




# Heroes

*By Robert Cormier*

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## Heroes By Robert Cormier

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.

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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 a man he once admired and respected, a man adored by many people, a man who also received a Silver Star for bravery. A man who destroyed Francis's life.

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## Heroes By Robert Cormier Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #600512 in Books
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- Original language: English
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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Eighteen-year-old Francis Cassavant has returned from World War II an unwilling hero. Although he can still see and hear, a grenade has blown away his nose, his ears, his teeth, and his cheeks, leaving him faceless. Hiding his ghastly wounds with bandages and a white silk scarf, Francis welcomes the anonymity his mutilation brings him, for he has returned to his hometown with a secret mission--a plot for revenge (against his enemy Larry LaSalle) that he values more than his own life. Francis's eerily matter-of-fact acceptance of his hideous mien, along with his sweetness and selflessness, contrast sharply with his obsessive need for vengeance. No one recognizes him as the quiet kid who once loved Nicole Renard and hung out with fellow teens at the Wreck Center. LaSalle, formerly a charismatic youth leader, has also come back from the war a hero, and only Francis knows the dark side of this older man's concern for young people. But does LaSalle's one evil act wipe out all the good he has done? And is Francis just as guilty because he could have prevented it and didn't?

Robert Cormier--winner of the Margaret A. Edwards Award and many other honors--has once again crafted a riveting yarn of psychological suspense. Francis's story is revealed only gradually in hints that keep the reader guessing. Young teens will find it a quick and absorbing read, and older adolescents (and full-fledged adults, too) will relish pondering the many-sided ethical questions Cormier raises about heroism, guilt, and forgiveness. (Ages 13 to 16) --*Patty Campbell*

### From Publishers Weekly

According to PW's starred review, this dark story of a WWII veteran who seeks revenge on an old mentor "will hold fans from first page to last, and set them thinking about what really lurks behind the face of a hero." Ages 12-up.

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### From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up-Francis Cassavant, now 18 and the recipient of the respected Silver Star for heroism, returns to the Frenchtown section of Monument following World War II intent on murdering his former mentor and fellow Silver Star winner, Larry LaSalle. With a face ravaged by shrapnel from the grenade he fell on?ostensibly to save his comrades, but in reality to take his own life?Francis walks the streets of his old hometown. Wearing a silk scarf to mask his disfigurement, he remembers his childhood in the prewar days and searches for his nemesis, whom he feels sure will also return. Memories of his innocent years at St. Jude's Parochial School are sardonically juxtaposed with the present horror of his desolate existence. Expert at nothing as a boy, Francis was empowered by the encouragement of Larry, the acrobat, dancer, teacher, and coach at the town's recreation center. Francis's dreams and youth were shattered when the man, home on leave, raped Francis's girlfriend, and he failed to intervene. Disillusioned, the boy forged his birth certificate, enlisted to die an honorable death, and ended up living a nightmare. Cormier takes the notion of heroism and deconstructs it. The hero is epitomized by Francis: a white scarf, no more than a veneer, hiding an appalling reality of hypocrisy and betrayal. The thread of Catholicism is woven throughout the narrative. Characters are not absolutes, but capable of great and evil acts. This lean, compelling read may not rank among the most popular of Cormier's works, but it is a powerful and thought-provoking study.

*Jennifer A. Fakolt, formerly at Carson City Public Library, NV*

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Mary Summers:**

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