

The scientist Victor Frankenstein devotes himself to scientific studies. What intrigues him most is the mystery of the origin of life, and finally he does discover 'the cause of generation and life'. He 'builds' a creature, assembling various parts that he takes from the bodies of dead people, and then manages to instil the spark of life into it. To his amazement, the creature begins to breathe and opens his eyes, but he looks so hideous that Frankenstein is filled with horror and disgust.

The loneliness of the monster (from Chapter 16)

The poor monster feels utter desolation and is condemned to loneliness. After being abandoned by Frankenstein, he wanders about the country; at first, he is full of curiosity and benevolence, but soon he is disappointed and wounded by the horror and hostility with which people react at the sight of him.

He lives in total solitude and, simply by observing a family who live in a small cottage, learns to speak and then to read. But again, his horrible aspect frustrates his attempts at making friends, as is described in this passage.

I continued to wind among the paths of the wood, until I came to its boundary which was skirted by a deep and rapid river, into which many of the trees bent their branches, now budding with the fresh spring. Here I paused, not exactly knowing what path to pursue, when I heard the sound of voices, that induced me to conceal myself under the shade of a cypress. I was scarcely hid when a young girl came running towards the spot where I was concealed, laughing, as if she ran from someone in sport. She continued her course along the precipitous sides of the river, when suddenly her foot slipped, and she fell into the rapid stream. I rushed from my hiding-place and with extreme labour from the force of the current, saved her and dragged her to shore. She was senseless, and I endeavoured by every means in my power to restore animation, when I was suddenly interrupted by the approach of a rustic, who was probably the person from whom she had playfully fled. On seeing me, he darted towards me, and tearing the girl from my arms, hastened towards the deeper parts of the wood. I followed speedily, I hardly knew why; but when the man saw me draw near, he aimed a gun, which he carried, at my body, and fired. I sank to the ground, and my injurer, with increased swiftness, escaped into the wood.

This was then the reward of my benevolence! I had saved a human being from destruction, and as a recompense I now writhed under the miserable pain of a wound which shattered the flesh and bone. The feelings of kindness and gentleness which I had entertained but a few moments before gave place to hellish rage and gnashing of teeth. Inflamed by pain, I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind. But the agony of my wound overcame me; my pulses paused, and I fainted.

Other suggestions:

- The overwhelming loneliness: Emily Dickinson, *The Loneliness One dare not Sound* (1862), from *Emily Dickinson's Complete Poems*
- The female loneliness: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), Chapter I
- The loneliness of adolescence: J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Chapter 15
- Loneliness as solitude: Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), Chapter I
- Loneliness as abandonment: Philip Larkin, *Home is so sad* (1958)
- Loneliness as reclusion: Jane Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Part III
- Loneliness as memory: Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin* (2000), Part I, The Bridge