

Before You Read

Frankenstein Chapters 17–21

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Why is it important to love and be loved?

Think-Pair-Share

On a sheet of paper, write three reasons why companionship or love is an important part of the human experience. Then meet with another student and read your ideas aloud. Discuss, blend, and adjust your lists to come up with three reasons that you both agree on.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how the need for love continues to motivate Frankenstein's creature.

BACKGROUND

The British Isles

The British Isles include two main islands, Great Britain and Ireland, as well as numerous smaller islands. They lie a relatively short distance off the coast of Europe and were once connected to the continent. Four groups of people call the islands home, the English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish. While the climate is uniformly maritime, consisting of mild winters, cool summers, and ample precipitation, the landforms vary from the mountains and rocky headlands of Scotland to the plains of Southeast England.

Did You Know?

Tales of horror create suspense by raising questions or uncertainties about the action in the reader's mind. Sometimes we don't know what will happen. As we read, we wonder *who* or *what* is responsible for the events that take place, or we wonder *how* the events came about. In other cases, the tragic outcome is known or strongly hinted at at the beginning of the story. As we read, the suspense comes from anticipating *when* the worst will occur or wondering if it can be prevented. Authors often increase the readers' feeling of fear or dread through foreshadowing. They give hints that suggest or prepare the reader for a later event. Such hints, or foreshadowing, might take the form of a statement by a character, a mood established in the description of the setting, or the revelation of an important trait in one of the characters.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

base [bās] *adj.* mean-spirited

inexorable [i nek 'sər ə bəl] *adj.* unyielding

insurmountable [in 'sər moun 'tə bəl] *adj.* impossible to overcome

irksome [urk 'səm] *adj.* annoying

listless [list 'lis] *adj.* lacking energy

malicious [mə lish 'əs] *adj.* deliberately harmful

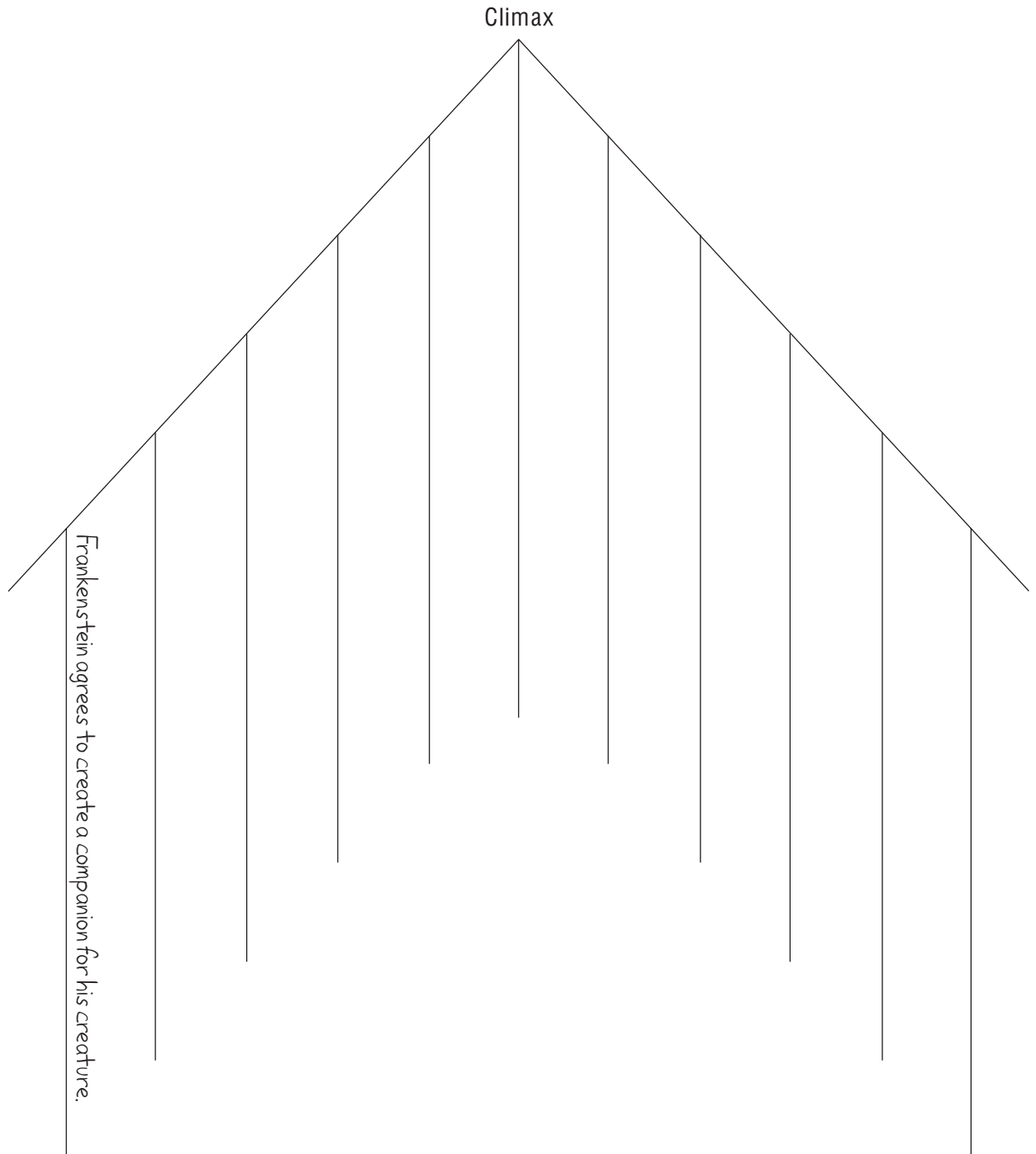
torpor [tôr 'pər] *n.* state of inactivity or apathy

traverse [trav 'ərs] *v.* to travel across

Active Reading

Frankenstein Chapters 17–21

Use the sequence chart below to trace the main events that occur after Frankenstein agrees to create a companion for his creature. Use as many boxes as you need but record the climax, or turning point, of this part of the novel at the peak of the diagram.



