

DUNE REVENANT

FAN FICTION

Unfinished draft 9/9/2000 by William Mitchell

Chapter 1

(20525 AG) The present inquiry of the Fish Speaker Schools has its origins in a long forgotten crisis. Knowledge of the events surrounding the millennia called the Scattering, and subsequently, the great Integration that followed is critical to understand the people of that ancient time. The discipline of the Spice Dreamers and their ability to reconstruct and disseminate the personae of “our past humanity” has provided us a tool of utmost importance. Through their efforts, we have discovered a wealth of archaeological information, a temporal strata opened to us that has allowed a reconstruction of what in ancient times would have been called “history”. Remember that Multiple Memories and Persona Shifting were not common traits of our human ancestors. This fact was among the most alarming and revolutionary of all those made by the Spice Dreamers: People’s minds were once solitary and alone.

— Sociotemprint of the Fish Speaker School Idah-Mirabla

Thunhun stood alone at a podium facing a crowd that filled the Great Hall to capacity. The hall held over a million people, which made it the perfect meeting place for the First Millennial Celebration of the founding of the Fish Speaker Schools, but this is not what held Thunhun’s interest.

I stand before a million Individuals, but my thoughts are on the design of this place.

The design of the Great Hall of the Idah-Mirabla School was influenced by the original Temple to St. Alia of the Knife. Although Rakis had been destroyed some two thousand years before, the blueprint of the temple had been saved in a ridulian crystal.

Legend says recorded by the Tyrant God Guldur himself. Guldur must have cherished the design himself, the sweeping bow of the thousand meter outer wall leading to the “knife”, a thousand-meter spire rising above.

Thunhun called him by the common name of Guldur, although, as an historian, he knew the Tyrant God’s name was actually Leto II. This thought out of time pleased Thunhun, and calmed him as he prepared to speak.

The Temple to St. Alia was chosen for size, although several structures on various Fish Speaker worlds would have sufficed. All the major schools were convening here on the planet Ouadra, however, for its rich history dating back to the first dozen Fish Speaker Schools. Known in ancient times as Chapterhouse, Ouadra was home of the Idah-Mirabla School, the school Thunhun acted as chosen representative for during these celebrations. Hundreds of events surrounded the Millennial Celebrations, each suited to the quasi-familial roles and goal-groups the various schools were founded on, as well as lectures to be given by representatives of each of the Fish Speaker Schools. Thunhun looked across at the banners of the various groups and listed them off to himself, once again to calm his nerves as the roar of the shuffling crowd calmed in preparation for his lecture.

Harkon-Mohia, Chani-Tej, Hallac-Ouadra, even members of Hayt-Scytl abandoned their isolationist views for these events.

Some discussions were specialized for smaller interest groups, while several dozen speakers were to address the entire assembly, all over the course of several stand. The sponsor-card read the title of his lecture to all those who entered the hall:

“Spice Dreaming as a Technique of Historical Archaeology”
Idah-Mirabla Fish Speaker School
presented by Thunhun Idahu ibn al’Idah-Mirabla
Sociotemprint Archaeologist

As he began, sometime after the movements settled, gradually entering into what for Thunhun mark a lifetime achievement, his eyes fixed upon the prismatic colors of the Sun-Sweep Window calendar at the far end of the hall.

I look into the pathways of light in this ancient calendar, as I take steps to undo what we all know as Time.

The crowd of nearly a million reached an eerie silence, and Thunhun began.

“We are assembled here in reverence to the accomplishments of that thousand years of progress historically called the Integration. Before our ancestral schools were formed, in those ages when the Scattering was ended and the Returning commenced, a great overcoming took place. Today we stand here as a testament to both the irreconcilable uniqueness of our individual Schools as well as our ability to retain the Individual amidst such an Integration. We are in agreement that the archaic concept of ‘humanity’, although of only minor significance to Individual life, once was a rallying word for pre-Integration beings.

While Persona Shifting and Multiple Memories have become common traits among Individuals in all the major Schools, the question of how these changes came about has long remained a mystery. The origins of the Fish Speaker Schools are shrouded in the lost ancient histories, but a recent historical archaeological technique, Spice Dreaming, has uncovered keys to this lost past. In much the same way that Guild Navigators once folded space as a means of space travel, the Spice Dreamers have learned to fold consciousness as a means of time travel.

We are a people riddled by questions. How have we acquired the variety of Schools we know today? What is our origin? Different Schools approach this knowledge differently. Our common mythos is open to interpretations. Tleilaxu Originary Evo-Theory. Bene Gesserit Mytho-Geneticism. We stand ready for a new approach to the trace of truth. I have taken the liberty of presenting a series of Spice Dream discovered temprints from the dawn of the Integration and the dawn of our very Fish Speaker Schools. Know that the seeds of the Integration were sown out of the conflicts beginning with the merging of two great but warring schools, the Bene Gesserit and their rivals, the Honored Matres.”

Thunhun explained the details of the process of the Spice Dream. The individual conduit ingested Synthspice to broaden the band of consciousness. Although most Individuals possessed Multiple Memories and could share Personas passed on within a School’s line, the technique of a consensual vision had only recently been discovered. The process of the Spice Dream allowed a number of people to experience an actual historical moment by a

dilation of the fabric of consciousness.

Thunhun glossed over the space-time figures, simplifying the idea as a cross between the ability to foldspace and the techniques of Duncan's Net. This consensual hallucination allowed history to be re-experienced, as easily as reading a history book had been ten millennia ago.

Thunhun paused as he was joined at the podium by a young conduit named Yanima from the Noree-Ampre School.

The Noree-Ampre school maintained a strong backbreeding with the original Ixian genepool that had been in fashion these days, which also suited the schools members to the technical expertise of large-scale Spice Dreaming. Anyone could learn to fold the consciousness of a few proximate people, but there were a lot of threads to track and a level of discretion to drop insignificant threads that required a Spice Dreamer with the Ixian background to manage such a large event. As Yanima prepared for the trance, Thunhun prepared the assembled crowd to receive the dream.

Within moments the place and the moment began to fade from Thunhun's thoughts, and like the mundane dreams it was named for, the Spice Dream began to work upon his consciousness, and the consciousness of the assembly.

We can never experience the Spice Dream of another, yet we know they all coincide within the intents of the Spice Dreamer.

As Yanima continued the process, folding consciousness, turning back the moments both from physical and psychical evidences, the million assembled Individuals began to share the historical hallucination, each thought woven to the fabric of the desired target. Thunhun's last thoughts before the dream were on Yanima, who was an alphaline bred direct from Hwi Noree herself, her silhouette cutting the light from the Sun-Sweep Window.

She is as beautiful as was the consort of God.

And then they were transported...

The ghola Paul Atreides was alone in the courtyard when Miles Teg entered. The boy looked around, quite aware that his progress was being watched from above by perhaps Sheeana or one of the other sisters. Paul was right of course, Sheeana and Duncan Idaho were awaiting the practice session in order to monitor his progress. Duncan was outraged, and he said so to Sheeana.

"What is the purpose of all this, Sheeana?"

"Don't go there, Duncan, we both know things are at work around us that are larger than your discomfort at training Paul."

She always calls him Paul, never 'the ghola'. When I was young, mother Swanugyu had always referred to me as 'the ghola', never as Duncan. But Sheeana is no longer Bene Gesserit.

He watched the pair in combat training below, and Sheeana turned up the listening device to eavesdrop. Paul was angry.

"Where is Duncan? Isn't he going to be teaching me to use plasma weapons?"

'Where is Duncan?' I remember when the original Paul used to request my company,

while I watched on with his father, Duke Leto. So many lives and I've returned to this.

As Sheeana spoke to Duncan and watched Paul and Miles training below, she realized that the concept of ghola never seemed natural to a Bene Gesserit, even though they had manipulated genetic lines for so many millennia. They always allowed a natural birth from two parents. The idea of genetics engineering shared the disapproval that computers gained after the Bulterian Jihad, the technology around the field forbidden by its edicts included computerized biotechnology. Only the Bene Tleilax practiced it, and they always denied they did, while the Bene Gesserit used conventional breeding. But it was now the second generation of Bene Gesserit sisters that were comfortable with the use of Tleilaxu axlotl tanks for custom growing gholas. Not only had they produced their own successful Duncan Idaho, but they had also surpassed all when they produced a young Miles Teg. The next project seemed inevitable, overseen by Sheeana and her band of renegade sisters. The creation of a ghola unlike any ghola project preceding it, they would bring back to life the strangest attractor of the ancient world, they would create a ghola of Paul Atreides.

