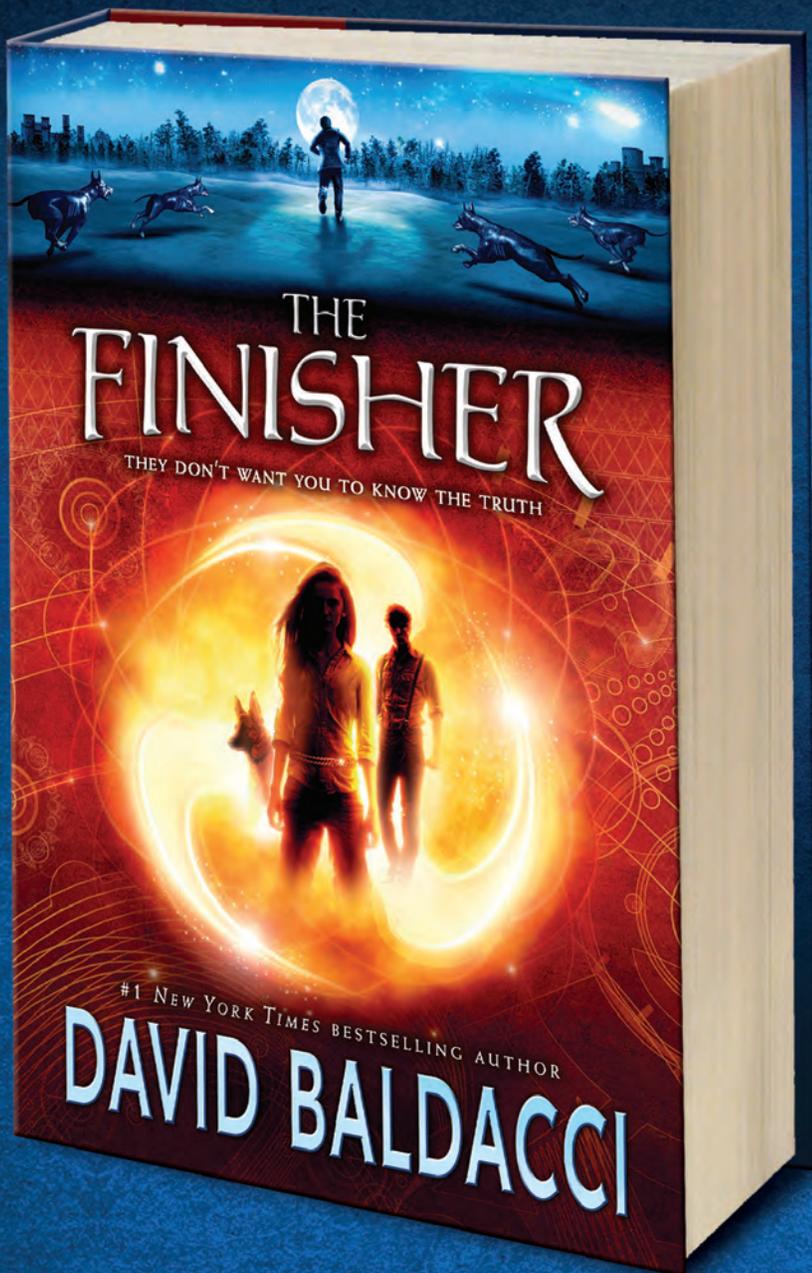


CLASSROOM GUIDE

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

DAVID BALDACCI



★ "What happens when an international best-selling crime novelist tries his hand at a youth fantasy? Well, in this case, success... Baldacci gets several things just right. He offers readers a smart, tough heroine worth rooting for; provides enough hints of a mysterious backstory to keep them wondering; and builds each chapter to a cliffhanger that pushes them to turn the page."

