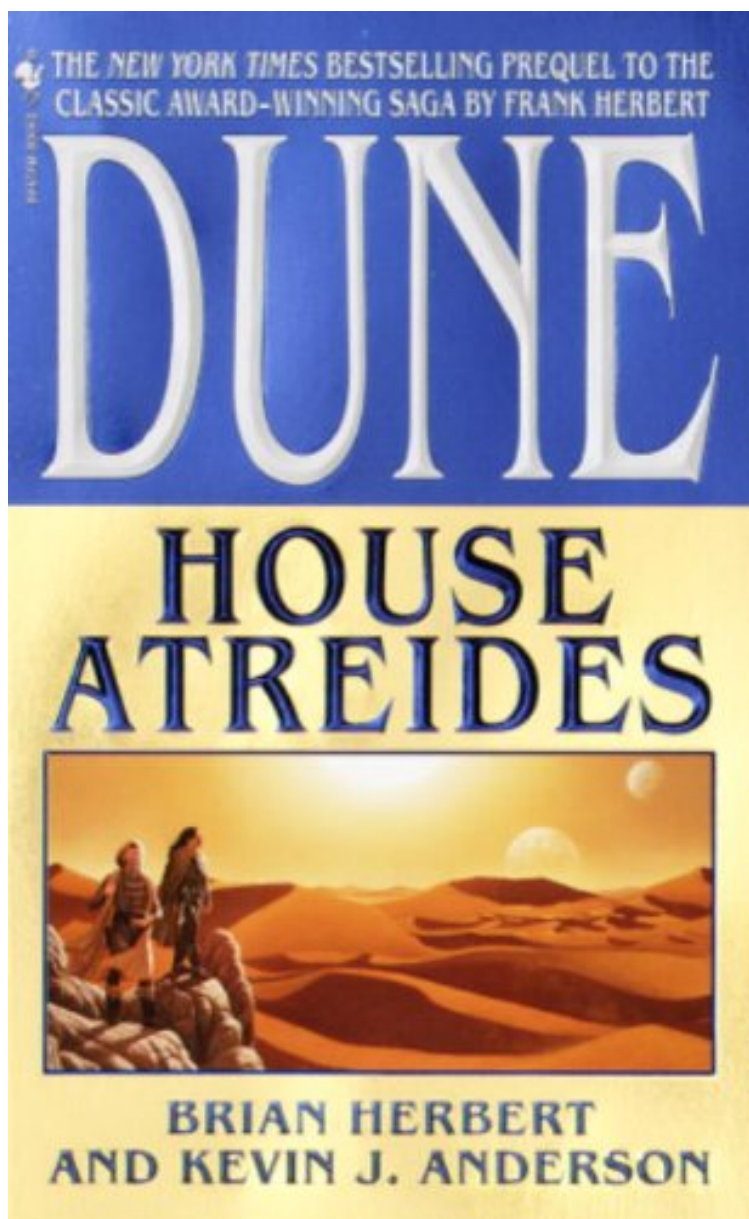


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Dune: House Atreides



*Par Brian Herbert, Kevin J. Anderson
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurTHE EPIC PREQUEL TO DUNE"DUNE: HOUSE ATREIDES is a terrific prequel, but it is also a first-rate adventure on its own. Frank Herbert would surely be delighted and proud of this continuation of his vision."Dean KoontzFrank Herbert's Dune chronicles became an enduring classic and the most popular science fiction series of all time. Working from recently discovered files left by his father, Brian Herbert and best-selling novelist Kevin J. Anderson bring us Dune: House Atreides, the prequel, which captures all the complexity and grand themes of the original work while weaving a new tapestry of great passion and momentous destiny into a saga that expands the tale written by Frank Herbert more than

thirty years ago. Complex, brilliant, and prophetic, Frank Herbert's award-winning Dune chronicles captured the imaginations of millions of readers worldwide and transformed their perception of what the future could be.

