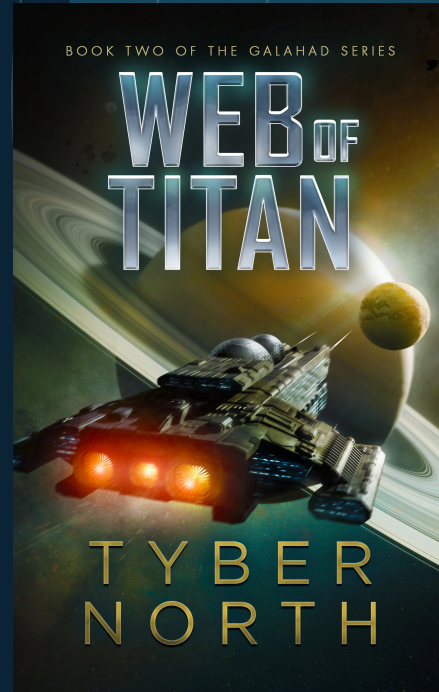


THE GALAHAD SERIES / BOOK TWO

Web of Titan

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. INTO THE GREAT UNKNOWN

A

As a crew member on Galahad, you have mixed feelings regarding the capture of the Titan pod. Write a message to Triana citing your reasons for or against this operation, and express what you suspect the pod may hold. Or, with friends or classmates, role-play a conversation as you and other crew members discuss the pros and cons of this capture. Explore the questions you have regarding the pod's possible contents.

B

You've now spent four months aboard Galahad and you've settled into some routines in your life. Compose three journal entries describing your daily activities, and express what some of the highs and lows may be. Plus, anticipating several more years aboard the ship, use the journal entries to share any concerns for your future. Do the routines make dealing with the unknowns in your life easier or more difficult?

C

Take on the role of Lita. In a series of medical reports, describe the frightening headaches suffered by some crew members and the treatment decisions that you've made. Pay specific attention to Bon's disturbing eyes and speech effects. As a medical professional, what is your diagnosis of this strange "disease"?

D

In 1984, the Librarian of Congress, Daniel J. Boorstin, wrote in The Washington Post: "The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance—it is the illusion of knowledge." How do you think this quote applies to Triana's thoughts at the end of Web of Titan? Write a three-paragraph essay that answers this question, and how it might apply to the mission of the Galahad project.

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II. A MOON CALLED TITAN

A

Learn more about Saturn and its moons, particularly Titan, either from research at the library or online. Using this knowledge, create an informative poster that lists reasons why Titan might be capable of supporting some type of extraterrestrial life.

B

The real Cassini-Huygens mission to Saturn uncovered a vast amount of data regarding the ringed planet and its many moons. Make a list of five important facts and discoveries that were made during this historic mission. Then, write a newspaper article that lays out the Cassini-Huygens mission and explain why it was important. With friends or classmates, discuss the connections between your research facts and the plot and themes explored in *The Web of Titan*.

C

Research the Titans of Greek mythology and their relationship to the Olympians, particularly the Twelve Olympians, during the War of the Titans. Next, compose a short essay detailing your discoveries and relating them to your understanding of the novel. Conclude the essay with your thoughts on how the story of the Greek Titans might offer hints or insights into the events of the next installment of the Galahad story, *The Cassini Code*.

III. REASON AND ROMANCE

A

Do you believe a computer can develop feelings? Research the latest cutting-edge discoveries on artificial intelligence, then use that data to produce a pamphlet that specifically addresses this question. Include one paragraph explaining your understanding of Roc's relationship with Galahad's Council members.

B

Had it not been for her relationship with Kelvin Pernice, Nina Volkov might have made it aboard the Titan pod. How could this have altered the fate of Galahad? Write a prologue chapter to *Web of Titan* where you imagine the relationship between Nina and Kelvin, and give more detailed reasons for why she missed the pod's launch.

C

Gap's emotions often confuse him. With a friend or classmate, roleplay a conversation where Gap seeks out Channy's advice regarding his feelings for Hannah, Triana, and perhaps even Ariel.

