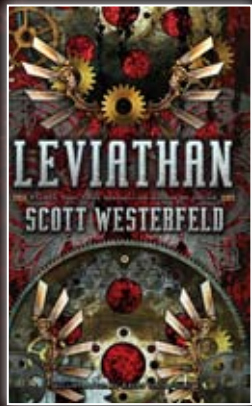


BEHIND THE LEVIATHAN ILLUSTRATIONS



Leviathan author, Scott Westerfeld, talks about how illustrator Keith Thompson took a makeshift model of a Stormwalker and sled and turned it into a digital masterpiece.



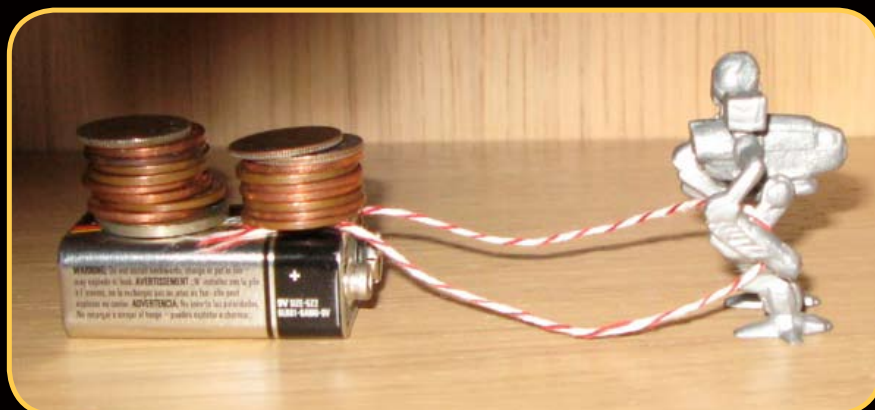
SCOTT SAYS: There's a scene in *Leviathan* where my characters have to use a Stormwalker (a giant armored walking machine) to transport a load of cargo across the snow. But the Stormwalker is a war machine, and doesn't have much cargo space. Luckily, however, my characters are quite clever and resourceful, so they knock down a castle gate and build a sort of improvised sled from it.

Keith and I decided we should definitely show the preparations for the Stormwalker dragging the sled. So he did a first draft of a sketch.



SCOTT SAYS: I liked this sketch for its little details, especially the Tasmanian tiger (the pet of the woman in the bowler hat) hanging out atop the cargo. But I was concerned that this sketch doesn't show the link between the Stormwalker and the sled, which becomes important when (*spoiler alert*) things go terribly, terribly wrong in the next chapter.

To convey the specific angle I wanted, I decided to model the illustration for Keith with a photograph, and created this little diorama:





SCOTT SAYS: It's amazing what you can do with a nine-volt battery, some coins, a piece of string, and a toy walker. (What, you don't have any toy walkers sitting around your house?)

I was rarely so literal when describing things for Keith. Usually he has a much better sense of how things look than I do, because he thinks more visually. But in this case the reader needed to know exactly how things worked. (And I also wanted to see it to help me with writing the next chapter.) So here's his revised sketch:



SCOTT SAYS: As you can see, Keith kept the overall form of the photo, while adding back in all the cool details from his first draft, along with a few more. This sketch also shows how the illustration will split elegantly across two pages of text, with the gutter in between.

I gave this an enthusiastic thumbs up, and he proceeded to the digital version.



SCOTT SAYS: As you can see, the jump from pencil sketch to digital is huge. Being able to zoom in with Photoshop and render small details makes all the difference. There are seven characters, plus a Tasmanian tiger, and a wonderful sense of activity and purpose in this illustration. Keith's work always includes its own storytelling, suggesting a lot of hustle and bustle that's not necessarily shown in my text.

As you can see, this is a lot of detailed work. And remember, this is only one of thirty-three illustrations in the book!

(There's actually one change between this and the final version, but you'll have to get the book to see that. Heh, heh.)



KEITH SAYS: The structure and scale of this piece gave me a chance to work in a way I spent much of my childhood working: a long view, a landscape format, an almost flat ground plane, and a lineup of characters, animals and strange vehicles set before the viewer as though on a stage or on an old tapestry. A simplified view like this one, rather weirdly set out and old-fashioned, is a type of illustration I don't get to see or do enough of most of the time.