  
and  
PROFESSOR  
KREMPE

Several weeks later, still grieving, Victor goes off to Ingolstadt.

Arriving at the university, he finds quarters in the town and sets up a meeting with a professor of natural philosophy, M. Krempe. Krempe tells Victor that all the time that Victor has spent studying the alchemists has been wasted, further souring Victor on the study of natural philosophy.

Victor then attends a lecture in chemistry by a professor named Waldman. This lecture, along with a subsequent meeting with the professor, convinces Victor to pursue his studies in the sciences.

Victor attacked his studies with enthusiasm and, ignoring his social life and his family far away in Geneva, made rapid progress.

Fascinated by the mystery of the creation of life, he begins to study how the human body is built (anatomy) and how it falls apart (death and decay). After several years of tireless work, he masters all that his professors have to teach him, and he goes one step further: discovering the secret of life.

Privately, hidden away in his apartment where no one could see him work, Victor decided to begin the construction of an animate creature, envisioning the creation of a new race of wonderful beings.

Zealously devoting himself to this labor, he neglected everything else—family, friends, studies, and social life—and grew increasingly pale, lonely, and obsessed.

Victor wants to prove that he knows the secret of life. To simply bring back to life someone who had died was not enough; other scientists might claim that the person was in a coma and not really dead.

Victor decided to build a body out of various parts and then bring the body to life so that there could be no doubt as to Victor’s triumph. The creature would be larger than life. Victor began collecting body parts.

One stormy night, after months of labor, Victor completes his creation. But when he brings it to life, its awful appearance horrifies him.

He rushes to the next room and tries to sleep, but he is troubled by nightmares about Elizabeth and his mother’s corpse. Victor is sick from a fever and from exhaustion after months of working. He wakes to discover the monster looming over his bed.

Victor’s creation has almost transparent skin through which muscles and sinews may be seen, lustrous black hair, black lips, and yellow eyes. He is seven feet tall and hideous in appearance.

Terrified by the appearance of his own creation, Victor fled from his apartments and, although already sick with fever, spent the night outside in the cold, wet streets of Ingoldstadt.

The next morning, he goes walking in the town of Ingolstadt, frantically avoiding a return to his now-haunted apartment.

As he walks by the town inn, Victor comes across his friend Henry Clerval, who has just arrived to begin studying at the university. Delighted to see Henry—a breath of fresh air and a reminder of his family after so many months of isolation and ill health—he brings him back to his apartment.

Victor enters first and is relieved to find no sign of the monster. But, weakened by months of work and shock at the horrific being he has created, he immediately falls ill with a nervous fever that lasts several months. Henry nurses him back to health and, when Victor has recovered, gives him a letter from Elizabeth that had arrived during his illness.

Elizabeth’s letter expresses her concern about Victor’s illness and begs him to write to his family in Geneva as soon as he can. She also tells him that Justine Moritz, a girl who used to live with the Frankenstein family, has returned to their house following her mother’s death.

After Victor has recovered, he introduces Henry, who is studying Oriental languages, to the professors at the university. The task is painful, however, since the sight of any chemical instrument worsens Victor’s symptoms; even speaking to his professors torments him. He decides to return to Geneva and awaits a letter from his father specifying the date of his departure. Meanwhile, he and Henry take a walking tour through the country, uplifting their spirits with the beauties of nature.

On their return to the university, Victor finds a letter from his father telling him that Victor’s youngest brother, William, has been murdered. Saddened, shocked, and apprehensive, Victor departs immediately for Geneva.

On the carriage trip back to Geneva, Victor passes by Mont Blanc. Victor makes out a tall figure standing on the peak of the mountain, and he is sickened by the realization that it is his own creation. Victor intuitively knows that his brother was murdered by the very creature Victor brought to life.

By the time he arrives, night has fallen and the gates of Geneva have been shut, so he spends the evening walking in the woods around the outskirts of the town and he rows across the lake to his family’s estate.

When he returns home, Victor learns that Justine Moritz has been accused of the murder of William.

Elizabeth blames herself for William’s murder. The family had gone for a walk, and Elizabeth had worn a beautiful and valuable miniature portrait of Caroline Frankenstein. Little William had asked for permission to wear his mother’s portrait, and Elizabeth allowed him to.

Ernest and William had run ahead of Elizabeth and Alphonse, and William had gotten away from Ernest.

A search for William was organized, but then his body was found with the bruises from large hands on his throat. The miniature portrait of Caroline was missing.

After the discovery of William’s body, a servant had found in Justine’s pocket the picture of Caroline Frankenstein last seen in William’s possession. Victor proclaims Justine’s innocence, but the evidence against her seems irrefutable, and Victor refuses to explain himself for fear that he will be labeled insane.