By his death in 1986, Frank Herbert had completed six novels in the Dune series. But much of his vision vast, sprawling, and multilayered remained unwritten. Now, working from recently discovered files left by his father, Brian Herbert and bestselling novelist Kevin J. Anderson collaborate on a new novel, the first volume in the prequel to Dune where we step onto planet Arrakis...decades before Dune's hero, Paul Atrides, walks its sands.

Beginning nearly four decades before Dune, House Atrides introduces pivotal characters, alliances, base treacheries, and bright hopes that form the foundation of Dune. On the planet Arrakis, an aging tyrant sits on the Golden Lion Throne and rules all of the known universe, while his son grows dangerously impatient for the crown. A quasi-religious order of black-robed women move their secret breeding program one momentous step closer to creating a god-child they call the Kwisatz Haderach. And a minor family among the nobility, House Atrides, chooses a course of honor that will bring it to destruction at the hands of its mortal enemy, House Harkonnen or take it to new heights of power. Here is the rich and complex world that Frank Herbert created in his classic series, in the time leading up to the momentous events of Dune.

As Emperor Elrood's son Shaddam plots a subtle regicide, young Leto Atrides leaves his lush, water-rich planet for a year's education on the mechanized world of Ix; a planetologist named Pardot Kynes is dispatched by the Emperor to the desert planet Arrakis, or Dune, to discover the secrets of the addictive spice known as melange; and the eight-year-old slave Duncan Idaho is hunted by his cruel masters in a terrifying game from which he vows escape and vengeance. But none can envision the fate in store for them: one that will make them renegades and shapers of history. Covering the decade when Shaddam wins his throne, the teenager Leo Atrides becomes unexpectedly the ruler of House Atrides, and Pardot Kynes uncovers one of the planet Dune's greatest secrets, House Atrides stands next to Dune in its power and scope.

While this new novel solves some of Dune's most baffling mysteries, it presents new puzzles springing from the sands where one day Paul Muad'Dib Atrides will walk. But now, in the years before Paul's birth, an unforgettable new epic begins. Fans of the Dune chronicles will relish the opportunity to return to the rich and exotic universe created by Frank Herbert, while new readers will be introduced to an incomparable imagination a future where the fate of the entire cosmos is at stake. Extrait Melange is the financial crux of CHOAM activities. Without this spice, Bene Gesserit Reverend Mothers could not perform feats of observation and human control, Guild Navigators could not see safe pathways across space, and billions of Imperial citizens would die of addictive withdrawal. Any simpleton knows that such dependence upon a single commodity leads to abuse. We are all at risk.--CHOAM Economic Analysis of Materiel Flow Patterns Lean and muscular, Baron Vladimir Harkonnen hunched forward next to the ornithopter pilot. He peered with spider-black eyes through the pitted windowplaz, smelling the ever-present grit and sand. As the armored 'thopter flew high overhead, the white sun of Arrakis dazzled against unrelenting sands. The sweeping vista of dunes sizzling in the day's heat made his retinas burn. The landscape and sky were bleached of color. Nothing soothed the human eye. Hellish place. The Baron wished he could be back in the industrialized warmth and civilized complexity of Giedi Prime, the central world of House Harkonnen. Even stuck here, he had better things to do back at the local family headquarters in the city of Carthag, other diversions to suit his demanding tastes. But the spice harvesting must take precedence. Always. Especially a huge strike such as the one his spotters had reported. In the cramped cockpit, the Baron lounged with well-postured confidence, ignoring the buffet and sway of air currents. The 'thopter's mechanical wings beat rhythmically like a wasp's. The dark leather of his chestpiece fit tightly over well-toned pectorals. In his mid-forties, he had rakish good looks; his reddish gold hair had been cut and styled to exacting specifications, enhancing his distinctive widow's peak. The Baron's skin was smooth, his cheekbones high and well-sculpted. Sinewy muscles stood out along his neck and jaw, ready to contort his face into a scowl or a hard smile, depending on circumstances. "How much farther?" He looked sideways at the pilot, who had been showing signs of nervousness. "The site is in the deep desert, m'Lord Baron. All indications are that this is one of the richest concentrations of spice ever excavated." The flying craft shuddered on thermals as they passed over an outcropping of black lava rock. The pilot swallowed hard, focusing on the ornithopter's controls. The Baron relaxed into his seat and quelled his impatience. He was glad the new hoard was far from prying eyes, away from Imperial or CHOAM corporate officials who might keep troublesome records.

