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DUNE

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CHAPTERHOUSE: DUNE

BOOK SIX IN THE DUNE CHRONICLES

FRANK HERBERT

With an Introduction by Brian Herbert

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INTRODUCTION

BY BRIAN HERBERT

Chapterhouse: Dune is set thousands of years in mankind's future, when the known universe is ruled by women. It is a fascinating milieu, populated by gholas grown from dead human cells, as well as shape-shifting Face Dancers, half-human Futars, cloned humans, and mutant, conspiratorial Guild Navigators. There are immense Heighliners that fold space to traverse vast distances in the blink of an eye, along with nearly invisible no-ships and no-chambers that contain mysterious machinery.

As the novel opens, the planet Dune has already been destroyed by Honored Matres, powerful, enigmatic women who emerged from the Scattering that the God Emperor set into motion long ago in order to spread humankind across uncounted star systems. On planet Chapterhouse, the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood has a giant sandworm, obtained surreptitiously, that is metamorphosing into sandtrout. Thus the Sisters have initiated a desertification process that could result in a new Dune, and a new source of the priceless spice melange, a finite resource that they need and hope to control . . .

This is the sixth novel in Frank Herbert's classic, wildly popular science fiction series, and the last story in the highly imaginative Dune universe that he wrote. He typed much of the novel at his home in Hawaii, where he tended to the serious medical needs of my mother, Beverly Herbert. A professional writer herself, she helped with the plotting of the book and provided him with the title before she passed away in 1984. My father did not complete the writing task, however, until after her death, when he returned to Washington State.

It is impossible for me to read *Chapterhouse: Dune*, or to even think about it, without experiencing powerful reminders of my mother and the relationship she had with my father for almost four decades. An extraordinary woman, she was the basis of the literary character Lady Jessica in the first three novels of the Dune

series, and the source of many of the aphorisms that are so familiar to Dune fans. The strong presence of women later in the epic saga—particularly in the fifth and sixth novels—stemmed from her as well.

As their son, I watched my parents interact and strengthen each other in countless ways. I can honestly say that I never heard them raise their voices to each other, though they did have subtle disagreements that others might not have noticed. The words and signs that passed between them were on a different, barely perceptible level. My parents were symbiotic, highly intelligent human organisms, so closely linked that thoughts seemed to pass between them as if contained within one mind.

Frank Herbert's best friend, Howie Hansen, put it this way: "There are two Frank Herberts—the one I knew prior to Bev and the one that you know who was created by Bev. Frank Herbert the author would not exist had there not been a Beverly [Herbert] to marry him and . . . coalesce him mentally . . ."

After my mother passed away in Hawaii, Dad wrote a long and poignant tribute to her that is published at the end of *Chapterhouse: Dune*, describing their life together and what they meant to each other. For years afterward, I thought that this moving testimonial was the best place to conclude the entire series. After all, they had been a writing team and had embarked on their marriage in 1946 with dreams that both of them would become successful writers. They achieved that, and along the way they shared numerous great adventures together—a remarkable story of love and sacrifice that I described in *Dreamer of Dune* (2003), the biography of Frank Herbert.

Chapterhouse: Dune carries on the suspense-filled account of the destructive Honored Matres that was begun in *Heretics of Dune*. Brutal women who are rumored to be renegade Bene Gesserit, they threaten to obliterate the ancient Sisterhood, and a great deal more. They seem unstoppable. And yet there is something else out there in the universe that is chasing the Honored Matres, but its identity is unrevealed by Frank Herbert. Cleverly, the author sprinkled clues throughout the novel about what it might be, and at the end the reader is left wondering and considering the options.

Back in the 1950s and 1960s, Frank Herbert attempted to sell a number of mystery stories and—encouraged by his friend and

fellow author Jack Vance—even joined Mystery Writers of America. In 1964, Dad did sell a short story to *Analog*, “The Mary Celeste Move,” which was a well-drawn science fiction mystery about the investigation of a peculiar phenomenon of human behavior. Aside from that, however, his mystery-writing efforts in those days went largely unrewarded. He kept running into problems with story length and genre, and publishers were not interested. So back he went to science fiction, where he enjoyed unparalleled success.

After all of the rejections my father suffered with his mysteries, it is particularly interesting and satisfying that he wrote a widely published mystery story and immersed it into the Dune universe. For more than a decade after his death from an illness in 1986, the solution to this mystery was the most intriguing and widely debated subject in science fiction. How fitting this was for the legacy of a man who was so often rejected by publishers and who might never have reached a wide audience if not for the brave editor Sterling Lanier, who took a chance and accepted *Dune* for hardcover publication after more than twenty other editors had turned it down.

