

Wolitzer's latest came from her long love of Scrabble

Children's book and novel are both bestsellers

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Author Meg Wolitzer has two bestselling books out.

As a writer, Meg Wolitzer is currently enjoying the best of two worlds.

Wolitzer's just-released children's book, *The Fingertips of Duncan Dorfman*, and her novel *The Uncoupling*, published earlier this year, are both bestsellers.

We caught up to the double-threat author at her home in New York for a Q&A.

Question: Where do you write?

Answer: I write where I can, on my laptop. I live in a New York City apartment and it just often seems that space is limited. I sometimes give up completely and go write in a coffee shop — and have some of the most productive days.

It seems that the ambient din in the background sort of makes a great soundtrack that I don't have to listen to, but I know it's there.

It really is conducive to good, deep work.

Q: What are three of your favourite things in your writing space?

A: (At home) I write often in my bedroom or on the couch in the living room. I have a 12-pound Havanese dog. If I write on the bed, he's right up against me — definitely a kind of writer's companion.

(Secondly), I have gotten great benefits from drinking Snapple. My friend jokes that the secret of my success was the Snapple diet.

But I've switched over to this Japanese, sugar-free green and white tea. I always have a bottle of it nearby.

(And thirdly), I keep a stack of books that I love nearby, too. Then I can look at them and think, 'Surely you can do better than you're doing — I mean, look how great this one is.'

It's not a horse race, but it's inspiring to remember that every writer is so different — just sees the world differently.

And to kind of go into one of those little worlds briefly, reminds me of why I love to write.

Q: Where did your book, *The Fingertips of Duncan Dorfman* (about three kids who meet up at a Scrabble tournament) come from?

A: It came from a love of Scrab-



Wordfest presents
Meg Wolitzer in a reading
at 10 a.m. today at Vertigo Studio.
Tickets and info at 403-237-9068
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ble. I grew up playing Scrabble with my mother. We would always take it to the beach and the local town pool.

I think ideas for books marinate over a very long time — without the writer even knowing that that's what's happening.

I love Scrabble purely for itself, because I love words. I love the way words play. I often have wordplay in my adult novels.

Q: What do you like best about the book?

A: I like that I got to write the same way I write for adults. That it's not like I put on a different hat. I really stayed who I was as a writer. But I just made myself the younger version of myself, and said, 'What's the book I would have liked to read?'

Q: Pen or pencil for your corrections?

A: Oh, pen. A really high-end, thin-point Magic Marker.

Q: How long do you give a book (as reader) until you pull the plug?

A: Not that long. I'm really not going to stick around past Chapter 3. I think that often readers ask a writer a very legitimate question: why are you telling me this?

And if the book and the writer can't really answer it by then, you start to wonder.

Or not.