
The Robert Walton's Role in Frankenstein

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the novel is the view of Robert Walton. Walton uses his letters during his journey on the Pacific Ocean to allow the reader to understand the tragedy of both the Monster and Frankenstein from an unbiased perspective, giving mankind a ray of hope as being kind compassionate. Both men, even though they have similarities, are very different. Robert Walton makes humankind look like they are merciful and sympathetic. Walton wants to go to a land and accomplish things that no man has ever done. He wishes to improve existing life on earth as it is. Frankenstein even goes to describe how different he is from Walton, "you seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been," (Shelley 25). Robert Walton's character is structured heavily on the letters he wrote to his sister. In one letter to his sister Margaret, he expresses how loneliness consumed him. "I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me; whose eyes would reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend," (Shelley 13).

Victor Frankenstein fulfills his desperate need for a friend, as they both compliment each other through their solitude. As for the Monster, his lonesomeness was never satisfied, for his own situation cursed him to an eternity of loneliness. When Shelley gives the narrator role to Walton, she makes sure each character's story is coming from an equal opinion, and that having Walton tell the story from his perspective allows the reader to make their own opinion of Walton himself, Frankenstein, the Monster, or any other character. By giving Walton this role, Shelley uses him as a way to introduce Frankenstein's story. Frankenstein is able to tell what happened to himself, but throughout the novel, the monster was never able to say that his solitude was destroyed and that it found a companion. Walton provides a sympathetic view of the Monster's distress, "I was at first touched by the expressions of his misery," and is pushed aside, "when I called to mind what Frankenstein has said of his powers of eloquence and persuasion, and when I again cast my eyes on the lifeless form of my friend, indignation was re-kindled within me" (Shelley 272).

This shows how the monster felt every time it encountered with humankind. In addition to Walton having this narrative role, he is able to conclude both the Monster and Frankenstein's story altogether. Giving this role to any other character such as Frankenstein, he could possibly just end the novel with his death and leave the Monster out to dry. This makes the reader want to know more about the Monster's future, but if Frankenstein had been the main narrator, the reader would be lost. It would leave them wondering of how the Monster's story concluded. The Monster goes to say "fear not that I shall be the instrument of future mischief. My work is nearly complete. Neither yours nor any man's death is needed to consummate the series of my being,

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and accomplish that which must be done: but it requires my own," (Shelley 274).

Robert used this as a way to tell the reader the after the death of Frankenstein, the revenge the Monster wanted on him would die. This conclusion allows the reader to have closure on both the Monster and Frankenstein's story. Without Robert Walton's letters Frankenstein would never be truly resolved. His resolution to the Monster's story concludes this novel. Walton gives the reader someone a character they can relate to and form their own opinions apart from Frankenstein and the Monster.

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