

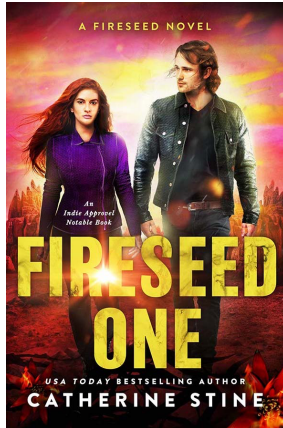
Study Guide for Fireseed One

By *USA Today* bestselling author Catherine Stine

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ISBN-10: 0984828249, **ISBN-13:** 978-0984828241

Discussion Questions, Related Assignments, Creative Projects & Links



What if only your very worst enemy could help you save the world?

Fireseed One, a YA thriller, is set on a near-future earth with soaring heat, toxic waters, amphibious vehicles, ice-themed dance clubs and fish that grow up on vines. Varik Teitur inherits a vast sea farm after the mysterious drowning of his marine biologist father. When Marisa Baron, a beautiful and shrewd terrorist, who knows way too much about Varik's father's work, tries to steal seed disks from the world's food bank, Varik is forced to put his dreams of becoming a doctor on hold and venture with her, into a hot zone teeming with treacherous nomads and a Fireseed cult who worships his dead father, in order to search for Fireseed, a seemingly magical hybrid plant that may not even exist. An indie notable novel, and USA News International Book Award finalist in sci-fi and YA.

Discussion Questions:

What do the main characters—Varik, Marisa and Audun—want in *Fireseed One* and how does that change throughout the novel? What is Stine trying to say through these characters?

Do you understand and support the late Professor Teitur's turning away from the Hotzone refugees in the first part of *Fireseed One*? How do you feel later? What does this say about human nature? How tragic events can change one's worldview?

What are the major themes? Discuss each one at length. Do any intersect?

Describe the border wall in *Fireseed One*. Why were the walls erected? Could the side that is "kept out" ever switch to the side that is "keeping out others"? How might that happen in *Fireseed One*? How might this change the dynamics of each side? Once built, do walls ever get taken down? Cite an example of this in the real world.

What are the dangers of reducing the biodiversity of the ecosystem, as in *Fireseed One* when the world's seed bank is invaded and damaged?

Describe the news Stream. How is it used?

Does *Fireseed One* contain humor? If so, what type? How can one use humor in a serious novel to enhance the plot? Which characters were the most amusing?

Describe Rain and Armonk. What sector are they from? What do they and their community say about humans who are thrown into a very bad situation?

Describe Bryan and the ZWC. Is Bryan a complete villain? In what ways could he be seen through a heroic lens?

What are the perils of being an isolationist cult such as the Fireseed Cult?

How do Varik and Marisa's quests compare at various stages of their journeys? Are they ever in synch? Describe the turning points in their relationship and what motivates these.

What was your favorite scene? Why? Who was your favorite character and why?

What do you imagine happens to Varik after the novel ends? What do you hope for in a sequel?



In *Fireseed*, **agar** is the basis for food, clothing, building materials, and just about everything. It so happens that agar not only exists in *Fireseed*'s fantasy world, but marine farms already make loads of it for human consumption! It is derived from red algae, and processed in large tube-like columns.

I found packets of it in my local health food store where it is sold as a thickener for stews. Algae and seaweed happen to be extremely healthy foods. They are full of minerals and iodine, which our bodies need.

Related Assignments:

1. Agar in *Fireseed One* is used to eat, to build houses, to make clothes, and just about everything in-between. In the real world, agar is derived from red algae. It is often used as a gel in desserts, and it's used in Petri dishes as a conductor for science experiments. Here is one link from [fao.org](http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/y4765e/y4765e06.htm) on contemporary agar production:

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/y4765e/y4765e06.htm>

Research other current and future uses for agar that scientists are working on. In *Fireseed One*, when the agar crop is blighted, there is worldwide panic, as agar is necessary for survival. In the real world today, what crop is necessary for survival? Give a presentation with images.