Just before Frank Herbert passed away, he seemed to his family like a much younger man than his sixty-five years, filled with boundless enthusiasm and energy. His passing left us with a feeling that he might have accomplished a great deal more in his already productive life if he had only lived longer . . . that even more remarkable achievements might have flowed from the marvelously inventive mind that created the Dune universe, the acclaimed Native American novel *Soul Catcher*, and other memorable novels.

Sadly, the additional works were taken from him. And from us.

My father left loose ends when he died, many uncompleted dreams. Like the painter Jean Gericault, at the end of his life Dad spoke of all the things he would do when he was well again. He wanted to spend a year in Paris, wanted to be the oldest man to climb Mount Everest. There were more Dune stories to tell, along with an epic novel about Native Americans, and maybe even a movie to direct. But like Gericault, he never got well.

The fifth and sixth novels in Frank Herbert’s Dune series—*Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*—were intended to be the first two books in a new trilogy that would complete the epic

story chronologically. Using my father's outline and notes, I eventually co-wrote the grand climax with Kevin J. Anderson in two novels—*Hunters of Dune* (2006) and *Sandworms of Dune* (2007).

As you read *Chapterhouse: Dune*, look for intriguing clues that Frank Herbert wove into the story. Then go back and reread his preceding five novels in the series, and you'll discover more clues. He left so many possibilities, so many avenues to stretch the imaginations of his readers. Truly, the Dune saga is a tour de force, unmatched in the annals of literature.

Brian Herbert
Seattle, Washington
February 7, 2009

Those who would repeat the past must control the teaching of history.

—BENE GESSERIT CODA

When the gholababy was delivered from the first Bene Gesserit axlotl tank, Mother Superior Darwi Odrade ordered a quiet celebration in her private dining room atop Central. It was barely dawn, and the two other members of her Council—Tamalane and Bellonda—showed impatience at the summons, even though Odrade had ordered breakfast served by her personal chef.

“It isn’t every woman who can preside at the birth of her own father,” Odrade quipped when the others complained they had too many demands on their time to permit of “time-wasting nonsense.”

Only aged Tamalane showed sly amusement.

Bellonda held her over-fleshed features expressionless, often her equivalent of a scowl.

Was it possible, Odrade wondered, that Bell had not exorcised resentment of the relative opulence in Mother Superior’s surroundings? Odrade’s quarters were a distinct mark of her position but the distinction represented her duties more than any elevation over her Sisters. The small dining room allowed her to consult aides during meals.

Bellonda glanced this way and that, obviously impatient to be gone. Much effort had been expended without success in attempts to break through Bellonda’s coldly remote shell.

“It felt very odd to hold that baby in my arms and think: *This is my father*,” Odrade said.

“I heard you the first time!” Bellonda spoke from the belly, almost a baritone rumbling as though each word caused her vague indigestion.

She understood Odrade’s wry jest, though. The old Bashar Miles Teg had, indeed, been the Mother Superior’s father. And Odrade herself had collected cells (as fingernail scrapings) to grow

this new gholia, part of a long-time “possibility plan” should they ever succeed in duplicating Tleilaxu tanks. But Bellonda would be drummed out of the Bene Gesserit rather than go along with Odrade’s comment on the Sisterhood’s vital equipment.

“I find this frivolous at such a time,” Bellonda said. “Those madwomen hunting us to exterminate us and you want a celebration!”

Odrade held herself to a mild tone with some effort. “If the Honored Matres find us before we are ready perhaps it will be because we failed to keep up our morale.”

Bellonda’s silent stare directly into Odrade’s eyes carried frustrating accusation: *Those terrible women already have exterminated sixteen of our planets!*

Odrade knew it was wrong to think of those planets as Bene Gesserit possessions. The loosely organized confederation of planetary governments assembled after the Famine Times and the Scattering depended heavily on the Sisterhood for vital services and reliable communications, but old factions persisted—CHOAM, Spacing Guild, Tleilaxu, remnant pockets of the Divided God’s priesthood, even Fish Speaker auxiliaries and schismatic assemblages. The Divided God had bequeathed humankind a divided empire—all of whose factions were suddenly moot because of rampaging Honored Matre assaults from the Scattering. The Bene Gesserit—holding to most of their old forms—were the natural prime target for attack.

Bellonda’s thoughts never strayed far from this Honored Matre threat. It was a weakness Odrade recognized. Sometimes, Odrade hesitated on the point of replacing Bellonda, but even in the Bene Gesserit there were factions these days and no one could deny that Bell was a supreme organizer. Archives had never been more efficient than under her guidance.

As she frequently did, Bellonda without even speaking the words managed to focus Mother Superior’s attention on the hunters who stalked them with savage persistence. It spoiled the mood of quiet success Odrade had hoped to achieve this morning.

