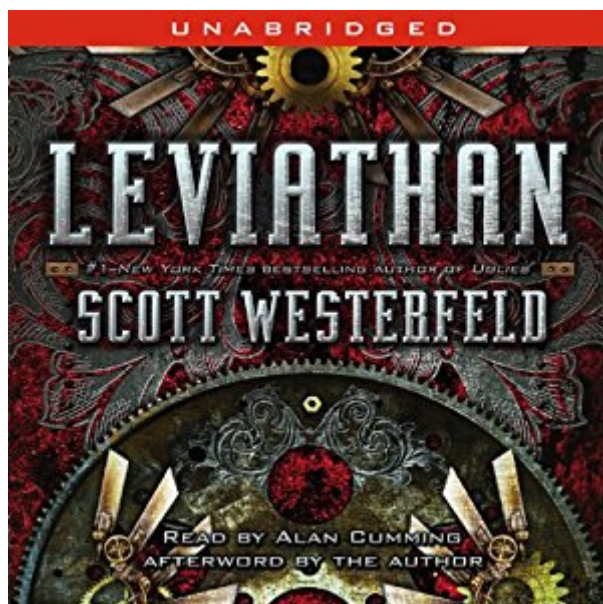


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# Leviathan



## Synopsis

Two opposing forces are on the brink of war. The Clankers - who put their faith in machinery - and the Darwinists - who have begun evolving living creatures into tools. Prince Aleksandar, the would-be heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, comes from a family of Clankers, and travels the country in a walker, a heavily-fortified tank on legs. Meanwhile Deryn Sharp, a girl disguised as a boy, works for the British Empire, crewing the ultimate flying machine: an airship made of living animals. Now, as Alek flees from his own people, and Deryn crash-lands in enemy territory, their lives are about to collide... --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Version: Unabridged

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Whispersync for Voice: Ready

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## Customer Reviews

In an alternate history, Europe is headed towards a World War. The Germanic Clankers, with their advanced machinery, face off against the British Darwinists, with their crossbred animals. The Darwinists have a new weapon, the Leviathan, a flying whale ship. Deryn Sharp is new to the service and is on the Leviathan for her first assignment. But only males are allowed to be in the service, so she must hide her identity from everyone, and disguise herself as a boy. Meanwhile, Prince Aleksandar Ferdinand is woken in the middle of the night and forced to flee his home. With only a small group of men, Aleksandar faces foes at every turn. When the Leviathan lands near Aleksandar, he meets young Deryn, and their fates intertwine. In this latest young adult novel from Scott Westerfeld, he has created an alternate history in a steampunk version of World War I. It's a fantastic world of elaborate machines and bizarre, unnatural animals. In addition to the unique world

and fascinating story, the characters are just as absorbing and are the driving force behind the story. Aleksandar is spoiled, but very bright and capable. And Deryn is brave, talented, and humble. The two are from different worlds and seems as if the reader is viewing to drastically different stories, until the two worlds collide. There is no lack of suspense and action in this steampunk adventure. As a growing niche in the science fiction genre, this novel is sure to be popular amidst youth and adults alike. With events culminating in a climactic ending, there is room left open for a sequel, which I certainly am hoping for. It's a fun, fresh and decidedly unique tale. Don't miss this one.

Eventhough the protagonists in Leviathan are 15 and 16 years old, Westerfeld's clean writing makes this book entirely appropriate for the younger middle grade (ages 8-12) set. My 11 yo really enjoyed the story - and he's taken to sporting a knit cap he says is a Bowler Hat. Deryn is a girl who disguises herself as a boy so she can join the Air Service in 1914 Britain. Prince Aleksander is the half-royal not-heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne who struggles with duty and survival when the assassination of his parents pitches the world into war. Their paths collide and Westerfeld's fast-paced action doesn't disappoint. Oh, and there's Darwinist creatures pitted against Clanker machines, and the technology is a delicious mixture of retro steam and futuristic custom-designed creatures. Scott Westerfeld's fantastic imagination, combined with Keith Thompson's gorgeous line drawings, creates a feast for the mind and eyes. The only drawback to this book is its ending: curses upon Westerfeld for his cliff-hanger books! You must read the next book Behemoth, but it doesn't come out until October 2010. Westerfeld says he will probably tour when Behemoth is released, so I may have to stalk him. The only question: how do I get my e-book signed? I might have to resort to having him sign something else. Maybe that collectible Leviathan art that would really look awesome on my wall. Westerfeld writes smart and very clean books. The violence is real, but not gratuitous, and almost completely bloodless. There is death in Leviathan. This is war, after all. Alek accidentally kills a soldier, and Deryn is involved in a couple battles where fatalities occur. The dead are hinted at, but not described. Unless your child is very sensitive to such things, Leviathan is an excellent book for advanced readers ages 9+. I will be shocked if Leviathan isn't made into a movie. It is action packed and has "summer blockbuster" written all over it. Now if I could just get my own messenger lizard.

I liked the story but it just seemed to take forever to get off the ground (no pun intended). Of the two separate stories, I felt Deryn's was way more interesting, Alek came across to me as annoying,

stupid, and illogical at times and I had to force myself to read through his parts of the story. Deryn was much more likable and thus easier to read about. Once the two parts came together, I thought the story flowed much better and was an easier read. The details on the Darwinist creations, and the way they work together to form a sort of ecology was very interesting and made me want to read more to learn more about this world they live in. All in all, a decent story, almost prologue like, that will leave you wanting to read the next book.

2.5 stars. I liked the characters a lot, and particularly enjoyed that Alek and Deryn matured throughout the book as they got more life experience. I do wish Nora had been more likable though; as it is there seems to be something sinister about her. Despite enjoying the main characters, I didn't enjoy the overall plot of the book. Steampunk is pretty hit or miss for me in general, so the book might appeal more to serious fans of the genre. I just didn't find either the world or the plot particularly engaging. I was particularly turned off by the way the Darwinist countries used and manipulated living animals to create their machine replacements. I also don't like when books leave multiple major issues unresolved because it feels like a cheap way to try to force readers into continuing the series, and I didn't feel like much was resolved in this book. I would recommend Westerfeld's earlier books (Uglies, The Midnighters, Peeps) over this one.

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