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Responding

Frankenstein Chapters 17–21

Personal Response

Which of the events in this section of the novel surprised you the most and why?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What arguments does the creature use to persuade Frankenstein to make the female creature? How does Frankenstein's decision affect Frankenstein's mood and personal life?

2. What keeps Frankenstein from completing the second creature? In your opinion, why does the creature direct his revenge to Frankenstein's wedding?

3. How does Frankenstein become lost at sea? What happens when he lands in Ireland? Why does he call himself Henry Clerval's murderer?

Responding

Frankenstein Chapters 17–21

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. How does Shelley create a feeling of suspense in Chapters 17 through 21?

5. Did you find the events in Chapter 21 probable or improbable? Explain.

Literature and Writing

The Second Time Around

Imagine that Victor Frankenstein has decided to write a letter to Elizabeth or his father that describes his thoughts about creating another creature. Take on the role of Frankenstein as you write a letter of explanation. You may want to compare Frankenstein's creation of the second creature to his creation of the first one. Does he have the same motives or different ones? Do you think his attitude toward such ambitious projects has changed?

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In your group, develop a soundtrack for this section of the novel. Make a list of specific songs or types of music you might play for each of the major scenes, such as the creature's visit to Frankenstein's room or Frankenstein's debate with himself at the side of the female creature. Review Chapters 17 through 21 to make a list of key scenes. Then skim for details about the physical setting or the characters' emotions that might spark ideas for music. Make a two-column outline of your soundtrack. In the first column list the key scenes or events in order. In the second column identify or describe the music that will accompany the scene. Focus on conveying the mood of the scene. If possible, play your music for the rest of the class or explain your choices.

Math Connection

Chart Victor Frankenstein's path on a map of Europe as he travels from Geneva to London and then to other cities and locations farther north. Then use the scale on the map to estimate the mileage between each pair of locations in sequence. To do this, you will need to consult the novel or make a guess about the form of transportation and route used. Record and label your figures clearly on a separate sheet of paper. Add up the mileage to find the total distance he traveled from the beginning of Chapter 17 to the end of Chapter 21. Compare your figures with those obtained by other students. If some figures disagree sharply, discuss the method you used to arrive at your figure. Decide which figure is most accurate.

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Before You Read

Frankenstein Chapters 22–24

FOCUS ACTIVITY

It is sometimes said that the key to living a responsible and happy life is to balance intellectual and emotional pursuits. What does this mean to you?

Freewrite

Freewrite for five minutes about a person who is governed more by intellectual decisions than by emotional decisions. What are the positive and negative consequences of relying more on your intellect than your emotions?

Setting a Purpose

Read to find how Frankenstein weighs emotional and intellectual factors in a decision he must make.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

Five years after *Frankenstein* was published, Mary Shelley saw the first dramatic production of her novel. She liked the actor's portrayal of her creature. How well she might like the hundreds of interpretations since is interesting speculation. In the 1931 film *Frankenstein*, starring English actor Boris Karloff, the monster comes to life on an operating table after being zapped with electricity. Given a huge, squared-off skull and pale corpse-like skin, Karloff portrayed the monster as a gentle, almost childlike character. His interpretation struck a chord with audiences, especially young children, from whom he received much fan mail. In the 1995 film version of the novel, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, Robert De Niro, an actor known for his violent tough-guy roles, was cast as the creature. The director, Kenneth Branagh, explained, "I wanted a wise and intelligent and multifaceted Creature who could be angry and even funny at times, and who would have a sense of humor, however darkly ironic." To develop the physical appearance of the creature, make-up artists did research in books from the early 1800s on surgery, skin disorders, and embalming. They wanted to find out what Frankenstein would have been able to achieve using the techniques and knowledge available at the time. The result is a gray, scarred, hulking, patchwork sort of man.

Two Characters in One?

Many people who have not read Shelley's novel think that Frankenstein is the name of the creature, not the scientist who brought him to life. Careful readers of the novel, however, point out that this mistake has a certain symbolic truth. They see the two characters as doubles of each other, or two parts of a divided self. The idea of the double comes from German folklore and is known as the *doppelgänger* ("double goer"). The concept was based on the ancient belief that each living creature has an exact double who exists as a spirit or ghost. Many writers of horror stories have employed the idea of the double. For example, in Robert Louis Stevenson's novella of double identity, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a respectable doctor becomes a murderous stalker by night.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

adversary [ad'vər ser'ē] *n.* enemy; opponent

consternation [kon'stər nā'shən] *n.* state of confusion

illustrious [i lus'trē əs] *adj.* very distinguished

omnipotent [om nip'ət tənt] *adj.* all-powerful

pilgrimage [pil'grə mij] *n.* long journey for a spiritual purpose