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## *Mort(e)* Discussion Guide

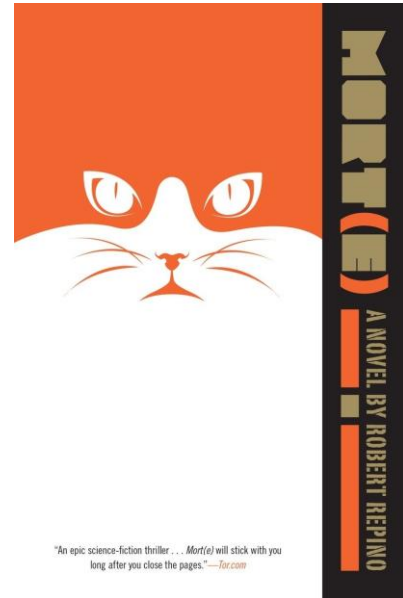
### Introduction

*Mort(e)* is an apocalyptic novel written by Robert Repino and published by Soho Press Inc. in 2015. It is also the first novel written by Mr. Repino and the first in a three book series. If you enjoyed George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, *Mort(e)* is very similar but much darker.

### About the book

The main antagonist of the book is a colony of ants, led by the vicious Queen Hymenoptera, that are trying to take over the world. The ants have a vendetta against the entire human race, and to accomplish their goals of world domination, they make every animal in the world sentient. *Mort(e)* was an ordinary house cat until the ants took over. The whole book is his story, starting as a lazy domestic cat and morphing into a human hunting special agent. He is friends with Sheba, the neighbor dog, and after the great war starts between the humans and insects, he loses her in the commotion. He joins the Red Sphinx division of the army, led by Cul-de-Sac the bobcat, fighting humans and looking for Sheba. The entire army is supremely commanded by the ant colony. As *Mort(e)* fights human rebels and looks for Sheba, he learns more about the colony in order to help stop a horrible disease that is spreading through all the animals.

The greatest weapon against the animals is a disease called EMSAH that spreads rapidly and causes mass hysteria and death. The ants are always called in to eliminate towns or corpses of the infected. *Mort(e)* believes that his superiors are not telling him everything, and he finds a



way to communicate with the much more intelligent ants to learn the truth. These conversations with the colony enlighten *Mort(e)* and show him everything he needs to know about the ant's final plan. The novel ends with several twists and surprises along with a massive battle between the humans, animals, and ants.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. The ants feel attacked and threatened by humans.
  - a. Do you think they were justified in their conquest?
  - b. Did they go about their goals in an intelligent manner?
  - c. How could their goal of world domination be better accomplished?
2. Ants communicate by pheromones and touch, and in the book the animals need a special helmet to talk with them. In theory, does the ants' form of communication with other animals make sense? Specifically, would any other animal really be able to handle that much information at once? Knowing everything about what is happening in the world might overload the animal's brains. Did this part of the book make you want to study ants more to learn about their communication methods?
3. The final battle between every species ended in a very explosive way.
  - a. How did the final battle influence your opinion about the ants?
    - i. Did you feel any new emotions towards them?
  - b. Did it change your original opinion about ants in general?
  - c. Did you expect the book to end that way?

4. Mort(e)'s learned a great deal as time went on about the way the ants were running the world. He was able to learn a lot from the Queen, and he saw what she and her ancestors had gone through.
  - a. How did Mort(e)'s opinion of the colony change throughout the book?
  - b. Were you able to relate to this?
  - c. Did you feel pity for the ants after hearing all the Queens details about the past?
5. Do you think a different species of insect would have made a better antagonist?
  - a. Why did the author choose ants instead of another social insect like bees, termites, or locusts?
6. One interesting aspect of the book is the fact that the ants did not change any other insects into sentient beings. They did not even control them and use them in their attacks on the humans.
  - a. What advantage did the ants gain by not using other insects?
  - b. Would the book have ended differently if they had used every available insect?
7. Queen Hymenoptera is wise but ruthless, she even eats her own young in order to produce fear and eliminate the weak. Do you think she was too overbearing with her authority and control of the other ants? Would the book have ended a different way if she would have been more diplomatic?
8. Mort(e)'s life takes many different turns throughout the book. He was a soldier, a lover, a spy, and even a normal cat.
  - a. Was there one aspect of the book that you enjoyed more?
9. Mort(e) was able to discover what EMSAH really was and how it was controlled. The ants play a huge role in every outbreak and subsequent quarantine.

- a. Why do you think none of the ants ever got infected?
- b. Do you think the worker ants knew the truth about the disease, or only the queen?