

Frankenstein ch 1-10 quote analysis

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Chapter 1

“ I was their plaything and their idol, and something better- their child, the innocent and helpless creature bestowed on them by Heaven, whom to bring up to good, and whose future lot it was in their hands to direct to happiness or misery, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me. With this deep consciousness of what they owed towards the being to which they had given life.” This quote expresses Victor Frankenstein’s beliefs that it was up to his parents to make him happy and to succeed in life.

The last line expresses a belief that any parent owed it to their child happiness and love by bringing them to life. Frankenstein is being hypocritical, putting so much responsibility and pressure on his parents when he, himself will not take on the same responsibilities when it is laid out in front of him. “ They consulted their village priest, and the result was that Elizabeth Lavenza became the inmate of my parents’ house—my more than sister—the beautiful and adored companion of all my occupations and my pleasures.

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Elizabeth’s beauty is a sign of her inner goodness. (Halo Effect in Psych) “ Everyone loved Elizabeth. The passionate and almost reverential attachment with which all regarded her became, while I shared it, my pride and my delight. On the evening previous to her being brought to my home, my mother had said playfully, ‘ I have a pretty present for my Victor—tomorrow he shall have it.’ And when, on the morrow, she presented Elizabeth to me as her promised gift, I, with childish seriousness, interpreted her words literally

and looked upon Elizabeth as mine—mine to protect, love, and cherish. All praises bestowed on her I received as made to a possession of my own. We called each other familiarly by the name of cousin. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me—my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only.”

Victor sees that Elizabeth’s beauty is the reason people love her. Yet this seems to be the reason he loves her himself. “ When my father returned from Milan, he found playing with me in the hall of our villa a child fairer than pictured cherub... They were fond of the sweet orphan. Her presence had seemed a blessing to them... the result was that Elizabeth Lavenza became the inmate of my parents’ house—my more than sister—the beautiful and adored companion of all my occupations and my pleasures.”

Although Elizabeth is welcomed into Victor’s family, her being an orphan reminds us that family that can be destroyed at any moment. Chapter 2 “ Destiny was too potent, and her immutable law had decreed my utter and terrible destruction.” Dr. Frankenstein cannot take blame for his immoral actions in life. First he gives his parents the sole responsibility for how he turns out and if he is happy or not, now he is blaming destiny for the actions that are out of his parents control. “ Wealth was an inferior object; but what glory would attend the discovery, if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!”

Dr. Frankenstein says that he did not start this for the money but for the pure purpose of the glory for being the first man to discover something. Similar to Walton in the beginning of the book, he wants to make a mark in the world for himself. “ Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated

my fate... A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind, and bounding with joy, I communicated my discovery to my father. My father looked carelessly at the title page of my book and said, ‘ Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash.’”

Victor learns that his interest in alchemy is useless and that such a field is outdated. Instead, science and natural philosophy are the accepted forms of thought. “ As I stood at the door, on a sudden I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak which stood about twenty yards from our house; and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump. When we visited it the next morning, we found the tree shattered in a singular manner. It was not splintered by the shock, but entirely reduced to thin ribbons of wood. I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed.”

The natural world is beautiful and also capable of destruction. “ 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.” Victor says his family is happy, and his parents as the bringers of “ many delights.” Victor knows how great it is to have your creators care about you, but this knowledge does not convince him to do the same for the creature that he has brought to life.

Chapter 3

“ After having made a few preparatory experiments, he concluded with a panegyric upon modern chemistry, the terms of which I shall never forget: ‘ The ancient teachers of this science,’ said he, ‘ promised impossibilities and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little; they know that metals cannot be transmuted and that the elixir of life is a chimera but these philosophers, whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. They penetrate into the recesses of nature and show how she works in her hiding-places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows.’ ”

This professor gives Victor a way to see scientific questions as coming from older traditions. This respect for the old combined with the new is what allows Victor to go forward in his scientific explorations. “ My departure was therefore fixed at an early date, but before the day resolved upon could arrive, the first misfortune of my life occurred—an omen, as it were, of my future misery. Elizabeth had caught the scarlet fever...Elizabeth was saved, but the consequences of this imprudence were fatal to her preserver. On the third day my mother sickened...On her deathbed the fortitude and benignity of this best of women did not desert her. She joined the hands of Elizabeth and myself.

‘ My children,’ she said, ‘ my firmest hopes of future happiness were placed on the prospect of your union. This expectation will now be the consolation

of your father. Elizabeth, my love, you must supply my place to my younger children. Alas! I regret that I am taken from you; and, happy and beloved as I have been, is it not hard to quit you all? But these are not thoughts befitting me; I will endeavour to resign myself cheerfully to death and will indulge a hope of meeting you in another world.” The loss of Victor’s mother is a foreshadowing of the loss he is going to encounter again. At the same time, her death shows that family is what is most important to Victor. Chapter 4

“ The summer months passed while I was thus engaged, heart and soul, in one pursuit. It was a most beautiful season; never did the fields bestow a more plentiful harvest or the vines yield a more luxuriant vintage, but my eyes were insensible to the charms of nature. And the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time. I knew my silence disquieted them, and I well-remembered the words of my father: ‘ I know that while you are pleased with yourself you will think of us with affection, and we shall hear regularly from you. You must pardon me if I regard any interruption in your correspondence as a proof that your other duties are equally neglected.’”

The beauty of nature distracts Victor from his other worries. Nature’s beauty can affect human feelings. “ Darkness had no effect upon my fancy, and a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the

human feelings.” The beauty of the church is a juxtaposition with the ugliness and decay of death. Chapter 5

“ How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.”