JUSTINE MORITZ

Justine confesses to the crime because her priest tells her that if she does not confess, she will go to hell when she is executed. But Justine tells Elizabeth and Victor that she is innocent. She can’t explain how the miniature portrait came to be in her dress pocket. They remain convinced of her innocence, but Justine is soon executed.

Victor becomes consumed with guilt, knowing that the monster he created and the cloak of secrecy within which the creation took place have now caused the deaths of two members of his family.

After Justine’s execution, Victor becomes increasingly melancholy. He considers suicide but restrains himself by thinking of Elizabeth and his father. Hoping to cheer up, Victor makes a trip alone to the valley of Chamounix. The beautiful scenery cheers him somewhat, but his respite from grief is short-lived.

One rainy day, Victor wakes to find his old feelings of despair resurfacing. He decides to travel to the summit of Montanvert, hoping that the view of a pure, eternal, beautiful natural scene will revive his spirits.

When he reaches the glacier at the top, he is momentarily consoled by the sublime spectacle. As he crosses to the opposite side of the glacier, however, he spots a creature loping toward him at incredible speed.

Sitting by the fire in his hut, the monster tells Victor of the confusion that he experienced upon being created.

He describes his flight from Victor’s apartment into the wilderness and his gradual acclimation to the world through his discovery of the sensations of light, dark, hunger, thirst, and cold.

The creature had found a coat in Victor’s apartment and had put it on before leaving. His first encounters with humans had been bad experiences, as people ran away from him in terror.

According to his story, the creature one day found a fire and was pleased at the warmth it created, but he became dismayed when he burned himself on the hot embers. He realized that he could keep the fire alive by adding wood, and that the fire was good not only for heat and warmth but also for making food more palatable.

In search of food, the monster finds a hut and enters it. His presence causes an old man inside to shriek and run away in fear. The monster proceeds to a village, where more people flee at the sight of him. As a result of these incidents, he resolves to stay away from humans.

One night he takes refuge in a small lean-to adjacent to a cottage. In the morning, he discovers that he can see into the cottage through a crack in the wall and observes that the occupants are a young man, a young woman, and an old man.

OLD DeLACEY

The creature observes his neighbors for an extended period of time. They are the DeLacey family—a blind father and two adult children, Felix and Agatha. The little family is a loving one, but the monster notices that they often seem unhappy, though he is unsure why. He eventually realizes, however, that their despair results from their poverty, to which he has been contributing by surreptitiously stealing their food. Torn by his guilty conscience, he stops stealing their food and does what he can to reduce their hardship, gathering wood at night to leave at the door for their use.

FELIX DeLACEY and  
AGATHA DeLACEY

The monster becomes aware that his neighbors are able to communicate with each other using strange sounds. Vowing to learn their language, he tries to match the sounds they make with the actions they perform. He acquires a basic knowledge of the language, including the names of the young man and woman, Felix and Agatha. He admires their graceful forms and is shocked by his own ugliness when he catches sight of his reflection in a pool of water. He spends the whole winter in the hovel, unobserved and well protected from the elements, and grows increasingly affectionate toward his unwitting hosts.

SAFIE DeLACEY

As winter thaws into spring, the monster notices that the cottagers, particularly Felix, seem unhappy. A beautiful woman in a dark dress and veil arrives at the cottage on horseback and asks to see Felix. Felix becomes ecstatic the moment he sees her. The woman, who does not speak the language of the cottagers, is named Safie. She moves into the cottage, and the mood of the household immediately brightens. As Safie learns the language of the cottagers, so does the monster. He also learns to read, and, since Felix uses Constantin-François de Volney’s Ruins of Empires to instruct Safie, he learns a bit of world history in the process. The cottagers also read aloud Milton’s Paradise Lost, which includes the story of God’s creation of Adam. Now able to speak and understand the language perfectly, the monster learns about human society by listening to the cottagers’ conversations.

Reflecting on his own situation, he realizes that he is deformed and alone. “Was I then then a monster,” he asks, “a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned?” He also learns about the pleasures and obligations of the family and of human relations in general, which deepens the agony of his own isolation.

After some time, the monster’s constant eavesdropping allows him to understand the history of the cottagers. The old man, De Lacey, was once an affluent and successful citizen in Paris; his children, Agatha and Felix, were well-respected members of the community. Safie’s father, a Turk, was falsely accused of a crime and sentenced to death. Felix visited the Turk in prison and met his daughter, with whom he immediately fell in love.

Safie sent Felix letters thanking him for his intention to help her father and recounting the circumstances of her plight (the monster tells Victor that he copied some of these letters and offers them as proof that his tale is true). The letters relate that Safie’s mother was a Christian Arab who had been enslaved by the Turks before marrying her father. She inculcated in Safie an independence and intelligence that Islam prevented Turkish women from cultivating.

