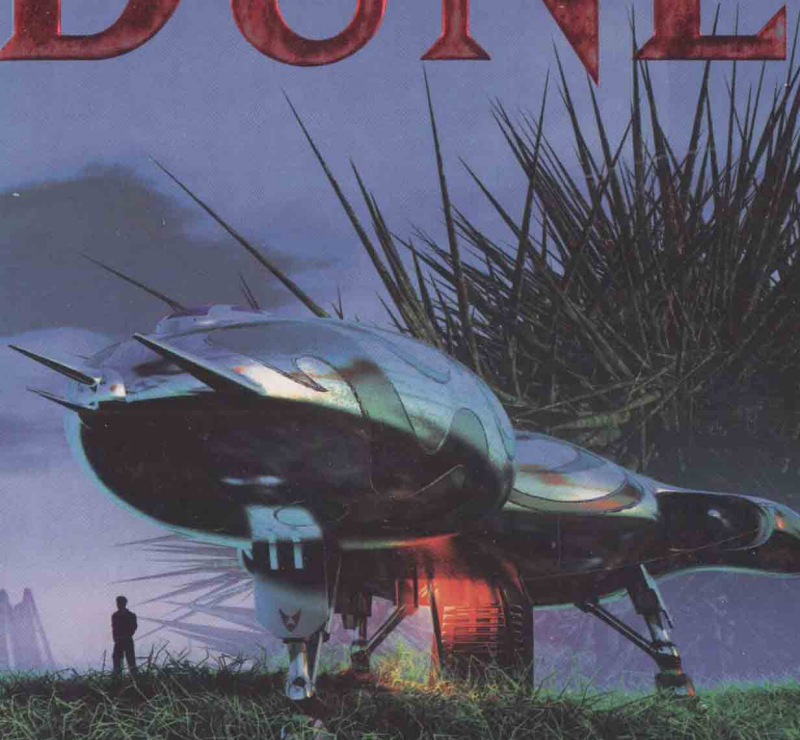


BRIAN HERBERT &
KEVIN J. ANDERSON
HUNTERS OF
DUNE



The long-awaited sequel to *Chapterhouse: Dune*
FRANK HERBERT'S EPIC CONTINUES

KEVIN J. ANDERSON

Hunters of Dune

Based on an outline by Frank Herbert

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And as always, these books would not exist without the unending help and support from our wives, Janet Herbert and Rebecca Moesta Anderson, or the original genius of Frank Herbert.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

We wish Frank Herbert could have been here to write this book.

After the publication of *Heretics of Dune* (1984) and *Chapterhouse: Dune* (1985), he had much more in mind for the story, a fantastic grand climax to the epic Dune Chronicles. Anyone who has read *Chapterhouse* knows the excruciating cliffhanger ending.

The last novel Frank Herbert wrote, *Man of Two Worlds*, was a collaboration with Brian, and the two of them discussed working on future Dune books together, particularly the story of the Butlerian Jihad. However, with the beautiful dedication and coda that Frank wrote at the end of *Chapterhouse*, a loving tribute to his wife, Beverly, Brian originally thought that the Dune Chronicles should end there. As he explained in *Dreamer of Dune*, the biography of Frank Herbert, his parents had been a writing team, and they were gone. So Brian left the series untouched for many years.

In 1997, more than a decade after the death of his father, Brian began to discuss with Kevin J. Anderson the possibility of completing the project, of writing the fabled *Dune 7*. But apparently Frank Herbert had left no notes, and we thought we would have to do the project based solely on our own imaginations. After further discussions, we realized that a great deal of preliminary work needed

to be completed before we could tackle *Dune 7* – not just laying groundwork for the story itself, but also reintroducing the book-buying audience and a whole new generation of readers to the incredible, highly imaginative *Dune* universe.

More than twenty years have passed since the publication of *Chapterhouse: Dune*. While many readers loved the original classic *Dune* or even the first three books in the series, a significant portion of the audience had not continued all the way through to that last book. We needed to reawaken interest and get those readers prepared.

We decided to write a trilogy of prequels first – the Prelude series of *House Atreides*, *House Harkonnen*, and *House Corrino*. When we began to dig through all of Frank Herbert's stored papers in preparation for writing *House Atreides*, Brian was surprised to learn of two safe-deposit boxes that his father had taken out before his death. Inside the boxes, Brian and an estate attorney discovered a dot-matrix printout and two old-style computer disks labeled 'Dune 7 Outline' and 'Dune 7 Notes' – pages describing exactly where the creator of *Dune* had intended to take his story.

