

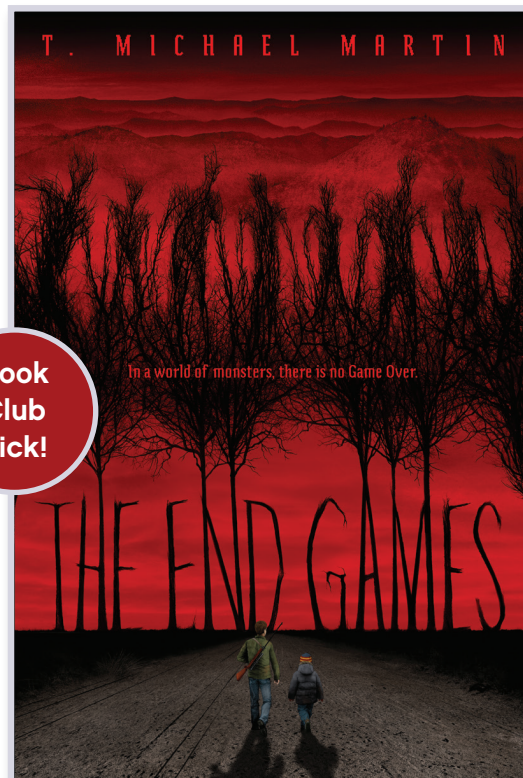


THE END GAMES

BY T. MICHAEL MARTIN

ABOUT THE BOOK

In the rural mountains of West Virginia—armed with only their rifle and their love for each other—brothers Michael and Patrick follow instructions from the mysterious Game Master. They spend their days searching for survivors, their nights fighting endless hordes of “Bellows”—creatures that roam the dark, roaring for flesh. And at this Game, Michael and Patrick are very good. But The Game is changing. The Bellows are evolving. The Game Master is leading Michael and Patrick to other survivors—survivors who don’t play by the rules. And the brothers will never be the same.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you make of the epigraphs at the start of the novel? What is their significance, and how do they work in tandem?
2. Who is the Game Master? How is The Game a survival mechanism for Michael and Patrick?
3. What is Rulon’s survival tactic? Why does the Rapture follow his lead? Why do human beings often feel the need to ascribe meaning, even if, as Bobbie says, “the meaning is something terrible” (p. 137)?
4. What does Michael’s mantra of “feel the blood” mean, and what does it reveal about his character? What’s your mantra for when you need to calm down and focus?
5. What is Michael’s “yes-yes” feeling? How does it guide him and protect him?
6. How do Michael’s experiences from before—as a son, stepson, half brother, and video game player—help prepare him for survival?
7. The soldiers call the infected Zeds, while Michael refers to them as Bellows. What do each of these names mean? What are Shrieks? How do people name new things that have never existed before?
8. Why does Captain Jopek remind Michael of his stepfather, Ron? How is Jopek not the savior soldier Michael wants him to be? Is he a good guy or a bad guy?
9. How do Michael and Patrick end up on their own? Who did they leave behind and why? Would you have done what Michael did?
10. Describe Michael and Patrick’s bond. How does Michael care for, nurture, protect, and enjoy his brother? Why does he take such responsibility for him?
11. How does The Game turn out for Michael and Patrick? How is The Game similar to real life in the real world?
12. What is the “endgame” for a virus? How is it a metaphor for Michael and Patrick’s journey?
13. Who or what goes home in the novel? Why?
14. How is this novel similar to other zombie stories, movies, or TV shows? How is it different?
15. What does *The End Games* suggest about hope, both in oneself and in humanity?