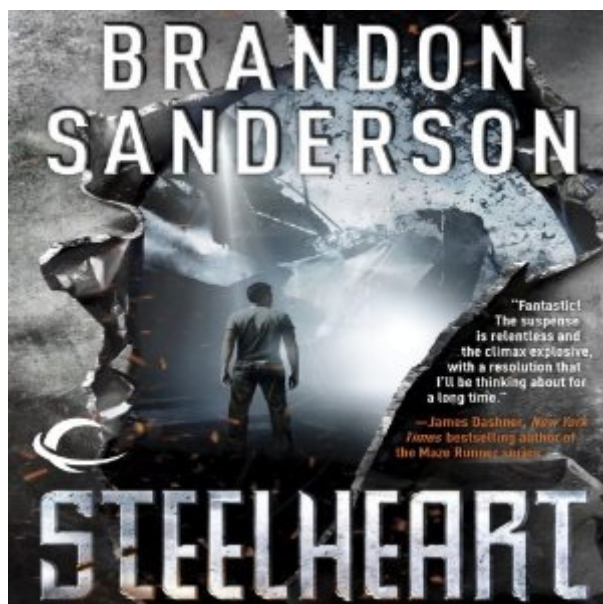


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Steelheart: The Reckoners, Book 1



Synopsis

From the number-one New York Times best-selling author of the Mistborn Trilogy, Brandon Sanderson, comes the first book in a new, action-packed thrill ride of a series - Steelheart. Ten years ago, Calamity came. It was a burst in the sky that gave ordinary men and women extraordinary powers. The awed public started calling them Epics. But Epics are no friend of man. With incredible gifts came the desire to rule. And to rule man you must crush his wills. Nobody fights the Epics...nobody but the Reckoners. A shadowy group of ordinary humans, they spend their lives studying Epics, finding their weaknesses, and then assassinating them. And David wants in. He wants Steelheart - the Epic who is said to be invincible. The Epic who killed David's father. For years, like the Reckoners, David's been studying, and planning - and he has something they need. Not an object, but an experience. He's seen Steelheart bleed. And he wants revenge.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 12 hours and 14 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: September 24, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00ECDSQZ2

Best Sellers Rank: #19 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy #23 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Fiction

Customer Reviews

Steelheart will be my second Sanderson book based in his younger teen fiction category, The Rithmatist being my first. Whereas I felt that The Rithmatist was a bit too corny and "cutesy," I think Steelheart will be a great "gateway" book for younger fans to discover Sanderson's other, more mature, fiction series. Steelheart is set in a world shaped by "The Calamity," a meteor in the sky which has granted comic-book superhero-style powers to random humans, now called Epics. One of the defining themes in the book being that absolute power corrupts absolutely, there are no superheroes. No X-Men, Spidermans, or Supermans. Normal humans in this world are regarded as little more than slaves. The book follows the main character David, in his quest for revenge against

the ruthless, cold-hearted, ruler of Newcago (formerly Chicago) - Steelheart. While the plot and character development are pretty basic, and while David does suffer a little bit from "The Chosen One" Syndrome, the story is well-paced and makes for a very engaging read. This will probably be one of those books that you end up reading until it's way past bedtime. Fans of Sanderson will immediately recognize some of his quirks - protagonists tending to use their brains rather than brawn, numerous plot-twists, and of course, gratuitous magic system explanations. Steelheart is no exception to this formula. For the teens - Steelheart is basically a comic book in written form. There's fights, superpowers, puppy-love crushes, and explosions. In fact I could almost hear a Hans Zimmer soundtrack in my head during several of the battles. Sanderson paints a vivid picture through his storytelling, and it won't take much imagination to see the entire book unfurling before you like a movie. For the parents - Steelheart is a bit on the violent side but is clean on both language and romance. There's quite a few relatively graphic descriptions of firefights and injuries and incidental body count is pretty high. There's a big leap nowadays between Rated PG-13 and R, and I think Steelheart is probably right in between those two. It's not as bad as something you'll see on HBO/Showtime, but it's not nickelodeon-clean either. Something like primetime cable network violence. For the adult Sanderson fans - the corny language will probably be the first thing that sticks out to you; the second thing will be the bluntness. It's always amusing to read something like Steelheart after re-reading *The Way of Kings* - same author but completely different voices. If you're already a fan of Sanderson, Steelheart will be very familiar ground and you won't feel out of place at all. With the exception of the depth of character and plot. There's not a whole lot of subtext comparatively to his adult works, but honestly I found that a bit refreshing. It's like having to play politics at the office versus hanging out with friends. Steelheart was a great read and is a stand out in the crowded teen fiction market. For the adult Sanderson fans, I still consider this book a "buy". Honestly it reminded me quite a bit of his *Mistborn Trilogy* (and everything that entails). I inhaled this book in two days, and if it wasn't for that pesky need for sleep, I probably would have done it in a single sitting. It's honestly just a fun, action-packed, page-turner of a book.

I'm going to separate this into the good and the bad to make it easier to gather my thoughts on the book. It really had some major ups and downs. Some minor spoilers may be ahead. Let's start with the bad:

1. This book really beat you over the head with some of the characters, the humor, and the love story. For instance, the character of Cody and his relentless made up storytelling that no one bought, and everyone got tired of. Every chance he got, there was another story he was telling that was exaggerated or just complete nonsense.
2. The humor. How many times do I have to hear

about how bad the David (the main character) is at coming up with metaphors. It's really like every 5 minutes he goes into another one, only to explain, yet again, how bad he is at them. Maybe it would have been funny if you weren't beat over the head with it over and over. Same goes for Cody and his outlandish stories, we get it.³ The love story. It really felt as if it was told through the perspective of a 12 year old. And was another thing that was beat over your head over and over. David finds Megan extremely beautiful, we got it, I don't need to be reminded every time they were involved in the same scene.⁴ A lot of the book revolved around the mystery of what Steelheart's weakness was. Now obviously not everyone is going to have this problem, but I felt like I knew pretty early on, and it was a bit frustrating knowing I'd have to get to the end to find out, and I was right, which added to the frustration. The good:¹ All of that said, the plot, the epics, the city and the structure of the society were all very cool and well done. The name Newcago wasn't very creative to me, but just a minor detail.² The idea of the Reckoners, the tools they use, and then the twists and turns as the story goes along, especially at the end, really redeemed the story for me. Prof and Abraham were very cool characters in my opinion. I loved the surprises, and the ending solution, as said on the cover, really was pretty awesome and did not see that coming.³ It was full of action and suspense, there wasn't really a lot of dull down time or any parts where it really felt like it was moving slow for me. Overall, if you can get past the very cheesy, beating-a-dead-horse to make absolutely sure you're getting the humor YA aspects of the book, it's well worth a read. Despite the negatives, I will be waiting for the next book in the series and have already read the interlude short story Mitosis which was pretty good as well.

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