Frankenstein

Lesson Plan and Supplementary Materials

For Elementary Classrooms and Libraries

Lesson Plan for Elementary Classrooms and Libraries

Introduction: This lesson plan is designed to provide an age-appropriate introduction to the story of *Frankenstein* through the reading of *Frankenstein* adapted by Deanna McFadden or *Frank was a Monster Who Wanted to Dance* by Keith Graves. A wide variety of cross-curricular activities have been designed to further the students' introductory understanding of the major themes of the story.

Purpose: To provide elementary students with introductory exposure to the story and themes of the novel *Frankenstein*, or, *The Modern Prometheus.*

Learning Objectives:
1. Students will gain an introductory understanding of the basic story and themes of *Frankenstein*.
2. Students will explore the major themes of the story and make connections between the story of *Frankenstein* and their own lives.
3. Students will increase their vocabulary by being exposed to and learning new words and concepts introduced during the story.
4. Students will learn to verbally, textually, and artistically express ideas and connections made between the story and the historical context and/or the modern world via their own lives.

Procedure: Students will individually, or as a class read, *Frankenstein* adapted by Danna McFadden or *Frank was a Monster Who Wanted to Dance* by Keith Graves. They will then participate in one or more of the learning activities presented below.

Although each activity has been designed to fulfill the core curriculum standards accompanying each outline, the historical and literary importance of the story make it ideal for a wide variety of subject-specific core curriculum implementations. Other subject-specific learning activities can also be designed and used to fulfill the unique curriculum needs of each classroom.

Pre-assessment Activity

As a pre-assessment activity, begin with an open dialog with students about the general story of Victor Frankenstein and his monster. A good place to start would be an examination of their knowledge of the modern Frankenstein as depicted in modern film and television. Ask open-ended questions such as "What do you know about Frankenstein and his monster?" or "How have you previously been exposed to the story of Frankenstein and his monster?" to gauge any preexisting knowledge of the story and characters.

For a more structured pre-assessment, students may also be given the vocabulary included in the supplementary material section. Students will then write definitions of each word with which they are currently familiar. A similar post-assessment may also be conducted after the story and activities are complete in which students provide definitions for the vocabulary in order to gauge vocabulary growth.

Learning Activities

Core Curriculum Standard	Activities
Language Arts Standard VII: Comprehension Fine Arts: Visual Arts Standard I: Making Standard II: Perceiving Standard III: Expressing Standard IV: Contextualizing	Before reading *Frankenstein* adapted by Deanna Mc Fadden, students will be asked to consider what they think Frankenstein's Monster will look like based on their previous knowledge of the story. Students will then be given a wide variety of art supplies and will create an artistic interpretation of what they think Frankenstein's Monster looks like. After reading the story, students will create a second artistic interpretation of the Monster based on what they learned about the Monster's character and physical traits while reading the story. For younger students, coloring pages[1] depicting the popular image of "Frankenstein" have been included in the supplementary materials on pages 22-25. To help students organize their thoughts about the Monster's physical and character traits, a brainstorming chart is included in the supplementary material on page 26.
Language Arts Standard I: Oral Language	*Read Frank Was a Monster Who Wanted to Dance* aloud as a class. Encourage students to participate by having them point to the correct parts of their body as they are featured in the story.
Language Arts Standard VII: Comprehension Library Media Standard II: Literature Standard 6500.07-6506.07, 6500.08-6506.8, and/or 6500.0901-6506.0901	Students may also participate individually by selecting students to act out certain segments of the story as they are read. While reading include dialogic reading by pausing at appropriate places in the story to ask the students questions about the story's plot, characters, and illustrations.

Language Arts
Standard VII: Comprehension

Fine Arts: Dance
Standard I: Moving
Standard II: Investigating
Standard III: Creating

Fine Arts: Music
Standard II: Singing
Standard IV: Listening

Read *Frank was a Monster Who Wanted to Dance* aloud as a class. When the story is complete, students will have the opportunity to create their own versions of the dance featured in the book. In an open area, play the song "Monster Mash" by Bobby "Boris" Picket and students will dance to the music.

For added comprehension, spend time learning the lyrics as a class so students may sing along to the song while danc-

ing. Fine Arts: Visual Arts
Standard I: Making
Standard II: Perceiving
Standard III: Expressing
Standard IV: Contextualizing

Language Arts
Standard I: Oral Language

Language Arts
Standard VIII: Writing

Provide students with a variety of magazines which feature animals such as *Zoobooks, Ranger Rick*, or *Your Big Backyard*. Students will select several pictures of different animals to cut out. After the animals are selected, the students will glue together different elements of each animal on construction paper, creating a "Frankenstein" animal.

For younger students, coloring pages have been included in the supplementary materials. Each coloring page contains a drawing of half an animal. Students can then draw their own "monstrous" halves to complete the picture. Coloring pages[2] are found on pages 27-31.

For added difficulty, have students label each part of their animal along with reasons they chose to add that particular body part.

Students may also orally present their art pieces and explain each feature of the animal.

Science
Learning Objective I
Learning Objective II
Learning Objective III

Create a hands-on Frankenstein's Laboratory using items such as spaghetti, peeled grapes, dried apricots, and string beans. Place each item in a covered box. Students will then touch each item and guess which body part of the monster they are feeling.

Learning Objective IV	For added difficulty, have students record their hypothesis and justify their guesses as to the content of the boxes.
	Instructions for creating the laboratory can be found at **Frankenstein Games:** http://meltingpot.fortunecity.com/jinx/1088 /Ballroom/frankenstein_games.html

Language Arts Standard VII: Comprehension Science Learning Objective I Learning Objective II Learning Objective III Learning Objective IV	Discuss the role the brain plays in the formation of our personalities, emotions, and preferences. Students will then be asked to consider what kind of character traits may be found within the Monster's brain.
	Students will be given a blank drawing of a brain and asked to color and label sections according to the character traits they think the Monster possess. Brain coloring pages[3] have been included on pages 32-34.
	To help students identify traits, emotions, and characteristics of the Monster, a character map[4] and character trait[5] sheet has been included on 35-36.
	An example of a completed brain is located on 37.
	For a more hands-on version of this activity use brain jell-o molds and have students label the brain with toothpicks and tags.

Language Arts Standard VII: Comprehension Science Learning Objective I Learning Objective II Learning Objective III Learning Objective IV	Discuss Victor Frankenstein in the context of his scientific experiments and achievements. Students will then have the opportunity to step into Victor's shoes by becoming "mad scientists."
	After the discussion, prepare several simple science experiments each student can perform or observe.
	Several classroom-appropriate science activities can be found at **Surfing Net Kids** at http://www.surfnetkids.com/science_experiments.htm

To add a technological element to the lesson, a virtual tour of a rendering of Victor's laboratory can be explored via **The Bakken Library and Museum** at http://www.thebakken.org/Frankenstein/slideshow-1.htm

Language Arts
Standard VII, Comprehension
Standard VIII: Writing

As a class, discuss the Monster's desire to be accepted, loved, and liked. Talk to the students about their own experiences of alienation and how it made them feel. Ask them what they might do to ensure no other students feel the way the Monster did when he was rejected.

As a class set up a pen pal program. Half the students will write from the perspective of the Monster and the other half will respond as someone eager to befriend him.

