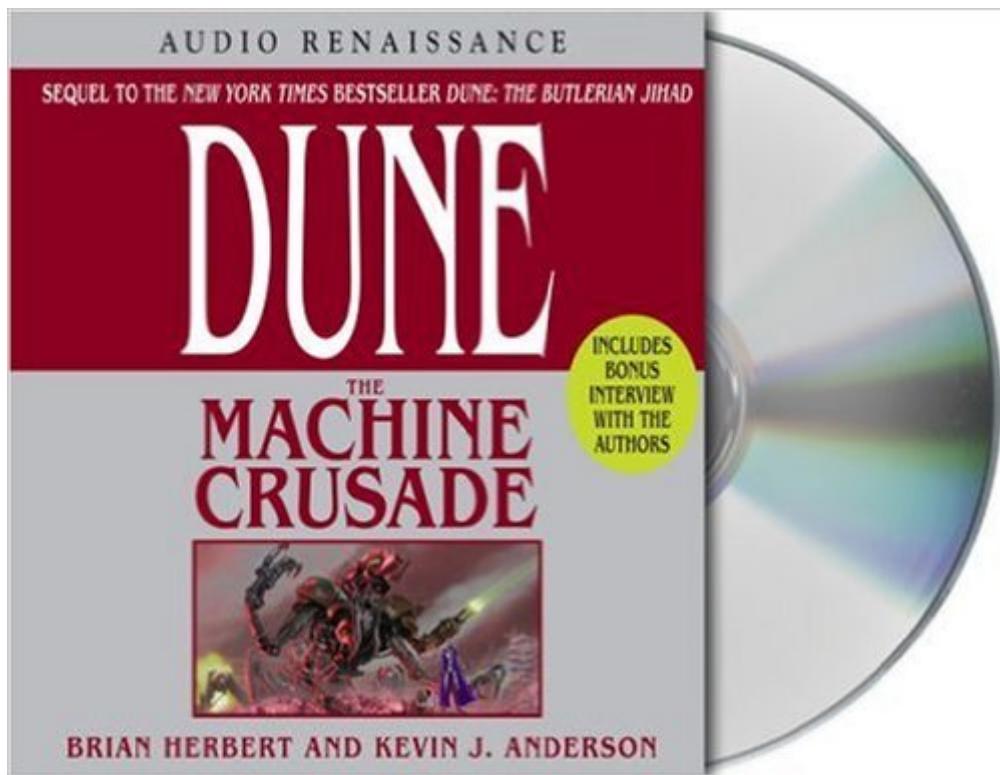


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Dune: The Machine Crusade



Synopsis

The breathtaking vision and incomparable storytelling of Brian Herbert and Kevin Anderson's Dune: The Butlerian Jihad, a prequel to Frank Herbert's classic Dune, propelled it to the ranks of speculative fiction's classics in its own right. Now, with all the color, scope, and fascination of the prior novel, comes Dune: The Machine Crusade. More than two decades have passed since the events chronicled in The Butlerian Jihad. The crusade against thinking robots has ground on for years, but the forces led by Serena Butler and Irbis Ginjo have made only slight gains; the human worlds grow weary of war, of the bloody, inconclusive swing from victory to defeat. The fearsome cymeks, led by Agamemnon, hatch new plots to regain their lost power from Omnius--as their numbers dwindle and time begins to run out. The fighters of Ginaz, led by Jool Noret, forge themselves into an elite warrior class, a weapon against the machine-dominated worlds. Aurelius Venport and Norma Cenva are on the verge of the most important discovery in human history--a way to "fold" space and travel instantaneously to any place in the galaxy. And on the faraway, nearly worthless planet of Arrakis, Selim Wormrider and his band of outlaws take the first steps to making themselves the feared fighters who will change the course of history: the Fremen. Here is the unrivaled imaginative power that has put Brian Herbert and Kevin Anderson on bestseller lists everywhere and earned them the high regard of readers around the globe. The fantastic saga of Dune continues in Dune: The Machine Crusade.

Book Information

Series: Dune (Book 2)

Audio CD

Publisher: Macmillan Audio; Unabridged edition (September 16, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1559279451

ISBN-13: 978-1559279451

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 2.7 x 5.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (178 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,347,803 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #687 in Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction #807 in Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy #2593 in Books > Books on CD > General

Customer Reviews

Most people who read these prequels are most likely acquainted with the original works of Dune by Brian's father Frank. And if you aren't yet familiar with the originals then I suggest you start your reading there where it was originally meant to be. As it is, the prequels--started with the three "House" books and later moving back 10,000 years to the Butlerian Jihad--are sad little shades of Frank Herbert's visions. As Dune fans know, the Machine Crusade is the second book of a trilogy about a war between people and machines. Cliche? Very! That is why Frank Herbert began his Dune novels 10,000 years afterwards, to show the ramifications of such a war. He moved past the cliche and developed a universe that existed without machines. Here in the Machine Crusade we see the same typical writing of Kevin J. Anderson, whose writing style has very little eloquence compared to Frank Herbert. Frank Herbert's originals are a grand mishmash of intricate plotting that combines many aspects of human society: politics, religion, philosophy, ecology and family interaction. His books were all internal; he created characters that you cared about, that took on a life of their own even when they had such minor parts in the storyline. All these points are lost in the Machine Crusade where Anderson is mostly concerned with the external conflict of the Butlerian Jihad. Think Star Wars or Terminator. Lots of fighting. Lots of dying. No plot except for yet more fighting. For anyone who has read the originals, you know that telling stories of battle was not Frank Herbert's purpose in these books. It was to tell chilling tales of tragic characters whose every move impacted all of human society.

As everyone knows by now, this isn't Dune. The first prequel wasn't nor will this one be. The problem isn't that this book doesn't match up well against Dune, it's that it doesn't match up well against its predecessor, the Butlerian Jihad, which itself was mostly solid rather than excellent. The Machine Crusade is a bit of a step backward for this series. As in Butlerian Jihad, characterization continues to be pretty shallow, with several characters once again making transitions of behavior that really haven't been earned by the story. And some characters are simply skimped on. The prequel problem of predictability due to simply filling in the design you're aiming at is more on display here than in book one, and while I can understand the need at some point for that last line (no spoilers here), making it the last line emphasizes the dangers in writing prequels--the sense your reader has that the story is being uncovered rather than growing. The plot remains the strong point, but here too it is weaker than the first book. Some of it is too contrived while some of it takes turns more for the plot's sake than for any natural development. And the structure, which remains cutting back and forth between multiple characters and plotlines, in this book does a disservice to several characters and storylines while in the first book it served to create tension and suspense.

We leave one story and when we come back to it too much has happened in the meantime that would be better shown than told or simply assumed. And I have to confess that some of the plot I just didn't get the necessity of. Some sections reinforced ideas that were pretty clear already. Some were simply repetitive, both from this book and the previous one.

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