

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