

One Giant Leap

Heather Kaczynski

Reviewed by: Rina Guo, 17

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

www.bethestaryouare.org

Cassandra Gupta awakes with her crew members on a foreign planet to hear the truth about life beyond Earth. It turns out that the Vrag and Megobari alien species have been at a brutal war for many years, and there is very little of the Megobari civilization left. The Vrag is only hungry for more power and already has its sights set on Earth as its next new target for destruction. But after a terrible surprise attack by the Vrag, Cassandra and Luka realize they're the only ones left that can warn and save the human race. They swiftly return back to Earth, only to find that the Vrag has beaten them to it, and to make matters worse, the Vrag has deceived world politicians into forming alliances with them, and a heavy bounty has been ordered on Cassandra and Luka's heads. Can Cassandra and Luka convince their people of their true enemy, enough to save their planet from the horrible fate that befell the other planets for it?

This novel is for readers age 13-18. This is some mild swearing, as well as destruction and death. Nothing is overly graphic or gruesome.

This is the sequel to Kaczynski's *Dare Mighty Things*. This was a great follow-up to *Dare Mighty Things*. While *Dare Mighty Things* was only the background story to set the foundation, *One Giant Leap* proved to be the real deal. For the first time, it introduced a near and urgent fear of extraterrestrial war, and the danger and thrill was much more heightened than the last book. While the last book did have thrill as well, much of that excitement was merely for the rigorous training that Cassandra had to endure. Now, she was faced with newer and real challenges of physically being in space.

I really liked the development throughout the story. There were ups and downs, but the plot didn't fail to excite me. What's great is that there were also appearances of some familiar friends and faces during the training program Cassandra attended from the last book. It only further increases Cassandra's realization of how much she means to people and how much they mean to her, which strongly contrasts with her initial sentiments of the value of friendship at the very beginning of the series. *One Giant Leap* was more conclusive and had a more satisfying and warm ending, compared to *Dare Mighty Things*. I liked that the end felt light and kind of playful, which contrasted with the imminent danger throughout the book before the resolution. In the end, I was left wondering curiously about what the world would be like if we could explore beyond our galaxy and find more to the endless dark space. This feeling that I was left with felt intentional and I'm glad it ended like this.

One Giant Leap marks the end of the "Dare Mighty Things" duology, and it was a stunning storyline of thrill, urgency and courage. I liked that the author took the possibility of "What if?" and vividly described visions of things that could literally be unimaginable and yet feel so real and understandable. I enjoyed this book a lot and I feel that readers who enjoy astronomy, science fiction and thrillers would love this book as well.

Recommended Titles:

The Final Six by Alexandra Monir

The 5th Wave by Rick Yancey

Aurora Rising by Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff

To Sleep in a Sea of Stars by Christopher Paolini