

Francis joseph
cassavant



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Francis has never been a particularly attractive person 'I was never handsome to begin with' but now he does not have anything that even resembles a face, 'I have no face' he does not have ears, more just flesh, no eyebrows, he has lost his teeth but it is possible for him to wear dentures but his biggest problem is his nose, 'My nostrils are like two small caves'.

Therefore, Francis keeps himself well covered up, scarf, baseball cap, a large fatigue army jacket and many bandages.

He wears all these to cover his face up but also to hide his identity from people he knows. When Francis was young he never fitted in 'I have never been a hero. Too short. Too uncoordinated. Too shy' until Larry LaSalle helped him to find what he was good at, table tennis. 'You're going to be a champion' Larry helped him find the courage to be that champion and win tournaments and beat everyone. But also gave him the courage to talk to Nicole, the love of his life.

For the first time in my love, a tide of confidence swept to me' Nicole gave him the ability to be someone completely different and enabled him to do things he never could do before. 'I was actually dating Nicole Renard' Francis had never been happier and life was perfect. Life suddenly changed on the 3rd of July 1943, the day that Larry LaSalle returned from the war, he was a hero and greeted like a hero should be 'a crowd gathered at the Monument Depot to greet his arrival'. He was a Frenchtown hero and a true mentor to the children of the Wreck centre.

Larry was always someone the children admired with his movie star smile 'My hero from the war'. He was so admired by everyone that he was thrown

a welcome home party by Frenchtown, 'You are our celebration,' the night ended in the "gang" from the Wreck Centre going to have a look at the place but they shortly left leaving Francis, Nicole and Larry by themselves. In that moment everything changed. Francis left Nicole and Larry to have one last dance for old time's sake but Francis knew in his gut not to leave but he never stepped in, not once.

He stood there and listened while Larry raped Nicole. He never moved, he just waited, and only once he had seen the betrayal in Nicole's face did he take it in, 'It's amazing that the heart makes no noise when it cracks.' From that moment it was never the same again, the one person he loved more than anything was gone, 'Poor Francis, go away Francis, just go away'. Why did Francis just stand there and not help her, the girl he supposedly loved and he did nothing. Suicide seemed to be Francis' answer to what had happened.

A week after his confrontation with Nicole, he went to church to confession when he shortly found himself on the roof of the church looking down on Frenchtown before wondering 'How long would it take to plunge towards the sidewalk?' but then he starts to realise that he's not really going to jump off and commit suicide, he could not disgrace his family like this, not when men were dying everyday out on the battlefield, fighting for their country. But Francis was sure of one thing; he wanted to die, so the next day he enlisted in the army by forging his birth certificate.

Francis spent 4 years in the army and in those 4 years was rewarded with a Silver Star, a medal given out to 'Heroes'. Francis fell on a grenade to save

many men from death. He was nearly certain of death but got lucky and only came out with serious facial injuries. Francis fell on that grenade because he saw that as his way out, finally his chance to die. 'We weren't heroes. We were only there...' Francis does not think of himself as a hero and he is disgusted in the fact that people think of him as one.

Larry has been hanging around Frenchtown for weeks now, just waiting for one person to turn up so he can carry out his mission. One person, Larry LaSalle, so he can kill him for what he did to Nicole, what he did to Francis and what he did to their relationship. When Francis hears Mrs Belander is talking to a neighbour, 'He is living in the second-floor tenement of a three-decker owned by someone whose name I don't catch, on the corner of Ninth and Spruce'. This is it, the moment Francis has waited 4 years to happen, he knows exactly where to find Larry.

Larry LaSalle is not innocent' Francis knows that this is exactly the right thing to do, this is what he deserves. Francis immediately tells him exactly who he is. 'I don't plan to stay long, only long enough to carry out my mission. ' Larry and Francis share a bit of conversation about the war, and Francis being a hero yet he is so young but again Francis corrects him telling him exactly why he went to war 'I was too much of a coward to kill myself. In the war, in a battle, I figured it would be easy to get killed' but none of it seems to make sense to Larry, why would Francis want to die?

Francis is shocked that Larry does not know why but explains about that night, with Nicole but he does not understand. 'You're too hard on yourself. You didn't do anything you should feel guilty about, that should make you

want to die. You were just a child... ' Larry does not understand quite how much Francis loved Nicole and he does not realise quite how much he ruined either. After a few minutes of discussion about Larry's sins, Francis has had enough and pulls out his gun to finish off what he came here for when suddenly Larry shouts out, 'Wait, you see , Francis.

I have my own gun. I take it out and look at it all the time. I place it against my temple once in a while. I wonder how it would feel to pull the trigger and have everything come to an end. So lower your gun, Francis, one gun is enough for what has to be done. ' Francis lowers his gun and all of a sudden cannot wait to get out of there. Once he leaves the building a gunshot goes off, 'the sound of a pistol shot cracks the air'. There it is, his mission is completed, and everything in the past 4 years has lead up to this moment.