

GOD EMPEROR
OF

D

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E

FRANK HERBERT

PRAISE FOR THE DUNE CHRONICLES

DUNE

“An astonishing science fiction phenomenon.”

—*The Washington Post*

“Powerful, convincing, and most ingenious.”

—Robert A. Heinlein

“Herbert’s creation of this universe, with its intricate development and analysis of ecology, religion, politics, and philosophy, remains one of the supreme and seminal achievements in science fiction.”

—*The Louisville Times*

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—P. Schuyler Miller

DUNE MESSIAH

“Brilliant. . . . It is all that *Dune* was, and maybe a little more.”

—*Galaxy Magazine*

“The perfect companion piece to *Dune*. . . . Fascinating.”

—*Challenging Destiny*

CHILDREN OF DUNE

“A major event.”

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“Ranging from palace intrigue and desert chases to religious speculation and confrontations with the supreme intelligence of the universe, there is something here for all science fiction fans.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Herbert adds enough new twists and turns to the ongoing saga that familiarity with the recurring elements brings pleasure.”

—*Challenging Destiny*

GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE

“Rich fare. . . . Heady stuff.”

—*Los Angeles Times*

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—*Time*

“Book four of the Dune series has many of the same strengths as the previous three, and I was indeed kept up late at night.”

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—*Challenging Destiny*

CHAPTERHOUSE: DUNE

“Compelling . . . a worthy addition to this durable and deservedly popular series.”

—*The New York Times*

“The vast and fascinating Dune saga sweeps on—as exciting and gripping as ever.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

The Dune Chronicles by Frank Herbert

DUNE
DUNE MESSIAH
CHILDREN OF DUNE
GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE
HERETICS OF DUNE
CHAPTERHOUSE: DUNE

Other Books by Frank Herbert

THE BOOK OF FRANK HERBERT
DESTINATION: VOID (revised edition)
DIRECT DESCENT
THE DOSADI EXPERIMENT
EYE
THE EYES OF HEISENBERG
THE GODMAKERS
THE GREEN BRAIN
THE MAKER OF DUNE
THE SANTAROGA BARRIER
SOUL CATCHER
WHIPPING STAR
THE WHITE PLAGUE
THE WORLDS OF FRANK HERBERT
MAN OF TWO WORLDS (with Brian Herbert)

Books by Frank Herbert and Bill Ransom

THE JESUS INCIDENT
THE LAZARUS EFFECT
THE ASCENSION FACTOR

Books by Brian Herbert

DREAMER OF DUNE: THE BIOGRAPHY OF FRANK HERBERT

Books Edited by Brian Herbert

THE NOTEBOOKS OF FRANK HERBERT'S DUNE
SONGS OF MUAD'DIB

Books by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson

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DUNE: HOUSE HARKONNEN

DUNE: HOUSE CORRINO

DUNE: THE BUTLERIAN JIHAD

DUNE: THE MACHINE CRUSADE

DUNE: THE BATTLE OF CORRIN

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HUNTERS OF DUNE

SANDWORMS OF DUNE

PAUL OF DUNE

THE WINDS OF DUNE

SISTERHOOD OF DUNE

MENTATS OF DUNE

NAVIGATORS OF DUNE

GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE

BOOK FOUR IN THE DUNE CHRONICLES

FRANK HERBERT

With an Introduction by Brian Herbert

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Version_7

*To Peggy Rowntree with love and admiration and deep
appreciation*

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About the Author

INTRODUCTION

BY BRIAN HERBERT

In the summer of 1980, I was visiting my mother and father at their home in Port Townsend, Washington. On a small table beside my mother's favorite chair, I noticed a draft of *God Emperor of Dune*. She had the manuscript open to page 516, near the conclusion of the novel. When I asked Dad how it was going, he said it was a totally new kind of love story, unlike anything ever written before. When I finally got the opportunity to read the story, I found it was that, and a great deal more.

To understand this complex novel, it is important to realize that *Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, and *Children of Dune* form a trilogy. The fourth entry in the series, *God Emperor of Dune*, is a bridging work leading to a new trilogy. Before Frank Herbert died in 1986, he wrote the first two books in that trilogy, *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*, and made notes for the third volume, to which he gave the working title *Dune 7*. (In collaboration with Kevin J. Anderson, I later wrote *Dune 7* as two novels: *Hunters of Dune* and *Sandworms of Dune*.)