Safie was eager to marry a European man and thereby escape the near-slavery that awaited her in Turkey. Felix successfully coordinated her father’s escape from prison, but when the plot was discovered, Felix, Agatha, and De Lacey were exiled from France and stripped of their wealth. They then moved into the cottage in Germany upon which the monster has stumbled. Meanwhile, the Turk tried to force Safie to return to Constantinople with him, but she managed to escape with some money and the knowledge of Felix’s whereabouts.

While foraging for food in the woods around the cottage one night, the monster finds an abandoned leather satchel containing some clothes and books. Eager to learn more about the world than he can discover through the chink in the cottage wall, he brings the books back to his hovel and begins to read. The books include Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s Sorrows of Werter, a volume of Plutarch’s Lives, and John Milton’s Paradise Lost, the last of which has the most profound effect on the monster.

Unaware that Paradise Lost is a work of imagination, he reads it as a factual history and finds much similarity between the story and his own situation. Rifling through the pockets of his own clothes, stolen long ago from Victor’s apartment, he finds some papers from Victor’s journal. With his newfound ability to read, he soon understands the horrific manner of his own creation and the disgust with which his creator regarded him.

Dismayed by these discoveries, the monster wishes to reveal himself to the cottagers in the hope that they will see past his hideous exterior and befriend him. He decides to approach the blind De Lacey first, hoping to win him over while Felix, Agatha, and Safie are away. He believes that De Lacey, unprejudiced against his hideous exterior, may be able to convince the others of his gentle nature.

In the wake of this rejection, the monster swears to revenge himself against all human beings, his creator in particular. Journeying for months out of sight of others, he makes his way toward Geneva. On the way, he spots a young girl, seemingly alone; the girl slips into a stream and appears to be on the verge of drowning. When the monster rescues the girl from the water, the man accompanying her, suspecting him of having attacked her, shoots him.

As he nears Geneva, the monster runs across Victor’s younger brother, William, in the woods. When William mentions that his father is Alphonse Frankenstein, the monster erupts in a rage of vengeance and strangles the boy to death with his bare hands.

He takes a picture of Caroline Frankenstein that the boy has been holding and places it in the folds of the dress of a girl sleeping in a barn—Justine Moritz, who is later executed for William’s murder.

Having explained to Victor the circumstances behind William’s murder and Justine’s conviction, the monster implores Victor to create another monster to accompany him and be his mate.he reaches the glacier at the top, he is momentarily consoled by the sublime spectacle. As he crosses to the opposite side of the glacier, however, he spots a creature loping toward him at incredible speed.

The monster tells Victor that it is his right to have a female monster companion. Victor refuses at first, but the monster appeals to his sense of responsibility as his creator. He tells Victor that all of his evil actions have been the result of a desperate loneliness. He promises to take his new mate to South America to hide in the jungle far from human contact. With the sympathy of a fellow monster, he argues, he will no longer be compelled to kill.

After his fateful meeting with the monster on the glacier, Victor puts off the creation of a new, female creature. He begins to have doubts about the wisdom of agreeing to the monster’s request. He realizes that the project will require him to travel to England to gather information. His father notices that his spirits are troubled much of the time—Victor, still racked by guilt over the deaths of William and Justine, is now newly horrified by the task in which he is about to engage—and asks him if his impending marriage to Elizabeth is the source of his melancholy.

After Justine’s execution, Victor becomes increasingly melancholy. He considers suicide but restrains himself by thinking of Elizabeth and his father. Hoping to cheer up, Victor makes a trip alone to the valley of Chamounix. The beautiful scenery cheers him somewhat, but his respite from grief is short-lived.

Victor refuses, unwilling to marry Elizabeth until he has completed his obligation to the monster. He asks Alphonse if he can first travel to England, and Alphonse consents.

Victor and Alphonse arrange a two-year tour, on which Henry Clerval, eager to begin his studies after several years of unpleasant work for his father in Geneva, will accompany Victor. After traveling for a while, they reach London.

Victor and Henry journey through England and Scotland, but Victor grows impatient to begin his work and free himself of his bond to the monster. Victor has an acquaintance in a Scottish town, with whom he urges Henry to stay while he goes alone on a tour of Scotland. Henry consents reluctantly, and Victor departs for a remote, desolate island in the Orkneys to complete his project.

Quickly setting up a laboratory in a small shack, Victor devotes many hours to working on his new creature. He often has trouble continuing his work, however, knowing how unsatisfying, even grotesque, the product of his labor will be.

