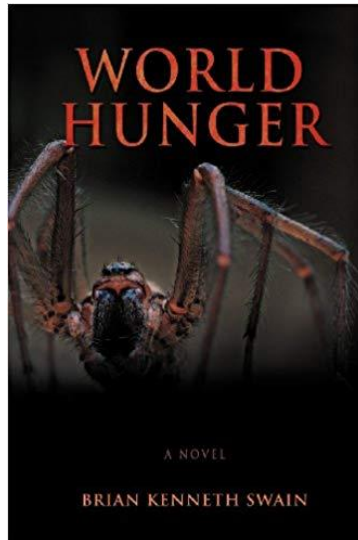


Whitney Schultz



## **World Hunger**

Brian Kenneth Swain

### **Introduction**

Brian Kenneth Swain is the author of many novels, essay collections, and poetry collections. He has been a featured poet in countless societies and festivals with his work appearing in magazines and has also been a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee. This well researched novel makes the point that attempts at ending world hunger are well meaning. *World Hunger* was published by iUniverse, Inc in August of 2007.

### **About the Book**

*World Hunger* is a thriller that encompasses the lives of biochemists Phillip Barrett and Julia Croft who are now employed by Vanguard Life Sciences Corporation. This corporation is a lucrative agribusiness and life science company. The two biochemists have to come up with a solution to produce seeds that are disease and pest-resistant, drought tolerant, faster growing, and have high yields along with nutrition. Despite many warnings at how dangerous this could be and that more time should be taken, the CEO of the company goes ahead with testing the seeds in field conditions. Test sites are set up in a few different areas in order to represent a range of climates.

The crops do just what they were engineered to do. Insects that feed on the crops end up with the same enhancements the crops were engineered with. They grow uncharacteristically larger, consuming more crops, demolishing domestic animals, and attacking people! The insects with incredible features wreak havoc, including causing human deaths. A major downfall is that the usual pesticides that once reigned over the insects now have no effect in controlling them. Now, Vanguard Life Sciences Company faces a whirlwind of fury from environmentalists, the media, and the government. The biochemists have to race to solve the problem by developing a way to eliminate the grotesque insects.

## **Discussion Guide**

1. How does the CEO's, Robert Chase, attitude differ from Phillip Barrett and Julia Croft, who are the biochemists? Do they have the same view or is it widely different in regards to developing the seed to help eradicate world hunger?
2. Was Robert Chase right in his actions in only putting the test fields in certain countries that were not in Western Europe? How does media and government react to the locations of the test

fields? Do you think if this were real life that environmentalists would go even further to the point where they might cause harm to the corporation and the employees of the corporations?

3. Do you think that anybody in the corporation knew the risks would go as far as they did?

There were many warnings, but the size of the problems are exponential and were quite a surprise. One would think that approval of the study would have to pass through many different hands. Do you think that was the case here or did the CEO hold all of the power?

4. Do you think solutions such as developing a new pesticide or engineering another sort of creature that would be above the insects in the food chain would work? Are Philip and Julia the best bet for the job or would somebody else be better qualified?

6. What were Philip's and Julia's thoughts on going through with the study? Could they have done more to postpone until more research was performed?

7. When the world was under attack, did the media and government react in the way that you thought they would? Did this situation warrant more drastic measures in how the rest of the world helped or should Robert Chase be solely responsible in fixing the problem?

8. Did Brian Swain portray the insects correctly? Do you agree with the insects he chose and how violently they reacted? Should he have made them bigger, smaller, more destructive, or act in a totally different manner?

9. Do you think something of this magnitude could happen in real life? Is genetically engineered seed the solution to end world hunger? How many other steps must be taken to help the problem that plagues so many?

10. Did you enjoy your venture through the novel? Did it take the turns you expected or did Brian Swain work well to keep the reader on their toes? Could it have done without certain fillers or is there anything you would have liked to see to help add to the storyline?