



***Dune* by Frank Herbert**

Book review by Julian Kingery

RATING
4/5

Dune is not a novel, it's a barren desert planet on which water is as precious as gold. It's a planet inhabited by Fremen who have survived hundreds of years of persecution and harsh desert climate growing powerful in the shadows. It's the only planet that grows the super valuable spice and is home to monstrous worms who could swallow a building in a bite. It's a planet with a complex religion, culture and language. Finally, it's a planet at the center of a galaxy-wide power struggle between royal houses, emperors, and trading corporations.

Frank Herbert builds a world through 800 pages of dialogue-heavy reading, giving the reader a lot of freedom in what they imagine. Herbert rarely directly describes things but instead places the framework for the reader to create their own planet. This can be a blessing and a curse as sometimes I was overwhelmed by the amount of participation the book required.

The plot of this novel is slow and the reader has to put a lot of trust in Herbert because he leaves the reader with unanswered questions for long periods of time and rarely explains himself very well. Often I found myself having to piece the plot together by forging ahead and remaining in a state of confusion for a while. This, however, was overshadowed by the genius and complexity of the plot.

Herbert's characters are likable, understandable, and complex. He builds character with dialogue and a lot of internal monologues that express their inner thoughts and emotions. Herbert really allows the reader to get in the heads of his characters. This does not mean that the reader will be able to fully understand characters, though, because they remain unpredictable and interesting throughout the novel.

One of the biggest strengths of *Dune* is its portrayal of religion. For anyone who likes to chew on moral dilemmas and big ideas that relate back to the "real" world, Herbert's perspective on religion is very interesting. *Dune* manages to examine religion from two sides, as a tool for control and a tool for chaos.

All books are subjective but *Dune* especially because depending on who is reading it can be two things. To some it can be an 800-page impenetrable fog of made up words, to others a world so well thought out it could be real. *Dune* is not a great casual read; however, for people who aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves and put in a little work, it's totally worth it.