Paul cried out as Miles landed a blow.

"Alright, lad, that's enough hand-to-hand for today, let's move on to those plasma weapons you spoke of earlier." Miles glanced up at the observation window, and both Duncan and Sheeana knew what his face told.

Paul's reactions are too slow to survive. He is a relic of a past age.

Duncan gazed out at Paul, and sensed the strange feeling that everything he did was being watched by some unknown observer...

The Spice Dream receded. The assembly's mummings grew as they awaited Thunhun's response. As the din of conversation rose in the Great Hall, Yanima gave a knowing look to Thunhun as she left the sceneum.

Her eyes tell me that she thinks they're pleased with the demonstration. But will they believe the truths behind what their consciousness has just experienced, for all of our sakes?

"What we have revealed is a key in the proof for once and for all that there truly lived a man named Paul Atreides. The evidence before us is obvious. Why would the memories lie? Many have claimed that the very idea of a Kwitsatz Haderach was a myth constructed by the Master Face Dancers, somehow interwoven within our very cellular memories. I offer this memory as proof that Paul Atreides did exist. Why create a twice fallen god? The historical Law of Least Probability demonstrates that it would be absurd to create such a wild story where an imaginary man-god is fabricated and then reconstructed as a ghola who is less than his origin is such a bizarre tale that it must be true."

A voice from the crowd sounded, "Of course you are familiar with the idea of Ghola Degradation Theory." Thunhun explained that Ghola Degradation would not be an issue as the dynamics of Spice Dreaming would still be fixed in a true psychological moment from the past. As soon as this question was answered, another arose, continuing to counter the Spice Dreamer findings. Thunhun half listened as he watched the Sun-Sweep Window and thought of the fact that it was a representation of all ancient calendars up until its creation. When the voice was finished, Thunhun resumed his findings, letting the light paths from that grand window somehow focus and guide him.

The lecture continued for some time. After the flood of questions and personal greetings, some hours later, Thunhun found himself alone in the cloisters of his chambers. He reclined back into the chair where he had done most of his research. As a historian of the era that produced the Integration, Thunhun infrequently found himself alone these days, the increased interest in Integration origins were due to the Millennial Celebrations. Even the Spice Dreaming could be done alone, but it was much more vivid to have multiple dreamers reconstructing a memory or a scene from the ancient past. Yanima would be along soon enough, with a few other of the students of the Idah-Mirabla school. Thunhun would get back to the Tleilaxu memories, which were where his current priorities lay.

The Tleilaxu memories are not history, they are the key to all of our futures.

Thunhun had a strong backbreeding to the original children of Duncan and Murbella, and although the practice of Duncan gholas continued up until two hundred years before, the Idah-Mirabla school kept to the actual offspring, unlike the solipsistic Hayt-Idaho school, that crossbred in with subsequent Duncan gholas. Idah-Mirabla was more like a family than a school, a relic preserved from its founders. Thunhun himself was one of three gholas born on the same day, although rarely interacted with his two twin “brothers.” As an historian, his focus had always been in the past. Thunhun had perfected the technique of multiple Spice Dreamers reconstructing the same historical moment in a revolutionary way. Each Spice Dreamer became responsible for the thread of a single character in a past moment, and as the long dead personas interacted through the dream, each dreamer kept a tight hold on his assigned persona. Some target moments even had auxiliary Spice Dreamers focusing on interpersona communication or even collective subtexts. This way, more internal detail could be obtained and the scenes came across with a greater resolution of internal dialogue and stray thoughts that were historian’s bread and butter.

His thoughts wandered back to a Spice Dream he had constructed a dozen times before, to a time that he felt had an historical poetry about it. The present faded, and Thunhun heard the years recede with a sound he always likened to the wind rushing through the reeds from his childhood. The association pleased him, and over the years he had nurtured it, so the hours spent in his small boat on that river by his childhood home were never lost. Soon there was no room in his consciousness for anything other than the Spice Dream, and the dilation of time brought him back to the time soon after the destruction of the original Rakis.

His target was a no-ship in search of a home...

Sheeana emerged from the no-ship with a sense of wonder and completion as her feet touched the sand of this new world. *A desert*, she thought, although other voices whispered, “for the taking” — she turned her thoughts to the stream of responsibilities that were to follow. She had no precedent to guide her, only an adherence to Bene Gesserit tradition that must hold where all other traditions had unraveled. She was the tradition now; what had been was one thing, but what lay ahead for her and those who followed her was quite something else.

The planet had five moons; Sheeana liked this fact the moment Duncan had reported it upon the discovery of the planet by the no-ships sensors. She had already rejected perma-

nent settling of another world they had stopped on, a cooler world in comparison, much more temperate, much like Chapterhouse. They had nicknamed this first world Stopover, and this world further resembled Chapterhouse in that it had no moon.

We even chose to remove that detail. Too much romance in a moon for the homeworld of a sisterhood that forbade even music.

Sheeana needed a world with at least one moon. “We are building a new mythology,” she had said to Duncan. Stopover proved its namesake accurate, and within a month they returned to their no-ship — leaving their moonless haven for the void of foldspace.

Time passed. Scytale paced his cell pondering the cells within his nullentropy tube. The sandworms rumbled in the converted cargo hold. Sheeana worked with her fellow renegade sisters in private sessions. The Duncan awoke one night soon after a nightmare vision, he saw a ghostlike Dune returned, and was overcome with the feeling that this was a gauntlet that humanity could not surpass by simple destruction of the world. He saw Fremens there, and Muad'Dib was there, inviting him, warning him. He told Sheeana that it was an oracular dream, but it was not the future he saw, not a prescient vision. He had failed to explain it more.

“I don't see the future,” Duncan insisted, and his emphasis on that final world somehow was a clue to Sheeana of what he did see. “Things simply appear in the net of my extended awareness. They must not be thought of as visions of the future.” Sheeana knew Duncan's Mentat training often hindered his ability to be a mystic. Her suggestion to him came out in one word:

“Zensunni.”

One of Duncan's past incarnations had been as a Zensunni philosopher, a Tleilaxu gift/joke to the Tyrant. That persona emerged and the words began to form in Duncan's mind.

“There is something of Dune that lives after its death. Perhaps our sandworm cargo carries it, pearls of Leto's awareness. Perhaps you carry it yourself, Sheeana.” He paused, and Sheeana waited on his next words, “What I see defies the temporal, a disembodied spirit of a shattered world. This Dune Revenant wanders as we wander, it seeks a world to haunt as we seek one to inhabit. Restless as we are restless.” Sheeana noticed he had a looking in his eyes that in his half-trance he chose not to hide.

He's gazing into his Net, seeing what has been caught up in it. Duncan is our fisherman. Yet we fish for a new Dune.

Two weeks after departing moonless Stopover, they found the five-mooned world. Idaho taxed his abilities to see within his oracular net, until the world had been discovered, tangled within its mesh. He found the world there as he had found so many things. He had added lists of weapons, languages, and skills acquired out of thin air to the archive on the no-ships computer. A mechanical no-ship detector was the first project he wanted to begin work on, as soon as time and resources would allow it.

“Teg can see the no-ships, Duncan had warned Sheeana, and he knew the Bashar would protect the whereabouts of this five mooned world and their no-ship.

Much of the planet was already desert. Sheeana circled the no-ship that first time herself, the air was dry and hot. A dustwind kicked up, and her nostrils registered the possibility of sandworm adaptation. The dustwind carried the telltale signs of a sandstorm, not a fierce one, but on its way nonetheless from a desert sea to the south.

She marveled at this desert world. The planet's sun was of a slightly hotter class than

the sun of Rakis had been. She turned to a pair of sisters that had also emerged from the ship — Sheeana took a handscreen itinerary from one of them — list of the attributes of the planet appeared electronically. “We’ll need stillsuits for sure, and equipment to construct our first shelters. From there we’ll manufacture the rest.” Sheeana returned to the screen. Hotter sun, and the planet was a notch too close, making for a quicker year.

That could quicken the sandtrout cycle.

Longer days and nights were the result of a slower planetary rotation, 16-hour days/ 16-hour nights at the equinox. The planet’s large size and mass resulted in a gravity slightly greater than that of Rakis.

This world will produce strong limbed children, if we can acclimate to the heat.