For a more cross-classroom project, exchange letters between classrooms, one classroom writing as Monsters and the other as friends.

For younger students, a letter template has been included in the supplementary material on page 38.

Language Arts
Standard VII: Comprehension

Fine Arts: Visual Arts
Standard I: Making
Standard II: Perceiving
Standard III: Expressing
Standard IV: Contextualizing

Each student will receive the Your Monster's Vital Statistics[6] handout provided on page 39 of the supplementary materials. Students will consider what traits they would like a Monster to have if they were able to be Victor Frankenstein for a day and create their own creature.

Once the handout is complete, students will be given a wide variety of art supplies in order to create their own artistic representations of their outlined monster from the handout.

Language Arts
Standard I: Oral Language
Standard VIII: Writing

Fine Arts: Visual Arts
Standard I: Making
Standard II: Perceiving
Standard III: Expressing
Standard IV: Contextualizing

Students will be asked to imagine having Frankenstein's Monster over to their home for dinner. What types of food would they serve? What would be his favorite food and drink?

Students will then be given the place setting[7] located on page 40. They will draw the dinner they would serve to the monster.

Students will then present their dinner to the class, explaining their meal choice.

Biography of Mary Shelley[8]

Mary Shelley (1797-1851) was the daughter of William Godwin, the foremost English writer on the French Revolution, and his wife Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of the *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). Her mother died only days after Mary's birth.

Mary was brought up with her elder sister Fanny Godwin, the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and her American lover Gilbert Imlay, who was adopted by Godwin and reared as his own child until the age of eleven when he disclosed her parentage to her. The family complications were considerably advanced in 1801 with Godwin's remarriage to his neighbor, the widowed Mary Jane Clairmont, which brought two additional children, Charles and Claire Clairmont, into the household. A fifth sibling was added in 1803 with the birth of William Godwin, Jr.

The five children were instructed principally at home. Following Godwin's own precepts, there was little distinction made in their educations on the basis of sex, so Mary Godwin had an education of considerable breadth, one that few girls of her time could equal. Apart from formal instruction, the children were exposed almost daily to Godwin's extensive acquaintance among the London intelligentsia, ranging from the poet and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whom Mary heard recite "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in Godwin's living room, to scientists like Humphry Davy and her father's bosom friend William Nicholson, the two foremost experimenters with galvanic electricity in the early years of the nineteenth century. These figures especially would later have a noticeable impact on the writing of *Frankenstein*.

As heady as this intellectual climate was, there was a practical side to Mary's education in the Godwin-Clairmont household as well, for its income derived mainly from the proceeds of the Juvenile Library, their publishing venture specializing in books of instruction for younger readers. At the age of ten Mary had her first experience with publication, when the Juvenile Library printed her witty poem, *Mounseer Nongtongpaw; or, The Discoveries of John Bull in a Trip to Paris*. By 1812 it was in a fourth edition.

It was on November 11th 1812 that Mary met the poet Percy Shelley, then only twenty years old. Shelley was visiting her father (whom he admired) accompanied by his wife Harriet. They met again in May 1814. Mary was by this time seventeen and fascinated by Shelley. They were mutually attracted, and Shelley much admired her not only for her appearance and her parents' reputations, but also for her intellectual abilities that far outweighed those of Harriet.

Mary and Percy eloped on July 28, 1814 to a France still recovering from defeat in war. This period would provide material for Mary's second book, *History of a Six Weeks' Tour Through a part of France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland*. No doubt, it also inspired the brilliantly described and evocative landscapes of *Frankenstein*. The couple were ruined upon their return by disapproving parents on both sides who cut down their allowances until the creditors were upon them. Worse, Percy's second child by Harriet was born in November and Mary herself had become pregnant. She lost her child only weeks after her birth on March 6, 1815 and almost immediately became pregnant with William who was born in 1816. Mary also had to care for a seriously ill Percy.

Between 1815 and 1819, Mary lost three of her four children. In the same period, Fanny Imlay Godwin and Harriet Shelley committed suicide. Two weeks after they were notified of Harriet's suicide, on December 30, 1816, Mary Godwin and Percy Bysshe Shelley were married.

This event brought about an immediate reconciliation with Godwin, but was attended as well by a law-suit in the Court of Chancery brought by Harriet's family with the intention of depriving the father of custody of his two children from the marriage. The success of this suit convinced Shelley and Mary that they would suffer continual persecution if they remained in England.

On the first day of 1818 Frankenstein was published anonymously, followed shortly after by Shelley's book-length narrative poem, *The Revolt of Islam*. On March12, Mary and Shelley, with their two children Clara and William, departed from England to make a new home in Italy.

The four years they spent in Italy saw the establishment of Percy Bysshe Shelley as one of the foremost poets in the English language. It likewise furthered the career of Mary Shelley as "The Author of Frankenstein," the rubric under which she continued her anonymous publication with a second novel immersed in medieval Italian history, *Valperga*: or, *The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca* (1823). After Percy Bysshe Shelley's death by drowning in 1822, Mary Shelley found herself without sufficient financial means to remain in Italy and, with some reluctance, returned to England to begin a second existence there in the fall of 1823.

She never equalled the popular success of *Frankenstein*, but she published a number of other novels after *Valperga: The Last Man* (1826), *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck* (1830), *Lodore* (1835), and *Falkner* (1837). In addition to her novels, she produced a large volume of miscellaneous prose: short stories, biographies, and travel writings, including the retrospective *Rambles in Italy and Germany* of 1844. She likewise supervised the publication of her husband's *Posthumous Poems*, which appeared in 1824, his *Poetical Works* (1839), and his prose (1839 and 1840). Her only surviving child was Percy Florence Shelley, who was born in 1819 and who acceded to the baronetcy upon the death of Shelley's father, Sir Timothy, in 1844. Mary Shelley herself died in her home in Chester Square, London, on February 1, 1851.

The Birth of Frankenstein[9]

In the summer of 1816, nineteen-year-old Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and her lover, the poet Percy Shelley (whom she married later that year), visited the poet Lord Byron at his villa beside Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Stormy weather frequently forced them indoors, where they and Byron's other guests sometimes read from a volume of ghost stories. One evening, Byron challenged his guests to each write one themselves. Mary's story, inspired by a dream, became *Frankenstein*.

> *When I placed my head upon my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. . . . I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision—I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous Creator of the world. (Mary Shelley, from her introduction to the third edition.)*

Although early critics greeted the novel with a combination of praise and disdain, readers were fascinated with and a bit horrified by the macabre aspects of the novel. Interestingly, the macabre has transformed into the possible in the twenty-first century. The ethical implications of genetic engineering, and, more recently, the cloning of livestock, find echoes in Shelley's work. In addition to scientific interest, literary commentators have noted the influence of both Percy Shelley and William Godwin (Mary's father) in the novel. Ultimately, the novel resonates with philosophical and moral ramifications: themes of nurture versus nature, good versus evil, and ambition versus social responsibility.

Brief Synopsis[10]

Frankenstein is the work for which Mary Shelley is remembered by the general public. The story unfolds in a series of letters from Robert Walton, and enterprising Artic explorer, to his sister in England. Walton reports the sighting of a giant manlike creature driving a dogsled in the icy distance. This scene is followed by the rescue of a man whose sled had become stranded in the ice floe. The man is Victor Frankenstein.