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D

Lita's touching song describes her complicated feelings about being a part of the Galahad mission, where she's torn between missing her family and taking on the responsibility of the greater mission. Think of a time when you had to make a choice or sacrifice in your life, and contrast what your "logical mind" felt was right versus what your heart told you. Write your own song lyrics describing the situation. If desired, compose music to accompany your lyrics.

E

The Cassini are described as a being with some form of collective intelligence. Imagine that you are the Cassini, and write a three-paragraph description of yourself, as well as your thoughts about Galahad, its crew members, and your efforts to "improve" them.

F

Using craft materials, such as colored pencils or modeling clay, create an illustration or model of the Cassini. Next, compare your creation with those of your friends or classmates. What elements, such as colors and shapes, are common to some or all of the Cassini representations? Which elements are unique and most satisfying?

G

Bon's connection with the Cassini is a crucial component of the story. In the character of Bon, write a journal entry describing that connection. What exactly makes it painful for you, and was there anything good about the connection? Try to explain why your connection with this alien intelligence was the strongest of all the crew members. Do you hope for future connections, or are you do you fear that? Also, how would you say this connection with the Cassini affects your relationship with members of Galahad's crew?

READ + REFLECT

Questions for Discussion

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

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1

In the book's introduction, Roc cites "fear of the unknown" as an important human trait. Describe how this fear plays out in different situations through the course of the book. How does the computer provide a helpful bridge between the unknown and the known for the crew of Galahad and for the reader? Do you think a computer is the ideal character to provide this bridge, and why?

2

The opening chapter of the book describes a storm around Saturn and Titan. How does this visual description foreshadow the action and drama about to befall the crew and their discoveries about Titan?

3

Triana expresses confusion regarding her attraction to Bon. Do you believe she's ready for a real relationship, or is the grief surrounding the loss of her father too powerful at the moment to make that possible? How did the death of Dr. Zimmer also affect Triana's emotional state?

4

What do the Galahad crew members find aboard the pod? What, or who, is suspiciously absent from this small vessel? If you were aboard Galahad, what actions would you suggest Triana take after opening the pod?

5

Throughout the story, various crew members experience flashbacks and memories of their loved ones back on Earth. Do you believe these experiences are helpful to the crew, or could they be hurtful? How do you think four months in space have altered the teenagers' feelings about the past and the future?

6

What is special about Lita's friendship with Triana? In what ways do they support each other personally as well as in their roles on the ship? Do you have a similar friendship with someone? Or do you think the specific pressures of the Galahad mission might make their friendship different from one you might experience in your life? Explain your answer.

7

In Web of Titan, Triana contemplates the evolution of life on Earth, progressing from dinosaurs to modern humans. Do you agree with her that a different life form will eventually succeed humans? Or do you believe humans have sufficiently evolved to overcome the Bhaktul crisis and carry on?

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8

Describe Lita's reaction to the headache patients' orange eyes and Bon's strange speech. If you were a Council member aboard Galahad, would your reaction have been the same or different? Do you agree with Lita's decision to keep Bon in Sick House, or would you have advocated for moving him to some sort of containment cell? How do you think that decision would've been accepted by the crew?

9

Who figures out the existence of a translator device, and who is the crew member who figures out where it is? How does Bon make use of this translator? Do you believe he would've eventually controlled it without Triana's support? Now that they've escaped disaster, do you think Bon is finished with the Cassini? What evidence suggests that the alien life-form might remain entangled with Galahad?

10

Now that Galahad has endured an attack by a madman in Comet's Curse and survived their encounter with the Cassini in Web of Titan, do you believe the crew stands a chance of completing the long mission? Would you advocate for a return to Earth, or would you push to continue the mission to Eos? Explain your reasons for either choice.

11

At the end of the novel, Triana writes in her journal: "... after desperately wanting to know the contents of [Bon's] mind for so long, suddenly I'm not so sure." Do you believe the Cassini know the contents of Bon's mind? How might this mind link compare with the connection Triana imagines? Would you say Web of Titan is an exploration of connections, both emotional and intellectual? What are the risks and the rewards of these various connections? Explain your answer.