Duncan emerged from the no-ship with quickness in his step, “Sheeana, the temporary weather probe we left in orbit has downloaded its first datafeed. We should stay inside for noontime temperatures are going to get up there. It’ll be too hot to leave the no-ship. In fact, we’ll probably have to shutdown all non-essential systems or we’ll all cook inside. The ships skin temperature will tax the air temperature regulators as it is.”

Our first hardships so soon. This must be the planet.

Thunhun’s consciousness emerged from the Spice Dream as Sheeana respoke those words. He remembered another time, ten years past their first arrival, when Sheeana thought those words again. Thunhun contracted the moments, and he was back on the river, rushing toward the moment he desired...

“This must be the world to make us Fremmen again.” It was the voice of Odrade that spoke to Sheeana from other memory. Sheeana recalled the day the first arrived on new Dune, the day they landed ten years before. She remembered that day with a clarity that only a Reverend Mother could learn to master. She had realized that this was the planet, and recalled an inner conversation she had had with Odrade about what to do next: “So many things to do, Dar.” Sheeana had stopped herself before awakening Odrade’s inner persona on that first arrival day. Recently, however, the voice of Darwi Odrade was a constant companion. These days, Sheeana often allowed the inner voices to respond. Her fate was to change as only one other had in all of history, and she allowed a certain freedom for the other voices. The plans had been set in motion that day ten years ago — deployment of the sandworms from the cargo hold, assignation of duties, construction of dwellings assigned to those sisters, stillsuit manufacture assigned these sisters, all modifications overseen by Duncan.

“*We are to be Fremmen again.*” Sheeana allowed Dar the response. What a romantic the former Reverend Mother Superior had hidden from all of us (not as well as she had hidden Sea-Child, though). These tides from a decade past still held sway over Sheeana — Odrade had even helped her in the naming of the five moons. How mythic a position to find oneself in. More than any artist could imagine. How will these moons lend themselves in our challenge? Naming the moons had been instinctive. Sheeana recalled the conversation with Duncan: “These moons deserve Fremmen names,” she had spoken it to him on a rare night when all five moons were visible in the sky. They had been out in the night desert on a long-term test of the new stillsuits deep desert adaptations Duncan had made. They had been crossing an elevated ridge that would also allow them a view of

the open bled — to allow them to mark the progress of the sandworm adaptation. They adopted the most ancient arrhythmic Fremen step — which triggered for Sheeana a root of deeper rhythms, her dance of Shai-Hulud.

With time the moons acquired names: L-gaib (the outer world), L-Akrab (the scorpion), L-Katib (the writer), Sihaya (desert springtime), L-Sayal (the rain of sand). The name of the planet had been more difficult. Arrakis, as the ancients called it, itself was named from the Fremen word araq, which means “sweat.” The name *Dune* began to stick here, especially among the younger sisters upon awakening of other memories. Once the presence of ancient Arrakis was available to them the name would emerge. “How much hotter Dune seems than ancient Arrakis,” or “Dune revives the clarity of the Fremen in the Desert.” Sheeana recalled how Duncan insisted on calling the planet Dune, since his vision of the Dune Revenant before their arrival. That night on the high ridge they discussed the reports of the Returning of the Master Face Dancers to the Old Empire. Sheeana told him they were searching out known desert worlds. “So they want to destroy this Dune as well, do they.” Duncan referred to one report that came from Chapterhouse, Murbella had her hands full. Sheeana had asked, “Why do you insist on calling this world Dune?” Duncan returned a smile as he surveyed the night bled, “As these moons are my witness, I know one simple truth. The revenant from my vision has found a home haunt: this planet is now Dune.”

The Spice Dream subsided. Exhausted from the days events, and the emotional twists and turns that accompanied the evocation of such uncharted and ancient memories, Thunhun recalled something Yanima always said to him when he overworked himself

“Do you still remember how to have normal dreams? I’ll give you a clue, it has a lot to do with going to sleep.”

He had met Yanima during a student retreat, where several members from various Fish Speaker Schools met to exchange ideas. Duinain had been up for several days, wanting to push himself and apply Spice Dreaming to his pursuit of history.

The Spice Dreams will have to wait until tomorrow.

Later that night, Ouadra’s streets and stoas hummed with the activities of the Millennial Celebration. Thunhun tossed and turned for several hours of restless sleep. His eyes darted below closed lids, his arms and legs trashed. Suddenly, Thunhun awoke from his nightmare. Wet with the water of fear he recalled the dream.

The Temple to Saint Alia of the Knife.

He stood in the Temple plaza at mid-day, but he was not on Ouadra. Was he on Dune? The smell of spice coffee distracted him from the scene, with the Melange smell he knew only from his Spice Dreamed memories. This contradiction confused him for a lucid moment within the dream, and out of the corner of his eye he caught the glimpse of a hooded blind man. Then the sudden crash of broken glass. Distant. From far above. He looked to see the Sun-Sweep Window shattering outward, as a woman’s body leapt through it and fell towards the ground a half thousand meters below. For several slowed seconds that lasted an eternity he watched the woman fall.

He woke violently upon recognizing the woman as St. Alia, as she crashed onto the steps before him.

Chapter 2

The millennial celebration of the Fish Speaker Schools comes at a time when GIOAD has been true to the maxims of Integral Economics for over 500 years. That GIOAD incorporates the breadth and width of our universe's wide variety of xenocultural and exeziant needs was something that the ancients could never imagine. Archaic proto-economics, like capitalism and communism, were still present as far back as CHOAM, trying to check and balance the power they held. Being grounded in Integral Economics, GIOAD is no longer bound by questions of politics. Without such a system, we would expand to a critical mass that would mean our mutual destruction. We surrender all power unconditionally, so our success is the universe's success: measured in processes, not goals.

— GIOAD progressive philosophy

The meeting of the directors of GIOAD was not scheduled for another three demicycles, so an emergency annex meeting had been established unanimously by remote. The Guild Ixian Omni Asymulant Directorship had existed in name for several centuries. The edicts upon which Ixian Guild alliances were coded, however, spanned millennia back to the time of the God Tyrant, and the precedent of Ixian Guild cooperation and collusion could be found in the mythic stories of Muad'Dib. GIOAD directors included representatives from the major Guild enclaves as well as high exposure Ixian technocrats, cybimech theorists, and parliamentary integral economists.

Yeshika Ampre was the technocrat imperator of Ix, and it was her role to begin the GIOAD proceedings. Bred through the Noree-Ampre School from the same breeding process that produced Hwi Noree, Yeshika and her twin Yanima represented a style of Noree-Ampre breeding that stressed the undoing of the ancient male gender bias in technological creation. Hwi Noree, who wedded the God Tyrant himself, began to symbolize the issue that the male urge to create was often externalized and almost never had the grace of biological creation. The Noree-Ampre School stressed that female Ixians had an intrinsic understanding of the biological bias, and technology created by their School was not bound to the male overcoming of the creative urge. As females had once continued the species, their machines need not reflect such an unthinking reaction, so the cybimech theorists would pronounce. Yeshika reflected on these roles as she approached the small orbit-to-surface pod that would transport her to the parliament hall.

Although the meetings could be attended remotely via holo-imaging, a tradition of physical presence of the directors along ensured a high level of attention and importance that all GIOAD meetings demanded. Yeshika passed into the atmosphere of Ix from her residence on the artificial Ring encircling Ix in orbit. The Ixian home ward echoed much of the technological architecture they had introduced on Old Gammu, known to mythology as Giedi Prime. The tales of the world of Baron Harkonnen marked that world as an achievement of technology gone mad. The surface of Ix was encapsulated in an exoskin,

an armor of their techno-civilization, that the Ixians had always been known and feared for. Yeshika recalled the Ixian credo: Nothing exists that cannot be improved upon.

In the days of the Old Empire they had been kept in check, but the Ixians had undergone a renaissance during the time of the God Tyrant. The fact that the myths spoke of their machines as amusements for the God Tyrant, as did the gholas of the Tleilaxu, and His leniency towards them, caused the Ixians to flourish.

We have truly transformed Technology into Art.

Yeshika descended towards the surface, the city of Richese, named in honor of the sacrificed fabrication world, destroyed during the bloodshed of the Returning. Richese was a symbol of the age of Integral Economics. The city was no longer spires of glasteel that could only be compared to the rank and file phalanx as was common during the Scattering. The Integration years had witnessed a redesign of fundamental concepts in architecture. The decentralization of Ixian urban systems were cross-planet arranged by an equation of functionality, aesthetics and metamorphosis that could only be compared to non-Euclidean geometry. This bizarre aesthetic had become common to the Ixians — but it was the same strangeness that kept off-worlders away from Ix. Visually maddening, visitors were unable to reference such a groundless contrast of space and matter. Ixians themselves found other worlds equally unpleasant, with the effects of claustrophobia lessened by implants when they did leave Ix.

