



## Disappearing in Plain Sight

*Francis Guenette*

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## **Disappearing in Plain Sight** Francis Guenette

Sixteen-year-old Lisa-Marie has been packed off to spend the summer with her aunt on the isolated shores of Crater Lake. She is drawn to Izzy Montgomery, a gifted trauma counsellor who is struggling through personal and professional challenges. Lisa-Marie also befriends Liam Collins, a man who goes quietly about his life trying to deal with his own secrets and guilt. The arrival of a summer renter for Izzy's guest cabin is the catalyst for change amongst Crater Lake's tight knit community. People are forced to grapple with the realities of grief and desire to discover that there are no easy choices - only shades of grey.

## **Disappearing in Plain Sight Details**

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Author : Francis Guenette

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## From Reader Review Disappearing in Plain Sight for online ebook

### **Everydayreader1 says**

Crater Lake is a small fictional community. It is picturesque and somewhat isolated, chosen by its inhabitants so that each, in his or her own way, can grapple with a variety of personal trials that makes them want to disappear in plain site. And yet, they move forward, working through

I loved the characters in this book because I could relate to each of them. They all experienced great hardship and came through it to move forward with their lives. Grief, personal loss, failure to fit in ... all areas explored in this work. Francis Guenette brings these characters to life and explores the depths of their personalities in a powerfully real way. I can hardly wait to continue with the Series.

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### **Theresafic says**

The book packs an emotional punch, I found myself crying several times.

Lots of twists and turns, some I didn't expect. Some of the people didn't really become full-fledged characters to me. Dan, the priest was never more than a cardboard cut out priest. Aunt Beth never really came clear as a person, and Beullah just seemed like a bully. Lisa-Marie seemed like a real teen, but maybe a little too quick to get over her trauma.

I didn't understand how Izzy could work with friends as a trauma therapist. Unethical. The same with Justin. She worked with him at the camp and then he spends a year as a quasi camp host, who eats dinner with Izzy and is paid to work in her garden.

Over all, pretty decent book.

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### **Michelle Bacon says**

#### **Suffering and psychology**

Crater Lake has a camp where disturbed people go to get through their troubles. Izzy is an attractive counselor trying to help these people cope although she has some coping of her own to do. We explore the lives and troubles of Beulah and Aunt Bethany, Lisa-Marie, Caleb, Justin and Liam and watch as a tangled web of love and obsession unfold.

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### **Gwen says**

We're only human. It's a cliche we've all heard before, but it carries a powerful message: life's messy, and we all make mistakes.

Sometimes our mistakes are insignificant; we can pick up the pieces and move on. Other times, life deals us an unfair hand, or the choices we make lead us down an unexpected path, and the resulting issues are not so

easily solved.

What happens when our choices and imperfections continue to impact our lives for months, even years? Do we face the problem head-on and begin the healing process? Bury the past and try to move on? Are there any easy answers?

These are some of the questions indie author Francis Guenette examines in her debut novel, *Disappearing in Plain Sight*.

Set on the fictional shores of Crater Lake, Vancouver Island, Canada, Guenette's wide range of characters vary in age, profession, cultural and religious backgrounds, and sexual orientation.

Despite this diversity, they share a common thread: each character is running away from something in the past -- alcoholism, promiscuity, infidelity, sexual abuse. And these deliciously sinful backstories have led them all to Crater Lake, some for a fresh start, some to heal, and some to forget.

It's difficult to say what I enjoyed most about this novel, but the stunning description of setting, the characters who felt like old friends, and my desire to know their individual fates is what kept me reading.

Guenette's cleverly written twists and unanswered questions held my attention all the way through. I love that I incorrectly predicted the outcome of every storyline, right up to the heart-pounding climax and the rather open-ended conclusion.

Perhaps the answers will come in Guenette's sequel, *The Light Never Lies*.

