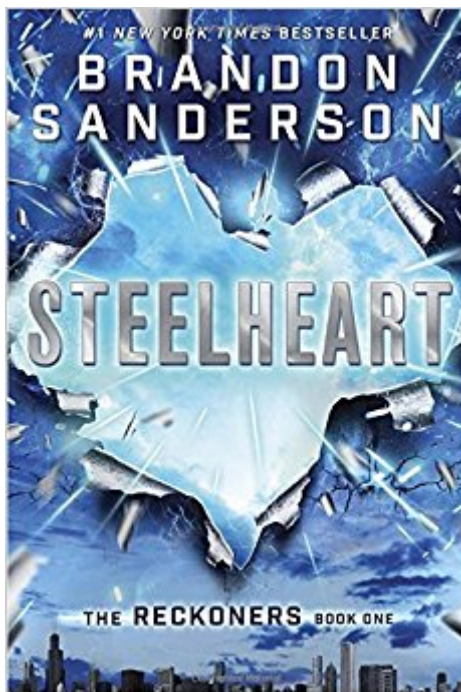


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Steelheart (The Reckoners)



Synopsis

The #1 New York Times bestseller that James Dashner called “fantastic” with “relentless” suspense and an “explosive” climax from Brandon Sanderson, the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Words of Radiance*, coauthor of Robert Jordan’s *The Wheel of Time* series, and creator of the internationally bestselling *Mistborn* trilogy. And don’t miss the rest of the *Reckoners* series: *Firefight* and *Calamity*. How far would you go for revenge if someone killed your father? If someone destroyed your city? If everything you ever loved was taken from you? David Charleston will go to any lengths to stop Steelheart in his world, David will need the Reckoners—a shadowy group of rebels bent on maintaining justice. And it turns out that the Reckoners might just need David too. Look for book two in the *Reckoners* series, *Firefight*, available now.

Praise for the *Reckoners* series #1 New York Times Bestselling Series “The suspense is relentless and the climax explosive.”
James Dashner, #1 New York Times bestselling author of the *Maze Runner* series “Another win for Sanderson . . . he’s simply a brilliant writer. Period.”
Patrick Rothfuss, author of the New York Times and USA Today bestseller *The Name of the Wind* “Action-packed.”
EW.com “Compelling. . . . Sanderson uses plot twists that he teases enough for readers to pick up on to distract from the more dramatic reveals he has in store.”
The A.V. Club

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 680L (What’s this?)

Series: *The Reckoners* (Book 1)

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: Ember; Reprint edition (September 23, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385743572

ISBN-13: 978-0385743570

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 2,060 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #10,896 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Boys & Men #52 in Books > Children’s Books > Growing Up & Facts of

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Q&A with Brandon Sanderson (Interviewed by James Dashner) Q. Brandon, you're perhaps best known for your adult books •Mistborn, The Way of Kings, and particularly for finishing Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time series. However, recently you've undertaken several projects for younger readers. Why is that? How does it feel to be entering into the world of YA fiction? How does it differ from writing for an adult audience? How do you possibly think you can compete with your friend, James Dashner? A. I've known this guy James Dashner for so long, and he was such an inspiration to me, and I thought, if this joker can do it, then I can too! The sci-fi/fantasy genre is what made a reader out of me, and it has a long history of crossing the line between YA and adult fiction. For example, you mentioned The Wheel of Time. In the early books, the main protagonists are all teenagers. Are these books YA? The publishers don't classify them that way. They're shelved with the adult fantasy books. Books like that have influenced me in that some of the stories I tell fit into the mold that society says will package well as YA books. Other stories I tell that are a thousand pages long don't seem to fit that mold. But I don't sit down and say, "I'm writing for a teen audience now. I need to change my entire style." Instead, I say, "This project and the way I'm writing it feels like it would work well for a teen audience." Q. In previous interviews, you've mentioned that you come up with characters, worlds, and magic systems independently and then fit them together to create a book. How is that different when writing a YA book like Steelheart? Are certain worlds or magic systems more suitable for YA readers? And how in the world did you get so smart? A. Ha! I do a lot of talking about the process of writing. That makes it sound like I'm doing it more consciously than I am, but at this point I do most of it by instinct. I do take things like characters, settings, and magic systems all these little fragments and pieces and put them together into stories. Whether I'm writing YA or adult, this process doesn't vary. Some of these elements feel better suited for a teen audience, so when everything starts coming together as it does when a book is forming for me, some stories naturally gravitate toward YA. To me Steelheart is distinctive because it was one of those stories where all the elements came together at the same time. Once I got the

