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The Maze Runner Series

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“‘Good that,’ Thomas said. The two of them then looked at each other for a long moment, catching their breath, somehow reliving in those few seconds all the things they’d gone through, all the death, all the pain. And mixed in there was relief, that maybe – just maybe – it was all over.” – *The Death Cure*, page 319

Dashner, James. *The Maze Runner*. New York: Delacorte, 2009. PZ7.D2587Maz 2009.

When Thomas is pulled from a dark metal box with only vague memories of his past, he is introduced to a new life in the Glade. A grassy area dotted with ramshackle buildings, animal pens, and trees, the Glade is inhabited by a group of teenage boys. Some of the boys were sent to the Glade as much as two years earlier; none remember the life they had before. Surrounding the boys’ new home is a Maze which, despite exploring every day, no Glader has ever solved. But when the boys stop receiving their regular supplies and the monsters – known as Griever – living in the Maze begin attacking the Glade each night, the boys know that solving the Maze has become not just their only way home, but their only chance to survive.

Dashner, James. *The Scorch Trials*. New York: Delacorte, 2010. PZ7.D2587Sc 2010.

But solving the Maze isn’t the end; after Thomas and a handful of Gladers escape, they find themselves with a new problem. The boys have been infected with a highly contagious virus known as the Flare, which is ravaging the world outside of the Maze. To receive a cure, the Gladers must cross the Scorch. A stretch of barren land populated with violent Cranks (a term used for the infected), the Scorch received its name due to extreme heat and sudden, intense storms. But crossing the dangerous and arid land with limited resources and a deadline aren’t the Gladers’ only concerns: there is another group of teenagers crossing the Scorch, and their success depends on the failure of Thomas and his friends.

Dashner, James. *The Death Cure*. New York: Delacorte, 2011. PZ7.D2587De 2011.

After solving the Maze and surviving the Scorch, Thomas hopes that he and the few friends he has left will all receive their promised cure. That is, until everyone is separated with no explanation from WICKED, the organization at the core of Thomas’s trials. When Thomas is finally reunited with his fellow Gladers, WICKED offers the group a chance to retrieve their missing memories. Thomas isn’t sure he wants to remember; he already recollects more than his captors think – and it’s just enough to know that he shouldn’t trust them. The world is collapsing and WICKED refuses to release Thomas and his friends; if Thomas wants to survive and learn the truth about WICKED in the process, he will have to find a way to escape, yet again.

Readers of *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* series may feel a little burnt out on young adult dystopian fiction by now, but James Dashner's trilogy is worth a return to the genre. Told from the perspective of Thomas and centered on a group of mostly male characters, the *Maze Runner* series' complex plot offers action, suspense, a hint of romance, and just enough twists to keep readers guessing. There are some loose ends at the conclusion of the series and while readers will never know everything about Thomas, a prequel to the series titled *The Kill Order* – available from the Libraries as a downloadable audiobook – offers readers new information about WICKED and the world before Thomas's life in the Maze began.