*Disappearing in Plain Sight* is a story of real life problems and the often unforeseen consequences of the choices we make. It explores the themes of friendship, love and loss, grief and healing, and ultimately, the human capacity for forgiveness.

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### **Paula Obermeier McCarty says**

#### **WOW!!!**

I read a lot of books but I rarely write reviews. Most of the books are fun but not that memorable. I enjoy them but they usually don't touch me all that deeply (even the ones that are considered "literary"). This book took me by surprise.

First, I bought it thinking it took place near Crater Lake in Oregon and I used to live near there. Then I thought it was a suspense book about a missing person. Lastly, I thought it would be a typical light read. Well, I was wrong about all of those things.

This book was exceptional in that I was so drawn into the people (it's funny but it's strange to call them just "characters") that, for once, I didn't really care about the plot. The beautiful thing about this story was the way it made me examine my own core being along with the core beings of others. It made me pause my reading several times to re-evaluate some traumatic events from my past. Few stories have made me review those things with the sense of hope, compassion and peace that came from this particular book.

I didn't read the reviews on this book until after I'd read it. I knew this book had touched me deeply when I wanted to discuss some things further with many of the reviewers. I had to stop myself from mentally writing replies to many of the comments, LOL. Anyway, I thought this book did a marvellous job at showing how horribly flawed people could bring out their hidden shameful secrets yet still find a sense of home and family with each other. I think many of us want to be in that kind of family. It is truly a beautiful thing and the core ideas from this book will stay with me for a very long time.

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### **Ronda says**

I generally liked this book and especially all the characters. I was really disappointed by the whole Liam, Lisa-Maria thing. Ruined it a bit for me.

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### **Bernadette Robinson says**

Please ignore the reading time quoted as the book was actually started on 03.02.14.

I was sent a copy of this book by the Author in exchange for an honest review.

I gave this a 4.5 stars.

What a great debut novel from this Author. Francis Guenette has obviously drawn on some of her real life skills as the book centres predominantly around Izzy, a trauma counsellor and Lisa-Marie a young sixteen year old.

Izzy is like the light that attracts the moth and her ever open house, attracts plenty of characters all with their own troubles. I loved the way the characters stories became interlinked with one another and I felt that Caleb, Izzy's dead husband was as much a character in this story as the living.

With great attention to detail and description, this is a well written book on the whole.

At times I've often felt the same way as some of the characters, who feel like they almost disappear into the background in plain sight of others. Most of us will have felt like this from time to time. It certainly makes you think outside the box. At times it's a heart warming tale and at others it's less so as we learn of the past lives of the characters and the suffering that they've been through.

This was so nearly a 5 stars and I feel that it will stay with me for some time.

The great news is that a sequel has now been released, so I'll be able to read it soon hopefully, while this is still fresh in mind.

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### **Bodicia says**

The novel focuses on Lisa-Maria who has been sent to live with her aunt for the summer and Izzy, a widow who is also the resident counsellor for the camp. Lisa-Marie is a typical sixteen year old with issues from her past she is yet to deal with. Izzy has her own issues which stops her being the professional she should be. There is a real sense of family about this novel; different people with different problems coming together and making a life for themselves with the ghost of Izzy's husband Caleb, and his nature and ease with life, indirectly and subtly showing them all the way.

This is a very descriptive and involved novel and flips from the past to the present fairly erratically. That being said I really enjoyed the story itself and there is a lot of psychological insight into the characters and what has happened to make them whom they are today. They each have their flaws and the background into their characters goes much deeper than many novels. It all makes for an entertaining and thought provoking read topped off with a feeling of witnessing true friendships.

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### **Gaele says**

While I thought this was going to be more a story told from the point of view of a sixteen year old girl sent to her aunt's home for the summer, Francis Guenette managed to bring multiple characters, their growth and interactions as they learn to face and sort their pasts and then move forward into the future. Cleverly penned with an eye for interaction and motivation into behaviors, fears and actions readers are pulled into the story that has little nuggets of gold buried within each character story and revelation.

