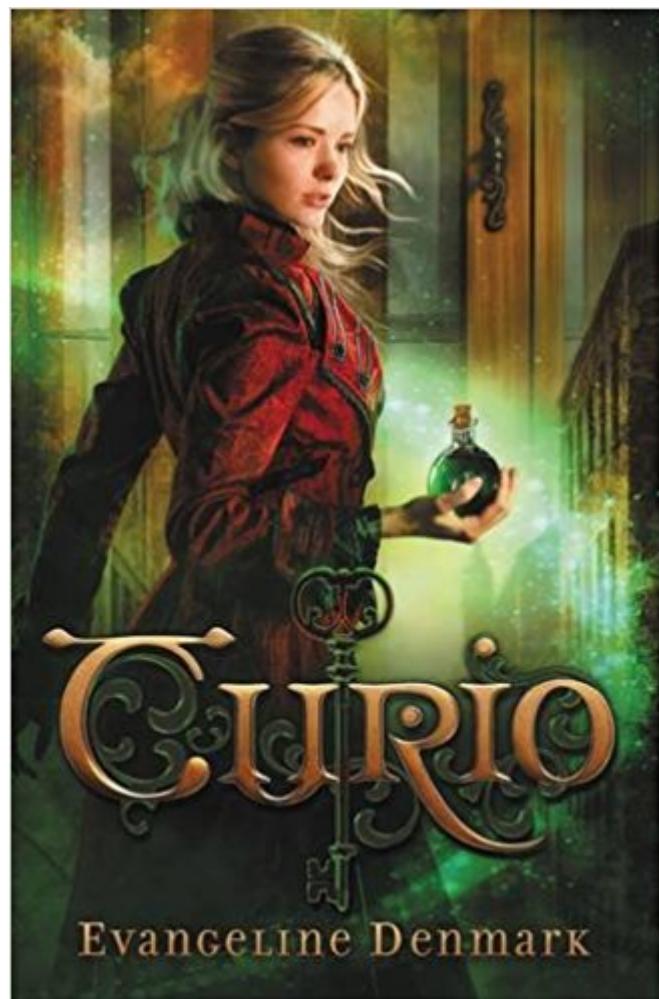


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## Curio (Blink)



## Synopsis

Grey Haward has always detested the Chemists, the magicians-come-scientists who rule her small western town. But she has always followed the rules, taking the potion the Chemists ration out that helps the town's people survive. A potion that Grey suspects she's like her grandfather and father may not actually need. By working at her grandfather's repair shop, sorting the small gears and dusting the curio cabinet inside, Grey has tried to stay unnoticed—or as unnoticed as a tall, strong girl can in a town of diminutive, underdeveloped citizens. Then her best friend, Whit, is caught by the Chemists' enforcers after trying to protect Grey one night, and after seeing the extent of his punishment, suddenly taking risks seems the only decision she can make. But with the risk comes the reality that the Chemists know her family's secret, and the Chemists soon decide to use her for their own purposes. Panicked, Grey retreats to the only safe place she knows—her grandfather's shop. There, however, a larger secret confronts her when her touch unlocks the old curio cabinet in the corner and reveals a world where porcelain and clockwork people are real. There, she could find the key that may save Whit's life and also end the Chemists' dark rule forever.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up—Grey Haward's life is nothing out of the ordinary. She, like everyone else in her town, spends most of her time trying to avoid the Chemists's notice—both fearing the powerful alchemists and needing a daily ration of their potion to survive. Life with the Chemists is life

in a police state, with violence doled out to those who break the law. When Grey's friend Whit is striped for an offense Grey feels responsible for, she stands up for him, unleashing an inner power and a family secret about a group of fighters long believed extinct. Thrust into a whole new world, Grey must figure out how to channel her newfound abilities in order to save herself and those she cares for. There are many threads in this book, and unfortunately, not all of them are woven successfully. At times, this work reads like two completely separate stories with only the names of the characters as a constant. The connection between the world of Curio and Grey's regular life does not feel fully developed, nor does the Defender/Chemist battle, although this looks to be addressed in a forthcoming prequel. VERDICT Purchase only where there is a ravenous fandom for steampunk and dystopia. —Heather Webb, Worthington Libraries, OH

"A wonderfully appealing writing voice and engaging characters immediately draw readers into this dystopian story. The imaginative worldbuilding (not one but two!) and swoon-worthy romances complete the attraction, making this novel difficult to put down until the very last word has been savored." - RT Book Reviews, Top Pick February 2016 "Magic, romance, world-hopping and ... steampunk! Put this book on your TBR stack right now, because

Denmark's world-crafting skills are two levels of genius you do not want to miss. Steampunk fans will absolutely fall in love with this novel, but fantasy readers should definitely come along for the ride. Excellent storytelling! Highly recommended." - Serena Chase, USA Today

