



Dune

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The center of this novel is Paul Atreides, a young man who grows to power and self-knowledge on the desert world Arrakis several thousand years in the future. Arrakis is a harsh world but also the only source of the spice melange, a highly prized substance in the intergalactic Imperial society.

Paul's family, the House of Atreides, has recently taken over Arrakis, but Baron Harkonnen, the planet's former ruler, attacks the newly arrived Atreideses, kills Paul's father, Duke Leto, and forces Paul and his mother, the Lady Jessica, to flee into the desert. Paul must make contact with the Fremen, Arrakis' native inhabitants, and enlist their aid in overthrowing the Harkonnen forces.

Paul must also develop and control his clairvoyant powers for they are the key to his success, enabling him to see the various forces that influence events. Through them, Paul becomes a leader of the Fremen and the founder of a new Fremen religion, giving him the military strength to fight the Harkonnens and, what is more important, providing him with the self-knowledge he needs to control his own destiny.

Beneath the adventure-story plot, with battles and intrigues, the novel explores the mythic patterns of the human mind. Paul's life conforms to that of the hero archetype with his noble origins, mystic powers, flight into the wilderness, contact with a foreign people, and avenging of his father's death. Herbert wished to show the disruption of a society by a messianic superman figure.

The novel is also a fascinating study of ecology, revealing the interdependent facets of Arrakis, from the climate to the Fremen religion. Part of Paul's development is his awareness that human society is as interconnected as a planet's ecology and that it is impossible to have complete knowledge or control of all the factors making up either. Allowance for the unknown and quick adaptability are the wisest measures because, as the novel reveals, the universe remains a mystery.

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