idea— people gaining super powers but only evil people getting them— the story basically started to write itself in my head. It happened during a four-hour drive along the East Coast, where by the end of it, I basically had this entire story. I knew where it was going, and I was really excited to write it. That's rare for me, but sometimes it does happen where everything clicks right at the beginning. Q. Can you give us a sense of the world in which Steelheart takes place? Why do you think this world worked well for these particular characters? A. Technically, Steelheart is set in a post-apocalyptic world where super villains gained powers and took over. I wanted it to feel alien and familiar at the same time and to be very visual. So I wrote it to be kind of like an action movie in book form. One of my catchphrases that I use when talking about writing is —Err on the side of awesomeness.— So I wanted the setting and feel of the book to be visually distinctive and awesome. When I designed Steelheart, the emperor of Chicago, I wanted him to have the power of transmutation— he turns things into steel. The idea that, in a burst of power, he turned the entire city— and even part of the lake— into steel was fascinating to me. This renders a lot of things useless. When your streetlights and all their wiring have been turned into steel, everything short circuits and doesn't work anymore. You can't get into buildings because their doors and windows have been melded together. The whole city has become a shell— like the husk of a dead beetle— and people have built on top of it. It's always perpetual twilight there, so we've got this cool feel of everything being steel at night. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Gr 8 Up— After the appearance of Calamity, a mysterious celestial force, ordinary humans began to exhibit superhuman powers. They became known as Epics and used their powers to control others. When David was eight years old, he witnessed his father's ruthless murder at the hand of Steelheart, one of the most powerful Epics in the world. Ten years later, David lives in Newcago (once Chicago) under the tyrannical rule of Steelheart and his inner circle of Epics. David has spent the last decade researching everything he can about Epics: their habits, their powers, and their weaknesses. He wants to join the Reckoners, a secretive group of humans dedicated to killing Epics, and convince them to take on Steelheart. However, even after all his study, David has not figured out the seemingly invincible Epic's weakness—without that knowledge, his plan for revenge cannot succeed. MacLeod Andrews's understated performance of the first-person narration is highly effective and makes the engaging action scenes stand out in contrast. He transitions easily among characters who vary in age, background, and status within the world of humans and Epics. Revelations in the climactic battle add layers and substance to the story, and listeners will look

forward to more in future installments. — Amanda Raklovits, Champaign Public Library, IL
--This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Brandon Sanderson takes the superhero genre and turns it on its head in this YA series. Thanks to an unknown cosmic event referred to as just "Calamity" super powered individuals now rule the earth. And they're all villains. David was a young boy when his father was killed by Steelheart, one of the strongest Epics that world has ever seen. Ten years later and David teams up with the Reckoners, who specialize in one thing: killing Epics. It's a fast paced story with plenty of twists and turns to keep your attention focused and your imagination guessing.

This book was AWESOME!!! But nothing less than what I'd expect from Brandon Sanderson. Just, he is amazing at genres other than epic fantasy. In fact, I think writing action is one of his strengths. OK, so yes this book is heavy on action, but not in an annoying or overwhelming way. It's intense, but not too intense. It's actually a really fun read. I had a hard time putting it down. And it has some great language. So great characters, good worldbuilding. The world could have been a bit more explained, but at the same time, the main character didn't know why it was like that, just that it was, so it lends credibility for the reader to not know either. I really love how this book takes all superhero tropes and COMPLETELY turns them UPSIDE DOWN. You go in expecting one thing and it's something completely different. One thing I really loved about David the main character was his competence. He is just a perfectly ordinary guy, but he has devoted his life to studying epics and so he knows things. He is not the typical Oh Woe Is Me, how'd I get caught up in this mess character. He put himself in this mess and he GETS THINGS DONE! He's great and I didn't realize incompetence in a main character annoyed me, until I read this book and saw how great it was to have such a good at his job main character. Anyway, the plot was also great. Everything about this book was great. I loved how all the unnecessary parts were cut. This book was just so tight. Like the editing and construction of this book were perfect. And the ending was AH-MAZ-ING. I loved the ending. All the little questions were answered/explained. In short, read this book. It's awesome. I'm so glad my mediocre book streak was broken. This book is great. I can't wait for the sequel. Brandon Sanderson, you are my hero, lol.

Another great take on the fantasy genre, Brandon Sanderson once again subverts our expectations. A mysterious comet lights up the sky, and one year later people all over the world gain strange new powers. Sounds like a cliched superhero book, right? How about the fact that there are

no superheroes? What makes this book so original is that nobody who gains powers becomes a superhero. There are only supervillains, and they very quickly take over the world and rule their fiefdoms with iron fists. Enter the Reckoners, a group of humans fighting back against their god-like overlords, hunting them down and assassinating them one by one. Enter David, a young man with a dubious grasp of the metaphor, who just so happens to be the one person who has seen Steelheart, the mightiest of the Epics, bleed. As usual, Sanderson does not go with the boring route of having the hero just be super special or a prodigy, or anything like that. He's just an ordinary man fighting extraordinary and sometimes invincible beings. What makes the book so good is that the Reckoners never kill the Epics by being stronger than them, but by identifying a small weakness and ruthlessly exploiting it. The character development is well crafted and each member of the Reckoners is believable as a person, with their own quirks and views on life, and even those who question the justification of assassinating one of the few epics who runs a stable, secure city. There were a few twists in this book, and while one of them I could see coming from a fair distance, there were others that came as a complete surprise, although looking back at it Sanderson did do an excellent job foreshadowing it. Unlike his other books, this is marketed towards young adults, and it is not part of the Cosmere, but the quality of writing remains consistently high, and it is certainly worth reading (and re-reading).

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