

Heroes

By Robert Cormier

Context

- Heroes was written in 1998 and focuses on events around World War II.
- Many of the flashbacks in the novel refer to the **Great Depression** which was an effect of the Wall Street Crash of 1929. Many families then were poor and underfed. After Franklin Roosevelt became president, he set up schemes to tackle unemployment-This is seen in chapter 5 where Francis talks about people, renovating the 'Wreck Centre', who had been hired under a new municipal program.
- Japan bombed Pearl Harbour in Hawaii on 7th December 1941. America joined the **war** the following day. The novel is centred around the affect this had on individuals and communities; particularly the juxtaposition between the knee-jerk reaction of patriotism when Larry LaSalle first joins the war effort and the subsequent affects the war has on the veterans after they return home.

Summary

- Francis Joseph Cassavant is eighteen. He has just returned home from the Second World War, and he has no face. He does have a gun and a mission: to murder his childhood hero.

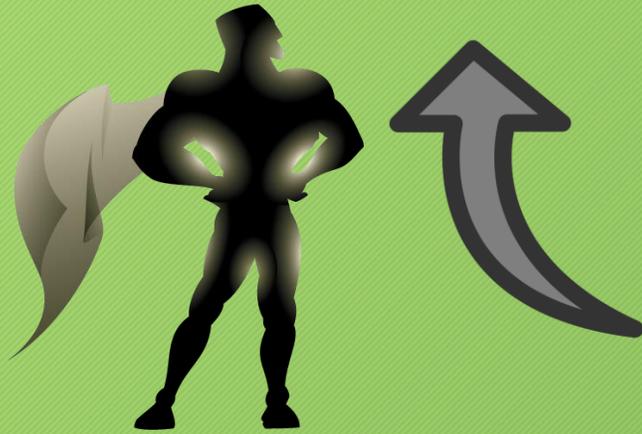
Francis lost most of his face when he fell on a grenade in France. He received the Silver Star for bravery, but was it really an act of heroism?

- Now, having survived, he is looking for Larry LaSalle, a man he once admired and respected, a man adored by many people, a man who also received a Silver Star for bravery.

- Francis wants to kill LaSalle for raping his childhood sweetheart and ruining both of their lives.
- Now back in Frenchtown and finally faced with the man he has despised for three years, can Francis go through with his 'mission'?



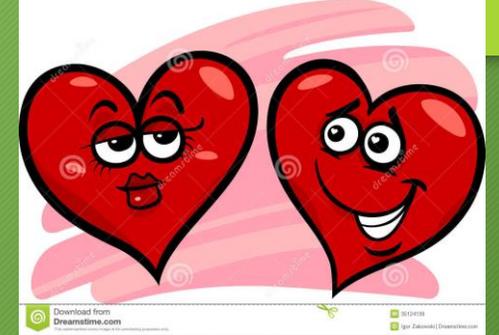
Heroism



Concealment and Revealmment



Love



Themes



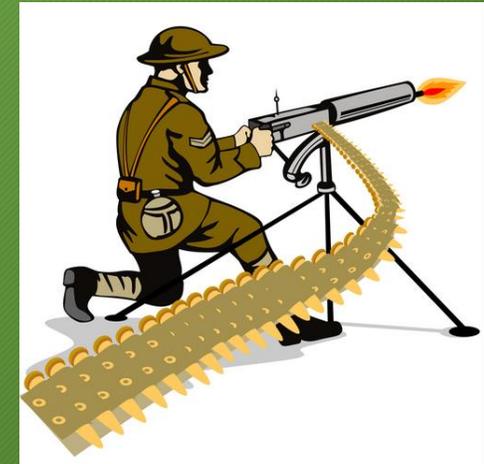
Innocence/Lost of Childhood



Forgiveness



War



Characters

Francis Cassavant

- The main protagonist in the novel and the first person narrator of the text.
- Francis reveals his story through a series of flashbacks.
- He battles with the idea of being a hero and questions what it means to be one.
- Francis falls for the beautiful Nicole Renard and longs for them to be together.
- His physical injuries are described in grotesque detail in the first chapter.
- He joined the army to die after wanting to commit suicide.
- He does his best to 'close the door' to his future.

WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO
FRANCIS CASSAVANT?



Larry LaSalle

LaSalle is the glamorous and charismatic man who runs the youth club in Frenchtown. He has a talent for bringing out the best in people, and he makes special favourites of Nicole and Francis.

There is a mystery surrounding LaSalle's departure from New York.

LaSalle joins up the very first morning after war is declared; his actions in the war lead to him being awarded a Silver Star medal, and when he returns home on leave he is given a hero's welcome by the townspeople and the members of the Wreck Centre. On that leave he manipulates Francis into leaving him alone with Nicole, and he then rapes her.

He appears to show no repentance for his actions.

At the end of the novel he shoots himself- why doesn't he let Francis kill him?



Nicole Renard

Nicole is a bit of a mystery through the book, more conspicuous through her absence than her presence. This is appropriate because she is more important in what she symbolises to Francis - happiness and innocence - than in their actual relationship. Nicole is much more mature than Francis - although she initially blames him for standing by and not stopping LaSalle, she realises very quickly her error and tries to find him to tell him so. She is the one who tells Francis that he should try to write through what he has experienced

WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO
NICOLE RENARD?



Minor Characters

Arthur Rivier

- Although he is not one of the main characters Arthur Rivier is significant as he shares Francis's feelings about the horrors of the war.
- He is the only one to recognise Francis, although it takes him a while
- Arthur appears to be functioning normally. However, one evening Francis finds him collapsed, drunk and crying in the alley.
- He says none of them were heroes, they were 'just there'. It is important enough for Francis to repeat it in the very last chapter.

Enrico Rucelli

- Francis met Enrico during his time at war. His experiences are used to show the extent of war as he lost both his legs and his left arm. He has a cheerful attitude despite his injuries but he does feel despair.



Summary of Chapters and Important Quotes

[F:\Heroes Summary and Quotes Full.docx](#)

Past Paper Questions

<https://d.docs.live.net/093c10e6409dba58/Heroes%20Past%20Paper.docx>