



## Killswitch

*Joel Shepherd*

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## **Killswitch** Joel Shepherd

Two years after the unhatching of Callayan President Neiland's plot to make the capital city of Tanusha the center of the Federation, Callay is under siege. So begins the third installment of this gripping trilogy from an exciting new sci-fi author.

A powerful faction of conservative Fleet captains has surrounded Callay, at Earth's behest, and is threatening a blockade - or worse. A fearful Earth does not wish to lose direct control of its precious war machine, and there are fears of civil war.

All that Callay has to oppose the warships of the Fleet is the Callayan Defense Force (CDF) - a newly formed group of raw recruits led by a politically hamstrung general. However, the CDF is largely trained and organized by Major Vanessa Rice and her best friend, Callay's combat-android, Commander Cassandra Kresnov. But when Cassandra's lover, Special Agent Ari Ruben, discovers a plot to kill her using a killswitch, which her old masters in the League built into her brainstem, Sandy is forced to go underground to stay alive.

## **Killswitch Details**

Date : Published November 30th 2007 by Pyr (first published 2004)

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Author : Joel Shepherd

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Genre : Science Fiction, Cyberpunk, War, Military Fiction, Fiction, Space, Space Opera

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## From Reader Review Killswitch for online ebook

### Rich Willson says

Badass Grrl!!

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### Shara says

Overall, this has been a pretty enjoyable trilogy. It's ambitious and intellectual, action-packed but yet intimate. Shepherd's greatest strength are characters you can really emphasize with and the amazing level of his diverse, culturally relevant world-building. Also enjoyable is the fact he really does have some strong, heroic women leads, and multiple leads at that, which is really awesome. [return][return][return]For a full review, which does include some spoilers, please click here: <http://calico-reaction.livejournal.co...>

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### David Brawley says

3rd book in the series. Just a fun as the others!

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### Shen says

didn't really enjoy this one at all. it felt like it was written because he had to write it not like there was another story there to come out.

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### Clay Kallam says

In another trilogy that features a female protagonist, the third installment of Joel Shepherd's Cassandra Kresnov series, "Killswitch" (Pyr, \$9.98, 450 pages), finally made it into my American hands, long after I read the first two in their Australian versions (Shepherd lives in Adelaide). Surprisingly, I was immediately back up to speed in this novel about an advanced combat android known as a "GI", Sandy Kresnov, who abandoned her creators to live in a free society where she could become more aware of her human side.

But Kresnov's dreams of a more pleasant, less violent, life on pacifist and somewhat decadent Callay run into the harsh reality of intergalactic politics and her own skills. She is a commander in the newly formed Callayan Defense Force, and must fight off attacks from various offworld factions – including some with GIs of their own.

Shepherd manages the complex narrative well, continues to develop Kresnov's character and does just fine with the long combat setpieces. The conclusion isn't quite as believable as it might be, as Shepherd made sure to leave the door open for a possible sequel (or two), but all in all "Killswitch" is a very good third in a series, and all three ("Crossover" and "Breakaway") are highly recommended.

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## Stefan says

Killswitch, the final book in Joel Shepherd's CASSANDRA KRESNOV trilogy, picks up the story 2 years after the end of Breakaway. The Federation is still going through a period of upheaval, with Callayan President Neiland trying to make Tanusha the capital of the formerly Earth-based organization, and numerous powerful factions (including Federation Fleet warships) converging on the planet to try and affect the outcome of this political power play.

Meanwhile, Callay is still in the process of setting up the administrative and military infrastructure necessary for its new function, and of course the former League hunter-killer android Cassandra Kresnov, and her friend Vanessa Rice, are heavily involved, both somehow installed at the top of the new Callayan Defence Force. (And if this seems a stretch in terms of probability, Joel Shepherd seems to agree, having Sandy wonder out loud "How the hell did us two idiots end up running an army?" early in the novel.)

To make matters even more complicated, Sandy's lover Ari Ruben discovers that her creators incorporated a "killswitch" in her brainstem, and that someone may be trying to activate it. In the middle of maybe the most important period in the history of Callay, Sandy is forced to go underground and investigate the plot to kill her.

