

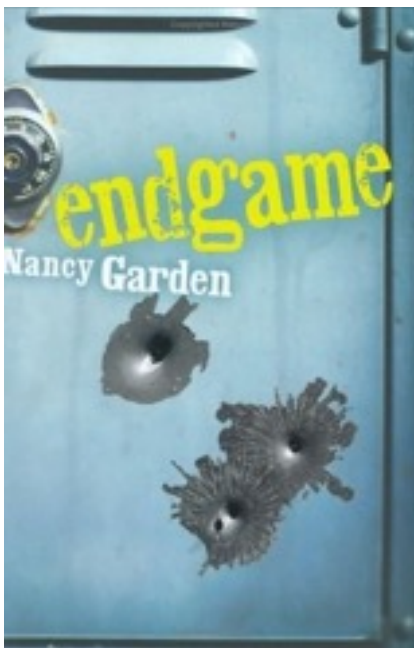
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ENGL 112B

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Endgame - Nancy Garden



<http://nancygarden.com/>

Author Biography:

Nancy Garden was born in Boston, Massachusetts and she started writing for fun at around age eight. Her first two published books were What Happened in Marston and a nonfiction book called Berlin: City Split in Two. On her website, Garden explains that Endgame is meant for readers age fourteen and up and that it was inspired by the Columbine High School shooting in

1999. She intended her book to focus on bullying and “the tragic consequences it can have on both bullied and bullied” (nancygarden.com).

Book Summary:

Endgame uses retrospective-narration from the shooter’s perspective to reveal the events that led up to a fatal school shooting. Gray Wilton is a fourteen year old freshman in high school who, at the beginning of the novel, has just moved to a new town to work on his anger issues and escape bullies. He suffers through high school with one friend, and together they face horrible abuse from the jock pack of bullies. Gray’s abuse continues at home as his father physically and mentally destroys his failure of a son. Very aware of the disappointment he is and under constant attack from bullies, Gray becomes depressed and is only happy when he plays his drums. Gray’s breaking point comes when his one true constant friend, his dog Barker, is hit and killed by his bullies’ car. He feels that he has to do the extreme to put an end to his pain, but his plan is only partially successful.

Significant Quotes:

1. “The next day, Ross went to Mr. Vee and told him what those guys did. But all Mr. Vee said was, ‘Sticks and stones, Mr. Terrel, sticks and stones.’ I guess maybe Ross didn’t tell him the whole story, but even so, like names don’t matter? Like they don’t make you feel really mad?”(58).

This quote is important because it shows the boys trying to get help from their teachers, like they are supposed to do, but it also shows the teacher failing the boys. Mr. Vee tells the boys to

toughen up and shows Gray that adults don't care and won't help him. Throughout the novel, there are several characters who had the opportunity and/or responsibility to end the bullying, but fell short. It is important for both teachers and students to realize the effect harmful words can have on others. The lack of adult intervention between the victims and the bullies made the victim feel secluded and trapped with no other option available.

2. “And I felt good, better than I’d felt since we’d moved. So I leaned back and just jammed, letting my hands zip from drum to drum, my foot rock on the pedal, and my body move to the beat. The music filled me, chasing everything else away, especially the bad stuff going on at school, as the music always did when it was loud and right. This was happiness, this was joy, this was the only thing worth anything, this was who I was...”(88).

This quote is important because it shows the reader how important drumming was to the narrator. Gray was passionate about drumming and even thought of it as his dream career, but his father did not consider it a real job and was constantly heckling him to find something real and not waste his time on a hobby. Gray’s dog and drums were the two joys of his world, and when they were both taken away from him he was done. Right after this quote, Gray’s father yells and shakes him until he passes out.

3. “‘I’m gonna do it sometime for real,’ I said to him all of a sudden. It just came out of me, and the black cloud moved away a little, but Ross laughed like it was a joke. He also looked at me like he thought shooting computer enemies was helping, but it wasn’t, and I decided not to do it anymore. It was so fake, a kids’ game. Ross just didn’t get it.”(244).

This quote is important because it shows that Gray tries to warn people and is begging for help until he decides to enact his plan. Ross doesn't understand, his dog and drums weren't taken

from him and he hasn't reached rock bottom. Ross, like so many others before him, laughs at Gray and dismisses the severeness of the situation. It isn't until near the end of the novel that Gray is reminded that he is now the bad guy and has caused other families great sadness which is similar to the sadness he felt when Barker was murdered. If Gray had thought about the repercussions of his actions, he probably wouldn't have killed the innocent people he did.

Bibliography Resources:

Garden, Nancy. *Endgame*. Graphia/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.

Garden's style fits with what would be expected from a depressed teenager. She includes cuss words that help show the tone of the narrator. The book has good durability and will still be relatable far into the future because its long-lasting themes such as; loss/death, family conflict, bullying, anger, and depression. Endgame serves as a reflectional guide of what not to do for students and teachers. This book fits into several of the categories of books from Adolescents in the Search for Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story, such as having; real life experiences, facing death and loss, identity, struggles with decisions, survival, and parable.

Text Complexity Analysis:

Endgame was given a ATOS book level of 4.8 with an interest level for 9th through 12th graders. The Lexile Measurement was 790L. While the book was intended by the author for fourteen year olds, I believe that it should be read in classrooms so as to reach the teachers as well. The message from the book that everyone has a different breaking point is important for all ages, but teachers specifically must listen and watch for bullying and intervene. The structure and

language from this book isn't complex, but the subject of school shootings and getting inside the shooter's mind is complex. Endgame fulfills all the Exeter Qualities except “ varied levels of sophistication that will lead to the continual development of reading skills”. The book matches up with real life experiences and doesn't require any previous knowledge to read. It effectively reaches its target demographic of fourteen year olds while still working with older teens as well.