—*Booklist*, starred review

THE COURAGE OF ONE CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING

Vega Jane has always been told that the village of Wormwood is surrounded by danger on all sides. The only way to stay safe is never to leave, to obey all the rules, and not to ask questions. But when Vega's friend disappears, she starts to dig at Wormwood's dark secrets and discovers that the deadliest threat of all may lie inside.

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 SCHOLASTIC

Meets Common Core State Standards



David Baldacci left a well-established law practice in Washington, D.C. to become one of the world's bestselling authors with his books published in more than forty-five languages in more than eighty countries, and more than 110 million copies in print. His most recent book for young readers, *Day of Doom*, the final book in the bestselling multiplatform The 39 Clues®: Cahills vs. Vespers series was published by Scholastic in March 2013.

Discussion Questions for *The Finisher*

1. Vega reflects that "while Wormwood was full of many things, the truth was not one of them." How does truth relate to the many dangerous choices that Vega makes throughout the story? (RL. 3, 5)
2. Using evidence from the book, explain what happens to a Wug during an Event. How is an Event different from a Wug dying? Why do you think most Wugs do not question the circumstances surrounding Events? (RL. 1, 3, 4)
3. Compare how the following characters—Vega, Delph, Morigone, and Cletus Loon—experience daily life in Wormwood. Explore how they live, work, and interact with other Wugs. How would you describe their overall quality of life? (RL. 6, 9)
4. How is Morigone both a friend and an enemy to Vega? Which do you think describes her better? Why? Use examples from the book to back up your points. (RL. 1, 3)
5. Why do you think John is so easily changed by Morigone? Why do you think Council puts him in charge of designing and overseeing the building of the Wall? In what ways is he like his sister? In what ways is he different? (RL. 3, 6)
6. Before walking through the gates to relive the past, Vega meets Eon. Eon helps Vega realize that "simply because you've lived through something doesn't mean you understand its true significance or even recall the details of it correctly." How does this awareness relate to Vega and her life in Wormwood? (RL. 2, 5)
7. Even though he is not physically present in *The Finisher*, Virgil Vega plays a big role in the story. Using specific examples from the book, explain how Virgil has impacted Vega, Delph, and Morigone. Why do you think Virgil chose to leave Wormwood? (RL. 3, 5)
8. What words does the author use to refer to the concept of time in *The Finisher*? Why do you think he chose to create these words and phrases? Give three other examples of words that the author created and their meanings. (RL. 1, 4; RI. 4)
9. Why do most Wugs blindly follow Council's orders? What motivates Vega to become one of the only Wugs to question Council and put herself in danger to uncover Wormwood's true history? (RL. 2, 6)
10. How does Vega find Destin, the Adder Stone, and the Elemental? Give three examples of how they come to her aid. Delph believes that Destin gives Vega what she needs when she needs it. Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Why or why not? (RL. 1, 6)
11. Describe the scene in the painting depicting the Battle of the Beasts. Why is the painting an important part of Wormwood's history? Look up and research famous paintings that portray war scenes. How are they similar to the painting of the battlefield in *The Finisher*? (RL. 3; RI. 3, 7)
12. Even though they know it's dangerous, most Wugs seem to enjoy watching the Duelum. Why do you think Council holds this event twice a year? Do you think it is fair to the Wugs who are forced to fight? Why or why not? (RL. 3, 6)
13. What qualities does Vega possess that make her a heroine who is both physically and mentally strong? Citing examples from *The Finisher*, describe three hardships Vega has to face and how she overcomes them. (RL. 2, 3)
14. If you were casting the movie version of *The Finisher*, who would you cast for each character? Give three reasons why *The Finisher* would make a good movie. Then rewrite your favorite scene as a movie script. (RL. 7; W. 3)

Common Core State Standards Correlations

The Anchor Standards used in this guide refer to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts under the main strands of Reading Literature (RL), Reading Informational Text (RI), and Writing (W) for grades 5-9.



This guide was written by Mary Kate Doman, Children's and Young Adult Book Consultant, Author, and Professor.

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