God Emperor of Dune also marks a change in writing style for the series. The first three novels are filled with action and layers of important messages about politics, philosophy, religion, ecology, women's issues, history, and the very nature of humanity. While *God Emperor* begins with action, and ends with it, there are many pages of dialogue in between. In those pages, there is a great deal of conversation about important, interesting subjects—much of it spewing from the God Emperor, Leto Atreides II. The thoughts are so brilliant, springing as they do from the mind of Frank Herbert, that I scarcely notice the difference in writing style when I'm reading. I like the book very much, and it was my mother's favorite in the series. But it is different, and it marks a change in style that the author carried forward to the next two books in the series, *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*.

Think of the style of *Dune*, with its adventure story following the classical hero's journey of Paul Atreides, and so many important messages layered beneath. The presentation is accomplished so expertly on the pages, so seamlessly, that when you get to the end, you hardly realize you've just learned a great deal about ecology and things that matter to this planet and to all of humankind. You only know that you want to read the book again, spending even more time with Paul Atreides, Duncan Idaho, the Lady Jessica, and the other characters in the incredible *Dune* universe. Bits and pieces of the story cling to you afterward, luring you back into it. So you return again to page one and continue on. This time you might focus on other aspects, other layers, things you didn't notice before.

God Emperor of Dune is different. When you finish it, you realize that you've just absorbed a large amount of data from a great mind, so much that you need to go back and study the material to see what the author intended. Realize, though, that in this novel Frank Herbert was exploring some of the layers of *Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, and *Children of Dune* that he had already established, taking the dangers of government and organized religion to new levels, merging them, and extrapolating to an extreme, providing a scenario of what it might be like if a holy tyrant led humanity and if that despot could not die. The stakes could not be any higher. And what a fantastic concept, combining human flesh with supernatural elements of nature to create a godhead. A frightening notion—and even more terrifying than the dangers of following a charismatic leader that Frank Herbert wrote about so eloquently in the second and third books of the series.

It is also interesting to note that Frank Herbert often wrote about beings with godlike powers, entities that took on differing forms. In his own *Destination: Void* and its sequel *The Jesus Incident* (cowritten with Bill Ransom), the entity is a supercomputer. In *Whipping Star*, it is a celestial body, a star. In *The Godmakers* and *Dune*, the gods are in human form. In *God Emperor of Dune*, the entity is part mysterious sandworm, part human, a creature that contains a vast storehouse of knowledge.

The God Emperor, Leto Atreides II, is one of the most unusual characters in the annals of science fiction. He has lived for more than 3,500 years and possesses a wisdom that spans time and

space. He seems capable of living forever, of leading humankind into the eternal future. For millennia after the events in the novel *Dune*, Leto has enforced a peace—a “Golden Path”—under which he has ensured the continued existence of the human species. As Leto puts it, “The Golden Path . . . is the survival of humankind, nothing more nor less.”

But Frank Herbert, who saw the dark side of the hero, also saw the dark side of the perfect civilization. He called this way of thinking “myth-busting” or seeing the “dystopia in the utopia.” As a newspaper reporter for many years, he often turned over stones to see what would scurry out. At the University of Washington in Seattle, he taught a political science class about shattering the myth structures under which we live. A modern-day Socrates, he tore into what he called “unexamined linguistic and cultural assumptions.”

My father knew how to do his research. Back in the 1950s, he was a speechwriter for a U.S. senator and worked in Washington, D.C. With C-9 security clearance, Frank Herbert had special access to the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress, through which he could use virtually any document or book in the vast library. He just got on the telephone, ordered what he wanted, and presently it arrived in a cart, with blue bookmarks designating the pages that were of interest to him. Notes were included on material available at other government facilities, including the National Archives and the Army Corps of Engineers. If he wanted any of the additional materials, he simply ordered them through the Library of Congress and soon they were in front of him.