The setting of Carter Lake seemed to provide contrast for the internal turmoil of the characters, a tranquil setting that is both beautifully described and detailed. Rather remote, this is the sort of community that people run to, leaving problems behind. Unfortunately, problems also have legs, and often will follow you in search of resolution: cleverly introduced and presented as the story unfolds.

While this story quietly moves forward, there are moments and people to appreciate as the story engrosses through the final pages. As a debut offering, this was a pleasant surprise with the author's knowledge clearly presenting this town and residents with skill and a deft hand.

I received an eBook copy from the author for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

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### **Erin Fanning says**

This lovely, intricately-plotted novel unfolds in layers, all rich in detail and intrigue, until author Francis Guenette ties the threads together for a satisfying and surprising conclusion. Told from the perspective of several characters--as is true with life, some more likable than others--the story is difficult to categorize, both literary and young adult, but ultimately impossible to put down. I look very forward to reading more in the series!

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## **P.C. Zick says**

Disappearing in Plain Sight by Francis L. Guenette is a beautifully executed novel about wounded souls attempting to heal and find their path in a life that hasn't been kind—so far. The wounded bodies and minds converge in one lovely and isolated spot on Crater Lake on Vancouver Island off the coast of British Columbia, Canada. It's the ideal spot to disappear in plain sight.

The title reminds me of times in my own life when I felt as if I was melting into the corner as life went on around me. It's not a pleasant state unless done by choice.

One line in the novel resonated with me, "When people talked and gathered he simply disappeared."

The main characters inhabiting the less social side of Crater Lake disappear in plain sight, and no one even notices.

No one notices, that is, until they all come together in plain sight of one another, and there in the safe cocoon of Crater Lake, they are all finally able to offer their pain, sympathy, and kindness to one another.

Ms. Guenette meticulously describes the scenery, particularly the home and gardens of Caleb and Izzy, where a door always stands open. I saw myself in that setting, entertaining in the gardens, holding book club discussions in the living area, and drinking wine in front of the small fireplace set on one of the decks overlooking the lake.

The point of view shifts from each of the main characters allowing the reader a full view of all the perceptions, misconceptions, and relativity of opinions based on the hurts and secrets of lifetimes touched by far too much sadness.

However, in learning about the characters, I became lost in their stories and rooted for all of them, most of whom are underdogs. Even the seemingly perfect Izzy garnered my sympathy for her life of unspoken desires and motivations.

The tension builds as love triangles and quadruples entanglements intensify. Unrequited love explodes as the layers of love peel away.

Life continues beating its heart even though we might disappear in plain sight at times. However, the tree that falls in the forest really does make a noise, and in the right place in time, others come running to help as happens in this novel. One of the characters says, "We don't give up on each other anymore. . ." and that is the ultimate lesson of this novel.

Disappearing in Plain Sight reminds me that it's never too late to start over and things in the short term that seem utterly hopeless turn to gems in the long run if only we see it through those times when it simply seems we've disappeared.

I recommend this novel that delves deeply into the human psyche and soul to give hope to all who only have to turn the page to become immersed in life at Crater Lake.

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## **Jude says**

The book introduces the reader to sixteen-year-old Lisa-Marie, sent to spend the summer with her aunt Bethany in a remote town on the edge of the fictional Crater Lake. Her aunt resides in a simple A-frame within the confines of Camp Micah, a counsellor's camp for young ways and strays. Like any sixteen-year-old, Lisa-Marie is instantly taken by the camp's resident hunk, nineteen-year-old Justin, and as time progresses she develops confusing feelings towards Izzy Montgomery, the camp's exceptionally beautiful and gifted trauma counsellor, and begins an unlikely friendship with Liam Collins, a thoughtful and secretive camp worker. While on the outset the close-knit community which keeps Camp Micah operating day by day

may seem watertight the reader learns of hidden tensions and unspoken words just waiting to destroy the carefully constructed routines. The presence of Lisa-Marie and a new guest unleash tensions which have been simmering under the surface of the camp for some time. The reader is set to discover that all those at Camp Micah have their own secrets and guilt locked away inside them.