Yeshika stepped across the portal and onto the transport to the Richesean Bureaupalace. She passed several Guildsmen in their spicetanks as she entered the building.

We have always been the perfect companions to the Guildsman. To bend space and time they exchanged the static view of 'human', in the same way we have done with implants. We were the first to Integrate with our environment; we turned our dependence on device into a philosophy of enhancement.

The directors were prepared for the moment of her arrival. Yeshika began in the convoluted style of address that was the practice on Ix; formal grammars governed by a linguistic calculus that was best suited for technical descriptions.

Not a spoon for just any mouth.

She advanced to the crisis at hand. "I need not understate the locus of our situational roles. The verification of The Ones With Many Faces as an epidemic transformation of the Master Face Dancers is evident from all reports. What Individual reports need addressing?"

Eahrch spoke first, his Synthspice body mutated by the El-Edrich School's tradition, squirming within his spice-tank. "The Ones With Many Faces see the Dune Revenant, however, they are no closer than we at discovering if the planet ever existed. All histories show there was never a second Dune. Yet that is what they seek."

Almek, a cybernetic space-folder, shifted while Eahrch spoke, but said nothing. Eahrch had ancient roots as a descendant of the Edrichs, who had known Muad'Dib, back in the age when Guild navigators were rated by the stage of hyperspatial specificity. Almek, however, was truly a product of the Integration, folding space by means of internal Ixian machines. He was of a School whose motto was *Let History be Forgotten*.

Almek piped in with his standard argument line, “The age of spice is over, we now fold space with biomechanics. Our goal should be to continue along the path that we began over a thousand years ago. I speak to the utter reversal of the edicts of the Bulterian Jihad.” Almek spoke of the spacefolding implants, which could not only think, but were actually able to dream the spice trance that allowed the possibilities of spacefolding.

Edrich could not help himself. “Find Dune Revenant and the True Spice, and the ancient ways shall return.”

Yeshika, detected their interaction and interjected, “We must allow ourselves to put aside the ambitions of the enclaves or the Ixian assemblage and act as one in this matter.” Yeshika motioned to Nro Pathay as she continued, “for that reason we should proceed according to the algorithms of the generalists.” Nro grimaced at this request, Yeshika purposefully excluding his extremist algorithms, which often worked outside of integral economic limits. The generalist algorithms had enabled Ix and the Guild an alternative to politic in the Integration, but it did ensure GIOAD’s place in the economy of the universe. The extremist algorithms that Nro Pathay and his line had theorized sought to use the resources available to GIOAD to reverse the nature of the Integration in a politico-military manner. Some saw them as Ixian nationalists that sought a New Empire, in spite of all the calculations that proved lack of real stability in all empires.

Before he could submit his objection, Yeshika added, “We wouldn’t want to undo the stability that GIOAD needs to continue the known worlds along the path of integration. Our intentions should continue as they always have, especially in safeguarding our knowledge of Sheeana’s Path and Dune Revenant from the Master Face Dancers.”

Yours is the road to failure for all of us.

Yeshika continued, “The location of Dune Revenant and the outcome of that phase of our history is unknown to even those of our rank. The ancient history tells that Jytha Ampre, my ancestor, aided by the Duncan and his revelations, folded Dune Revenant outside of our space, by means of an encrypted phase shift, forever placing the planet and its moons outside of our universe. The final fate of Sheeana, Duncan, and Scytale were never revisited.”

Nro Pathay chose this moment to strike. “As an Ixian delegate, I attended a fascinating lecture during the Millennial Celebrations on Ouadra on this very subject. Many of those gathered took exceptional interest in the visitations that your sister Yanima allows the universe to view via her Spice Dreams. Some talk about the truth of the gholia Paul, and the fate of Sheeana seems to be ignored. I wonder how the Master Face Dancers are regarding all of this.”

The fact that Yanima had chosen the life of a scholar often found its way into criticisms of Yeshika’s rule as Technocrat Imperitor of Ix. Yanima’s interest in questions of ancient history was something with Yeshika had never concerned herself.

History always seemed more like fetish, but Yanima never saw it that way. If Yanima could see that, she would be sitting here on the Ixian Consul. Ix was all about fetish.

Yeshika answered Nro calmly, “The Master Face Dancers are not our only concern. The implications of the Ones With Many Faces seem to outweigh even their benign pester-

ing.”

Nro rebutted, “Could we run numbers to predict how many of the million present on Ouadra were in fact Master Face Dancer spies? Wouldn’t it serve in our best interests to offer the Master Face Dancers the encryption key to the Dune Revenant? Could we not ally ourselves with one enemy to ward off another that is far greater?”

Does he admit to collaboration? He must be watched constantly!

Yeshika calmed herself and added, “Your solution is noted, however, the consul is in need of your functions as generalist. As you know, our initial inquiry and project confirm an 88 percent probability of Sheeana sharing the God Tyrant’s dream of becoming a sandworm, a 31 percent probability of her transforming several of her renegade sisters as well. Our final analysis I have personally compiled, and it is perhaps the most shocking: A 19 percent chance that Sheeana herself, as a sandworm, is still alive today on Dune Revenant, folded away from our universe. The question should not be whether we should inform the Master Face Dancers of her presence — rather, we should wonder what she has been planning for them, and for all of us, for the past 2000 years!”

Chapter 3

To describe the transformation of the Bene Tleilaxu defies the limits of the knowledge of an individual being. The ancient caste systems produced its masters and slaves. However, when the mule slaves perfected their face dancing over the millennia, they evolved into something quite different and unexpected. Just as Scytale had transformed over successive iterations from mule to Mastif, so did these Master Face Dancers transcend the role given to them by the Old Masters. What was the final outcome? The Ones With Many Faces. Many wish to approach The Ones With Many Faces, as one would approach a stranger when visiting a new land, and ask them, "How did you get to be this way?" Does one ask the moth how it changed from a caterpillar? The answer is forgotten in the cocoon. And the empty husk is the only witness to the fact.

— from the Chani-Tej School

Yanima, and a half dozen other Spice Dreamers, entered Thunhun's chamber in the historical hall of Ouadra. The planet was once the seat of the first combined sisterhoods of Bene Gesserit and Honored Matres during the Returning over 1000 years before. Now it was a Fish Speaker School planet, with various colleges from across the universe. Idah-Mirabla had secured the actual Bene Gesserit grand hall as they traced their origins back to Murbella, one of a dozen icons of the Integration that would prove to make the word 'humanity' no longer collectively inclusive of the universes of myriad beings.

"What are you doing alone?"

"Getting prepared for the Tleilaxu reconstruction." Thunhun didn't face them. He paused and then asked, "How was the Sociotemprint received?"

"The consensorium report as of moments ago was that Paul was a myth constructed by the Master Face Dancers several hundred years ago in conjunction with their transformation plans to become the Ones With Many Faces."

"Why will people always fall back on conspiracy theories?" Thunhun was silent for a moment.

No one plans mistakes like Paul, or would ever construct a story like the Paul ghola incident. And no one, not even the Masters, plan their own evolution.

Thunhun spoke his next phrase out loud. "Things just happen." Yanima and her fellow Spice Dreamers had made themselves comfortable around the room.

"Should we get started? Some of us have other things to do besides muddle through the past."

They began. Thunhun guided the moment as consciousness folded. As the dream began to focus, Scytale came into view...

It was several years before the target time, and Scytale overlooked the axlotl tanks. Ten years ago he had been a captive of the No-Ship with Duncan Idaho. After the destruction of Bene Tleilax by the Honored Matres, Scytale had been the sole survivor of the elite core of that society.

How hive-like we've become — our Way had made it necessary. Tleilaxu Masters, Face Dancers, the axlotl tanks — Now, a hive unlike any hive returns from the Scattering.

It was Scytale's voice.

Thunhun caused time to surge forward with a peristaltic gesture, ahead to the target time, after the Tleilaxu masters had first emerged from Scytale's nullentropy tube...

Scytale stood before the reanimated Tleilaxu Masters. Their motives had been awakened according to the old methods, bringing back their history and memories. However, the purpose of this briefing was to bring the council up to date since their destruction.

