

DUNE



An Introductory Guide

THE IMPERIUM

The Imperium is the world Dune takes place in, basically the “kingdom”. Since Dune is in space, that kingdom is technically “the known universe.”

Dune is a mix of fantasy tropes and sci-fi. So, the world is organized more like Game of Thrones or medieval stories than say, Star Wars.

The Imperium is governed by an Emperor. Under the Emperor, there are The Great Houses. A House typically indicates a certain family or dynasty and all that they rule over. The leader of a house will typically be a Duke or a Baron, and will rule over an entire planet. Luckily, you only need to worry about a few of them!

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MAJOR PLAYERS



The Emperor (Shaddam IV)

- Does not even appear in Part 1, but looms over the whole thing.
- Like any tyrant, he's worried about his power. There's a certain leader of a Great House rising in popularity that he feels is a threat.

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MAJOR PLAYERS



Duke Leto Atreides

–Leto leads House Atreides, who rule over the planet Caladan. Leto is a revered leader on Caladan and in the wider Imperium. So, what does the Emperor do?

–He gives House Atreides a NEW planet to rule over as well! Can you guess which one? Well, too bad it's already ruled over by...

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MAJOR PLAYERS

The Baron Vladimir Harkonnen

–The Baron leads House Harkonnen, who rule over Geidi Prime and ARRAKIS (Dune).

–Arrakis has made the Harkonnens obscenely rich due to the fact that it has the universe's only source of a very valuable substance, SPICE (or Melange).

–However, the Harkonnens are unpopular rulers due to their cruelty and greed. They have always pilfered Arrakis for its resources, and have been at war with the planet's native inhabitants.



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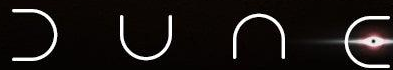
MAJOR PLAYERS

The Fremen

–Arrakis’ native inhabitants. The Fremen are a very religious and ritualistic people. They are fierce warriors, “at one” with the planet. They’ve developed practices and technology that allow them to survive in the desert, despite it being inhabited by giant worms.

–In fact, the Fremen worship the worms and refer to them as Shai-Hulud or The Maker.

–The Fremen can be easily recognized by their blue eyes, which comes from their consumption of Spice.



MAJOR PLAYERS

The Fremen

- The Fremen believe in a messianic prophecy - that a prophet from off-world will come and lead them to glory and paradise.
- They call this prophet the Lisan Al-Gaib or Mahdi.
- There are many prophecies and signs that will indicate the coming of the Lisan Al-Gaib.



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THE SETUP

So, the Emperor is taking Arrakis AWAY from the Harkonnens and giving it to the Atreides.

But if the Emperor is AFRAID of Duke Leto's popularity, why reward him with the riches of Arrakis?

Well, House Atreides wonders the same thing. They expect some sort of political plot, a trap of some kind, but have no idea to what degree. Still, they go along with it all, because of the complications of refusing an Imperial decree, and because they believe they can in fact succeed in ruling Arrakis.

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WHERE IT GETS MORE COMPLEX

The Imperium is vast. There are many groups of people in addition to Houses that are constantly trying to gain power and making moves of their own.

But there's only really one you need to worry about for now:

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The Bene Gesserit

- An ancient school of mental and physical training established primarily for female students.
- Their powers are all scientifically based, but so advanced that many call them “witches”.
- For instance, they can tell when people are lying and often serve leaders as Truthsayers.
- One of their most significant powers is known as “The Voice.” They can pitch the tone of their voices in such a way that it instantly hypnotizes people and they have control over them.



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The Bene Gesserit

–In an official capacity, the Bene Gesserit now train people to serve the Emperor and the Great Houses.

–But they have their own plans to seize power. They are playing the long game, crossing bloodlines over generations and centuries - essentially arranging marriages between powerful people and houses to yield powerful offspring - both in actual physical powers and political influence.

–They believe one day this will result in the creation of a male Bene Gesserit whose mental powers can bridge space and time. They call this future person the Kwisatz Haderach. Why does this matter?



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HOUSE ATREIDES

—Duke Leto's concubine, Lady Jessica, is a student of the Bene Gesserit.

—Leto and Jessica have a son...



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HOUSE ATREIDES

- Paul Atreides, whom Jessica has been secretly training in “The Way” - or the abilities of the Bene Gesserit.
- Jessica believes she may be the mother to the Kwisatz Haderach.



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Supporting Characters Helpful to Know

We'll now briefly cover some of the characters just so you're aware of why they are there at all.

Most are high ranking advisors and leaders amongst the Great Houses and wider Imperium.

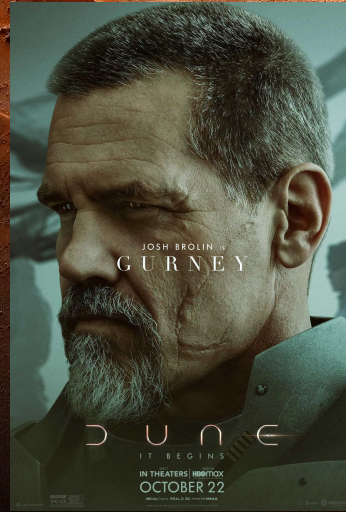
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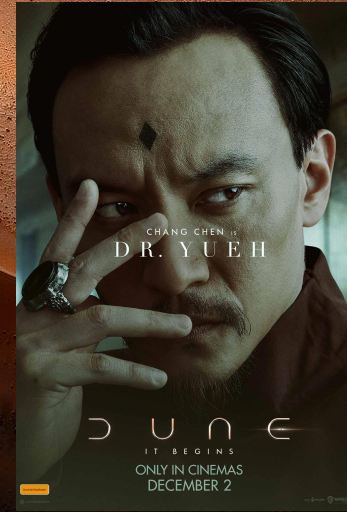
Supporting House Atreides



Duncan Idaho - Sword Master



Gurney Halleck - War Master



Dr. Yueh - Medical Expertise



Thufir Hawat - Mentat

Each of these serve as right-hand men to Duke Leto and as mentors to Paul Atreides.

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Note: a Mentat is a person who has trained in logical thinking - essentially a human computer.

Supporting House Harkonnen



Count "Beast" Rabban - Governor of Arrakis
and nephew to The Baron



Piter - Mentat

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Supporting the Emperor (kind of)



Reverend Mother - Leader of the Bene Gesserit

Note: the Reverend Mother Mohiam is not only head of the Bene Gesserit, but directly serves as the Emperor's truthsayer and advisor.



Liet Kynes - Judge of the Change

Note: the Judge of the Change is the person assigned by the Imperium to oversee the exchange of Arrakis from the Harkonnens to the Atreides.



And that's it!

There is lots more to the world of DUNE, but this basic info should help you enjoy the movie watching experience with a little less confusion!

Enjoy and remember:

Fear is the mind-killer.

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