Guenette has a penchant for similes within her descriptions, which I find really charming. The book opens with a very memorable quote: "Lisa-Marie woke to the sound of voices and the reflection of the lake rippling and running like melted butter along the sloped, cedar-planked ceiling above her bed." Comparing flowing water to ripples of butter conjures up the most wonderful images; nothing could make the lake seem more appealing.

All the characters in the book are incredibly well rounded, with each chapter divided into several mini chapters each following a different character. In this way the reader is able to submerge themselves within the community and grow to know the characters on an almost personal level. The first few chapters of the book are centred almost entirely on introducing each character, some of which appear very appealing and likable, and some not so much. I'm sure I am not alone when I say that I found it difficult to warm to Beulah at first. Lisa-Marie is perhaps the most central character, and the one the reader gets to know on the most personal level through her writings in her journal, Emma, named for the Jane Austen character. The central theme which links all the characters together is past trauma, as though they have been brought together at the camp for this very reason.

Disappearing in Plain Sight is undoubtedly a very well-written and enjoyable novel, but the aspect of the novel which particularly appealed to me was Guenette's focus on the inner mind of the characters. Guenette confronts issues which are still somewhat taboo in many circles of modern society, and she does so in such a way as to make it relatable. Depression, anxiety and stress are all problems that a large percentage of the population will come into contact with in one way or another at some point in their lives. Guenette brings this to the forefront of her work, expressing character's actions in an incredibly understanding way take, for example, Liam: looking up at the sky when he cannot sleep because he is so plagued by his thoughts. I'm sure there are many people who can relate to the feeling of comfort and security which comes from taking a duvet and lying under a skylight or in front of a large window and just being alone with the stars.

I was also very pleased by Guenette's decision to look at bullying in her novel, and particularly her choice to highlight the issue of online bullying and the stresses of social media, issues I feel very strongly about. The online world is full of resources, but it can also be a very dark and sinister place. The way Guenette expresses Lisa-Marie's feelings is so perfect that I am sure a lot of people who have experienced bullying to some extent can relate to her words. Lisa-Marie describes just wanting the voices to stop, to just get away from what is happening to her, without necessarily thinking about the result. Her only desire is for peace and quiet, to be left alone. Guenette conveys an incredibly complex feeling with remarkable simplicity.

This brings me to perhaps the strongest theme which runs throughout the novel: growth and progression. Throughout the course of the text, we learn the sad past of each character and over time witness them learning to deal with their problems. The answers, for many of the characters, come out in the pages of Guenette's novel. The ever-present lone wolf howling in the distance echoes the loneliness and worry felt throughout the camp. I don't want to ruin the ending of the book for anyone, so I will just say that the final paragraph serves to emphasise the natural progression of the characters.

I really enjoyed my first experience with Guenette's work. At first, I found it was the setting of the novel which most appealed to me. I developed a strong desire to visit camp Micah and dangle my feet into the cool water of the lake. Guenette's writing style is natural and fluid, allowing you to escape into the incredible scene she has created. As the book progressed each character began to speak to me, telling me their stories in turn. The intricate and multifaceted storyline is rewarding and well executed, with a carefully planned ending, which is satisfying without being fairy-tale-like. Overall, I would rate Disappearing in Plain Sight very highly and would strongly recommend anyone thinking of reading the book to give it a go.

Originally posted on Jade the Obscure

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## **Misfits farm says**

Lisa-Marie goes to stay with her Aunt Bethany. Bethany lives with her partner Beulah next to Camp Micah-a place for those who may have had a troubled past to have time to excel at different pastimes and to find themselves with counselling at the same time. The plot is based around 5 characters and their lives both now and in the past, the traumas they have endured and how they are patching things together. The scenes are beautifully described. This is one of those books that is hard to say too much about for me as there are numerous threads around the five people. The lake setting sounds idyllic and there is enough to make you pause and think a little about life and the world around us. An easy although, deep at times, summertime read.