While working one night, Victor begins to think about what might happen after he finishes his creation. He imagines that his new creature might not want to seclude herself, as the monster had promised, or that the two creatures might have children, creating “a race of devils . . . on the earth.”

Overcome by the monster’s hideousness and the possibility of a second creature like him, he destroys his work in progress.

The following night, Victor receives a letter from Henry, who, tired of Scotland, suggests that they continue their travels. Before he leaves his shack, Victor cleans and packs his chemical instruments and collects the remains of his second creature. Late that evening, he rows out onto the ocean and throws the remains into the water, allowing himself to rest in the boat for a while. When he wakes, he finds that the winds will not permit him to return to shore. Panicking, in fear for his life, he contemplates the possibility of dying at sea, blown far out into the Atlantic. Soon the winds change, however, and he reaches shore near a town. When he lands, a group of townspeople greet him rudely, telling him that he is under suspicion for a murder discovered the previous night.

After confronting Victor, the townspeople take him to Mr. Kirwin, the town magistrate. Victor hears witnesses testify against him, claiming that they found the body of a man along the beach the previous night and that, just before finding the body, they saw a boat in the water that resembled Victor’s. Mr. Kirwin decides to bring Victor to look at the body to see what effect it has on him: if Victor is the murderer, perhaps he will react with visible emotion. When Victor sees the body, he does indeed react with horror, for the victim is Henry Clerval, with the black marks of the monster’s hands around his neck. In shock, Victor falls into convulsions and suffers a long illness.

Victor remains ill for two months. Upon his recovery, he finds himself still in prison. Mr. Kirwin, now compassionate and much more sympathetic than before Victor’s illness, visits him in his cell. He tells him that he has a visitor, and for a moment Victor fears that the monster has come to cause him even more misery. The visitor turns out to be his father, who, upon hearing of his son’s illness and the death of his friend, rushed from Geneva to see him.

Victor is overjoyed to see his father, who stays with him until the court, having nothing but circumstantial evidence, finds him innocent of Henry’s murder. After his release, Victor departs with his father for Geneva.

Eventually, Victor and his father arrive home and begin planning the wedding. Elizabeth is still worried about Victor, but he assures her that all will be well after the wedding. He has a terrible secret, he tells her, that he can only reveal to her after they are married.

As the wedding day approaches, Victor grows more and more nervous about his impending confrontation with the monster. Finally, the wedding takes place, and Victor and Elizabeth depart for a family cottage to spend the night.

In the evening, Victor and Elizabeth walk around the grounds, but Victor can think of nothing but the monster’s imminent arrival.

Inside, Victor worries that Elizabeth might be upset by the monster’s appearance and the battle between them.

He tells her to retire for the night. He begins to search for the monster in the house, when suddenly he hears Elizabeth scream and realizes that it was never his death that the monster had been intending this night.

Consumed with grief over Elizabeth’s death, Victor returns home and tells his father the gruesome news. Shocked by the tragic end of what should have been a joyous day, his father dies a few days later. Victor finally breaks his secrecy and tries to convince a magistrate in Geneva that an unnatural monster is responsible for the death of Elizabeth, but the magistrate does not believe him. Victor resolves to devote the rest of his life to finding and destroying the monster.

His whole family destroyed, Victor decides to leave Geneva and the painful memories it holds behind him forever. He tracks the monster for months, guided by slight clues, messages, and hints that the monster leaves for him.

Angered by these taunts, Victor continues his pursuit into the ice and snow of the North. There he meets Walton and tells his story. He entreats Walton to continue his search for vengeance after he is dead.

Walton then regains control of the narrative, continuing the story in the form of further letters to his sister. He tells her that he believes in the truth of Victor’s story. He laments that he did not know Victor, who remains on the brink of death, in better days.

One morning, Walton’s crewmen enter his cabin and beg him to promise that they will return to England if they break out of the ice in which they have been trapped ever since the night they first saw the monster’s sledge. Victor speaks up, however, and convinces the men that the glory and honor of their quest should be enough motivation for them to continue toward their goal. They are momentarily moved, but two days later they again entreat Walton, who consents to the plan of return.

Just before the ship is set to head back to England, Victor dies. Several days later, Walton hears a strange sound coming from the room in which Victor’s body lies.

Investigating the noise, Walton is startled to find the monster, as hideous as Victor had described, weeping over his dead creator’s body.

The monster begins to tell him of all his sufferings. He says that he deeply regrets having become an instrument of evil and that, with his creator dead, he is ready to die. He leaves the ship and departs into the darkness.

The monster tells Walton that he intends to paddle on his ice floe to the nearest land, find some wood, build himself a funeral pyre, and set himself on fire. He leaves the ship and departs into the darkness.