She forced herself to think of the new gholia. *Teg!* If his original memories could be restored, the Sisterhood once more would have the finest Bashar ever to serve them. A Mentat Bashar! A military genius whose prowess already was the stuff of myths in the Old Empire.

But would even Teg be of use against these women returned from the Scattering?

By whatever gods may be, the Honored Matres must not find us! Not yet!

Teg represented too many disturbing unknowns and possibilities. Mystery surrounded the period before his death in the destruction of Dune. *He did something on Gammu to ignite the unbridled fury of the Honored Matres. His suicidal stand on Dune should not have been enough to bring this berserk response.* There were rumors, bits and pieces from his days on Gammu before the Dune disaster. *He could move too fast for the human eye to see!* Had he done that? Another outcropping of wild abilities in Atreides genes? Mutation? Or just more of the Teg myth? The Sisterhood had to learn as soon as possible.

An acolyte brought in three breakfasts and the sisters ate quickly, as though this interruption must be put behind them without delay because time wasted was dangerous.

Even after the others had gone, Odrade was left with the aftershock of Bellonda's unspoken fears.

And my fears.

She arose and went to the wide window that looked across lower rooftops to part of the ring of orchards and pastures around Central. Late spring and already fruit beginning to form out there. *Rebirth. A new Teg was born today!* No feeling of elation accompanied the thought. Usually she found the view restorative but not this morning.

What are my real strengths? What are my facts?

The resources at a Mother Superior's command were formidable: profound loyalty in those who served her, a military arm under a Teg-trained Bashar (far away now with a large portion of their troops guarding the school planet, Lampadas), artisans and technicians, spies and agents throughout the Old Empire, countless workers who looked to the Sisterhood to protect them from Honored Matres, and all the Reverend Mothers with Other Memories reaching into the dawn of life.

Odrade knew without false pride that she represented the peak of what was strongest in a Reverend Mother. If her personal memories did not provide needed information, she had others around her to fill the gaps. Machine-stored data as well, although she admitted to a native distrust of it.

Odrade found herself tempted to go digging in those other lives she carried as secondary memory—these subterranean layers of awareness. Perhaps she could find brilliant solutions to their predicament in experiences of Others. Dangerous! You could lose yourself for hours, fascinated by the multiplicity of human variations. Better to leave Other Memories balanced in there, ready on demand or intruding out of necessity. Consciousness, that was the fulcrum and her grip on identity.

Duncan Idaho's odd Mentat metaphor helped.

Self-awareness: facing mirrors that pass through the universe, gathering new images on the way—endlessly reflexive. The infinite seen as finite, the analogue of consciousness carrying the sensed bits of infinity.

She had never heard words come closer to her wordless awareness. “Specialized complexity,” Idaho called it. “We gather, assemble, and reflect our systems of order.”

Indeed, it was the Bene Gesserit view that humans were life designed by evolution to create order.

And how does that help us against these disorderly women who hunt us? What branch of evolution are they? Is evolution just another name for God?

Her Sisters would sneer at such “bootless speculation.”

Still, there *might* be answers in Other Memory.

Ahhhh, how seductive!

How desperately she wanted to project her beleaguered self into past identities and feel what it had been to live then. The immediate peril of this enticement chilled her. She felt Other Memory crowding the edges of awareness. “*It was like this!*” “*No! It was more like this!*” How greedy they were. You had to pick and choose, discreetly animating the past. And was that not the purpose of consciousness, the very essence of being alive?

Select from the past and match it against the present: Learn consequences.

That was the Bene Gesserit view of history, ancient Santayana's words resonating in their lives: “*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*”

The buildings of Central itself, this most powerful of all Bene Gesserit establishments, reflected that attitude wherever Odrade turned. Usiform, that was the commanding concept. Little about any Bene Gesserit working center was allowed to become non-

functional, preserved out of nostalgia. The Sisterhood had no need for archeologists. Reverend Mothers embodied history.

Slowly (much slower than usual) the view out her high window produced its calming effect. What her eyes reported, that was Bene Gesserit order.

But Honored Matres could end that order in the next instant. The Sisterhood's situation was far worse than what they had suffered under the Tyrant. Many of the decisions she was forced to make now were odious. Her workroom was less agreeable because of actions taken here.

Write off our Bene Gesserit Keep on Palma?

That suggestion was in Bellonda's morning report waiting on the worktable. Odrade fixed an affirmative notation to it. "Yes."

Write it off because Honored Matre attack is imminent and we cannot defend them or evacuate them.

Eleven hundred Reverend Mothers and the Fates alone knew how many acolytes, postulants, and others dead or worse because of that one word. Not to mention all of the "Ordinary lives" existing in the Bene Gesserit shadow.