Killswitch is again filled with interesting characters — most importantly of course Cassandra Kresnov, the android action hero with a heart, and her friend and colleague Vanessa Rice. Also reappearing in a more prominent role are Ari Ruben (who is interesting enough to carry a novel by himself), and Rhian Chu, an artificial person who used to be a member of Sandy's former Dark Star squad and who effectively illustrates the personality development curve the high-des androids can go through. The descriptions of Sandy's (and Rhian's) thought processes, coming to terms with what they have done in the line of duty, are at times surprisingly powerful.

Killswitch is another fine installment in the CASSANDRA KRESNOV series, this time even more action-packed and exciting than the previous two books — as hard as that may be to believe! There's not a dull moment in this novel, and especially the action scenes involving both Sandy and Rhian are tremendously gripping and simply impossible to put down.

If the novel has one weakness, it's that Joel Shepherd is running two parallel story lines, a major one involving Sandy and Vanessa's activities planetside, and a smaller (but equally important) one focusing on rivaling Fleet factions in orbit. The plots are connected because both influence the eventual outcome of the Callayan bid to become the Federation capital, but they are generally kept separate for most of the novel until they are resolved in quick succession at the end of the novel. This has the odd consequence of giving the novel two endings, with the second (and again, equally important) one feeling somewhat like an afterthought, after reading the explosive finale of the planetside plot.

With some reconfiguring, this novel could probably have been turned into two books, although maybe that's just a reflection of my genuine disappointment that Killswitch is the last novel in the CASSANDRA KRESNOV series. Despite the rushed ending, this is a strong, intelligent and breathless military-flavored SF novel. If Joel Shepherd were to write another 10 novels in this series, I'd happily read them all.

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### **Jo (Mixed Book Bag) says**

Great end to the series. Cassandra get all that she wished for, just not in the way she wanted. Again start with the first book, don't start in the middle or the end.

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### **Tony Hisgett says**

I have enjoyed the first two books in this series, but I have been waiting for the story to really take off. Unfortunately after reading the first half of this book I was beginning to think this was a backward step.

This story is just too chaotic, everybody is the enemy, too many actions are just haphazard. It's as if the author couldn't work out where to take the story so just threw in new characters and plots at random, like a 'beat em up' computer game. Perhaps his target audience is the 'Call of Duty' generation!

It may be that the author is trying to show how confused the situation actually is, but it makes it irritating to read and to be honest, it was just becoming boring. Fortunately things improved a little in the second half, with less chaos and enough logic to make it possible to follow the story and to actually begin to care about the characters again, although it was still more computer game than sifi thriller.

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### **Alisa Russell says**

This is the third book of the Cassandra Kresnov series, and I will have to say I enjoyed it as much as the other two. Hard-hitting action, military sci-fi, philosophical questions about the meaning of life-it was all in there and made me think as well as being an enjoyable read. For someone who is not supposed to be human, Cassandra Kresnov sure has a good handle on what it means to be human. I have also read and enjoyed the first two books of this series and would love for the author to revisit it at some point. In any case, I plan to read more from this author as he has a good style I can relate to. Nice job!!!

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### **Ralph McEwen says**

I liked Shara's(Calico Reaction)review. The books should be read in order.

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### **Heather Mayes says**

I liked this series for the same reason I really enjoyed Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

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### **Kevin says**

Excellent conclusion to a great trilogy. Cassandra Kresnov remains a great character and this final installment suffers from far less pacing problems than the first book. Joel Shepherd has grown as much as a writer as his main character has as a person over the course of this series.

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### **Ryun says**

Things finally are coming to a head for sexy one-woman army Cassandra Kresnov: a de facto occupying fleet is surrounding her newly adopted homeworld of Callay, there's a superhuman killer loose that seems strangely familiar, and her boyfriend's just told her that there's a self-destruct mechanism inside her skull.

KILLSWITCH – the third book in Joel Shepherd's series that started in Australia in 2001 and was brought to North America last year by Pyr with CROSSOVER and BREAKAWAY – is another remarkable effort that remains true to its predecessors and shows Shepherd's evolution as a writer.

More: <http://www.bookgasm.com/reviews/sci-f...>

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### **Patrick says**

Actually, there is some really great writing in this series - some great writing for key characters, but the author can get a little bogged down in minutia sometimes. As a result the book can feel like it's dragging a bit re. each main story.

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### **Becky says**

Once again, Commander Kresnov kicks butt and takes names. REALLY like this character.

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