Victor’s attempt to create a beautiful creature is a failure. “ I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart.”

The beauty of Elizabeth and the goodness that comes with it is threatened by Victor’s scientific findings and the ugly thing he has created. “ Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.”

The ugliness of the monster is compared to something worse than something in Dante’s Inferno. This further states the halo effect that prevents the

monster from functioning in society. “ I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty, and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me, but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy and ran down to Clerval.”

Victor assumes that because his creature is ugly, he must be evil. Chapter 6 “ Justine, you may remember, was a great favourite of yours; and I recollect you once remarked that if you were in an ill humour, one glance from Justine could dissipate it, for the same reason that Ariosto gives concerning the beauty of Angelica—she looked so frank-hearted and happy.”

Justine’s beauty represents her happy, good nature. “ Justine has just returned to us; and I assure you I love her tenderly. She is very clever and gentle, and extremely pretty; as I mentioned before, her mein and her expression continually remind me of my dear aunt.” Justine’s beauty makes her an object worth loving.

“ I must say also a few words to you, my dear cousin, of little darling William. I wish you could see him; he is very tall of his age, with sweet laughing blue eyes, dark eyelashes, and curling hair. When he smiles, two little dimples appear on each cheek, which are rosy with health. He has already had one or two little WIVES, but Louisa Biron is his favourite, a pretty little girl of five years of age.”

William’s attractiveness is equal to the affection people feel for him. “ The pretty Miss Mansfield has already received the congratulatory visits on her approaching marriage with a young Englishman, John Melbourne, Esq. Her

ugly sister, Manon, married M. Duvillard, the rich banker, last autumn. Your favourite schoolfellow, Louis Manoir, has suffered several misfortunes since the departure of Clerval from Geneva. But he has already recovered his spirits, and is reported to be on the point of marrying a lively pretty Frenchwoman, Madame Tavernier. She is a widow, and much older than Manoir; but she is very much admired, and a favourite with everybody.”

People like Madame Tavernier because she is good looking.

Chapter 7

“ I wept like a child. ‘ Dear mountains! my own beautiful lake! how do you welcome your wanderer? Your summits are clear; the sky and lake are blue and placid. Is this to prognosticate peace, or to mock at my unhappiness?’” Nature has the power to strongly affect emotions because of its beauty. “ During this short voyage I saw the lightning playing on the summit of Mont Blanc in the most beautiful figures. The storm appeared to approach rapidly, and, on landing, I ascended a low hill, that I might observe its progress. It advanced; the heavens were clouded, and I soon felt the rain coming slowly in large drops, but its violence quickly increased.” Beauty and violence coexist in nature.

“ A flash of lightning illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy daemon, to whom I had given life. What did he there? Could he be (I shuddered at the conception) the murderer of my brother?”

The ugliness of the monster's crime is reflected by the awful weather. "During our walk, Clerval endeavoured to say a few words of consolation; he could only express his heartfelt sympathy. 'Poor William!' said he, dear lovely child, he now sleeps with his angel mother! Who that had seen him bright and joyous in his young beauty, but must weep over his untimely loss! To die so miserably; to feel the murderer's grasp! How much more a murdered that could destroy radiant innocence! Poor little fellow! one only consolation have we; his friends mourn and weep, but he is at rest. The pang is over, his sufferings are at an end for ever. A sod covers his gentle form, and he knows no pain. He can no longer be a subject for pity; we must reserve that for his miserable survivors.'"

Henry expresses affection for William by describing his physical features. Chapter 8 "The appearance of Justine was calm. She was dressed in mourning, and her countenance, always engaging, was rendered, by the solemnity of her feelings, exquisitely beautiful. Yet she appeared confident in innocence and did not tremble, although gazed on and execrated by thousands, for all the kindness which her beauty might otherwise have excited was obliterated in the minds of the spectators by the imagination of the enormity she was supposed to have committed.

She was tranquil, yet her tranquillity was evidently constrained; and as her confusion had before been adduced as a proof of her guilt, she worked up her mind to an appearance of courage. When she entered the court she threw her eyes round it and quickly discovered where we were seated. A tear seemed to dim her eye when she saw us, but she quickly recovered herself, and a look of sorrowful affection seemed to attest her utter guiltlessness."

Justine's innocence is seen in her beauty. Unlike the monster, her looks reveal her true nature. Chapter 9

“ When I reflected on his crimes and malice, my hatred and revenge burst all bounds of moderation... Elizabeth was sad and desponding; she no longer took delight in her ordinary occupations; all pleasure seemed to her sacrilege toward the dead; eternal woe and tears she then thought was the just tribute she should pay to innocence so blasted and destroyed.”

Because he cannot let go of a grudge, Victor seeks revenge on the monster in hopes of curing his guilty conscience. “ I, not in deed, but in effect, was the true murderer. Elizabeth read my anguish in my countenance, and kindly taking my hand, said, ‘ My dearest friend, you must calm yourself. These events have affected me, God knows how deeply; but I am not so wretched as you are. There is an expression of despair, and sometimes of revenge, in your countenance that makes me tremble. Dear Victor, banish these dark passions. Remember the friends around you, who centre all their hopes in you. Have we lost the power of rendering you happy? Ah! While we love, while we are true to each other, here in this land of peace and beauty, your native country, we may reap every tranquil blessing–what can disturb our peace?’”

Victor's guilt due to the deaths of William and Justine causes him to seek revenge against the monster. Chapter 10