**STEELHEART**

By Brian Sanderson

**Louisiana Young Reader’s Choice Nominee 2015**

**Young Adult**

*Submitted by Jennifer Jacob, Student*

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**Title:** *Steelheart*

**Author:** Brian Sanderson

**Publisher:** Random House

**Pages:** 386

**SUMMARY**

Eighteen year old David can remember a time before Epics, but just barely. When he was eight years old, a mysterious burst in the sky gave some ordinary men and women epic superpowers. While many people, like David’s dad, believed that these Epics were given their powers to help mankind, David quickly learned that this is not the case as he is forced to witness his father’s brutal murder at the hands of a seemingly invincible Epic, Steelheart. David discovers a secret – the seemingly invincible Steelheart bleeds. Ten years later, David is consumed by seeking revenge on Steelheart – the tyrant who now rules what is left of Chicago, or Newcago. Although most ordinary humans live in fear in Steelheart’s shadow, one elusive group, the Reckoners, continues to fight. David may not know how to find the Reckoners or how to defeat Steelheart, but he knows one thing for certain: he has seen Steelheart bleed. David will not stop searching until he sees Steelheart bleed again.

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

Brian Sanderson did not always want to be a writer. In fact, Sanderson did not always like reading. However, when Sanderson’s eighth grade teacher gave the young reader *Dragonsbane* by Barbara Hamby, Sanderson knew something was different. At this point Sanderson became enthralled by epic fantasy, continuing to expand knowledge of the genre. After enrolling in Brigham Young University as biochemistry major, Sanderson took a sabbatical from school to work as a missionary in South Korea. Upon returning to the U.S. Sanderson knew he wanted to focus on writing. Sanderson changed his major to creative writing and started writing in earnest. After much learning and many failed attempts, Sanderson’s first novel, *Elantris*, was published in 2006. Since this date, Sanderson has published several bestsellers, including the Mistborn trilogy. His books have been published in over 25 languages, and he continues to work on several projects.

 Biographical information taken from the author’s website at

 <http://brandonsanderson.com/about-brandon/>

 Accessed October 1, 2014

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Author’s Website: <http://brandonsanderson.com/>

Goodreads Author Information: <http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/38550.Brandon_Sanderson>

**OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR**

*Firelight* (2015)

*Words of Radiance* (2014)

*Miltosis: A Reckoner’s Tale* (2013)

*The Emperor’s Soul* (2012)

**RELATED TITLES**

*Doon* by Carey Corp

*Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott

*Throne of Glass* by Sarah J. Mass

*Watchmen* by Alan Moore

*Soon I Will be Invincible* by Austin Grossman

*American Gods* by Neil Gaiman

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

**Language Arts:**

* Students will demonstrate knowledge of speaking, listening, and incorporating evidence through a Socratic seminar discussing the effect of leadership and heroism on society. Socratic seminar resources at <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/socratic-seminars-30600.html> and <https://www.nwabr.org/sites/default/files/SocSem.pdf>. Also, students will use the *New York Times’* Room for Debate section: <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/04/21/the-bystanders-who-could-be-heroes>
* Students will use evidence from multiple sources to write a persuasive essay in which they argue whether or not people have a moral obligation to help others. Use the *New York Times* articles and/or the article “Thirty-Eight Saw Murder and Didn’t Call the Police”: <http://www2.southeastern.edu/Academics/Faculty/scraig/gansberg.html>
* Students will participate in a debate to demonstrate speaking, listening, and using evidence. The debate will address that heroes are born, not made, or that it is better to be loved than feared. Students can develop their responses into a persuasive essay, using evidence for support. Debate resources at <http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson304b.shtml>
* Students will demonstrate knowledge of the author’s style by creating a fan fiction piece in which they write a sequel to the novel, or rewrite a chapter of the novel. Students can compare their versions to the preview of the second book, *Firelight*, which is provided in the back of *Steelheart*. Writing must mimic the author’s style and tone and include elements of a story. Creative writing tips at <http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/creative1/shortstory/>.
* Students will demonstrate understanding of characterization and motivation by designing a Facebook or Instagram account based on one character from the novel. Students must include quotes from the text to support ideas. Templates, grading, and ideas at <http://www.asd20.org/Schools/ems/Teachers/Mary_Anderson/Documents/Character%20Facebook%20Profile.pdf>.
* Students will demonstrate understanding of character, theme, and plot, by selecting characters or a character from the novel and write “tweets” from the perspective of that character. Tweets must reflect the personality and tone of the character(s) selected. Other ways to use Twitter in the classroom may be found at <http://www.teachhub.com/50-ways-use-twitter-classroom>.
* Students will analyze plot, mood, and tone by creating a soundtrack of ten songs to accompany the novel. Songs must cover the mood of the beginning, middle, and end of the novel, as well as reflect specific characters or events. Use MLA format to cite songs used. OWL Perdue citation for music: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/09/>.

