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*Frankenstein*

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Please note: the below are only intended to help you “get inside” the book—please do not feel compelled to answer them in full, unless you wish to, and if there are questions or elements in the book that you don't understand, no worries, we will explain all when we meet for our Live Presentation on this new selection!

1. How does Mary Shelley's version of “Frankenstein” differ from the images of Frankenstein that currently circulate in the media and popular culture? Why do you think “Frankenstein” has now come to mean the creature, rather than the creator?

2. At one point, the “monster” says to Victor Frankenstein:

*“I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel...”*

What is the significance of this quote? What does it reveal about the larger issues and themes of the novel?

3. In what ways do you think that *Frankenstein* comments on issues of *gender* and *female identity*? What might it reveal about questions of women's authorship in the nineteenth century?

4. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is considered a prime example of “Romantic” literature. What elements link it to Romanticism? How does the novel represent *nature*, the *imagination*, and *individuality* – or other Romantic qualities that may come to mind?

5. How would you describe Victor Frankenstein's character? In what ways is the novel a psychological portrait of all that Victor embodies, especially his status as a privileged *creator* and his responsibilities toward his *creation*, the monster?

6. What do you think Mary Shelley is trying to convey through her representation of the monster? How would you describe his ethical makeup? His needs and wants? What compels him to act in so diabolical a manner?

7. How is *Frankenstein* constructed as a “novel”? What literary forms and devices does it make use of? How would you describe its style?

8. How does the novel represent Victor Frankenstein's *guilt*, and what does it reveal about him?

9. Toward the end of the book, Victor Frankenstein delivers an impassioned plea, urging the men on his boat to continue their pursuit of the monster:

*“Oh! Be men, or be more than men. Be steady to your purposes and firm as a rock. This ice is not made of such stuff as your hearts may be; it is mutable and cannot withstand you if you say that it shall not. Do not return to your families with the stigma of disgrace marked on your brows. Return as heroes who have fought and conquered, and who know not what it is to turn their backs on the foe.”*

What do these words reveal about his true nature and intent in pursuing his creation? How do they connect to other subjects raised in the book?

10. Why do you think that *Frankenstein* has proved so enduring a story for the past two hundred years? Which of its themes and issues seem especially relevant today?

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