2. What other existing plants and creatures in the ocean have future value?

3. Are there other future uses for the sea aside from providing food sources?

4. In *Fireseed*, global warming has moved invasive species into northern waters. In the real world, invasives are also becoming an issue. Here are links from *National Geographic* and *Science Daily* describing this phenomenon. **Give a report on the movement of invasive species and what can be done about it, using these and other links:**

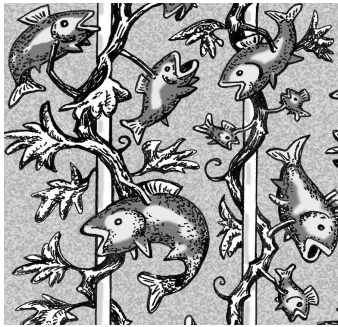
[ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/critical-issues-marine-invasive-](http://ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/critical-issues-marine-invasive-species/)

species/http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/11/081119161125.htm

Creative Projects:

A large part of creating a world in speculative and science fiction is a matter of asking “What if?” over and over. Transgenic hybrids are hybrid plants that don’t exist in nature and must be bred in a lab, for instance, blue roses. In *Fireseed One*, the mythical Fireseed plant is an undetermined mixture of plant and other DNA, which Varik guesses at in the end of book one. In the real world, biologists have combined tomato and fish DNA to produce blight-free tomato crops. They’ve also combined mothers’ milk and wheat DNA to create baby cereal and formula that will protect babies in third world countries from fatal diarrhea. Pretty amazing!

1. Think up a list of interesting fantasy hybrids that would make things easier or more enjoyable for society (For instance, veggies that taste like chocolate). **Discuss these with your book club or classmates.** Many inventions started in just this way. In fact, science fiction author Arthur C. Clark, author of *2001, A Space Odyssey*, envisioned satellite technology about fifteen years before it became a reality. He was the first to write about the idea of using manned space stations as television relay studios for global broadcast. In Clarke’s words: “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”



Depicted are Flyfish, a hybrid of tundra grape vines and perch that grow on vines in floating factories in Ocean Dominion.

Chapter head illustration for Fireseed One
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Creating a concept for a futuristic novel involves taking things from real life and imagining them amplified. For instance, taking the reality that the ocean has invasive plants, and envisioning that to where one could grow impenetrable underwater borders with them, as in *Fireseed One*.

Another way to world-build is to match up things that normally would not go together, such as the *Hunger Games* (by Suzanne Collins) match up of reality TV and ancient gladiators.

2. Write a few pages where you use one or both of these visioning tools to sketch out your own science fiction or fantasy world.

3. Draw a detailed world map. Where would you live and what would your profession be?

More Cool Links:

The Coming Green Wave: Ocean Farming to Fight Climate Change (B. Smith; *The Atlantic*)
<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/11/the-coming-green-wave-ocean-farming-to-fight-climate-change/248750/>

Floating Turbine Buoys Offshore Wind Potential (E. MacGuire; CNN.com)
<http://www.cnn.com/2012/06/28/world/windplus-floating-wind-turbine/index.html>

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To arrange an author visit, Skype chat or interview, send an email to kitsy84557@gmail.com with "School Book Talk" in the header. She welcomes letters from students.

Visit Catherine on the web at catherinestine.com



Catherine Stine is a *USA Today* bestselling author, whose novels span the range from futuristic to supernatural to contemporary. Her award-winning Fireseed series includes *Fireseed One* and *Ruby's Fire*. *Dorianna*, her dark YA twist on the Oscar Wilde classic, won Best Horror Book in the Kindle Hub Awards. An earlier YA novel, *Refugees*, earned a New York Public Library Best Book and a featured interview in Booklist.

Stine hails from Philadelphia, and lives in New York City. Visit catherinestine.com for more information.

Praise for *Fireseed One*:

Electrifying Reviews: "An action-packed, emotional thrill ride!"

5 stars from 909 Reviews Never Lies: "*Fireseed One* will have you on the edge of your seat, cheering for these characters every step of the way. If you're a fan of fantasy that isn't over the top, action-adventure with romance, read this book. Catherine Stine shines brightly with this stunning thriller."

5 stars from Parafantasy: "Amazing world-building and extremely clever plot! *Fireseed One* rejuvenated my interest in the sci-fi genre."

Inkscratchers: "The writing was absolutely beautiful!"

Amy Kathleen Ryan, bestselling author of *The Sky Chasers* series: "So full of startling ideas I couldn't stop reading! Recommended for fans of science fiction, thrillers, or anyone looking for a story full of big surprises."