Destruction by the Honored Matres will be nothing compared to what we face now. We face our very extinction by our own creation.

The reconvening had a ritual about it, a familiarity brought about by millennia of repetition. Each member of the council had experienced a thousand deaths and rebirths, but never had all perished at once.

If not for the nullentropy tube, which held all the vital genetic data, we would be lost, and I would be the last.

Still, the event seemed mundane and routine, the role of each reanimated Master snapping into place as if it had been pre-programmed to unfold at this given moment.

"Sheeana is our first concern," Scytale launched into his itinerary. "She is in communication with the consciousness of the God Emperor that is within each sandworm."

Nuahul spoke first. "We realize the powindah woman's gift is from the God Emperor himself. Why should she be a concern of ours? Since we have given her the Muad'Dib cells, and she has given us this moon, our Neo-Tleilax, in exchange, our dealings have been standard as they have with all Bene Gesserit for the past century. What is your concern?"

Scytale's face twisted and he spoke. "I had been their captive, and believe me, she has something planned. We need to watch this powindah bitch. We must act from caution."

Xiatl offered a compromise. "I motion to have a ghola grown from the cells that you have gathered from her, Scytale, then we can proceed with psycho-biotic testing and axlotl trait titration." Scytale sighed with compliance. It was true they could infer her motives and study her gholas reactions, but they would not have enough time.

Whatever Sheeana was up to, she had to be in the advanced stages of any plan already whose course she would be following.

Scytale inhaled before he continued with his agenda. "As you all now know, in your absence the newest Duncan ghola has exceeded all expectations: He Who Knew God has acquired the multives similar to ours. He has shown resistance to the whistle language which we embedded in him."

Atlell, who originally developed the idea of the multilived council 5000 years earlier, rose to attention. "I suggest that we allocate a number of mules to begin a multilive breeding matrix for a future program."

Nuahul responded after taking notice of Scytale's grimace. "It seems that Mastif Scytale has lost some of the Bene Tleilaxu faith during his time among the powindah. Do you forget, Mastif Scytale, that the Tleilaxu faith was built upon patience, foresight, and initiative?"

"I do not forget, but does Mastif Nuahul not heed the old adage, 'Plan while the enemy

wakes, act while the enemy sleeps'? Would you have us caught in a research project when our enemies strike?"

"Take no offence Mastif Scytale, I merely note that we may act and plan."

Scytale nodded to him and continued with his third issue. "Lastly, we have another unsuspected result from the Teg ghola. I hope those of you not involved with this research have all reviewed the dataseed on his excellerated enhancements brought on by the T-probe."

Several of the Mastif whispered among themselves as they took interest, but it was Xiatl who piped in a response. "We have already adapted several of the excelgro axlotl tanks with a T-probe modification. So modified, we are continuing to maximize the throughput of our axlotl tanks. The first mules were born out of this technology today, and the results are as you would expect. These mules are faster and stronger than ever, and we have managed to have a greater control over pre-bred specialization limits and maximum life span. I'm sending this first batch down to the surface to continue work on the Holy Sietch."

We face extinction so soon after our rebirth, and they think of gholas and mules.

Scytale concluded, "Remember, my brethren, it is not enough to be satisfied with the ends of endeavors. For the means of our arrival their has always been what has defined the Tleilaxu Way."

And it is here that we discover the ends of what it means to be Tleilaxu...

Yanima emerged first and waited for the others to return from the dream. When they had all returned, the other Spice Dreamers said their good-byes and left Thunhun's chamber. Yanima reflected about the quickness and silence with which they departed.

Never much to say to each other after a Spice Dream. It is the reliving that speaks to us and eliminates the need for reflection.

Yanima watched the others as they lingered in the final moments of the Spice Dream. She watched Thunhun as he began to emerge. They had met because they shared an interest in the past. During an age of thought sharing, the concept of what came before

Thunhun followed them on the way out with his eyes and said, "You know, Yanima, eighty percent of all Spice Dreamers are female. It has to do with Siona-genes." He then changed the subject. "That Sociotemprint is available to all the Fish Speaker Schools, and still they doubt its importance."

"How can they argue otherwise? Scytale himself has discussed the reanimation of Paul."

"You know the arguments: Gholas core-memory degradation, cellular mnemonic encoding — should I continue? We are two years into a real threat from the Ones With Many Faces, yet the rival schools continue to create false enemies. Their conspiracy delays action with research."

"What was Scytale's plan?"

"I haven't got much of it yet. His mind was traditionally Tleilaxu, keeping the plan hidden even from the self. The Bene Tleilaxu of that day had taken the philosophical question of language to the ultimate level of literalism. They translated language as code, that is, as that which stands between the way things are, the way they seems and the hidden ways."

“The unknowable ways,” Yanima added. “To us it seems so simple, but at the time it was revolutionary. I just don’t think they were any more revolutionary than the Bene Gesserit or the Tyrant himself.”

Thunhun stood up from his seat and walked to a window overlooking the Ouadra afternoon. “The Tleilaxu sense of praxis is revealed in their constant need to be literal, though ground their theories into practice.”

“They were the ultimate materialists.”

“Exactly why they were the specialists of the body: they had the ability to create shape shifting Face Dancers and to reanimate the dead as gholas from axlotl tanks. The ultimate code is the one grounded in the being of biological bodies: the genetic code. The long held Bene Tleilax secret is their equating the being of language with DNA, the genetic code that they call God’s Language.”

Yanima interrupted. “This was Scytale’s intention? We are all born from axlotl tanks, Thunhun, how can this be a clue to his intentions? How does any of this lead us closer to the Ones With Many Faces?”

Thunhun turned from the window to face Yanima.

“What do we know about the ancient Tleilaxu origins? They had bred themselves along a path that translates their own individual genetic code along the lines of their Zensunni beliefs that thread back through decimillenia. They had even perfected the encoding of gaps in their genetic sequence that traditionally would have no gaps. These gaps decentralized the idea of identical DNA throughout an organism. Don’t you see, this was a Zensunni trick: The entire being only has a complete genetic code, no single DNA strand is complete. The one is both empty and full. The gaps constitute concealment on the part of the Bene Tleilax ultimate motives, as the Bene Gesserit themselves were never able to decipher the Tleilaxu intentions and motives, let alone overcome the idea of breeding.”

“So are you saying the Ones With Many Faces were outside of the control of the original Tleilaxu masters?”

“By all means. I think they were even out of the control the Master Faces Dancers. From my research with Duncan memories, he first was in contact with two Master Faces Dancers, Marty and Daniel. Follow the threads from there and you’ll find that the Ones With Many Faces even took the Master Face Dancers by surprise. I just hope we are able to decipher their secret before it is too late.”

Yanima added a solemn note. “Reports from a Teg-Chiani school outward claims that we are losing as many a three worlds a day on the rim. With each world they take, the Ones With Many Faces have a new biomatter basis for further expansion.”

“Geometric expansion.” Thunhun did the math. “As the Ones With Many Faces consumed more worlds, their expansion increased in speed and in more directions. A thousand years earlier, the Honored Matres fled the Master Face Dancers for the Old Empire. Their Returning and our Integration was based on reaction from the Master Face Dancers driving us through evolution. Who knew that the Master Faces Dancers were facing a similar revolution from within their own alien civilization? The resistance to any reconstructed memories about the Master Face Dancers or the Paul gholas that came for the

other Fish Speaker Schools lay in the fact that no Master Face Dancer had ever been encountered in a thousand years.”

The theories of cellular-memory tampering emerged as a psychological explanation to this centuries old mystery: Why did they have memories of these Masters if one was never encountered?

Thunhun knew they existed. More than that, he knew that he needed to get into contact with a Master Face Dancer to learn what they knew. This would be more impossible than finding the Dune Revenant world itself, a world that he knew existed. In spite of all the reconstructed memories of Dune Revenant, the world was never found anywhere in the know universe, explained away by the Schools as gholas-degradation psychosis. Thunhun swore by Duncan’s Net that he would prove these theories wrong.

Chapter 4

In any ecosystem there exists a stratum of lifeforms whose sole existence is to provide the base for higher life forms. Were it revealed to humanity that we are as culturally meaningless as bacteria in the eyes of higher lifeforms, it would cause a mass existential anxiety and hysteria as history has never seen. If it had been otherwise, if the Golden Path of the Tyrant God had been set in perpetual motion without the need for further intervention, there would have been no need for Sheeana's race of sandworms, nor for Master Face Dancers. We shudder at the thought, but even they are only steps to a new level of being. Were we to look deep enough we would find all progress as mere building blocks to whatever else may come to pass.