**Social Studies:**

* Students will demonstrate understanding of setting by creating a map and/or images of Newcago and the areas described in the book. They will write a brief essay explaining their map, using evidence from the text.
* Students will use the novel as a guide to imagine and create the laws and/or a constitution that keep(s) Newcago stable. Compare these laws to those in Louisiana or to the Constitution of the United States of America: <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html>.
* Students will work in small groups to research how a dictator gains and sustains power, using dictators from history. Their presentations must also compare and contrast Steelheart to a dictator in today’s society or to a dictator in the past. Students may use the following resources: <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/mim45eeke/president-of-zimbabwe-robert-mugabe/> and <http://historylists.org/people/list-of-top-10-most-brutal-dictators-in-modern-history.html>

**Art:**

* Students will examine popular super hero symbols and demonstrate and apply knowledge of symbolism, color, and technique to create a symbol to represent a character from the novel. Related web sites: <http://www.comicvine.com/profile/lvenger/lists/my-100-favourite-superheroes/17520/> and <http://www.pinterest.com/explore/superhero-logos/>.
* Students will compare a theme across different genres by selecting an important scene from the novel to draw, sculpt, or paint. Artwork must be based on evidence from the text: <http://flavorwire.com/245401/great-works-of-art-inspired-by-great-works-of-literature/8>
* Students will mimic the style and purpose of the novel by adapting a section into a graphic novel: <http://www.scholastic.com/graphix/createcomic.htm>

**STEM**

* Students will work in small groups to research and analyze the properties of metals, like steel. They will demonstrate understanding through creating a presentation to the class that contains a visual.
* Students will apply knowledge of mass and formulas to calculate the amount of steel needed to create a city the size of Newcago. They will then analyze the benefits and problems of such a place.
* Students will use technology to demonstrate speaking, listening, and knowledge of character, plot, tone, and theme to create a podcast of a major conflict or battle in the novel: <https://www.podomatic.com/login>
* Students will use video or gaming software to create a video game representation of the plot, characters, setting, and conflict: <http://www.sploder.com/free-game-creator.php> or <http://gamefroot.com/>
* Students will apply knowledge of the principles of science to debate the possibility of viable superpower that is based on facts and properties of science: <http://thespiritscience.net/2014/08/30/16-people-with-real-super-powers/>

**Vocabulary:**

 Calamity

 Dictator

 Fortuity

 Precognition

 Notorious

 Reckon

 Hesitant

 Epic

 Enforcement

 Scavenged

 Illusion

 Refraction

 Conflux

 Doubtful

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Reread the first chapter of the novel when David describes the Epic powers bestowed on ordinary humans. What abilities do people today have that might be called “epic”? Using evidence from the text, evaluate the extent to which people should be allowed to use these powers.
2. In what ways is David’s search for revenge justified? In what ways is it excessive? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
3. How does David’s character develop throughout the novel? Use evidence from the text to support your response.
4. Why are people afraid to stand up to Steelheart and other epics? What does this choice reveal about human nature? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
5. Many characters in the novel are deliberately deceitful. Select one and explain his or her motivation, using evidence.
6. If David were granted epic powers, what would he be given and why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
7. *Steelheart* is similar to other dystopian novels. Using evidence from the text, answer the following: Why do you think these novels are so popular in today’s society? What does this say about this generation?
8. Other than to entertain, what do you think is the author’s purpose in writing this text? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
9. Based on your reading of the novel, do you agree or disagree that power corrupts? Use evidence from the text to support your response.
10. Based on your reading of the novel, who do you think makes a better leader: someone who is loved or someone who is feared? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

**RELATED WEBSITES**

**Marvel Comics: Create Your Own Superhero**

<http://marvel.com/games/play/31/create_your_own_superhero>

Create your own superhero avatar

***The Guardian:* What is it like to live in a dictatorship?**

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/03/belarus-mythbuster-what-like-live-europe-last-dictatorship>

An article that examines the conditions of a dictatorship, using Belarus as example

***U.S. News*: What is it like to live in a dictatorship?**

<http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/rick-newman/2013/04/12/heres-how-lousy-life-is-in-north-korea>

An article that examines the conditions of living in a dictatorship, using North Korea as example

**World Coal Association**

<http://www.worldcoal.org/coal/uses-of-coal/coal-steel/>

Information on the production of coal and steel

**Steelworks: America’s Production of Steel**

<http://www.steel.org/About%20AISI/Statistics.aspx>

Further information on the production of steel