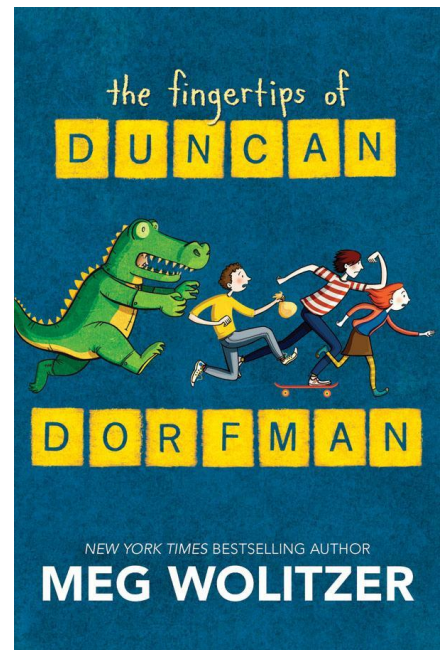


The Fingertips of Duncan Dorfman by Meg Wolitzer (Penguin, 2011)

*12 year old Duncan Dorfman has an unusual ability that lets him read letters with his fingers, and when when he competes at a national scrabble tournament, he must choose if he is going to cheat*

**Discussion Questions.**

1. What is Duncan's special power?
2. Why does Duncan Dorfman's mother not want him to reveal his special power?
3. In the cafeteria sitting with the Andrew, another loner, Duncan makes a decision to reveal his special power. What do you think motivated him to do this?
4. When Carl proposes that he and Duncan become Scrabble partners, and Duncan will use his special power in the National Tournament, Duncan asks Carl (p. 24) "Is it legal? And Carl answers "Of course it's legal." Do you agree with Carl?
5. What kind of person is Carl's mom? When Carl's mom offers to pay all the tournament expenses for Duncan if he would pose in a cigarette ad with Carl, Duncan says (p. 104) "An alarm went off inside him, telling him this wasn't something he should take part in." Why do you think that alarm went off? Why did he go ahead and do it anyway?
6. While Duncan is the main character in the book, we are also introduced to two other contestants – April Blunt and Nate Saviano who each have their reasons for wanting to win. What are their reasons?
7. Did you think Duncan would use his special power at the tournament? On p. 203 it looks as if he might. Why do you think he finally decided not to?
8. Which pairs of players did you hope would win the tournament? Why? How did April and Nate win in their own way?
9. After Carl and Duncan's win – Duncan confronts Carl (p.256) and Carl says "I'll never call you lunch meat again. I told you to make it right, didn't I? I meant, do the right thing." Do you think Carl was telling the truth?
10. When Duncan goes back to school why does he choose to sit with Andrew at the lunch table?
11. Do you think it was right for Duncan's mother to keep the identity of his real father away from Duncan? Were you surprised to find out who Duncan's dad was? Why or why not?
12. Did this book make you want to learn how to play scrabble?



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