

Notes: Chapters Four and Five

***There are questions throughout the notes and at the end of them. Please answer them for credit.**

Directions: Read the set of notes provided. Please answer any questions that may be addressed within the notes and please annotate any of the terms, story-line or devices that you find within the notes.

I. Chapter Four Summary: Victor becomes an eager and proficient student of science in Ingolstadt. He respects both Waldman and Krempe, but finds much friendship and encouragement from Waldman. Victor is so eager, in fact, that he mentions, "The stars often disappeared in **the light** of morning whilst I was yet engaged in my laboratory". This touches on the **theme of nature**. Nature brings peace to Victor, yet he is escaping it; he rarely ventures outside.

Victor plans to return home, but is so enrapt by the study of the human body that two years have passed in his obsession. He begins collecting bodies in churchyards and charnel houses. He is determined to find life within death.

***Symbol of light**, "...until from the midst of this darkness a **sudden light** broke in upon me—a **light** so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with immensity of the prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised, that among so many men of genius who had directed their inquiries toward the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret" (Shelley 47).

***The light** he speaks of is the discovery of bringing life to lifeless matter.

***He** begins experimenting with smaller objects, but is not satisfied until he attempts to bring to life an 8foot human being, gigantic in stature.

Quote from the chapter, "...I should first break through, and pour a **torrent of light** into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me" (47).

- This quote reflects Victor's desire to play God
- He wants to be worshipped.

In attempting to build the Creature, Victor falls very ill. He abandons all enjoyments of life, avoids his family's letters and becomes obsessed beyond recognition.

- Victor comments in hindsight that the pursuit of knowledge is not a noble pursuit if it strips you of family, love, nature and enjoyment.
- If man wasn't so ambitious, many of the great wars wouldn't have been fought, Rome wouldn't have fallen and America would have been discovered more gradually.

Chapter 5

On a dreary night in November, Victor sees his creation come to life. He says, "...and my **candle** was nearly burnt out, when, by the **glimmer of the half-extinguished light**, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs" (51). He finds the creature to be hideous and ugly and is frightened by its presence. He runs to bed to sleep and is tormented by nightmares of Elizabeth turning into his mother's dead corpse as he embraced her in a kiss. When he awakens he finds the creature hovering over him: "...by the

dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch-".

- Victor realizes he made a mistake in creating the creature
- He did not want to play God
- Upon creating it, what was he supposed to do with it? Care for it?
- As a new father, he desires to abandon his creation

Victor abandons his creation and runs for a church=irony. **Why is it ironic for him to search for God now?**

He runs through the streets of Germany in a state of panic. A poem is referenced that alludes to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner": " Like one who, on a lonely road

Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread

How do the lines of this poem reflect Victor's emotional state?

As Victor runs through the streets, he is delighted to find Henry looking for him. Henry came from Geneva to visit him, as the family was deeply worried. Victor is filled with great joy to see Henry, but fears his return to the apartment. Upon arriving, Victor is greatly relieved to find that the "wretch" is gone and he soon becomes delirious with laughter. Henry detects that Victor is gravely ill. At this point, Victor falls into a terrible fever and is bedridden for months. Henry eagerly nurses him back to health and Victor is **witness to the first signs of spring (symbol of life)**. When he is finally healed, Henry asked him if he can speak to him about an important matter. Victor lies in bed stunned, thinking Henry is aware of the creature's birth. Henry merely asks Victor to read a letter that Elizabeth has written to him. He is much relieved.

Why is light often referenced in these chapters?

What theme is introduced with the arrival of Henry?

Can Henry be a foil to Victor?

Is Victor a monster for abandoning his creature?

Is it fitting that Victor falls ill in Winter, the same month his creature is born? Why?