

How is the character of Nicole Renard important to the novel as a whole?

Nicole is important to the novel because she brings out most of the themes in the novel. She is also important because she is the stereotype of a young girl in the 1940s.

The first theme that Nicole brings out is love when Francis states that Nicole 'made my life there complete.' This implies that Nicole contributes to a main character. She is also Francis' childhood love and friend and described as resembling a saint. This makes her character important to the novel because she is the indispensable missing element in Francis' life.

The second theme that she brings out is war when she and Francis discuss what they want to do in the near future, Francis wants to 'read every book in the Monument Public Library' and Nicole wants to 'maybe become a nurse...' This is important because it presents the theme of relationships between Francis and Nicole. It also shows how the war is the focus of their career ambitions, Francis goes to fight, and Nicole might become a nurse. A theme of innocence is also shown here while they are watching a movie in the theatre, they are hearing the narrator talking of 'a girl that had been unknown' and they 'cheered' their fighting forces and 'booed and hissed' at Hitler. This implies that they must be quite young as they are treating war a sort of match.

The third theme that she presents is isolation when she tells Francis not to leave her 'Don't go' before she dances with Larry LaSalle. This implies that she feels nervous and apprehensive when she is alone. The themes of innocence and betrayal are shown here because Francis thinks that Larry is going to 'make her a star' but they do not know what Larry is actually going to do. This is important because the trust is broken with Larry for his assault and Francis for not doing anything, Nicole's innocence is lost because of the betrayal that she thinks that men will be nice and friendly.

The fourth theme that she presents is betrayal when she is assaulted by Larry LaSalle. She did not want Francis to leave her alone, but he did because Larry told him to. There is also a theme of innocence lost when Nicole 'stumbled into the hallway,' the way Cormier describes Nicole's appearance implies that her innocence and purity have been shattered. When Nicole sees Francis waiting outside in the dark her 'eyes flashed black with anger,' this is because she is filled with the pain and betrayal of Francis not doing anything to stop Larry.