Doddering old Emperor Elrood IX didn't need to know every damned thing about Harkonnen spice production on Arrakis. Through carefully edited reports and doctored accounting journals, not to mention bribes, the Baron told the off-planet overseers only what he wanted them to know. He swiped a strong hand

across the sheen of sweat on his upper lip, then adjusted the 'thopter's environment controls to make the cockpit cooler, the air more moist. The pilot, uncomfortable at having such an important and volatile passenger in his care, nudged the engines to increase speed. He checked the console's map projection again, studied outlines of the desert terrain that spread as far as they could see. Having examined the cartographic projections himself, the Baron had been displeased by their lack of detail. How could anyone expect to find his way across this desert scab of a world? How could a planet so vital to the economic stability of the Imperium remain basically uncharted? Yet another failing of his weak younger demibrother, Abulurd. But Abulurd was gone, and the Baron was in charge. Now that Arrakis is mine, I'll put everything in order. Upon returning to Carthag, he would set people to work drawing up new surveys and maps, if the damned Fremen didn't kill the explorers again or ruin the cartography points. For forty years, this desert world had been the quasi-fief of House Harkonnen, a political appointment granted by the Emperor, with the blessing of the commercial powerhouse CHOAM--the Combine Honnete Ober Advancer Mercantiles. Though grim and unpleasant, Arrakis was one of the most important jewels in the Imperial crown because of the precious substance it provided. However, upon the death of the Baron's father, Dmitri Harkonnen, the old Emperor had, through some mental deficiency, granted the seat of power to the softhearted Abulurd, who had managed to decimate spice production in a mere seven years. Profits plunged, and he lost control to smugglers and sabotage. In disgrace, the fool had been yanked from his position and sent off without official title to Lankiveil, where even he could do little damage to the self-sustaining whale-fur activities there. Immediately upon being granted the governorship, Baron Vladimir Harkonnen had set out to turn Arrakis around. He would make his own mark, erase the legacy of mistakes and bad judgment. In all the Imperium, Arrakis--a hellhole that some might consider a punishment rather than a reward--was the only known source of the spice melange, a substance worth far more than any precious metal. Here on this parched world, it was worth even more than its weight in water. Without spice, efficient space travel would be impossible ... and without space travel, the Imperium itself would fall. Spice prolonged life, protected health, and added a vigor to existence. The Baron, a moderate user himself, greatly appreciated the way it made him feel. Of course, the spice melange was also ferociously addictive, which kept the price high....

