



## The Finisher (Vega Jane, Book 1)

*By David Baldacci*

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**The Finisher (Vega Jane, Book 1)** By David Baldacci

The #1 *New York Times* bestselling fantasy novel for all ages by master storyteller David Baldacci -- now in paperback!

**SHE WILL NOT BREAK**

Vega Jane was always told no one could leave the town of Wormwood. She was told there was nothing outside but a forest filled with danger and death. And she always believed it -- until the night she saw Quentin Herms run away.

Vega knows Quentin didn't just leave -- he was chased. And he left behind a trail of clues that point to a dark conspiracy at the heart of Wormwood. To follow the clues will attract the attention of influential people willing to kill to keep their secrets. If Vega wants to stay safe, she just needs to keep her head down and her mouth shut. There's only one problem -- Vega Jane never walks away from a fight.

Master storyteller David Baldacci introduces an unforgettable heroine who must think fast, hit hard, and defy all odds to uncover the truth.

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## The Finisher (Vega Jane, Book 1) By David Baldacci Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 6–9—Wormwood is full of secrets, known mostly by members of the Council. The rest of the villagers live oblivious, regimented lives. They've been told there's nothing outside of the village except for a forest inhabited by deadly creatures. Vega Jane, 14, is understandably alarmed when she sees her mentor, Quentin Herms, running straight for the Quag. If Council members find out that he left her a note and a map of the forest, who knows what would become of her? Frustrated by the prescribed secrecy that shrouds the village, Vega takes matters into her own hands, embarking on an adventure to investigate the mysteries surrounding Wormwood, the Quag, and Quentin's departure. She grows in confidence and knowledge with each clue she uncovers and makes more than a few enemies along the way. Vega's investigations reveal that little in Wormwood is as it appears. Fans of action-packed fantasy will enjoy her mystical adventures. At almost 500 pages, with sophisticated vocabulary, the book is best suited for strong readers. The pace is occasionally uneven, with redundant descriptions of Vega's daily life in Wormwood, and the large cast of minor characters can be challenging to track. The imaginative and multilayered world is the novel's strength, with the bleak, ancient village serving as a stark contrast to the fantastical adventures and challenges the teen faces in her quest for the truth. Readers will be rooting for her but will not find much resolution in *The Finisher*, as the last chapter seems to set the stage for the next installment.—Juliet Morefield, Multnomah County Library, OR

From [Booklist](#)

**\*Starred Review\*** What happens when an international best-selling crime novelist tries his hand at a youth fantasy? Well, in this case, success. Baldacci, best known for writing thrillers, also has a talent for creating magical worlds. At first glance, though, *Wormwood* seems mostly depressing. Like most other Wugs, 14-year-old Vega Jane is dirty, hungry, and deprived. The few things that keep her going are her friend Delph; her brother, John; and a tree where she goes to ponder. (Pondering is in short supply in *Wormwood*.) She also has her job at the Stacks, putting the finishing touches on pretty objects. But everything changes one morning when she spies her mentor, Quentin Herms, heading into the Quag, the terrifying forest that surrounds Wormwood. There are beasts inside the Quag, and supposedly nothing past it, so why would Herms run? The cryptic note he leaves behind raises more questions, and despite danger from many directions, Vega is a girl who wants answers. 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 cliff-hanger that pushes them to turn the page. There is also head-spinning action, which is sometimes a bit too repetitious. How often can Vega be chased by a monster and run faster than she has ever run in her life? The ending is predictable, but it leads seamlessly into the next book, where, perhaps, some of Vega's answers await. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** As with Rick Riordan and Ridley Pearson, among others, the interest surrounding a high-profile author writing children's books should garner this a ton of attention. Grades 7-10. --Ilene Cooper

Review

"What happens when an international best-selling crime novelist tries his hand at a youth fantasy? Well, in this case, success." -- BOOKLIST, starred review

"Best known for his adult crime novels, Baldacci makes a detour into middle-grade with this wildly fanciful and darkly intriguing tale of a girl forced to fight for her life as she investigates the secrets of her tiny community." -- PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

"This vividly described tale takes readers to an original fantasy world full of strange creatures, intriguing relationships, and long-lost secrets. Baldacci knows how to deliver thrills." -- Brandon Mull, #1 NEW YORK TIMES bestselling author of the Fablehaven series

"THE FINISHER is an enchanting romp through a fantastical world worthy of Rowling or Brooks. Baldacci proves that his pen can engage youth as well as adults." – Richard Paul Evans, #1 NEW YORK TIMES bestselling author of the Michael Vey series

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Timothy Roesch:**

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#### **Donald Sams:**

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