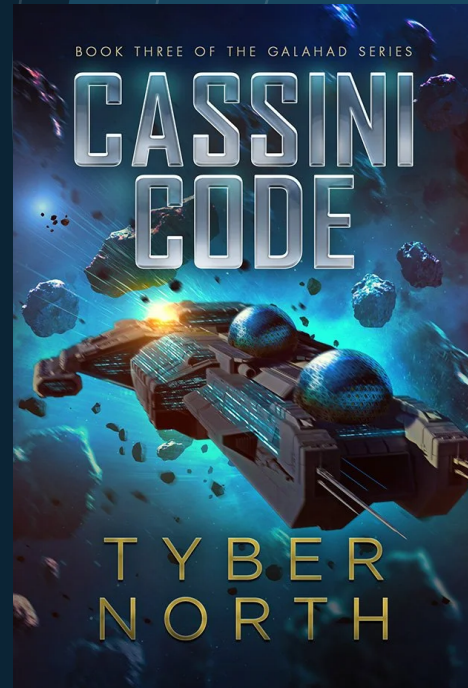


THE GALAHAD SERIES / BOOK THREE

Cassini Code

STUDY GUIDE

Writing activities,
research projects, and
discussion questions for
teachers and students.



WRITING + RESEARCH

Activities

These projects are designed to deepen comprehension while inviting students to imagine themselves aboard Galahad.

I. RETURN TO EARTH

A

Dr. Zimmer created the Galahad mission because humans faced extinction from Bhaktul's Disease. As a crew member aboard the ship, imagine that you're having second thoughts about leaving your family to face their fate on Earth. Compose three journal entries describing the life you left behind, your role and duties on Galahad, and your feelings about the risks you're now encountering within the Kuiper Belt.

B

Merit Simms calls his movement "R.T.E." or "Return to Earth." His followers wear armbands to show their solidarity. With friends or classmates, think of a list of present-day or historical movements and social causes with slogans and, possibly, recognizable symbols. How were these movements organized, who led them, and what were their goals? Has examining real-life movements affected your consideration of Merit Simms? Why or why not?

C

Make a list of five reasons people should join Merit's movement and demand a return to Earth. Or, make a list of five reasons to support the Council. Then, as a Galahad crew member, compose a speech that explains your position and your reasons. Read your speech aloud to friends or classmates.

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II. CALLING THE CASSINI

A

Imagine Triana has asked you to explain the Kuiper belt to the rest of the crew. Using research from the library or online, prepare a report with graphs or charts, PowerPoint or other presentation software, drawings, photographs, or other elements. Present your report to friends or classmates acting as the crew, and invite them to ask questions for you to answer.

B

Divide friends or classmates into groups to debate the plan of allowing Bon to reconnect with the Cassini. One side will be in favor of the plan, the other will be opposed. Use what you've learned from the Galahad novels as well as additional research on space travel and extraterrestrial life to support each position.

C

Imagine you are part of the Cassini. Write a letter to the crew of Galahad describing yourself, your species, and your role in policing the universe. Or, explain why Bon's theory is wrong or incomplete. Use clues gathered from Web of Titan and Cassini Code to frame your ideas.

D

Do you believe in extraterrestrial life? Do you think scientists should attempt to contact aliens? Would you be willing to volunteer to communicate with aliens, as Bon did with the Cassini? Create a survey to find what friends or classmates might say to each of those questions. Use bar graphs and brief explanations to organize and report the findings of your survey.

III. TO BE HUMAN

A

Triana's role as Council leader makes it challenging to develop friendships. Have you ever been in a position of responsibility that made relationships with your peers difficult? Write a short essay, or create a poem, song, or drawing that expresses how friendships can be challenging in these situations.

B

Merit Simms sabotaged the ship because he was afraid. Do you think fear often causes people to abandon their sense of right and wrong? Think of a time when you were in a frightening situation. How did it make you feel, physically and emotionally? Based on your own experiences and observations, write a paragraph either defending or condemning Merit's behavior and actions.

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C

Although Merit's rebellion was defeated by Gap and Triana, does it make you question the effectiveness of the Council system when it comes to governing aboard Galahad? Write an analysis of both the positive and the negative elements of this system, and include any recommendations you might have to change or improve it.

D

At the end of Cassini Code, Bon realizes that Alexa has also been somehow changed. In the voice of either Bon or Alexa, compose a journal entry exploring the question, "Am I still human?"

READ + REFLECT

Questions for Discussion

Use these questions for classroom discussion, small-group work, written responses, or independent study.

1

At the beginning of Cassini Code, what is the technical problem facing Galahad? How would you describe Gap's reaction to the jokes made by crew members about the issue? How does the chill on Level Six perhaps reflect a change in the attitudes of some crew members?

2

What is it about the Kuiper Belt's structure that makes it so dangerous for a spaceship to pass through?

3

Do you think it's a good idea for Channy to organize a Dating Game for the crew? How would you describe the romantic uncertainties that exist between various crew members early in the novel, and do these have an impact on crew performance?

4

In chapter 4, why does Triana decline Roc's offer to spy on Merit Simms? Do you agree or disagree with her reasoning?

5

At his first appearance in front of the Council, what change is Merit suggesting for the mission? Do you feel he was persuasive in his arguments? Why or why not?

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6

Lita recalls some of her mother's experiences as a young medical student and doctor. Do you feel these stories are helping Lita as she navigates her duties on Galahad, or do they inhibit her? Have you thought about following in the footsteps of a family member? Does that idea excite you or frighten you?

7

Merit is able to convince several people to join his movement. If you were a crew member, would you be drawn to his arguments? Why or why not?

8

As the ship races through the Kuiper Belt, we see some of the Council members confronted with the temptation to return to Earth. Are their doubts understandable? What conclusions do they ultimately reach?

9

How does supporting Lita through Alexa's surgery strengthen Triana's bond with her fellow Council member? What happens to Alexa following the operation? How does this news affect the ship's crew?

10

In chapter 18, Triana tells Channy about her father's advice regarding visualization during stressful moments. Are there situations in your life when this approach could be helpful? Is this strategy something that could help the rest of the crew?

11

After his second connection with the Cassini, what does Bon conclude about the alien force? How does he use this information to help pilot the ship through the Kuiper belt?

12

What tactic does Gap use to solve the heating problem on the ship and at the same time help Triana defeat Merit Simms? In your opinion, did Merit need to resort to sabotage to win people over to his side, or could he have been equally persuasive without doing so?

13

How do you feel about Merit's punishment? Do you feel it was sufficient? Even after Merit's defeat by Gap, does homesickness still loom as a threat to the mission?

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14

Do you feel that his success in thwarting Merit may have influenced Gap's decision to break up with Hannah? What has Gap come to understand about himself that may have led to this breakup? Is there a parallel to the new connection developing between Bon and Alexa? And do you think this association will alter Bon's relationship with Triana?

15

What do both Bon and Alexa believe will happen when the ship reaches the other side of the Kuiper Belt? Do you believe the crew of Galahad will pass the Cassini "test"? In your mind, what sort of test is the crew undergoing?