The armored 'thopter flew over a seared mountain range that looked like a broken jawbone filled with rotted teeth. Up ahead the Baron could see a dust cloud extending like an anvil into the sky. "Those are the harvesting operations, m'Lord Baron." Hawklike attack 'thopters grew from black dots in the monochrome sky and swooped toward them. The communicator pinged, and the pilot sent back an identification signal. The paid defenders--mercenaries with orders to keep out unwelcome observers--circled away and took up protective positions in the sky. So long as House Harkonnen maintained the illusion of progress and profits, the Spacing Guild didn't need to know about every particular spice find. Nor did the Emperor, nor CHOAM. The Baron would keep the melange for himself and add it to his huge stockpiles. After Abulurd's years of bumbling, if the Baron accomplished even half of what he was capable of, CHOAM and the Imperium would see a vast improvement. If he kept them happy, they wouldn't notice his substantial skim, would never suspect his secret spice stashes. A dangerous stratagem if discovered ... but the Baron had ways of dealing with prying eyes. As they approached the plume of dust, he took out a pair of binoculars and focused the oil lenses. The magnification permitted him to see the spice factory at work. With its giant treads and enormous cargo capacity, the mechanical monstrosity was incredibly expensive--and worth every solari expended to maintain it. Its excavators kicked up cinnamon-red dust, gray sand, and flint chips as they dug down, scooping up the surface of the desert, sifting for aromatic spice. Mobile ground units ranged across the open sand in the vicinity of the factory, dipping probes beneath the surface, scraping samples, mapping the extent of the buried spice vein. Overhead, heavier machinery borne by jumbo ornithopters circled, waiting. Peripherally, spotter craft cruised up and down the sands with alert watchers searching for the telltale ripples of worms' sign. One of the great sandworms of Arrakis could swallow their entire operation whole. "M'Lord Baron," the pilot said and handed the communicator wand over to him, "the captain of the work crew wishes to speak with you." "This is your Baron." He touched his ear to listen to the pickup. "Give me an update. How much have you found?" Below on the sands, the crew captain answered, his voice gruff, his manner annoyingly unimpressed with the importance of the man to whom he was speaking. "Ten years working spice crews, and this deposit's beyond anything I've ever seen. Trouble is, it's buried deep. Normally, you know, we find the spice exposed by the elements. This time it's densely concentrated, but ..." The Baron waited for only a moment. "Yes, what is it?" "Something strange going on here, sir. Chemically, I mean. We've got carbon dioxide leaking from below, some sort of a bubble beneath us. The harvester's digging

