



Elements of Mary Shelley's Life in Frankenstein.





Isolation

- x After the death of her mother, Mary Shelley's father, William Godwin, married Mary Jane Clairmont. While this was exciting for Mary Shelley, she soon realized that her step mother preferred her own children over Mary. Mary felt alone and unhappy for most of her childhood.

The creature also had a parent who was too preoccupied with their relationship to pay them any attention. For this reason, he and Mary were both social outcasts who felt alone. Mary used the creature as a symbol for her own isolation.



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- ✘ *"What chiefly struck me was the gentle manners of these people, and I longed to join them, but dared not. I remembered too well the treatment I had suffered the night before from the barbarous villagers, and resolved, whatever course of conduct I might hereafter think it right to pursue, that for the present I would remain quietly in my hovel, watching and endeavoring to discover the motives which influenced their actions."
(Chapter 12)*
- ✘ *"I am an unfortunate and deserted creature; I look around and I have no relation or friend upon earth. These amiable people to whom I go have never seen me and know little of me. I am full of fears, for if I fail there, I am an outcast in the world forever."
(Chapter 15)*



Education

- x Despite her being so well known for her intellect, Mary Shelley received no formal education. She knew only what she read, in her mother's books and from spending time with her father's highly intelligent friends.

After being abandoned by Victor, the creature had to rely on observation and literature to acquire his knowledge and intellectual capacity.



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- × *“... the books were written in the language the elements of which I had acquired at the cottage; they consisted of Paradise Lost, a volume of Plutarch’s Lives, and The Sorrows of Werter... I now continually studied and exercised my mind upon these histories, whilst my friends were employed in their ordinary occupations.” (Chapter 15)*





Abandonment

- x Mary Shelley's mother died soon after giving birth and it's evident that she feels abandoned to some extent based off how the theme is portrayed within the novel.

The theme of strained parent-child relationships and abandonment are present in both the author's life and within the lives of characters within the story. Victor's loss of his mother haunts him throughout the novel and influences many aspects of the plot. Similar to Shelley, the creature lost their parent so soon after birth that they have no memories of them. She feels the same sense of abandonment the creature feels, and is haunted by her mother's death the way Victor is haunted by his.



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- ✘ *"We are responsible for those we bring into the world and must treat them with unconditional love." (Chapter 10)*

- ✘ *"Sometimes I allowed my thoughts, unchecked by reason, to ramble in the fields of Paradise, and dared to fancy amiable and lovely creatures sympathizing with my feelings and cheering my gloom; their angelic countenances breathed smiles of consolation. But it was all a dream; no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone. I remembered Adam's supplication to his Creator. But where was mine? He had abandoned me, and in the bitterness of my heart I cursed him." (Chapter 15)*



Incest...?

- ✘ Mary Shelley's novel Mathilda is an indication of the possible incestuous relationship Mary may have had with her father, as it is literally about incest between a father and daughter.

Although Victor and Elizabeth were not related by blood, they referred to each other as cousins and eventually had a relationship. In this way the theme of incest is present in both the novel and her life.



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- × *"... I received as made to a possession of my own. We called each other. We called each other familiarly by the name of cousin... my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only." (Chapter 1)*