As he recovers his health, Frankenstein relates his story. He tells of his warm family life in Geneva and of his early enthusiasm for the natural philosophy of alchemists such as Cornelius Agrippa. At the age of twenty-one, Frankenstein leaves to study science at Ingolstadt. There, he learns the difference between modern science and mysticism. He embraces scientific method but holds onto one of the dreams of his former beliefs—the creation of life. Ultimately, he completely embraces this goal, assembling a being of huge scale in order to simplify its construction. When his creature gains life, Frankenstein is instantly revolted. He exits the apartment and wanders about, hoping that the spark of life in the creature will expire spontaneously. The following day the creature disappeared, and Victor is visited by his best friend, Henry Clerval, who, unaware of the creature's existence, helps Victor to regain his composure over the next several months. In early May, Victor's younger brother William is murdered outside Geneva. A servant is accused of the crime. Upon his return home, Victor catches a brief sight of the creature, whose existence has nearly slipped Victor's mind. He senses that the creature is responsible for his brother's murder, but he remains silent as the servant is convicted of the crime. After the trial, while vacationing in the Alps, Victor meets the creature on a glacier. There, he learns of the creature's cruel rejection by humankind, its self-education (the creature is easily the most articulate character in the book), and its subsequent revenge on its creator. Though the creature did indeed murder William, Victor is torn between hatred and sympathy. Reluctantly, he agrees to animate a female companion for the creature.

After months of indecision, Victor travels to the Orkney Islands (north of Scotland) to begin the work that he has promised the Monster. Midway through, in sight of the creature himself he becomes fearful of the havoc that might be caused by a race of such fiends. He destroys the lifeless torso over which he stands. The creature vows to be with Victor on Victor's wedding night (he is engaged to a cousin) and departs. After murdering Victor's friend Clerval, a crime of which Victor is briefly accused, the creature disappears. Victor is wed in Geneva and awaits a confrontation with the creature. Instead, the creature slips into his bedroom, murders his bride, and escapes. Finally, Victor goes to the authorities. Finding no hope there, he pursues the creature himself, winding up on Walton's ship. There, he dies of exhaustion from the hunt. The novel closes with a visit to Walton's ship by the creature. The creature laments the death of his creator and departs, vowing to take his own life.

Historical Context[11]

The Romantic Period is the historical period during which *Frankenstein* was written. It stretches from c.1785 to c.1830, a time of considerable political and social upheaval. It was a time which saw England change from a largely agricultural society to a modern industrial nation, and with this change came a shift in the balance of economic power. The aristocracy's influence waned as that of the wealthy, industry-owning middle classes grew.

It was also a time of war. The American Revolution and the French Revolution brought ideas of popular freedom, of the power of the common laborer and of the right to equality. In England these ideas were at first enthusiastically received by a large number of Liberal and Radical thinkers, William Godwin foretold, in his 1793 *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice* an inevitable but peaceful evolution towards a society in which property would be equally distributed and government redundant. However, the later terrifying and violent stage of the French Revolution dampened approval for this type of Republicanism.

In England, the time of revolution was one of fear, for the ruling classes particularly. As a result they passed a number of strict laws in an attempt to secure their hold and the nation's stability. Public meetings were banned, habeas corpus was suspended and those advocating even moderate political change were charged with high treason in time of war. Towards the end of this period, when demobilized soldiers returned home after Napoleon's defeat in 1815, there was a great deal of unemployment, and what work was available was extremely poorly paid. Workers, as yet un-enfranchised and legally forbidden from forming unions, turned to petitions, protest meetings and then riots to express their discontent. Some former manufacturing workers, now unemployed due to increasing mechanization, attempted to destroy the machines which had replaced them. The government responded with the passing, in 1812, of a bill prescribing the death penalty for such sabotage.

Events and tensions escalated somewhat towards the end of the Romantic Period. In 1819 troops charged a large but orderly assembly of workers at St. Peter's Fields in Manchester, killing nine and injuring hundreds more, in an atrocity which became known as the Peterloo Massacre. Agitation continued, leading to such an atmosphere of revolutionary threat and social instability that in 1830, feeling that England was the closest it had ever come to revolution, Parliament was postponed, and the age of the Whig Reforms was ushered in.

Frankenstein is a unique novel in the canon of English literature. The novel seeks to find the answers to questions that no doubt perplexed Mary Shelley and the readers of her time.

Shelley presents a unique character in Victor Frankenstein and his creation, the Monster. It is as though there are two distinct halves to one character. Each half competes for attention from the other and for the chance to be the ruler of the other half. In the end, this competition reduces both to ruins.

Shelley also is keenly aware of the concern that technology was advancing at a rate that dizzied the mind of early eighteenth century readers. Perhaps this novel is addressing that issue of advances created by men, but which fly in the face of "natural" elements and divine plans.

Mary Shelley crafts her exquisite novel in a way to direct attention to the treatment of the poor and uneducated as a major theme throughout the book. She would have learned these precepts from her father William Godwin, a noted writer and philosopher.

Literary Context[12]

Though *Frankenstein* is customarily classified as a horror story (albeit the first and purest of its kind), it is interesting to note that Mary Shelley's contemporaries regarded it as a serious novel of ideas. It served as an illustration of many of the tenets of William Godwin's philosophy, and did more to promote his ideas than his own work ever did. The novel does not, however, subscribe to all of Godwin's precepts. It stands in explicit opposition to the idea that man can achieve perfection. In fact, it argues that any attempt to attain perfection will ultimately end in ruin.

Frankenstein is part of the Gothic movement in literature, a form that was only just becoming popular in England at the time of its publication. The Gothic mode was a reaction against the humanistic, rationalist literature of The Age of Reason; one might say it was ushered in by the death of Keats, the English author with whom Romanticism is perhaps most closely associated.

Frankenstein might be seen as a compromise between the Gothic approach and the Romantic one. The novel addresses serious philosophical subjects in a fantastical manner though it confronts recognizable human problems, it can hardly be said to take place in a "rational," comprehensible, recognizable natural world. Some critics have suggested that this tension between Gothic and Romantic literary modes echoes the philosophical tension that existed between herself and her husband, the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

The Gothic: The term 'gothic' is used freely in our time, despite most people's having little comprehension of what it means with regard to literature. The simplest definition is *a style of fiction characterized by the use of desolate or remote settings and macabre, mysterious or violent incidents*. This, however, deals only with the outward appearance of the genre. At a deeper level, the Gothic can be characterized by exploration of *social values, prescriptions and proscriptions, concern with good and evil, and questions regarding the boundaries between what is human, monstrous, natural, unnatural, supernatural and divine.*

The Gothic uses monsters and the unknown to make readers consider and examine what knowledge is, and what being 'human' really means. It is a world which opened up "*the dark irrational side of human nature - the savage egoism, the perverse impulses, and the nightmarish terrors that lie beneath the controlled and ordered surface of the conscious mind.*"

Romanticism: The Romantic movement in European literature and the arts lasted from the late 1700s to the end of the nineteenth century. A reaction against the neo-Classicist movement which stressed intellect and reason, Romanticism consisted mainly of: a belief in the innate goodness of humans in their natural state; individualism; reverence for nature; primitivism; philosophic Idealism; a somewhat paradoxical tendency toward free thought and religious mysticism; revolt against political authority and social convention; an exaltation of physical passion; the cultivation of emotion and sensation for their own sakes; and, a persistent attraction to the supernatural, the morbid, the melancholy, and the cruel.