— Ancient NeoTleilaxu Coda

Duncan could see them staring back from the future. First the Master Face Dancers Marty and Daniel, now these Spice Dreamers, Yanima and Thunhun.

I can't tell where they are gazing from. They are so different from us. Fish Speaker Schools! They look back to this very crucial time.

He realized the young ghola Paul was standing before him, distracting Duncan's inner gaze away from his Net. Time had gotten away from him, Paul's morning prana-bindu exercises with Rebecca had ended and now he was to train with Duncan in Mentat skills.

When did I first meet you Paul?

When Duncan first saw Paul was an experience hard to explain and harder to share. Before him stood the Paul ghola, at the same age he knew him when he trained him as the head swordmaster of Leto Atreides. These were the original memories first experienced by a man named Idaho. These memories had been the basis of all the Duncan gholas over the centuries.

Duncan decided to turn this into a different kind of lesson.

(Try reconstructing this detail, future voyeur!) "You know about Other Memories, don't you, Paul?"

"Sure, what Sheeana has taught me. When the other me was Awakened by the spice, it allowed me access to multiple-ancestral memories," Paul hesitated, as if he were to keep silent, and then blurted out, "Will I undergo the Spice Agony?"

"Not to worry about that now Paul, not to worry about becoming Muad'Dib."

"Was the moon of the destroyed Dune beautiful? Sometimes I want those memories back, just to know why I chose the shadow mouse."

Does he see the shadow mouse? Now! Zensunni.

"The feeling of déjà-vu to one with multiple-life memories at his disposal seems unimportant. Yet here we stand, Paul, swordmaster and student, Duncan and Paul, as we had stood years before."

Gods, it was 7000 years before.

Duncan thought of the oddness that this déjà-vu presented: An unimaginable feeling

that transverses permutations of being, to arrive here to him at this given time. He looked at Paul.

There is truth in this feeling.

The boy Paul looked on, and responded to Duncan's silence with the simple smile that a student gives the teacher whom he respects, but does not quite understand.

Some time later Duncan found himself alone, Paul sent off to his studies with one of Sheeana's sisters.

What did you do to us, Leto, you old Worm?

Duncan remembered the Tyrant in a way that no other could even imagine.

Gods, did I know him! How many times had he arrived for the first time before Leto in the dark? How many times had Leto tested him? How many times had he died at Leto hands? He would call me one of his Duncans! One of a series of me.

Now the Tyrant seemed to be such a one among many.

One worm, but I knew him from the point of view of many lives.

Duncan recalled Leto mentioning something of the worms to come after his death. "More Ganglia. And aware!" he would say in his basso voice. The transformation to worm had strange effects on Leto's larynx. Duncan imagined its low tones could be heard reverberating under the sand if Leto chose to.

Sheeana is in touch with this intelligence. From the first day she summoned the worms.

Sheeana had been spending more time in the desert these days.

"In preparation," she would say. In preparation for what? Duncan recalled a discussion he had with Sheeana about the Tyrant. Why she choose to explain the obvious to him suddenly: "By merging with the worm, Leto extended their awareness of us. We are benefiting from the melange both directly and indirectly. It's so easy to see, Duncan."

"But given this — what is the relationship between human and worm?"

"Ah, the Mentat comes to the foreground for his question; but the computation is too quick. Try the dance next time, Duncan." *Melange never extended consciousness for the long term — it merely brought us closer to the kind of being the sandworms always had. Now that Leto has brought the possibility of a closer joining of Sandworm and Human, Sheeana hopes to seal his plan with one last calculated procedure. Symbiosis.*

With all my being I want to escape this insane situation. Return to my Murbella.

Teg entered the room, interrupting Duncan's train of thought.

"Duncan Idaho, always the pawn, even of his own thoughts." Teg smiled as he handed Duncan a vidbook.

"What's this?"

"Report from Sheeana. Scytale is up to something in the outskirts of the deep bled." Duncan looked over the ecological report from the equatorial bled as well as the southern dune sea. Sheeana reported that the sandtrout were abundant and many of the smaller worms seemed to be growing quite large.

Duncan turned the conversation to Paul.

"How is Paul's weapons training going?"

"Slowly. He's an old model, you know. A lot like you were when I trained you."

He implies that if I made it, Paul would make it. He reassures that our training is not in vain.

Teg, Rebecca, Sheeana, and Duncan himself conducted Paul's training. While Teg trained him in the Atreides tradition as weapons master and Rebecca trained him in the tradition of the Bene Gesserit, Sheeana had reserved a special type of training for herself and Duncan. Duncan would include Mentat and Zensunni training but would also bring to bear his own, unique perspective of multiple lives. Sheeana had felt that there was so little knowledge, even among Bene Gesserit, of the various skills one needed to manage all those lives. Lastly, Sheeana herself would teach Paul along the lines of his special lineage.

As Kwitsatz Haderach, as the Father of the Golden Path, as Prophet. How does one teach a uniqueness like this, unless one takes steps to continue its progress?

Teg appeared to be in his twenties, Duncan in his forties, and each had acted as the 'father' of the other, so there was a curious bond between the two that kept them together.

We've both experienced our own deaths.

"We're not quite human, Duncan, you know that." "It worries me that we aren't, and it worries me that Sheeana realizes that the 'future' of all this business lay in the hands of people like ourselves."

We have perspective that the average human does not.

"In my time as a Bashar, as a leader of men, I often looked for a quality that I had, that all my men had, and worked with them."

"What are you saying — soldiers follow a soldier, so what humanity is becoming will follow our lead? This smells of the lies that fuelled the Harkonnen's ranks to bloodshed."

All those millennia ago.

"Duncan, remember I am Atreides. I didn't fight that war, but all wars have that foul smell about them. The hardest thing for a soldier to do is not fight. We can't change the progression. You of all people should have some perspective on this."

"Leto could never break me of that perspective. And when he did, a new me, fully rebellious and loyal would emerge from my ashes."

The two looked at each other over a silent lull in the conversation. Then the moment erupted and the two laughed out loud knowingly.

"Bashar Teg, it gives me reason to live to see that the future has a good man in it."

Teg pointed to the vidbook. "Enough of this, we sound like philosophers." Teg marked out the various terrain areas where the sandworms had been active, satellite grinds that they had just implemented over the past six months, and telemetry reports from the Tleilax activity on the Nova Tleilax moon orbiting the planet. "Just too many things to keep abreast of on this damn world. Between the heat wrecking the equipment and the damned magnetic field surrounding this place, I surprised any of our machinery works."

Duncan looked up at Teg, "Miles, you know this place needed to be unique. In all the worlds we've visited, none had been able to sustain the sandworms."

"Might not be unique for long, if I can't find a way to stabilize the Ixian phasing modules in orbit."

The entire system had been successfully held out of phase with the universe of the Old

Empire in a stabilized spacefold. Teg and Duncan had developed the design from the no-ship's systems, which constantly dreamt the mathematics necessary to keep the world safe from the Master Face Dancers. But the Ixian module itself had been acquired by Teg from a brilliant Ixian by the name of Jytho Ampre.

Before I died.

As Bashar, Teg had lead an initiative to keep Ixian technology out of the hands of people from the Scattering. The deal had been made as an exchange for military services. In return, Teg acquired the Ixian technology for the Bene Gesserit.

“Hiding a small star system within a constantly fluctuating hyperspace field keeps us hidden, but it has a way of wearing out the equipment that makes it possible.”

“That’s your excuse for not keeping an eye on Scytale.” Duncan handed back the vid-book to Teg.

“Sheeana has only now alerted us. However, she has not directly intervened with Scytale’s plans. I suggest we pay Scytale a personal visit and leave the Tleilaxu presence in the deep desert to Sheeana’s worms.”

Sheeana’s worms. How close you are to the truth, Miles.

Chapter 5

History is filled with strange lessons of those who would claim to think for themselves, and those who are judged as blind followers. Is this even verifiably so? Were the followers of Muad'Dib blind to his prophesy and promise? Was the God Tyrant justified in his totalitarianism? The lesson is one that each of us must ask ourselves: to what extent am I the result of my world, and how does my every action transform the given? Persona Sharing is the gift of the Integration, for a certain veil that once existed between the members of 'history-bound humanity' has now been lifted.

