

Frankenstein

Plot

Framing story - Robert Walton, an ambitious young man, is on an expedition searching for a passage across the North Pole. He wants to do something great for mankind and to become famous. The book opens and closes with a series of letters that Walton sends to his sister, Margaret, in England. While his ship is blocked in the ice, a man on a sled, Victor Frankenstein, is seen and rescued. Victor is dying, but in the week he still lives, he tells his story to Walton.

Starting in his early teenage years, Victor, dreams of doing something of great benefit for mankind and of becoming famous. In particular, he dreams of finding a way to defeat death. At 17, just before he leaves to study at university, his mother dies, but not before making him promise to marry Elizabeth, a girl who the family had adopted many years earlier. At university he studies chemistry and natural philosophy and begins to work on his dream of creating life from a dead body.

When he is successful, he becomes disgusted and frightened by the creature's ugliness and runs away from it. The creature is peaceful and well disposed toward his creator and all men at first, but continual rejection from both, together with intense loneliness, make him become angry and one by one he kills the people that Victor loves most. First his younger brother, then his best friend, Henry, after Victor refuses to create a female creature to be his companion. Lastly, he kills Elizabeth on her and Victor's wedding night.

Creature and creator end up chasing each other across the Arctic ice, each wanting to kill the other. When Victor dies on Walton's ship, the monster somehow knows and comes on board to see the body himself. Walton sees him and the monster tells his version of the story. He leaves the ship, after telling Walton that he intends to build a funeral pyre and burn himself to death on it.

For more on Frankenstein, check out these web sites:

films and popular culture

<http://www.frankensteinfilms.com/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankenstein_in_popular_culture

general and varied on Shelley and her creature

<http://home-1.worldonline.nl/~hamberg/>