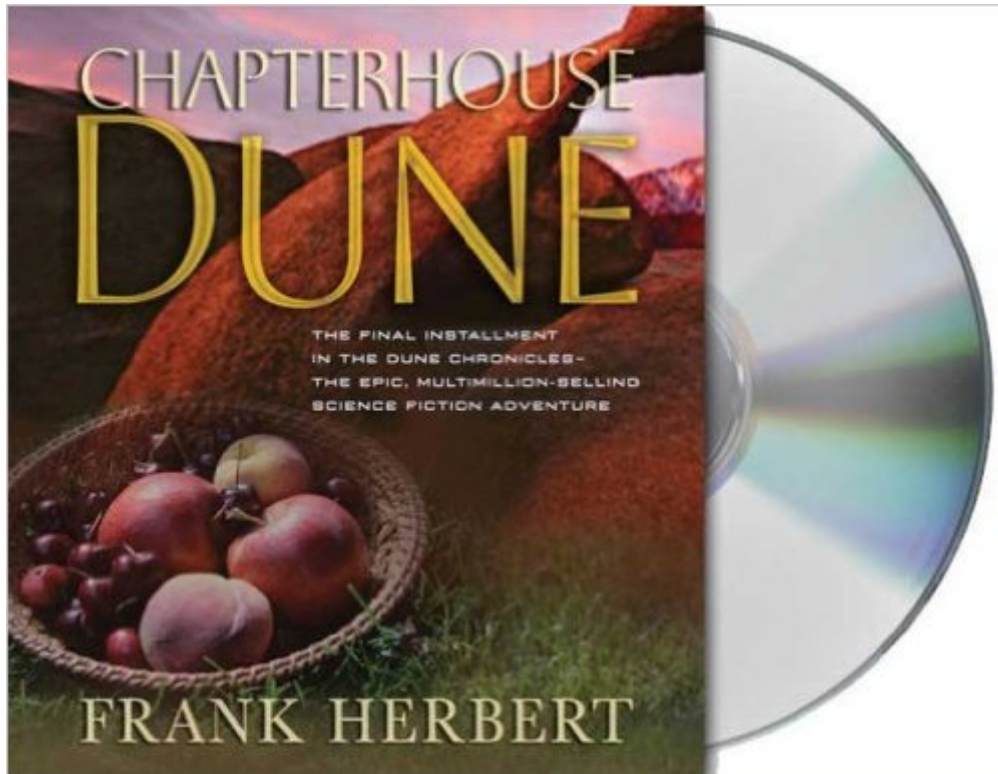


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Chapterhouse Dune



Synopsis

The desert planet Arrakis, called Dune, has been destroyed. Now, the Bene Gesserit, heirs to Dune's power, have colonized a green world and are turning it into a desert, mile by scorched mile. Chapterhouse Dune is the last book Frank Herbert wrote before his death: A stunning climax to the epic Dune legend that will live on forever.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It may not have been his intent, but fate has made Chapterhouse Dune the last book in Frank Herbert's Dune series. There may be others, and they may even be good (I haven't yet read them), but this book represents Herbert's final words on the subject. Although not perfect, and definitely leaving things open for another book, this is, overall, a worthy addition to the series. In this book - a direct sequel to Heretics of Dune with many of the same characters - the Bene Gesserit sisterhood is under siege, threatened by the Honored Matres, a somewhat darker version of their own organization, that is sweeping viciously across the galaxy like a barbarian horde. With the original Dune lifeless after a Matres attack, the Bene Gesserit are trying to create a similar world out of their headquarters. Although they don't think of it in those terms, they are really trying to create a planetary gholia, a clone similar to that of recurring character Duncan Idaho. The book focuses on the war between the two sisterhoods. The book does have its flaws. The rather open-ended conclusion may be forgiven if we believe that Herbert had another book intended. The characters are, as usual, overly serious and everything they do is filled with hidden meanings. Also, there is a

feeling that Herbert was making up parts of this story as he goes along, with new movements suddenly appearing (such as the futuristic Jews who have never been previously mentioned although they have supposedly always been around). In the end, what is the central point or character of this series? Is it a history of the Bene Gesserit, the House Atreides, Duncan Idaho or some combination of all these.

[Nota Bene: As Frank Herbert's last two published novels in the Dune series, Heretics of Dune and Chapterhouse: Dune, along with the unwritten Dune 7, in fact comprise a single story that happened to be divided into three parts, I'll post the same review for both of the two published volumes. This review contains no spoilers.] During the first half of his literary career, Frank Herbert focused most on coming to terms with what it meant to be conscious. The evolution of his thinking on the subject can be traced from real-world events which happened to him in his youth, through his earliest published science fiction stories, crude as they were, and on into novels like The Dragon in the Sea and the stories that would coalesce into The Godmakers, and certainly The Santaroga Barrier and Destination: Void. This line of thinking reached its fruition in the novels Dune and Dune Messiah. Having expanded his understanding of the full spectrum of consciousness about as far as it could go (although admittedly he never stopped tinkering with the subject), in the second half of his career Herbert refocused his attention on how the limitations imposed upon individual consciousness - or perhaps it might be better to say the limited perspective encompassing a single human lifetime - leaves humanity ill-equipped to confront an infinite and ever-changing universe. In effect we end up in a continuous crisis mode, always vainly insisting that the world of tomorrow conform to the expectations of yesterday. We're persistently and comically always shocked to discover our assumptions are wrong. Elsewhere I have described this aspect of Herbert's thinking, the human failure to deal with, or even to recognize, the implications of an unbounded universe, as an absolute-infinity breach.

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