The Characters of Frankenstein[13]

Robert Walton: The reader's representative in the novel, he is the person to whom Victor relates his story. He has much in common with Victor: ambition, drive, and the desire for glory.

Victor Frankenstein: He is the main character, a man driven by ambition. His quest for absolute knowledge and power will eventually end in his own ruin.

The Creature: The work of Frankenstein's hands. He is Frankenstein's double, his persecutor, and his victim. The lives of him and his creator are inextricably entwined.

Elizabeth Lavenza: Both Victor's sister and his bride. Elizabeth is presented as being angelically good and incomparably beautiful. She represents ideal womanhood and its promises of love and comfort.

Caroline Beufort: Victor's mother; a paradigm of motherly concern and generosity. Her death provides the catalyst for Victor's desire to transcend death. It is her last wish that Victor and Elizabeth be married.
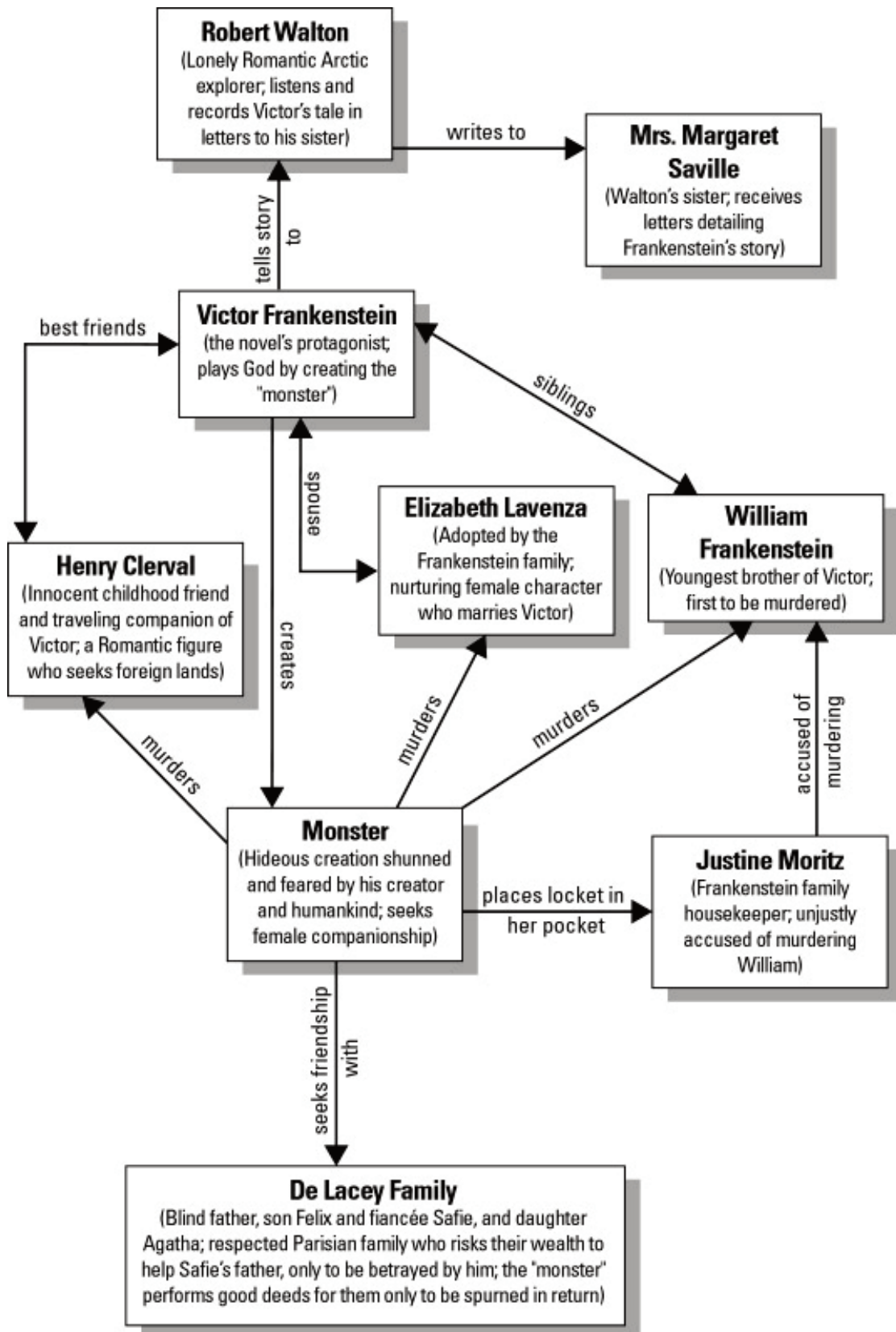
Alphonse Frankenstein: Victor's father; yet another shining example of kindness and selflessness. His happiness depends on the happiness of his children. If they fail, he does as well; thus, their deaths precipitate his own.

William: The youngest son of the Frankenstein family. His death at the hands of the monster renders him a symbol of lost and violated innocence.

Henry Clerval: Victor's best friend since childhood. Fascinated with the history of mankind, he is Victor's intellectual opposite. He, too, will be murdered by the monster; he is perhaps a symbol of the destruction of Victor's own goodness and potential.

Justine Moritz: Though a servant in the Frankenstein household, she is more like a sister to Victor and Elizabeth. She is executed for William's murder, and thus becomes yet another martyr to lost virtue and innocence.

Character Map[14]

Robert Walton
(Lonely Romantic Arctic explorer; listens and records Victor's tale in letters to his sister)

writes to →

Mrs. Margaret Saville
(Walton's sister; receives letters detailing Frankenstein's story)

tells story to ↑

Victor Frankenstein
(the novel's protagonist; plays God by creating the "monster")

best friends →

siblings

Henry Clerval
(Innocent childhood friend and traveling companion of Victor; a Romantic figure who seeks foreign lands)

spouse

creates

Elizabeth Lavenza
(Adopted by the Frankenstein family; nurturing female character who marries Victor)

William Frankenstein
(Youngest brother of Victor; first to be murdered)

murders

murders

murders

accused of murdering

Monster
(Hideous creation shunned and feared by his creator and humankind; seeks female companionship)

places locket in her pocket →

Justine Moritz
(Frankenstein family housekeeper; unjustly accused of murdering William)

seeks friendship with

De Lacey Family
(Blind father, son Felix and fiancée Safie, and daughter Agatha; respected Parisian family who risks their wealth to help Safie's father, only to be betrayed by him; the "monster" performs good deeds for them only to be spurned in return)

Major Themes[15]

Prejudice and Injustice: Prejudice, or judging people with little or no evidence, is a recurring theme throughout *Frankenstein*. The first major incidence of it comes when Victor abandons his creature. Worse, when he wakes to see it reach out to him just hours after its 'birth', Victor assumes it means harm. In fact, it is simply the natural action of a 'child' reaching out for its 'parent'.

