

A Sci-Fi Book Review

[CassaStar](#) - [Alex J Cavanaugh](#)

(Book one of the CassaTrilogy)

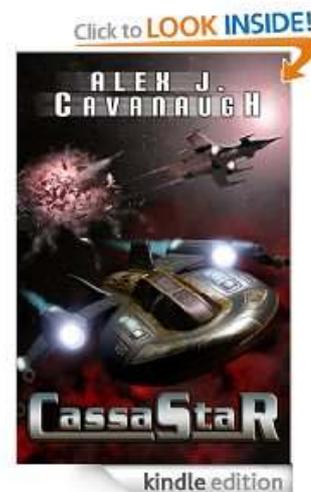
Publishers - [Dancing Lemur Press](#)

Genre - Speculative Fiction - Soft Science Fiction - Space Opera

Ebook - Novel - Paperback - 246 pages

Price Rs 731 - 800 (Actual Rs 914) /\$15.95 - \$10.00

Available at Amazon Kindle Store and Flipkart(India)/IndiaTimesShopping



Blurb:

To pilot the fleet's finest ship...

Few options remain for Byron. A talented but stubborn young man with a troubled past and rebellious attitude, his cockpit skills are his only hope. Slated to train as a Cosbolt fighter pilot, Byron is determined to prove his worth and begin a new life as he sets off for the moon base of Guaard.

Much to Byron's chagrin the toughest instructor in the fleet takes notice of the young pilot. Haunted by a past tragedy, Bassa eventually sees through Byron's tough exterior and insolence. When a secret talent is revealed during training, Bassa feels compelled to help Byron achieve his full potential.

As war brews on the edge of space, time is running short. Byron requires a navigator of exceptional quality to survive, and Bassa must make a decision that could well decide the fate of both men. Will their skills be enough as they embark on a mission that may stretch their abilities to the limit?

This is the first book in the series by author and fellow blogger Alex Cavanaugh and works well as a standalone novel.

The story is set in a far away, unnamed galaxy and revolves around a small, elite group of fighter pilots from the planetary race of Casaans. It focuses primarily on the training and one to one relation between the pilots and their navigators, and in turn with their mentors.

The concept of advanced mind powers and the ability to use this power to enhance their flying skill is intriguing. It creates a whole lot of possibilities in the application of the same in other areas of their life; something I am hoping is explored in the other books in the series.

The protagonist, Byron, whose attitude and behaviour often puts him at odds with those around him, possesses the said ability in its rarer state. His journey to the elite training camp at the remote moon base, his interactions with his navigator cum friend and instructor turned mentor help in his coming out of social isolation, albeit slowly. His flying abilities and new found temperament are further tested during the first assignment which finds him in the midst of an escalating war at the edges of their space.

The story has been crafted with care, the technology not too farfetched, and the world though alien is painted with human like qualities and emotions. Friendship, trust, courage and belief in each other form the crux of the story. The training scenes are well drawn and the few battle scenes are gripping. The final battle is reminiscent of Star Wars and the like.

My major grouse is the lack of female characters which I understand has been addressed in the next book CassaFire.

Believable characters and scenarios make it a pleasant, fast read.

The dialogue was stilted and formal in places but I construed it to be peculiarity of that race.

The story doesn't offer much in terms of technology and world descriptions, and thus may not find favour with hard core science fiction fans. It's a well written tale appealing to readers of character driven plot lines, first timers to the genre, and fans of young adult fiction.

As an avid science fiction reader of both the soft and hard science varieties (I may not always understand the intricacies and theories), and as someone who prefers exploration and invention to military action and description, I found CassaStar a pleasurable read.

I give this a 3.5/5 star rating for the writing, the characters and the interesting premise

Personal Disclaimer: This book was an original purchase used for the purpose of review, hence the post in entirety is my basic impression after reading the book. It is not based on intervention by the author or publishing house.