— GIOAD Integral Philosophy

Sheeana worked in her studio for what might be the last time. She had set up a working space for sculpture soon after they had settled. The art form embodied her way.

And how my path differs from that of the Bene Gesserit.

A particularly good stone was quarried from the rocks that marked off the western bled. She had a portable stone cutter fabricated from the no-ship replicators, in much the same way that all their material needs had been replicated for their colony here. She had even enlisted the help of a smaller sandworm to drag the stone back to her studio.

The worms are thriving now. We have Spice again, and even a few of Rebecca's sisters have taken the Water of Life.

Sheeana had asked the young sister Laeona to arrange a meeting between Rebecca and Maia. Maia was one of the sisters who had become a Reverend Mother here on their new home. The two arrived, with Laeona, who closed the doors of Sheeana's studio as she left the three.

Rebecca spoke first, "Not many Reverend Mothers could be found to indulge in such activities."

Not that Rebecca herself was an orthodox Reverend Mother. Her father had kept alive the traditions of the Jews that dated back over twenty thousand years.

Rebecca added, "I like it."

Both meanings taken.

Maia added, "What is your inspiration?"

Sheeana stopped working, and walking toward Maia and Rebecca she turned to view her work from their perspective.

"I call the work 'Sisters'. It will be the last sculpture that I shall make."

'Sisters'. What a human word. I shall miss being one among many, but will always hold within me the meaning of its lesson.

Sheeana filled in the silence as she placed the micro-stone cutter down on her tool table.

"Each of you are deciding for yourselves how your futures will unfold."

Neither Rebecca nor Maia took anything this Reverend Mother said lightly. Sheeana went about her studio casually, putting the stone cutter attachments in their homes with-

in her toolset. This too was strategic, for the time spent waiting allowed the two Bene Gesserit sisters a moment to reflect.

These women have been my family. I must not forget this poetry that has been humanity.

Maia's first thoughts were of her dying love affair with Teg. Many Bene Gesserit would never know true love or would question whether such a thing existed. But the passion she had with Teg was just that, passion. This made Maia realize that the sisterhood had been the only stable thing in her life. And she would give anything to preserve her relationship with her sisters.

Functional. Sex. What is love, then? The passion in all senses of the word. Sheeana asks much of me.

Rebecca thought of the Bene Gesserit, and of an earlier tradition. The Rabbi's tradition that was also her own. The tradition of her father. She had always been strong and orthodox, it had been her way, her faith. Now a choice lay between two disparate revolutions: Sheeana's plans and Murbella's twin sisterhoods. Two difficult paths, and yet Rebecca seemed to always land in difficult situations.

The millions of Lampadas. And my promise to the Jews. I cannot be everything to everyone.

Sheeana looked up at them both lost in thought.

"I have said so little to have caused such a morbid mood. There will be time, my sisters, to think through all our choices. Join me."

Maia and Rebecca followed Sheeana for a walk through her outdoor courtyard, where her other sculptures were displayed out in the desert heat. She sparked the conversation with questions about their daily tasks.

"The training of young Paul in the fundamental Bene Gesserit techniques goes well. It is of course the Atreides genes, never mind that he was once the Mahdi. I'm to meet with Miles Teg shortly to compare his results in more traditional combat training." Rebecca noticed the lack of reaction by Maia as she mentioned Teg's name.

When Maia first began pursuing Teg, I could almost time the exact moment her heart would involuntarily skip a beat. They have grown apart.

Maia had been a latecomer to the Bene Gesserit, having lived on a world that was recently acquired by the Honored Matres just before the death of the first Miles Teg. Sheeana had taken a liking to her, for she reminded her of herself in that green time, as an over-age acolyte of this Sisterhood. For that reason she lavished extra attention on her, and that extra attention resulted in a drive and an inspiration to the Sisterhood little before seen.

One could almost say my star pupil.

"The results of our most recent surveillance of Scytale and the Novo Tleilaxu colony have been analyzed. Judging by the types of powerdrains and the biospectral analysis of certain fields we've monitored, they're planning something huge. And the past several weeks of transports to the deep desert are rooted in more typical Tleilaxu plots than the 'resource gathering' and 'monitoring spice production' lines they have been using to justify these trips."

This Tleilaxu plotting grows old. How the Tyrant-God must have been bored by them.

Their walk continued past Sheeana's courtyard, and the mood finally took a turn for the pleasant. They met up with Miles Teg close to where Rebecca had planned to meet them.

"Sheeana and I can discuss her guidelines for Paul's next week of training, Miles, if you would like to have a moment with Maia?"

Rebecca is always the peace maker, and the communicator.

Miles looked at the three of them, but it was Maia who first spoke, "Miles and I have already had that conversation, haven't we, Miles?"

Miles laughed to break the tension. "And we are both quite content with the decision. I think Maia put it best when she said, 'There are better ways than putting the scorpion beside the tarantula.'"

Sheeana liked this.

A decision that we will all soon have to make.

Chapter 6

“His voice alone caused me rest, and all the evils he had done only empowered him in my mind. They called the old Baron Harkonnen evil, but what of the tradition of calling the pre-born Abomination? Did anyone say, ‘Alia, what have you to tell us from your unique knowledge?’ They did not. They feared me, and they condemned me. I was the first to wrestle with this angel, the one who sought to live with all the Other Memories. When I could no longer control them, I needed a voice that could. And when humanity can no longer bear the burdens of its history, will they not need a tyrant to keep the past at bay? Know that when the crisis of humanity comes, they will have been elated that their Tyrant came to save them.

And that we all are Abomination will only goad us into finding a new language that permits understanding.”

— From the play *The Vindication of Saint Alia*

Yanima sent off a Sociotemprint of their recent Spice Dreams to her sister Yeshika on Ix. At the same time an incoming transmission was received from Yeshika, presumably sent sometime earlier.

We need to keep in close contact. Who knows when our commutation lines will be broken?

The transmission was in three parts. Yeshika always sent a brief note on recent events, and along with that was a text called *The Vindication of Saint Alia*, and a note regarding this play. Yanima played the note, which was a holo-image. Yeshika appeared with the usual crackle of image into nearby empty space and spoke:

“Hello my dream twin. I always knew you would dream your life away, while I’ve taken the road of responsibility. Avoiding the Edrichs and Pathay keeps me in the archives these days, and I came across a reference to this in some archaic crystal memory storage. It’s a *written play*; something I know you’d appreciate. It’s the same as the holo-dramas of this classic, but I guess I never realized that Murbella wrote the thing down by *hand*. Anyway, take a stab at it. How’s Thunhun doing? Has he found any other *good* Spice Dreamers so you can come home? Yeshika.”

The message ended, and Yanima clicked open the icon for the text play. She had seen it dozens of times before (it was always performed here on Ouadra during Idah-Mirabla social events), however, she had also never thought of it as a text. She scrolled through to one of her favorite parts and was surprised that she still could enjoy reading something so much better experienced visually...

The Vindication of Saint Alia: Act II, Scene iii.

(CHAPTERHOUSE: Alone in the Dark, MURBELLA contemplates the forming of the FISH SPEAKER SCHOOLS to disband both the BENE GESSERIT and HONORED MATRES. She has

overdosed herself with the Spice Melange in hopes of receiving some vision to enact her plan.)

MURBELLA (*intoxicated*): How many billions do I hold within the confines of one body? To one who hasn't undergone the Agony, you would think of one such as I as a concentrated being, more souls than one body was meant to have. Would an outsider be surprised how spread thin this burden makes me? How diluted each thought seems when another could speak it a bit differently from Other Memory? How eagerly some soul might leap at the chance to contradict me. And yet I seek to gather them all together, to thin out to a point that I might have them all at once... conduct them outward like a lens through which I might espy the path that I must take.

So far back we stretch, mothers, children, mothers again. Mother, matre, madra, mama, mah. Here I see her, one not so like us, but so like all of us. I see her here. She is standing by the river, listening to the water flowing by in some ancient river. Stopping each sound the river makes. So many sounds and she hears them all. And she waits for the insects to pass, and the winds to silence, and behind the sounds of the water she hears them speaking to her. The fish. She listens for the fish until their voices come to her through the rushing.

And the fish speaks to her:

"Why do you listen past the river to hear me speak?"

Because I wish to hear what your voice would tell me.

"What of all the other sounds, are they not also for you to hear? Does not the river speak her lesson? Does not the tree speak with its voice, stirred to speak by the wind? Or the creatures of the land and air? Why do you stop to hear us speak?"