People who come across the Monster are all deceived by its appearance into thinking it will do them harm, when in reality it has been born with completely pure and good intentions. It is attacked by townspeople, beaten by Felix (who it thought could be a friend) and shot at by a peasant. It is no wonder it turns evil in the face of such prejudice. Shelley makes us question how we treat those who appear monstrous when we may be monsters ourselves.

Family: *Frankenstein*, is a work centered around the concept of the family, albeit so often a failed one. Each unit, from the explorer with paternal reverence of Victor Frankenstein to Victor's own relationship with his creation represents a familial bond.

Knowledge and Discovery: The novel begins with Walton describing his own voyage of discovery, which he hopes will lead him to the North Pole. On meeting Victor, he hears of another tale of discovery, that of the secret of creating life itself.

The Monster is also on a path of self-discovery, and all three characters share a powerful desire to acquire knowledge – a desire that ultimately leads two of them to their deaths, and which very nearly kills Walton.

Responsibility: Mary Shelley seems not to condemn the act of creation but rather Frankenstein's lack of willingness to accept the responsibility for his deeds. His creation only becomes a monster at the moment his creator deserts it . Thus *Frankenstein* warns of the careless use of science - the book was written at an early stage of the Industrial Revolution, a period of dramatic scientific and technological advance.

This is still an important issue, even 200 years after the book was written. Taken into consideration what many inventions of the last 50 years brought upon mankind, one must assume that many scientists still do not care much. (E.g. the splitting of the atom was used to create nuclear bombs and the invention of the computer resulted in de-humanization of our society).

Isolation: *Frankenstein* is full of characters who suffer physical or emotional isolation. Shelley deliberately chose settings that would emphasize this, such as the remote vastness of the Arctic Circle, where the story begins and ends. Walton chooses to isolate himself in this frozen wasteland, yet soon regrets the absence of a true companion on his expedition.

Victor also chooses to isolate himself, firstly at university in Ingolstadt, when he avoids contact with his family to work on the Monster. Later, he neglects Elizabeth (his most loving, unfailing companion) out of fear she will discover his secret. He then chooses the remote Orkney Islands on which to embark on the construction of the second creature, and seems most comfortable when surrounded by the wilderness of vast lakes, towering mountains or wild heathland.

The creature is a victim of isolation. However, unlike Walton and Victor, it does not bring this upon itself. Indeed, it tries early on to make contact with humans and connect with them, but is always abused, leading to self-imposed isolation in the hovel next to the De Laceys' cottage.

The torment it feels at being excluded from society in general, and loving companionship in particular, is what makes it ask Victor for a mate. When it later witnesses Victor tearing this mate to pieces, it sees a lifetime of isolation ahead and only then commits its most terrible crimes. Shelley's point here is that isolation, whether self-imposed or not, can only bring about unhappiness, a breakdown in civilization and, ultimately, tragic consequences.

Vocabulary from *Frankenstein*
adapted by Deanna McFadden[16]

There are a variety of ways to study vocabulary through *Frankenstein*. Initially, ask students to identify words that are unfamiliar in the text. Next, they can collaborate in groups or as a class to create definitions of the words based on their usage in context. Finally, they can check their definitions with a dictionary.

Alternatively, ask students to create illustrations demonstrating the definitions of the words.

Note: Vocabulary terms are listed in the order they appear in the novel

Savage:
1 : not tamed <savage beasts>
2 : very cruel and unrestrained <a savage beating>
3 : not cultivated : wild <the savage wilderness>
4 : not civilized <savage customs>

Charming:
1 : pleasant and attractive especially in manner <a charming person>

Logic:
1 : the study of the rules and tests of sound reasoning
2 : reasoning 1; especially : sound reasoning <no logic in that remark>
3 : connection (as of facts or events) in a way that seems reasonable <the logic of a situation>
4 : the arrangement of circuit elements (as in a computer) needed for computation

Tender:
1 : having a soft or yielding quality <tender steak>
2 a : physically weak : delicate <a tender plant> b : immature, young <children of tender years>
3 : loving, affectionate: <a tender look>
4 : showing care : considerate

Chemistry:
1 : a science that deals with the composition, structure, and properties of substances and with the changes that they go through
2 : chemical composition, properties, or processes <the *chemistry* of gasoline> <the *chemistry* of iron> <the *chemistry* of blood>

Microscope:
1 : an optical instrument consisting of a lens or a combination of lenses for making enlarged or magnified images of minute objects
2 : an instrument using radiation other than light for making enlarged images of minute objects

Destiny:
1 : something to which a person or thing is destined : fortune
2 : the course of events held to be arranged by a superhuman power

Tomb:
1 : grave
2 : a house or burial chamber for dead people

Gloomy:
1 : partial or total darkness
2 : a sad mood

Hurricane:
a cyclone formed in the tropics with winds of 74 miles (119 kilometers) per hour or greater that is usually accompanied by rain, thunder, and lightning

Laboratory:
a place equipped for making scientific experiments and tests

Sacrifice:
a giving up of something especially for the sake of someone else; *also* : something so given up

Cherish:
1 : to hold dear : feel or show affection for <cherished her friends>
2 : to keep with care and affection : nurture <cherishes her friendship>
3 : to harbor in the mind <cherish a hope>

Limb:
1 : any of the paired parts (as an arm, wing, or leg) of an animal that stick out from the body and are used mostly in moving and grasping; especially : a leg or arm of a human being
2 : a large branch of a tree

Disgust:
a strong feeling of dislike caused especially by something sickening or evil

Locket:
a small ornamental case usually worn on a chain or necklace

Loyal:
1 : a faithful to one's lawful government b : faithful to a person to whom allegiance or affection is due
2 : faithful to a cause or ideal

Grief:
1 : a deep sorrow : sadness b : a cause of sorrow
2 : a things that cause problems <enough grief for one day> b : an unfortunate happening

Glacier:
a large body of ice moving slowly down a slope or valley or spreading outward on a land surface

Miserable:
1 : a shabby in condition or quality <a miserable place to live> b : causing great discomfort or unhappiness <a miserable cold>
2 : extremely poor or unhappy : wretched
3 : pitiful 1, lamentable

Cloak:
1 : a long loose outer garment
2 : something that conceals or covers <a cloak of secrecy surrounded the talks>

Cottage:
1 : a small one-family house
2 : a small house for vacation use

Homeland:
one's native land, land of origin

Farewell:
1 : an expression of good wishes at parting : good-bye
2 : an act of departure