A man of boundless energy and enthusiasm, Frank Herbert possessed a mind that went in fifty directions at once. He was always thinking, always reading at every opportunity, always researching something. For each novel he wrote, he first pored over as many books as he could get his hands on about particular subjects, then spoke with scientists, doctors, and other experts. Time was critical to him, and he didn't like to waste a moment of it. Physically and mentally, he went from point A to point B quickly. Sometimes he learned what he needed with a phone call. To see how easy it might be for an unbalanced, dangerous person to obtain the ingredients and materials necessary for recombinant DNA research (for the novel *The White Plague*), Dad acted as if he were a doctor and telephoned medical suppliers.

Frank Herbert was a man full of intriguing ideas, the most interesting person in any room. His personality, like the characters he created in his stories, was larger than life. He had a full, fantastic beard, and with his twinkling eyes, you never quite knew what he would say next. A reviewer for the *New York Times* once quipped that Frank Herbert's head was so overloaded with ideas that it was likely to fall off. In *God Emperor of Dune*, my father described Leto II, who, through genetic processes, had acquired all human information. In "Pack Rat Planet" and *Direct Descent*, he wrote of a vast Galactic Library, a storehouse containing the written wisdom of humankind. Frank Herbert, like Leto II and the Galactic Library, was a repository of incredible, wondrous information. His words captivated millions of people all over the world.

My father respected his readers. He challenged them by using words they might have to look up in the dictionary, and kept them turning the pages with surprising twists and turns of plot and characterization. Who could have predicted that he would turn the hero myth of Paul Atreides upside down in the space of the first two novels in the Dune series, and show a dark path that humanity might find itself on if it followed a charismatic leader? This is a significant message, an urgent social warning that governments and leaders lie.

It is just one of many thought-provoking messages that Frank Herbert layered into his novels beneath the ongoing adventures, causing his readers to think about deep issues. But in his hands, the material never seems oppressive or boring, because he accomplished his art so cleverly, by deftly intertwining the messages with the unfolding action of the series. He was not pedantic, did not preach to his readers. He sought to entertain first, while teaching along the way.

I wrote a comprehensive biography of my father, *Dreamer of Dune*, a book that succeeded in capturing the essence of Frank Herbert. But he was more than any words could possibly describe, even those of a son who loved him. As much as I struggled to understand this complex, great man—and I made significant strides on that journey—I came to realize that he was always a step beyond any attempt to describe him, to capture him on the page. Even in death, he was still moving ahead, eluding discovery. I think about him every day, and about my incredible mother,

Beverly Herbert. She understood him better than anyone, and I learned about him through her, as well as through my own observations and conversations I had with him. But often, thinking back, I find myself realizing something new and intriguing about Frank Herbert, something I had not previously noticed or considered. Concerning the spice melange, he wrote in his magnum opus, “It’s like life—it presents a different face each time you take it.” He was like that himself, different each time you looked at him.

My father’s Dune novels are like that as well, revealing something new about the author on each pass through the pages. I like that. In life, Frank Herbert had such tremendous energy that he never walked beside me in the customary fashion of two people; he was always a half step ahead, leading the way. Dan Lodholm, his best friend from childhood, told me something similar. He remembered hikes they took together on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State in the 1930s, and how he was always looking at the back of Frank Herbert’s head, following him on the trail.

Now in *God Emperor of Dune*, we are treated to an intriguing look *inside* the head of Frank Herbert—through his character Leto Atreides II. This is a remarkable novel and another fantastic journey through the unparalleled Dune universe.

Brian Herbert
Seattle, Washington
May 8, 2008

Excerpt from the speech by Hadi Benotto announcing the discoveries at Dar-es-Balat on the planet of Rakis:

It not only is my pleasure to announce to you this morning our discovery of this marvelous storehouse containing, among other things, a monumental collection of manuscripts inscribed on ridulian crystal paper, but I also take pride in giving you our arguments for the authenticity of our discoveries, to tell you why we believe we have uncovered the original journals of Leto II, the God Emperor.

First, let me recall to you the historical treasure which we all know by the name of *The Stolen Journals*, those volumes of known antiquity which over the centuries have been so valuable in helping us to understand our ancestors. As you all know, *The Stolen Journals* were deciphered by the Spacing Guild, and the method of the Guild Key was employed to translate these newly discovered volumes. No one denies the antiquity of the Guild Key and it, *and it alone*, translates these volumes.

