

The Road To Dune by Frank Herbert.txtThe Road To Dune by Frank Herbert

with Illustrations by Jim Burns

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You have arrived on planet Arrakis. You will embark on a walking tour of epic proportions. Rarely does a visitor on the road to Dune make his or her way without an Imperium guide. Here is a sampling from such a guide, complete with illustrations.

Your walking tour of Arrakis must include this approach across the dunes to the Grand Palace at Arrakeen (background). From a distance, the dimensions of this construction are deceptive, especially when hazed by wind-blown dust. The largest man-made structure ever built, the Grand Palace could cover more than ten of the Imperium's most populous cities under the one roof, a fact that becomes more apparent when you learn Atreides attendants and their families, housed spaciously in the Palace Annex (foreground), number some thirty-five million souls.

When you walk into the Grand Reception Hall of the Palace at Arakeen, be prepared to feel dwarfed before an immensity never before conceived. A statue of St. Alia Atreides (foreground), shown as "The Soother of Pains," stands twenty-two meters tall but is one of the smallest adornments in the hall. Two hundred such statues could be stacked atop the other against the entrance pillars (background) and still fall short of the doorway's capitol arch, which itself is almost a thousand meters below the first beams upholding the lower roof.

If you are numbered among "the heartfelt pilgrims," you will cross the last thousand meters of this approach to the temple of Alia on your knees. Those thousand meters fall well within the sweeping curves (background) leading your eyes up to the transcendent symbols dedicating this Temple to St. Alia of the Knife. The famed "Sun-Sweep Window" (left face of the Temple) incorporates every solar calendar known to human history in the one translucent display whose brilliant colors, driven by the sun of Dune, thread through the interior on prismatic pathways.

On each pilgrimage, one hundred are chosen by lot to make the three-day climb up secret passages of the Grand Palace and, half-way up, may look down from this vantage on Muad'Dob's personal ornithopter. It sits on His private landing platform against an inner wall of the Palace. A narrow strip of windows in Atreides family quarters glisten on the high wall (left). An attendant has just made the regular inspection of the 'thopter, returning to the Palace with a traditional Fremen cry heard clearly from the observation stop: "His water is

secure!"

This Ixian heating device, set like a giant pearl in an ornate stand, greets you in a smaller passage of the Grand Palace. The ring-bound queue of the attendant servicing the device marks him as a city Freman. On your walking tour of Arrakis, you will see many such Ixian artifacts, some set with rare gems, all worked in precious metals by dedicated artisans, some of whom devote years to the completion of a single decorative line. Attention to detail can be seen on this space heater. It incorporates twenty precious metals in each lapped scale.

Rarely, in a private passage of the Grand Palace, the walking pilgrim will encounter the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam. The famed Bene Gesserit graciously paused here to be recorded in the light of a glowglobe. Note her wedding bands. They signify her eternal bond to the Sisterhood. The glowglobe is of an ancient design and may have come from Caladan in the original Atreides migration. The cracked vasculature rim on the lower left side of the globe could indicate rough treatment in the Harkonnen attack. Many artifacts from those troubled times survived and were restored on orders of Muad'Dib himself.

This authentic visage of the Princess Irulan, Muad'Dib's virgin consort, should be committed to memory before your walking tour of Arrakis. The pilgrim should beware of false images. You will be beset by tradesmen hawking such mementoes. Irulan authorized only this portrait for official sale to pilgrims.

The face of Duncan Idaho, gholah warrior, teacher, friend and advisor of Muad'Dib

stares out at you from this official portrait. It is sold to pilgrims on the walking tour of Arrakis only in Palace shops. All proceeds go to support retired Freman and provide for the education of Freman orphans.