Physical Characteristics
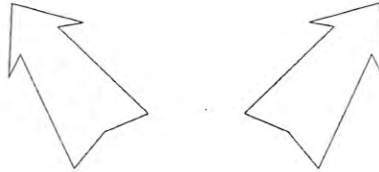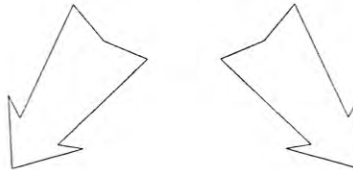
Frankenstein's Monster
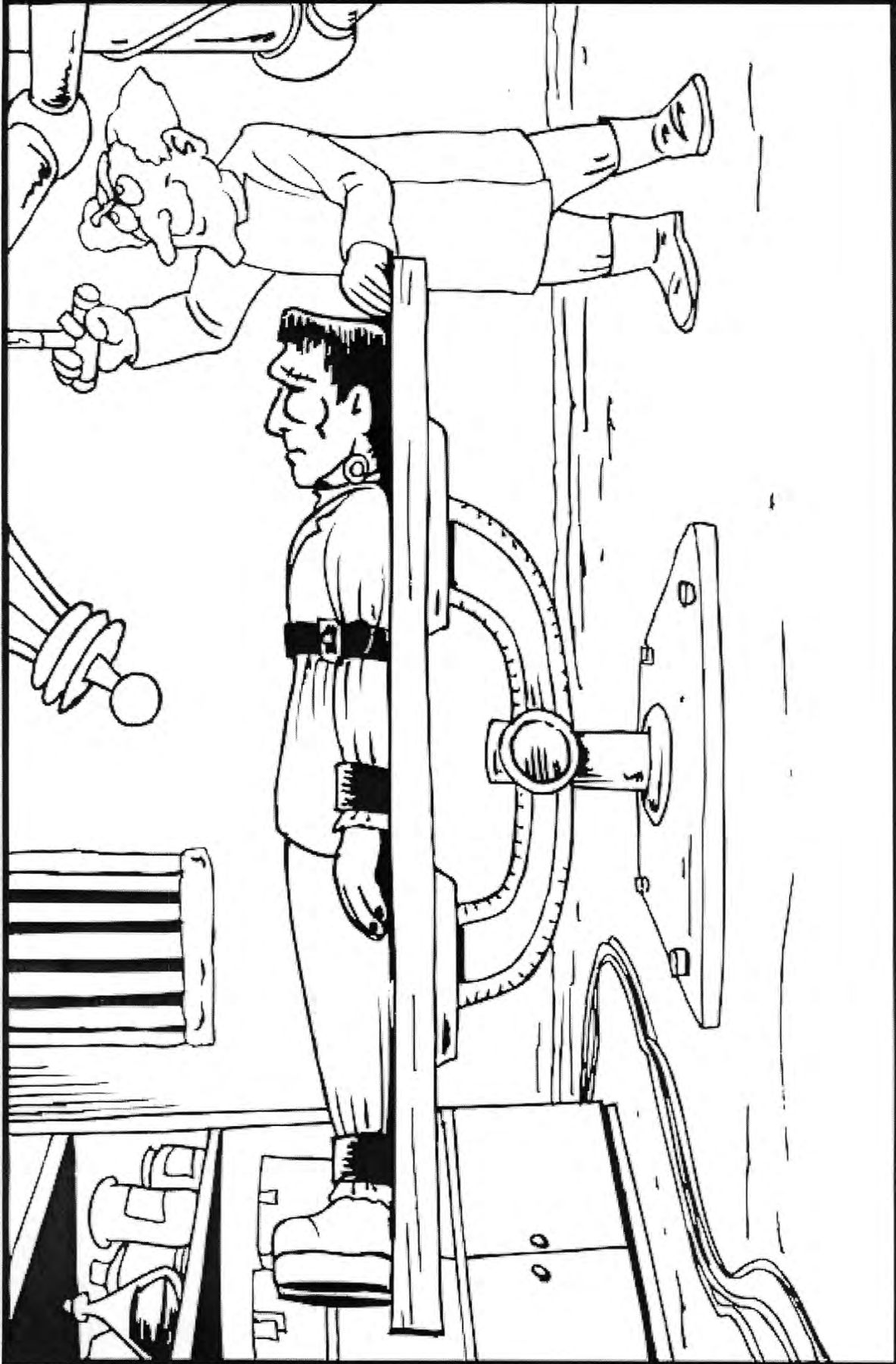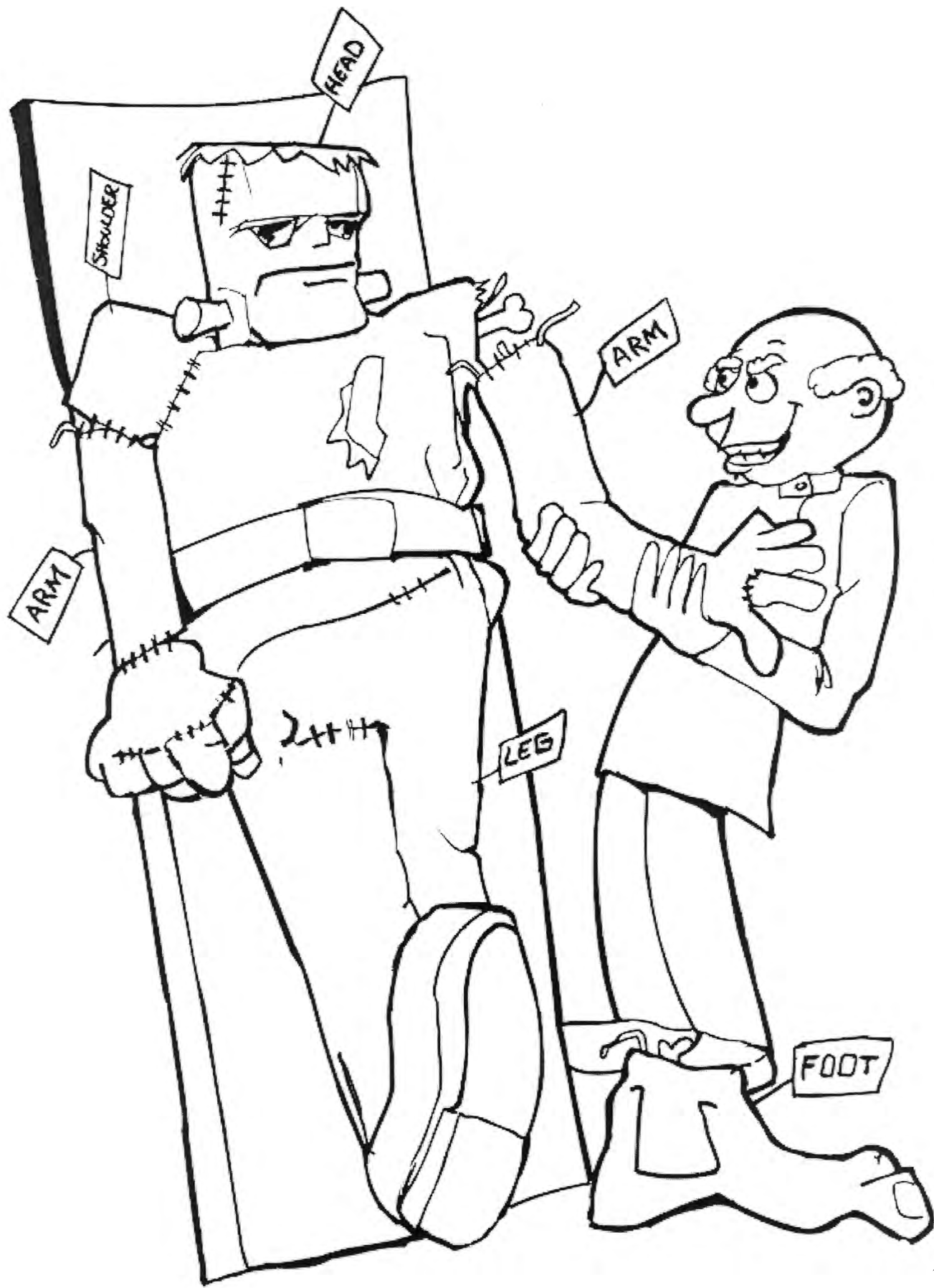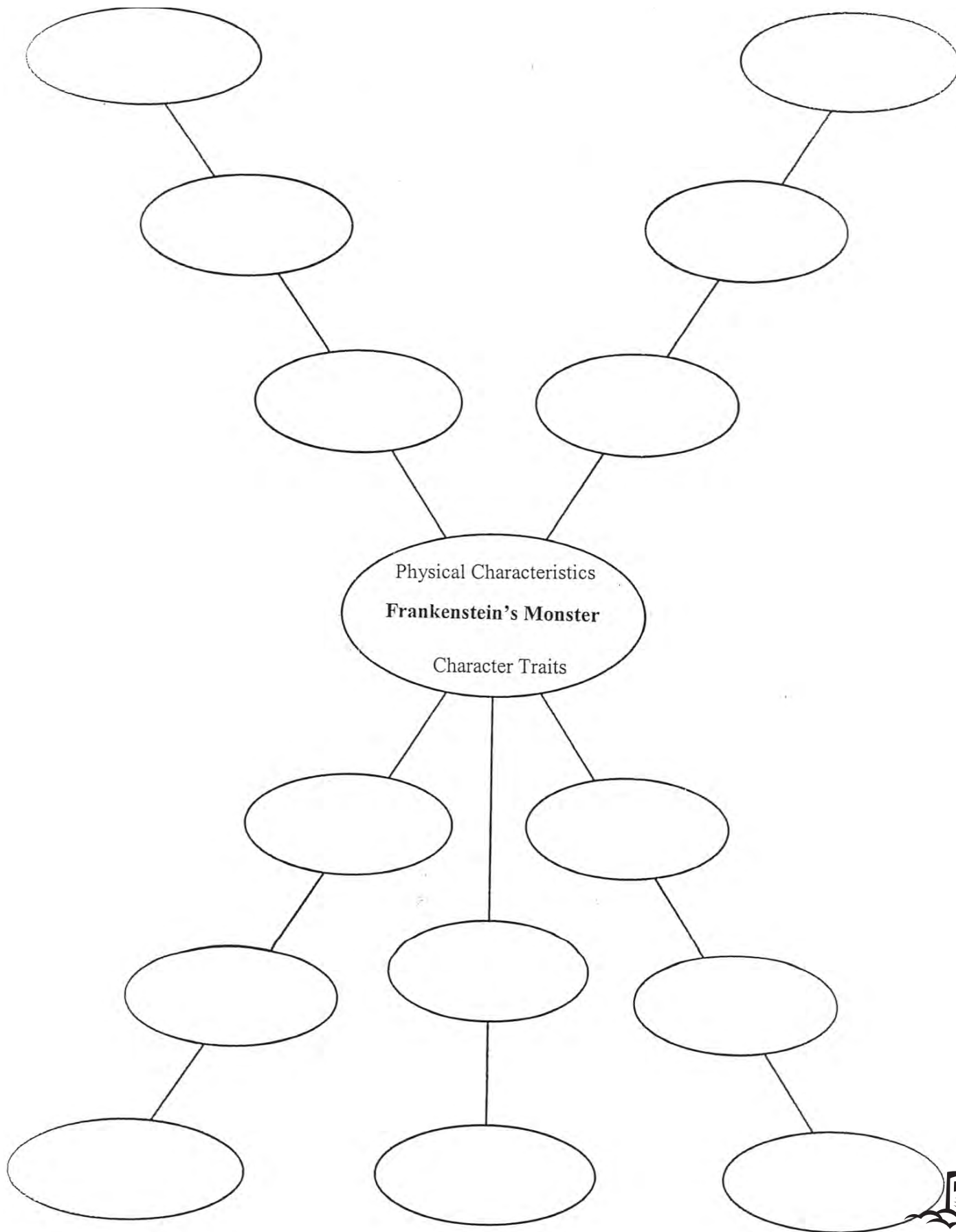
Character Traits