Reading this material, we saw instantly that *Dune 7* would be a magnificent culmination of the series, tying together the history and the characters we all knew in an exciting plot with many twists, turns, and surprises. In storage we also discovered additional notes and papers describing characters and their histories, pages of unused epigraphs, and outlines for other works.

Now that we had a road map in front of us, we plunged into the Prelude to *Dune* trilogy, which followed the stories of Duke Leto and Lady Jessica, the evil Baron

Harkonnen, and the planetologist Pardot Kynes. After that trilogy, we wrote the Legends of Dune – *The Butlerian Jihad*, *The Machine Crusade*, and *The Battle of Corrin* – which introduced the seminal conflicts and events that form the foundations of the whole Dune universe.

Indisputably, Frank Herbert was a genius. *Dune* is the best-selling and most beloved science fiction novel of all time. From the beginning of our monumental task, we realized that it would not only be impossible, but also foolish, to attempt to imitate Frank Herbert's writing style. Both of us were strongly influenced by his writing, and some fans have remarked on certain similarities in style. However, we consciously chose to write these books to capture the feel and scope of *Dune*, using aspects of Frank Herbert's style, but with our own pacing and syntax.

We are pleased to report that since the publication of *House Atreides*, the sales of Frank Herbert's original Dune Chronicles have gone up dramatically. Two six-hour TV miniseries starring William Hurt and Susan Sarandon – *Frank Herbert's Dune* and *Frank Herbert's Children of Dune* – have been broadcast to large audiences and wide acclaim (as well as winning Emmy Awards). They are two of the three most-watched shows in the history of the Sci-Fi Channel.

At last, after more than nine years of preparation, we feel the time is right for *Dune 7*. Upon poring over Frank Herbert's outline and notes, we realized that the breadth and scope of the story would have resulted in a novel of more than 1,300 pages. For this reason, the story is being presented in two volumes, *Hunters of Dune* and the forthcoming *Sandworms of Dune*.

Much more of the epic remains to be written, and we

intend to create additional exciting novels, telling other parts of the grand, brilliant tale that Frank Herbert laid out. The saga of Dune is far from over!

– Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson, April 2006

Following the 3,500-year reign of the Tyrant Leto II, an empire was left to fend for itself. During the Famine Times and the subsequent Scattering, the remnants of the human race cast themselves far into the wilderness of space. They fled to unknown realms where they sought riches and safety, to no avail. For fifteen hundred years these survivors and their descendants endured terrible hardships, a whole reorganization of humanity.

Stripped of its energy and resources, the ancient government of the Old Empire fell away. New power groups took root and grew strong, but never again would humans allow themselves to depend upon a monolithic leader or a key, finite substance. Single points of failure.

Some say the Scattering was Leto II's Golden Path, a crucible in which to strengthen the human race forever, to teach us a lesson we could not forget. But how could one man – even a man-god who was partially a sandworm – willingly inflict such suffering upon his children? Now that descendants of the Lost Ones are returning from the Scattering, we can only imagine the true horrors our brothers and sisters faced out there.

– Guild Bank Records, Gammu Branch

Even the most learned of us cannot imagine the scope of the Scattering. As a historian, I am dismayed to think of all the knowledge that has been lost forever, the accurate records of triumphs and tragedies. Entire civilizations rose and fell while out there those who remained in the Old Empire sat in complacency.

New weapons and technologies were spawned by the hardships of the Famine Times. What enemies did we inadvertently create? What religions, distortions, and social processes did the Tyrant set in motion? We can never know, and I fear that this ignorance will come back to haunt us.

– SISTER TAMALANE, Chapterhouse Archives

Our own estranged brothers, those Lost Tleilaxu who vanished in the turmoil of the Scattering, have come back to us. But they are changed in fundamental ways. They bring an improved strain of Face Dancers with them, asserting that they designed these shape-shifters themselves. My analysis of the Lost Tleilaxu, however, indicates that they are clearly inferior to us. They cannot even create spice from axlotl tanks, but they claim to have developed superior Face Dancers? How can that be?

And the Honored Matres. They make overtures of alliance, yet their actions show only brutality and the enslavement of conquered peoples. They have destroyed Rakis! How can we have faith in them, or in the Lost Tleilaxu?