through outer layers of sand to get at the spice, but there's also water vapor." "Water vapor!" Such a thing was unheard-of on Arrakis, where the moisture content of the air was nearly unmeasurable, even on the best of days. "Could have stumbled on an ancient aquifer, sir. Maybe buried under a cap of rock." The Baron had never imagined finding running water beneath the surface of Arrakis. Quickly he considered the possibilities of exploiting a free-flowing water resource by selling it to the populace. That was sure to upset the existing water merchants, who had grown too swollen with self-importance anyway. His basso voice rumbled. "Do you think it's contaminating the spice somehow?" "Not able to say, sir," said the crew captain. "Spice is strange stuff, but I've never seen a pocket like this before. It doesn't seem ... right somehow." The Baron looked over at the 'thopter pilot. "Contact the spotters. See if they've picked up any wormsign yet." "No wormsign, m'Lord," the pilot said, scanning the reply. The Baron noticed sparkles of sweat on the man's forehead. "How long has the harvester been down there?" "Nearly two standard hours, sir." Now the Baron scowled. One of the worms should definitely have come before now. Inadvertently, the pilot had left the comsystem open, and the crew captain gruffly acknowledged over the speaker. "Never had this much time either, sir. The worms always come. Always. But something's going on down here. Gases are increasing. You can smell it in the air." Taking a deep breath of the recycled cabin air, the Baron detected the musky cinnamon smell of raw melange scooped from the desert. The ornithopter flew in a holding pattern now, several hundred meters from the main harvester. "We're also detecting vibrations underground, some kind of a resonance. I don't like it, sir." "You're not paid to like it," the Baron replied. "Is it a deep worm?" "I don't think so, sir." He scanned the estimates being transmitted from the spice harvester. The numbers boggled his mind. "We're getting as much from this one excavation as a month's production on my other sites." He drummed his fingers on his right thigh in a rhythmic pattern. "Nevertheless, sir, I suggest that we prepare to pack up and abandon the site. We could lose--" "Absolutely not, Captain," the Baron said. "There's no wormsign, and you've already got nearly a full factory load. We can bring down a carryall and give you an empty harvester if you need it. I'm not leaving behind a fortune in spice just because you're getting nervous ... just because you have an uneasy feeling. Ridiculous!" When the work leader tried to push his point, the Baron interrupted, "Captain, if you're a nervous coward, you're in the wrong profession and in the employ of the wrong House. Carry on." He switched off the communicator and made a mental note to remove that man from his position as soon as possible. Carryalls hovered above, ready to retrieve the spice harvester and its crew as soon as a worm appeared. But why was it taking so long for one to come? Worms always protected the spice. Spice. He tasted the word in his thoughts and on his lips. Veiled in superstition, the substance was an unknown quantity, a modern unicorn's-horn. And Arrakis was inhospitable enough that no one had yet deciphered the origin of melange. In the vast canvas of the Imperium, no explorer or prospector had found melange on any other planet, nor had anyone succeeded in synthesizing a substitute, despite centuries of attempts. Since House Harkonnen held the planetary governorship of Arrakis, and therefore controlled all spice production, the Baron had no wish to see a substitute developed, or any other source found. Expert desert crews located the spice, and the Imperium used it--but beyond that, the details didn't concern him. There was always risk to spice workers, always the danger that a worm would attack too soon, that a carryall would malfunction, that a spice factory would not be lifted away in time. Unexpected sandstorms could come up with startling speed. The casualty rate and the equipment losses to House Harkonnen were appalling ... but melange paid off nearly any cost in blood or money. As the ornithopter circled in a steady, thrumming rhythm, the Baron studied the industrial spectacle below. Baking sun glinted off the spice factory's dusty hull. Spotters continued to prowl the air, while groundcars cruised beneath them, taking samples. Still no sign of a worm, and every moment allowed the crew to retrieve more spice. The workers would receive bonuses--except for that captain--and House Harkonnen would become richer. The records could be doctored later. The Baron turned to the pilot. "Call our nearest base. Summon another carryall and another spice factory. This vein seems inexhaustible." His voice trailed off. "If a worm hasn't shown up by now, there just might be time...." The ground crew captain called back, broadcasting on a general frequency since the Baron had shut down his own receiver. "Sir, our probes indicate that the temperature is rising deep below--a dramatic spike! Something's going on down there, a chemical reaction. And one of our ground-roving teams just broke into a swarming nest of sandtrout." The Baron growled, furious with the man for communicating on an unencrypted channel. What if CHOAM spies were listening? Besides, no one cared about sandtrout. The jellylike creatures deep beneath the sand were as irrelevant to him as flies swarming around a long-abandoned corpse. He made a mental note to do more to this weakling captain than just remove him from the work crews and deny him a bonus. That gutless bastard was probably handpicked by