I voluntarily chose to read this ARC and all opinions in this review are my own and completely unbiased

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## **Debbie Young says**

Writing this review on 11 January, it may not seem much praise to say that this is one of the best books I've read this year - but I am pretty sure I will still be saying that by 31 December.

I chose this book because of the intriguing title and beautiful cover, and its setting on Vancouver Island, where some of my relatives lived for many years, but which I never had the good fortune to visit.

With regard to the setting, this was powerfully evoked by the writing, bringing the territory to life in great depth, in multi-sensory vividness, such that the island feels like a key character in the book. It takes great skill to incorporate so much description of the scenery without interfering with the flow of the story or slowing the action, but Francis Guenette pulls this off, apparently effortlessly, subtly allowing aspects of the setting to propel the story forward.

Another difficult task is to head-hop sympathetically and smoothly so that the reader can understand how a large number of characters is feeling. Again, Guenette does this so masterfully that it's hard to believe this is a debut novel.

The proposition of bringing together a number of troubled characters in an isolated spot sounded interesting, and the opening chapters read almost like the set-up of a detective story - what secrets would be uncovered as the characters got to know each other? I had the feeling that I was not so much reading a book as watching the first scenes of a classic play or a major feature film, seeing the cast assemble ready for revelations and resolutions. (This book would make a fabulous play or film, by the way.)

The pace of the story was handled well, with details being gently and carefully dispensed at an easily digestible speed, giving the reader time to absorb each revelation and anticipate the next, and to enjoy frissons of anxiety, expectation and hope all the way through. Even so, I had to race through the book, as I cared so much about the characters and was desperate to see how it all turned out for them all: there was so much that could have gone horribly wrong for them, and I couldn't bear to wait.

As a complete optimist, I was rooting for hope and a happy ending, as I'd grown to love and respect the characters so much, while getting to know and understand them better. The conclusion, executed with great

care and masterful timing, had the beauty and elegance of the end of a symphony.

As an aside: by chance last night I watched a documentary about one of my favourite pieces of music, Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*, which begins and ends with a simple, solitary note, topping and tailing a growing and declining interaction of very different types of musical instrument, including harmonies, clashes, and surprises, even shocks, which make the simple ending so much more poignant and rewarding. It seemed the perfect match for the arc of this book. I hope that makes sense to anyone else who knows and loves that music as much as I do.

I can't remember the last time I cried at the ending of a book, but boy, this one did it for me. Beautiful. Thank you, Francis Guenette.

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### **Peter says**

Most of the novels I read are centred on one main character whereas 'disappearing in plain sight' is centred on five core characters (one of whom is dead) and three other characters who almost steal centre-stage. When I'd finished reading I asked myself, 'Who was the main character?' and couldn't come up with an answer. This made this novel very different. The writing is superb and there were scenes in two parts of the book that were beautifully crafted. The first is something we have all experienced...one angry character and two other characters looking at each other not knowing how to react until they break out into fits of laughter...I laughed aloud while reading this part. The second comes later in the book and is a conversation between two of the main characters, where one of them finally lets go of something he has been bottling up for years. The writer really tugs at the reader's emotions in this finely honed dialogue.

There was one downside with this novel being that it could have been 10 to 20% shorter. The garden scenes play a big part, and while exquisitely described, I found myself skimming pages because there were just too many descriptions.

I never like giving away the plot or story in novels that I review and this was not a hindrance with 'disappearing in plain sight.' There were many plots and sub-plots in this novel and like the characters, I could not find a central theme, other than the location. In my opinion it is a very unusual novel, the likes of which I have not read before. If it was possible I'd rate it 4.5 stars because it was a little lengthy but to do so would detract from the quality of the writing, so its five stars – with some small reservations.

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