Second, these volumes were printed by an Ixian dictatel of truly ancient make. *The Stolen Journals* leave no doubt that this was in fact the method employed by Leto II to record his historical observations.

Third, and we believe that this is equal in portent to the actual discovery, there is the storehouse itself. The repository for these *journals* is an undoubted Ixian artifact of such primitive and yet marvelous construction that it is sure to throw new light on the historical epoch known as "The Scattering." As was to be expected, the storehouse was invisible. It was buried far deeper than myth and the Oral History had led us to expect and it emitted radiation and absorbed radiation to simulate the natural character of its surroundings, a mechanical mimesis which is not surprising of itself. What has surprised our engineers, however, is the way this was done with the most rudimentary and truly primitive mechanical skills.

I can see that some of you are as excited by this as we were. We believe we are looking at the first Ixian Globe, the no-room from which all such devices evolved. If it is not actually the first, we

believe it must be *one* of the first and embodying the same principles as the first.

Let me address your obvious curiosity by assuring you that we will take you on a brief tour of the storehouse presently. We will ask only that you maintain silence while within the storehouse because our engineers and other specialists are still at work there unraveling the mysteries.

Which brings me to my fourth point, and this may well be the capstone of our discoveries. It is with emotions difficult to describe that I reveal to you now another discovery at this site—namely, actual oral recordings which are labeled as having been made by Leto II in the voice of his father, Paul Muad'Dib. Since authenticated recordings of the God Emperor are lodged in the Bene Gesserit Archives, we have sent a sampling of our recordings, all of which were made on an ancient microbubble system, to the Sisterhood with a formal request that they conduct a comparison test. We have little doubt that the recordings will be authenticated.

Now, please turn your attention to the translated excerpts which were handed to you as you entered. Let me take this opportunity to apologize for their weight. I have heard some of you joking about that. We used ordinary paper for a practical reason—economy. The original volumes are inscribed in symbols so small that they must be magnified substantially before they can be read. In fact, it requires more than forty ordinary volumes of the type you now hold just to reprint the contents of one of the ridulian crystal originals.

If the projector—yes. We are now projecting part of an original page onto the screen at your left. This is from the first page of the first volume. Our translation is on the screens to the right. I call your attention to the internal evidence, the poetic vanity of the words as well as the meaning derived from the translation. The style conveys a personality which is identifiable and consistent. We believe that this could only have been written by someone who had the direct experience of ancestral memories, by someone laboring to share that extraordinary experience of previous lives in a way that could be understood by those not so gifted.

Look now at the actual meaning content. All of the references accord with everything history has told us about the one person whom we believe is the only person who could have written such an account.

We have another surprise for you now. I have taken the liberty of inviting the well-known poet, Rebeth Vreeb, to share the platform with us this morning and to read from this first page a short passage of our translation. It is our observation that, even in translation, these words take on a different character when read aloud. We want to share with you a truly extraordinary quality which we have discovered in these volumes.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Rebeth Vreeb.

From the reading by Rebeth Vreeb:

I assure you that I am the book of fate.

Questions are my enemies. For my questions explode! Answers leap up like a frightened flock, blackening the sky of my inescapable memories. Not one answer, not one suffices.

What prisms flash when I enter the terrible field of my past. I am a chip of shattered flint enclosed in a box. The box gyrates and quakes. I am tossed about in a storm of mysteries. And when the box opens, I return to this presence like a stranger in a primitive land.

Slowly (slowly, I say) I relearn my name.

But that is not to know myself!

This person of my name, this Leto who is the second of that calling, finds other voices in his mind, other names and other places. Oh, I promise you (as I have been promised) that I answer to but a single name. If you say, "Leto," I respond. Sufferance makes this true, sufferance and one thing more:

I hold the threads!

All of them are mine. Let me but imagine a topic—say . . . *men who have died by the sword*—and I have them in all of their gore, every image intact, every moan, every grimace.

Joys of motherhood, I think, and the birthing beds are mine. Serial baby smiles and the sweet cooings of new generations. The first walkings of the toddlers and the first victories of youths brought forth for me to share. They tumble one upon another until I can see little else but sameness and repetition.

"Keep it all intact," I warn myself.

Who can deny the value of such experiences, the worth of learning through which I view each new instant?

Ahhh, but it's the past.
Don't you understand?
It's only the past!