The strain of such decisions produced a new kind of weariness in Odrade. Was it a weariness of the soul? Did such a thing as a soul exist? She felt deep fatigue where consciousness could not probe. Weary, weary, weary.

Even Bellonda showed the strain and Bell feasted on violence. Tamalane alone appeared above it but that did not fool Odrade. Tam had entered the age of superior observation that lay ahead of all Sisters if they survived into it. Nothing mattered then except observations and judgments. Most of this was never uttered except in fleeting expressions on wrinkled features. Tamalane spoke few words these days, her comments so sparse as to be almost ludicrous:

"Buy more no-ships."

"Brief Sheeana."

"Review Idaho records."

"Ask Murbella."

Sometimes, only grunts issued from her, as though words might betray her.

And always the hunters roamed out there, sweeping space for any clue to the location of Chapterhouse.

In her most private thoughts, Odrade saw the no-ships of Honored Matres as corsairs on those infinite seas between the stars. They flew no black flags with skull and crossbones, but that flag was there nonetheless. Nothing whatsoever romantic about them. *Kill and pillage! Amass your wealth in the blood of others. Drain that energy and build your killer no-ships on ways lubricated with blood.*

And they did not see they would drown in red lubricant if they kept on this course.

There must be furious people out there in that human Scattering where Honored Matres originated, people who live out their lives with a single fixed idea: Get them!

It was a dangerous universe where such ideas were allowed to float around freely. Good civilizations took care that such ideas did not gain energy, did not even get a chance for birth. When they did occur, by chance or accident, they were to be diverted quickly because they tended to gather mass.

Odrade was astonished that the Honored Matres did not see this or, seeing it, ignored it.

“Full-blown hysterics,” Tamalane called them.

“Xenophobia,” Bellonda disagreed, always correcting, as though control of Archives gave her a better hold on reality.

Both were right, Odrade thought. The Honored Matres behaved hysterically. All *outsiders* were the enemy. The only people they appeared to trust were the men they sexually enslaved, and those only to a limited degree. Constantly testing, according to Murbella (*our only captive Honored Matre*), to see if their hold was firm.

“Sometimes out of mere pique they may eliminate someone just as an example to others.” Murbella’s words and they forced the question: *Are they making an example of us? “See! This is what happens to those who dare oppose us!”*

Murbella had said, “You’ve aroused them. Once aroused, they will not desist until they have destroyed you.”

Get the outsiders!

Singularly direct. *A weakness in them if we play it right,* Odrade thought.

Xenophobia carried to a ridiculous extreme?

Quite possibly.

Odrade pounded a fist on her worktable, aware that the action would be seen and recorded by Sisters who kept constant watch on

Mother Superior's behavior. She spoke aloud then for the omnipresent comeys and watchdog Sisters behind them.

"We will not sit and wait in defensive enclaves! We've become as fat as Bellonda (and let her fret over that!) thinking we've created an untouchable society and enduring structures."

Odrade swept her gaze around the familiar room.

"This place is one of our weaknesses!"

She took her seat behind the worktable thinking (of all things!) about architecture and community planning. Well, that was a Mother Superior's right!

Sisterhood communities seldom grew at random. Even when they took over existing structures (as they had with the old Harkonnen Keep on Gammu) they did so with rebuilding plans. They wanted pneumotubes to shunt small packages and messages. Lightlines and hardray projectors to transmit encrypted words. They considered themselves masters at safeguarding communications. Acolyte and Reverend Mother couriers (committed to self-destruction rather than betray their superiors) carried the more important messages.

She could visualize it out there beyond her window and beyond this planet—her web, superbly organized and manned, each Bene Gesserit an extension of the others. Where Sisterhood survival was concerned, there was an untouchable core of loyalty. Backsliders there might be, some spectacular (as the Lady Jessica, grandmother of the Tyrant), but they slid only so far. Most upsets were temporary.

And all of that was a Bene Gesserit pattern. A weakness.

Odrade admitted a deep agreement with Bellonda's fears. *But I'll be damned if I allow such things to depress all joy of living!* That would be giving in to the very thing those rampaging Honored Matres wanted.

"It's our strengths the hunters want," Odrade said, looking up at the ceiling comeys. *Like ancient savages eating the hearts of enemies. Well . . . we will give them something to eat all right! And they will not know until too late that they cannot digest it!*

Except for preliminary teachings tailored to acolytes and postulants, the Sisterhood did not go in much for admonitory sayings, but Odrade had her own private watchwords: "*Someone has to do the plowing.*" She smiled to herself as she bent to her work much refreshed. This room, this Sisterhood, these were her

garden and there were weeds to be removed, seeds to plant. *And fertilizer. Mustn't forget the fertilizer.*