Abulurd. The Baron saw tiny figures of scouts tracking through the sands, running about like ants maddened with acid vapor. They rushed back to the main spice factory. One man leaped off his dirt-encrusted rover and scrambled toward the open door of the massive machine. "What are those men doing? Are they abandoning their posts? Bring us down closer so I can see." The pilot tilted the ornithopter and descended like an ominous beetle toward the sand. Below, the men leaned over, coughing and retching as they tried to drag filters over their faces. Two stumbled on the shifting sand. Others were rapidly battening down the spice factory. "Bring the carryall! Bring the carryall!" someone cried. The spotters all reported in. "I see no wormsign." "Still nothing." "All clear from here," said a third. "Why are they evacuating?" the Baron demanded, as if the pilot would know. "Something's happening," the crew captain The ground bucked. Four workers stumbled and pitched facefirst onto the sand before they could reach the ramp to the spice factory. "Look, m'Lord!" The pilot pointed downward, his voice filled with awe. As the Baron stopped focusing on the cowardly men, he saw the sand trembling all around the excavation site, vibrating like a struck drumhead. The spice harvester canted, slipped to one side. A crack opened in the sands, and the whole site began to swell from beneath the ground, rising in the air like a gas bubble in a boiling Salusan mudpot. "Get us out of here!" the Baron shouted. The pilot stared for a fraction of a second, and the Baron swept his left hand with the speed of a cracked whip, striking the man hard on the cheek. "Move!" The pilot grabbed the 'thopter controls and wrenched them into a steep ascent. The articulated wings flapped furiously. On the terrain below, the swollen underground bubble reached its apex--then burst, hurling the spice harvester, the mobile crews, and everything else up off the surface. A gigantic explosion of sand sprayed upward, carrying broken rock and volatile orange spice. The mammoth factory was crushed and blasted to pieces, scattered like lost rags in a Coriolis storm. "What the devil happened?" The Baron's dark eyes went wide in disbelief at the sheer magnitude of the disaster. All that precious spice gone, swallowed in an instant. All the equipment destroyed. The loss in lives hardly occurred to him, except for the wasted costs of crew training. "Hang on, m'Lord," the pilot cried. His knuckles turned white on the controls. A hammerblast of wind struck them. The armored ornithopter turned end over end in the air, wings flailing. The engines whined and groaned, trying to maintain stability. Pellets of high-velocity sand struck the plaz windowports. Dust-clogged, the 'thopter's motors made sick, coughing sounds. The craft lost altitude, dropping toward the seething maw of the desert. The pilot shouted unintelligible words. The Baron clutched his crash restraints, saw the ground coming toward them like an inverted bootheel to squash an insect. As head of House Harkonnen, he had always thought he would die by a treacherous assassin's hand ... but to fall prey to an unpredictable natural disaster instead--the Baron found it almost humorous. As they plunged, he saw the sand open like a festering sore. The dust and raw melange were being sucked down, turned over by convection currents and chemical reactions. The rich spice vein of only moments before had turned into a leprous mouth ready to swallow them. But the pilot, who had seemed weak and distractible during their flight, became rigid with concentration and determination. His fingers flew over sky rudder and engine throttle controls, working to ride the currents, switching flow from one motor to another to discharge dust strangulation in the air intakes. Finally the ornithopter leveled off, steadied itself again, and cruised low over the dune plain. The pilot emitted an audible sigh of relief. Where the great opening had been ripped into the layered sand, the Baron now saw glittering translucent shapes like maggots on a carcass: sandtrout, rushing toward the explosion. Soon giant worms would come, too. The monsters couldn't possibly resist this. Try as he might, the Baron couldn't understand spice. Not at all. The 'thopter gained altitude, taking them toward the spotters and the carryalls that had been caught unawares. They hadn't been able to retrieve the spice factory and its precious cargo before the explosion, and he could blame no one for it--no one but himself. The Baron had given them explicit orders to remain out of reach. "You just saved my life, pilot. What is your name?" "Kryubi, sir." "All right, then, Kryubi--have you ever seen such a thing? What happened down there? What caused that explosion?" The pilot took a deep breath. "I've heard the Fremen talking about something they call a ... spice blow." He seemed like a statue now, as if the terror had transformed him into something much stronger. "It happens in the deep desert, where few people can see." "Who cares what the Fremen say?" He curled his lip at the thought of the dirty, nomadic indigents of the great desert. "We've all heard of spice blows, but nobody's ever actually seen one. Crazy superstitions." "Yes, but superstition usually has some kind of basis. They see many things out in the desert." Now the Baron admired the man for his willingness to speak out, though Kryubi must know of his temper and vindictiveness. Perhaps it would be wise to promote him.... "They say a spice blow is a chemical explosion," Kryubi continued, "probably the result of a pre-spice mass beneath the sands." The Baron considered this; he couldn't deny the evidence of his own eyes. One day