– MASTER SCYTALE, sealed notes found in
burned lab on Tleilax

Duncan Idaho and Sheeana have stolen our no-ship and flown off to points unknown. They took with them many heretical Sisters, even the ghola of our Bashar Miles Teg. With our newly forged alliance, I am tempted to command all Bene Gesserits and Honored Matres to turn their attention to recapturing this ship and its valuable passengers.

But I will not. Who can find a no-ship out in the vast universe? More importantly, we can never forget that a far more dangerous Enemy is coming for us.

– Emergency message from
MURBELLA, REVEREND MOTHER SUPERIOR
AND GREAT HONORED MATRE

Three Years After
Escape from Chapterhouse

Memory is a weapon sharp enough to inflict deep wounds.

– The Mentat's Lament

On the day he died, Rakis – the planet commonly known as Dune – died with him.

Dune. Lost forever!

In the archives chamber of the fleeing no-ship *Ithaca*, the gholia of Miles Teg reviewed the desert world's final moments. Melange-scented steam wafted from a stimulant beverage at his left elbow, but the thirteen-year-old ignored it, descending instead into deep Mentat focus. These historical records and holo-images held great fascination for him.

This was where and how his original body had been killed. How an entire world had been murdered. Rakis . . . the legendary desert planet, now no more than a charred ball.

Projected above a flat table, the archival images showed Honored Matre war vessels gathering above the mottled tan globe. The immense, undetectable no-ships – like the stolen one on which Teg and his fellow refugees now lived – wielded firepower superior to anything the Bene Gesserit had ever employed. Traditional atomics were little more than a pinprick by comparison.

Those new weapons must have been developed out in the Scattering. Teg pursued a Mentat projection. Human ingenuity born out of desperation? Or was it something else entirely?

In the floating image, the bristling ships opened fire, unleashing incineration waves with devices the Bene Gesserit had since named 'Obliterators.' The bombardment had continued until the planet was devoid of life. The sandy dunes were turned to black glass; even Rakis's atmosphere caught fire. Giant worms and sprawling cities, people and sand plankton, everything annihilated. Nothing could have survived down there, not even him.

Now, nearly fourteen years later and in a vastly changed universe, the gangly teenager adjusted the study chair to a more comfortable height. *Reviewing the circumstances of my own death. Again.*

By strict definition, Teg was a clone rather than a gholia grown of cells gathered from a dead body, though the latter was the word most people used to describe him. Inside his young flesh lived an old man, a veteran of numerous campaigns for the Bene Gesserit; he could not remember the last few moments of his life, but these records left little doubt.

The senseless annihilation of Dune demonstrated the true ruthlessness of the Honored Matres. *Whores*, the Sisterhood called them. And with good reason.

Nudging the intuitive finger controls, he called up the images yet again. It felt odd to be an outside observer, knowing that he himself had been down there fighting and dying when these images were recorded. . . .

Teg heard a sound at the door of the archives and saw Sheeana watching him from the corridor. Her face was lean and angular, her skin brown from a Rakian heritage.

The unruly umber hair flashed with streaks of copper from a childhood spent under the desert sun. Her eyes were the total blue of lifelong melange consumption, as well as the Spice Agony that had turned her into a Reverend Mother. The youngest ever to survive, Teg had been told.

Sheeana's generous lips held an elusive smile. 'Studying battles again, Miles? It's a bad thing for a military commander to be so predictable.'

'I have a great many of them to review,' Teg answered in his cracking young man's voice. 'The Bashar accomplished a great deal in three hundred standard years, before I died.'

When Sheeana recognized the projected record, her expression fell into a troubled mask. Teg had been watching those images of Rakis to the point of obsession, ever since they fled into this bizarre and uncharted universe.

'Any word from Duncan yet?' he asked, trying to divert her attention. 'He was attempting a new navigation algorithm to get us away from—'

'We know exactly where we are.' Sheeana lifted her chin in an unconscious gesture she had come to use more and more often since becoming the leader of this group of refugees. 'We are *lost*.'

Teg automatically intercepted the criticism of Duncan Idaho. It had been their intent to prevent anyone – the Honored Matres, the corrupted Bene Gesserit order, or the mysterious Enemy – from finding the ship. 'At least we're safe.'

Sheeana did not seem convinced. 'So many unknowns trouble me, where are we, who is chasing us . . .' Her voice trailed off, and then she said, 'I will leave you to your studies. We are about to have another meeting to discuss our situation.'