Character Map

Actions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Says:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Feelings:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
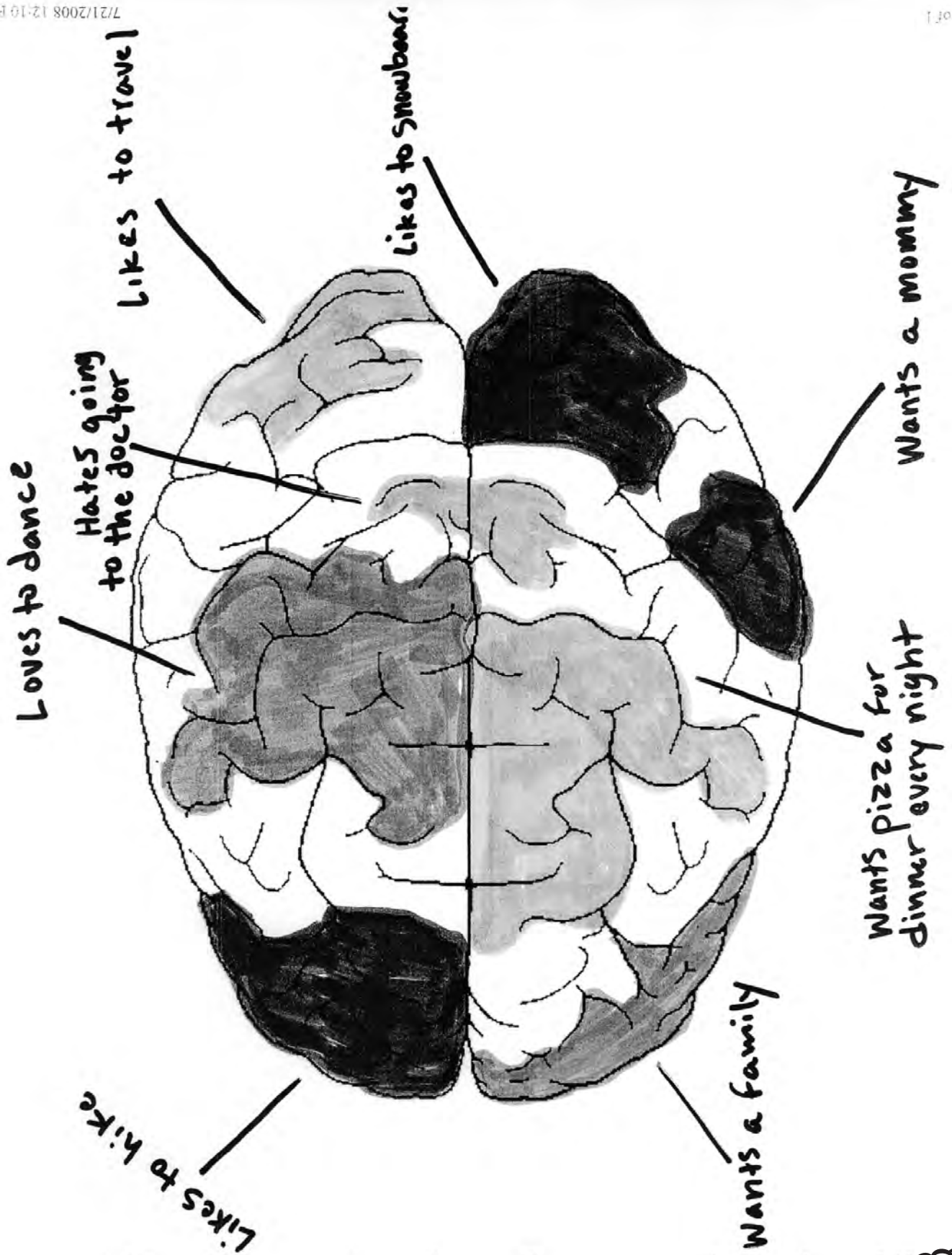
_____