Actual rating: 4.5 stars A wondrous mix of fantasy, dystopian, and steampunk with inventive twists and turns, Curio is a great new novel by Evangeline Denmark! I am a huge fan of steampunk, so naturally this novel caught my eye. However, this being said, I am also extremely picky about my steampunk. Some authors don't do it justice and fail epically, while other authors offer mind-blowing worlds that capture the exact essence of steampunk. I am happy to say that this novel is a perfect steampunk novel that everyone can enjoy. Every scene has a little hint of steampunk in it, but it's never overwhelming. One of the reasons this works so well is how Evangeline Denmark incorporated elements of other genres into the story as well. There's fantasy when we get to the Curio world, there's dystopian when we are in both worlds, and then there's a bit of romance. Everything is perfectly balanced, and it makes this book even more enjoyable. The writing was absolutely wonderful and Evangeline Denmark crafted a fantastical adventure that sweeps you away from the first page. There are so many secrets waiting to be uncovered, and I found myself on the edge of my seat waiting for these secrets to be unveiled. And when these secrets are revealed,

well let's just say, you will be pleasantly surprised. This book isn't that predictable, which is extremely refreshing, and you will find yourself guessing every thing. There are many twists and turns you won't see coming, and the world that Evangeline Denmark has developed is so intriguing. My only complaint was that I wished for a little more description of the fantasy elements. I don't know if this will be explained in future novels, but I didn't like just accepting that these elements existed with no explanation. I wanted to know more! However, I am extremely excited to learn more about the Defenders and the Chemists in future books. It's such a unique and creative aspect of this novel, and I can't wait to see where Evangeline Denmark takes the series in this regard. Grey is an amazing female lead, and easily one of my favorite steampunk ladies. Grey is so real and relatable, even though she's quite different than everyone around her. She has insecurities and is very uncertain of herself and her future. But, I loved how once Grey was transported to another world, she immediately took charge, and was able to fend for herself. She let the restrictions that had imprisoned her during her upbringing fall away, and was able to think on her feet and find her true inner strength. Grey's growth and development over the course of this novel is perfect and extremely well written. Ultimately though she learns what it truly means to be a Defender, and the entire ending is truly magnificent in both character development and storytelling. I highly recommend checking this novel out if you are a fan of steampunk novels or are looking to get into the genre. This would serve as a good introduction to the steampunk world without being too overwhelming. Plus, with the other genres mixed in, this novel has a little bit of something for everyone! Every character is unique and different from anything I have read previously, and I am excited to see what happens next in the Curio series! Happy reading :)

\*Originally reviewed on Goodreads and My Blog\* This book was pretty freaking awesome! I felt like I was in a strange Doctor Who episode in a sense, but not as good as Doctor Who =): There are evil, evil Chemists, Porcie's (porcelain people), clockwork people (although, they don't look like the Doctor Who ones, just people like), Defenders, Warriors, stone people etc for reasons and other stuff.: All of the people in the town have to take a potion that gets rationed out daily for the people to stay alive. There is a whole thing about that you can read in the book. But, Grey and her family are different. The men in the family are different and Grey herself. They are strong and they may not even need to take the ration. And why are they so big and strong? All of this stuff goes down in the beginning with Grey and her best friend Whit. Some things happen and he gets taken away to be um, taught a lesson. This upsets not only Whit's mom, but Grey, her father, grandfather and her mom. They try to help the family but this evil Chemist named Adante comes and starts

trouble. (I hate him!) It ends up that Grey is on the run for her life and her grandfather tells her to go to his shop where she works with him and one of his assistants. Well . . . instead of Alice falling down the rabbit hole, Grey gets tossed into the Curio Cabinet. Yes, I know that sounds funny as all get out but it was freaking cool after she got to the bottom. This is where she meets all of the porcelain people, the tocks and the infamous, Mad Tock. She's actually supposed to find him for reasons. It ends up being an amazingly, bizarre book that I just loved. I had a little crush on the Mad Tock too, he's not what you think he is and neither is a lot of people for that matter!  Thank you for looking at my review 

I couldn't put this book down. Denmark had me wrapped around her finger with her masterful storytelling, and Oh, the places she led me! I visited not one but TWO fantastical, fully developed worlds with intricate and intriguing details woven into the narrative. The dual plots kept me guessing, the action and danger kept me on the edge of my seat, and the characters made me feel brave, afraid, and in love. I feel like I've just returned home from a fantastical adventure, and that I made awesome new friends along the way. I can't wait to take another journey with them!

Any other book I read for 2016 will have a hard time competing. Curio is one of those books that I wish I'd written. From the first page, I fell straight into Gray's world. And the world-within-a-world. Not only is there the real world, which is controlled by the exacting Alchemists, there's also the world inside of the curio cabinet. I felt a part of both worlds although if I had to pick, I like the world inside of the curio a bit better. Why? Because it's inhabited by Porcies, porcelain people reliant on steam-run "jitter pumps", and metal mechanical people who must be wound. Then there are the outcasts, less than perfect Porcies. I also highly recommend the prequel, The Mark of Blood and Alchemy. I read it after I read Curio. I'm glad I read it second, but I think I would have understood the Alchemists and grandfather's roles a bit better. However, it made the mystery of Curio more exciting not knowing about the history of the various peoples. I received a copy of Curio in exchange for an honest review.

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