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DREAMER OF DUNE: THE BIOGRAPHY OF FRANK HERBERT

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

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DUNE: HOUSE ATREIDES

DUNE: HOUSE HARKONNEN

DUNE: HOUSE CORRINO

DUNE: THE BUTLERIAN JIHAD

DUNE: THE MACHINE CRUSADE

DUNE: THE BATTLE OF CORRIN

THE ROAD TO DUNE

(also by Frank Herbert; includes the novel *Spice Planet*)

HUNTERS OF DUNE

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SISTERHOOD OF DUNE

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NAVIGATORS OF DUNE

DUNE: THE DUKE OF CALADAN

DUNE: THE LADY OF CALADAN

TALES OF DUNE

SANDS OF DUNE

# CHAPTERHOUSE: DUNE

BOOK SIX IN THE DUNE CHRONICLES

## FRANK HERBERT

*With an Introduction by Brian Herbert*

ACE  
New York

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

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 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 ghola, 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 ghola. *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!*

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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."

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

*Abhhhh, 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

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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