_____

Appearance (Looks):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Identifying Character Traits Worksheet

Book Title: _____

Character Name: _____

Actions	Character Trait They Reveal

Likes to travel

Likes to snowboard

Wants a mommy

Hates going
to the doctor

Loves to dance

Wants pizza for
dinner every night

Likes to hike

Wants a family

Name: _____   Date: _____

Your Monster's Vital Statistics

What is your monster's name?

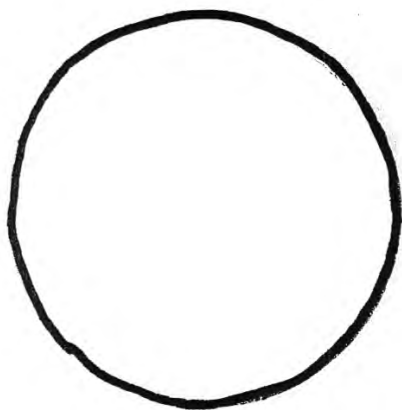What does your monster look like?

What does your monster sound like?

What kind of food or fuel does your monster need?

Does your monster serve any function or have any "super powers"? If so, what are they?
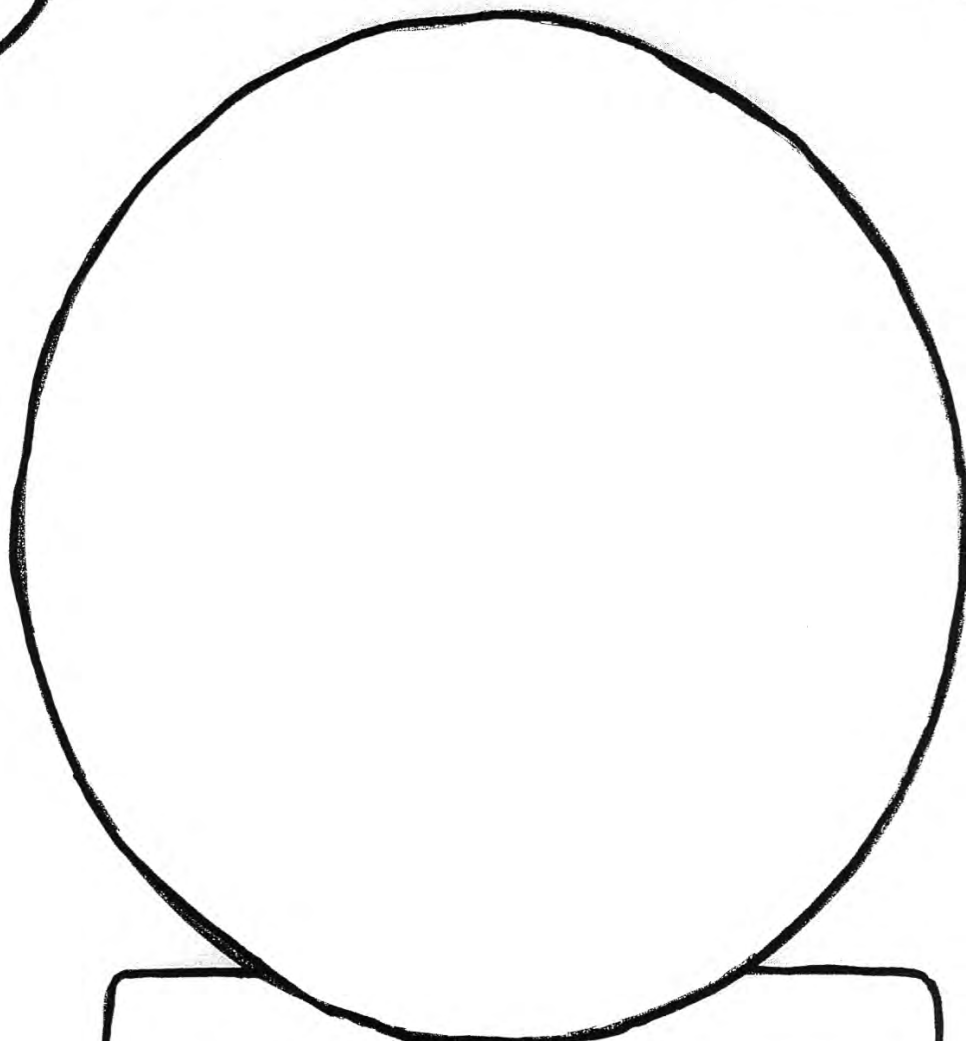
Why did you create your monster and what do you intend to do with it now that it is here?
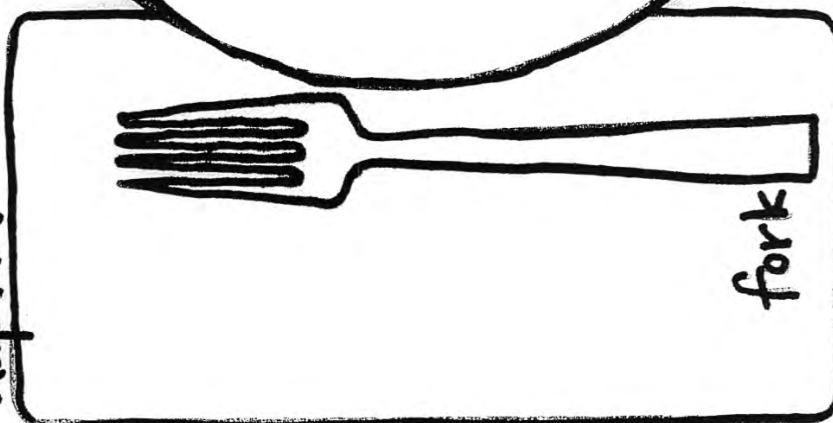
_____'s Place Mat
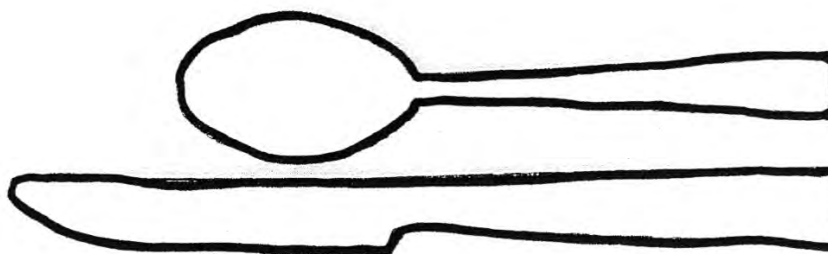
spoon

knife

napkin

fork

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