maybe someone would understand the true nature of melange and be able to prevent disasters like this. So far, because the spice was seemingly inexhaustible to those willing to make the effort, no one had bothered with a detailed analysis. Why waste time on tests, when fortunes waited to be made? The Baron had a monopoly on Arrakis--but it was also a monopoly based on ignorance. He gritted his teeth and knew that once they returned to Carthag he would be forced to blow off some steam, to release his pent-up tensions on "amusements," perhaps a bit more vigorously than he had earlier intended. He would have to find a special candidate this time--not one of his regular lovers, but someone he would never have use for again. That would free him of restraint. Looking down, he thought, No longer any need to hide this site from the Emperor. They would record it, log it as a find, and document the destruction of the crew and equipment. No need to manipulate the records now. Old Elrood would not be pleased, and House Harkonnen would have to absorb this financial setback. As the pilot circled around, the surviving spice crew assessed their damages on the ground, and over the comlink reported losses of men, equipment, and spice load. The Baron felt rage boiling within him. Damn Arrakis! he thought. Damn the spice, and damn our dependence on it! From the Hardcover edition.

Revue de presse House Atreides is a terrific prequel, but it's also a first-rate adventure on its own. Frank Herbert would surely be delighted and proud of this continuation of his vision. (Dean Koontz)'all these characters and themes will be familiar to fans of the original Dune novels. But new twists added by Herbert and Anderson will have fans, both old and new, turning pages. Having done their research well, Herbert and Anderson have succeeded in laying out the foundation for a new trilogy that will amplify the original novels and stand firmly as a class act in its own right.' - Dorman T Schindler, St Petersburg Times.'This book is written in a style so close to the original that it is hard to believe Frank Herbert did not direct it through some mysterious genetic link - maybe he did. Did I like it? Hey, I'm a Dune addict myself. I can't wait for the sequel to the prequel' - Mark Graham, Rocky Mountain News... Herbert and Anderson have met the challenge admirably. Within a web of relationships in which no act has simple or predictable consequences, they lay the foundations of the Dune saga... Even readers new to the saga will be able to follow it easily as the narrative weaves among the many interconnected tales. A TERRIFIC READ IN ITS OWN RIGHT... Will inspire readers to turn, or return, to its great predecessor. (PUBLISHERS WEEKLY) Brian Herbert and Kevin J Anderson succeed in weaving their own intricate saga. Dune: House Atreides does its predecessors justice. (USA Today)'...a rousing story that juggles eight or so plot lines with ease. The first of a trilogy, the book is written so that those who have never read Dune can start right here with the prequel.' - Michael Glitz, New York Post 'The author's research and passion for the material have served them well. Dune: House Atreides captures the essence of Dune while illuminating further the workings of Frank Herbert's universe' - Seattle Times Congratulations to Herbert and Anderson for transporting us back to this richly excavated world... A spicy melange treat for both new and long-time fans of the series (Billy Dee Williams (of Star Wars, Lady Sings the B)) 'Dune: House Atreides is packed with action, great story lines and twists within twists about favorite Dune villains and heroes. The result is a winning combination that keeps the two in stride with Frank Herbert's vision.' - Beyond the Cover. In writing a prequel to what is arguably the best science fiction novel of all time, Brian Herbert and Kevin J Anderson set themselves a monumental task. They succeed brilliantly. This cynical old critic found himself engrossed from page one, and eagerly looks forward to the rest of the series. Buy it now! (Dave Wolverton (NYT bestselling author)) Those who long to return to the world of desert, spice and sandworms will be amply satisfied (The Times)' Herbert and Anderson have brought this classic saga back to an exciting and dynamic life' - Denver Post '...a compelling story that will transport readers back to the world that changed science fiction forever' - Tattered Times, Denver, Colorado IN A WORD, SATISFYING: all Dune fans will want to investigate, newcomers will be tempted, and it should promote fresh interest in the magnificent original series. (Kirkus) opulently epic...always engrossing... In short, I can't wait for the next installment. (Johannesburg Star)' In a word satisfying: all Dune fans will want to investigate, newcomers will be tempted, and it should promise fresh interest in the magnificent original series' - Kirkus