Because one day we must face something, that you know so well. To learn from you how you continued, so that we may continue.

"We do not stop the river. We are part of it. You will know what your river is when you cannot stop it. When you are part of it. Is this all that you wished to hear?"

That you say this gives me hope. That we know where to find your voice will give those of us to come hope. So many will come to hear you. So many.

So many. Can we turn back to them, to those first Fish Speakers?

We cannot stop it.

I cannot.

(Sounds of someone entering outside the door which Murbella stares at, half expecting a flood of water to rush in. When the doors open, light floods in, and Murbella collapses. Enter DUNCAN IDAHO.)

DUNCAN: Murbella! (*calling to someone outside the room*) Quickly, someone, Mother Superior has collapsed!

MURBELLA (*weakly*): I cannot stop its course, my Duncan. The fish had warned her so long ago. They warned us from the start, but we never listened.

DUNCAN: No need to stop it, dearest. Just relax and let it go.

(Attendants enter and lift her in a lying position.)

SISTER 1: She reeks of Spice. What was she doing?

DUNCAN: What does any Fish Speaker do?

(Attendants take her from the room to care for her. Duncan turns and follows them out.)

Exit.

Yanima clicked shut the text and thought about the story of *The Vindication of Alia*. Murbella had written it herself after she began to merge the two schools of the Bene Gesserit and the Honored Matres. The play was to describe the way Murbella utilized the Other Memory of Alia in order to help her to make the decision. As the mythology told, Alia had been possessed by her Other Memory of her grandfather, the Baron Harkonnen, a possession that resulted in Alia's suicide.

Yanima arched away from the now, summoning a Spice Dream back, proximate to thoughts of Murbella....

Murbella had an ever-present question on her mind: "In what direction shall I lead my Sisters?" This new sisterhood had the potential of all the greatness of both the Bene Gesserit and the Honored Matres, but the leader was being crushed by the options open to her. Murbella was constantly ingesting near-fatal levels of Spice to explore all the permutations of choices. She consulted great leaders of the past, each with their own achievements and flaws. Odrade. Mohiam. Only until she walked through the memories of Alia did she find her way.

Yanima's dream subsided. Although Alia never had children, Tleilaxu agents had stolen some of her cells, and when they fled in the Scattering, they often tried to breed these traits into members of the Honored Matres as a bargaining tool. So Murbella came into the memories through this crossbreeding process. The story goes on to describe the way Alia possessed Murbella, how Murbella allied herself with the inner Alia, and finally, how the two overcame the Baron Harkonnen possessing both of them now. Murbella's trial would become a core study of her new established Fish Speaker School and would eventually lend itself to the practices of Persona Shifting and Multilive Individuals as they were today.

Was this a lesson too well learned? Why send the Vindication of Alia to me? Does Yeshika know of some connection between this story and the rise of the Ones With Many Faces? Murbella's experience was not only inspiration for dramatic writing. The Neo-Tleilaxu consul under Scytale's command sought to bargain with the Master Face Dancers in an attempt to thwart off Sheeana.

Had Scytale taken cells of Murbella, with the cellular memories of the ability to abolish abominationism, and traded them with the Master Face Dancers all those centuries ago? Does Yeshika suspect this as the origin of the Ones With Many Faces? Yanima replayed

Yeshika's message, knowing the best encoding was metaphor.

"Anyway, take a stab at it." Saint Alia of the Knife. Not just a loose joke.

Yanima scrolled forward through the readout of the play. Murbella became obsessed with Alia, but the clue wasn't rooting in her mind. Yanima slipped back into a Spice Dream, but only halfway, so she could watch the readout for clues. All the while, a slight hint of Murbella's Other Memories guided her as a sort of intuition about what to keep and what to let go.

The more she revisited Alia, the more she forgot her own problems. Murbella began to notice the way in which Harkonnen had possessed Alia, but somehow could not notice that Alia was overtaking her. Alia became sweet and ruthless to Murbella, so entranced by her mystique and presence. Alia's innocence came from her unique status as abomination. She was new to a world only she knew — and Murbella would stand transfixed by her in wonder. Would it have been so hard for someone to have reached out and accepted Alia? What was she envisioning that got glossed over by her so defined condition? She was the Saint of the Knife — *and here she is seen cutting through the limits of what is human. (the first person not to be human saves and kills her). What is left without her is a worship of our relationship with the ego. She only asked more of us than we were able to know.*

Yanima emerged from the Spice Dream. She glanced back at Yeshika's note.

"How's Thunhun doing?" Thunhun needed to learn about this fact. She could not risk the Spice Dream alone; too many details could be lost.

If Yeshika is right, our future may be much shorter than even the pessimism of Thunhun predicts. With an overcoming like this as part of their initial genetic make-up, who knows what boundaries that Ones With Many Faces are breaking through with each passing day?

Chapter 7

Techne itself was redefined by the Tyrant God, taking on a new, multi-threaded level of meaning after his death. For the teleological complexity of any system of creation becomes only the quantum origin of parallel levels, higher orders, and complex hyperstructures. Is it not then necessary to realize that such n-degree complexity approaches the infinite as the limit of a single occurrence? With infinite complexity realization becomes the singularity (as in the web formed by the recursive series of worm, spice, humanity), a doorway into a matrix of similarly infinite nodes within nodes. This is the structure that all contemporary thought pays heed to, if it wishes to find itself relevant to integral progress.

— GIOAD rules of Techne section xiii

Nro Pathay suppressed his outrage with brisk steps as he exited the GIOAD Bureaupalace complex at the heart of the urban-node on Ix. He knew the Generalists would spout political algorithms that projected an 86% increase in the danger to Ix by destroying the Dune Revenant.

Yeshika Ampre has finally given me a clue to removing the no-space that surrounds Dune Revenant — this would end once and for all the Sheeana problem.

As a Cybimech Theorist, Nro had been trained in the art that combined Mentat abilities with the once forbidden computer technology that arose after the time of the Tyrant God. Although mechanical computers had been created, the real advancement lay in the bio-neuro-systems engineered using the human brain as a model. Nro's brain had been augmented to supercomputer status by the Ixian offshoot of Tleilaxu technology applied to neuro-engineering. But Nro himself had progressed even beyond this stage. The research associated with even his early education spoke to a redefinition of language and Individual consciousness to the idea of a virus. Nro had even been successful in proving that individual consciousness could be encoded and replicated across different neural-networks without degradation.

I have made radical advancements of my own. My secrets. The Ones With Many Faces are not the ones to experiment with the self. I am ready to face them.

Nro Pathay entered the tram that curved through the folds of the urban-node. Graviton suspensors had grown in popularity again, after a brief resurgence of magnetic pulse rails. Nro was distracted for a moment on the way design reoccurred.

Good design is hard to surpass, yet this is exactly what the Ones With Many Faces would achieve.

The tram lurched into motion, gravitons urging the opposing retention-rail away to give the car motion. Nro found the Generalists to practical, and their disavowing of the purer realms of theory kept them politically neutered. His inner gaze turned toward one such pure realm, a fiscal-imperialistic set of dynamic algorithms that he used to forecast a future where Ix commanded a universal respect hitherto unseen.

What better way to ensure Ixian hegemony than to eradicate the Ones With Many Faces. One must turn to the only experts, the Master Face Dancers.

The tram stopped in outside a commercial sector, and Nro exited out into the busy crowd of exchange and adoration of the latest of Ixian wares. He moved through the various shops and displays, performing the ritual glance and nod toward the merchants and vendors. Nevertheless, Pathay walked with a second intention that he struggled to hide.

Two thousand years ago, Sheeana went into hiding on the Dune Revenant with the help of Ixian no-space generators. My client wishes to help undo all of that to save us from The Ones With Many Faces. And here I find myself questioning my 'loyalty' to Ix.

Nro stopped at a certain merchant's booth, custom designed in by a holocarving program out of a classic plastic design mold using dumbed-down polymer generators. The effect was both modern and antique, with a style of décor that reminded Pathay of the Ixians who had fled during the Scattering. The booth was selling the latest in neuro-scramblers, a memory altering device popular among both recreational users, as well as creators in a rut and people desiring memory changes. The merchant looked Ixian, wearing traditional garb of the Richese ruling class from a thousand years ago.

"Would the customer wish to entertain a new outlook on his life? Our wares are premium integrity and offer a wide range of features."

"I'm looking for the more advanced line. Do you have any more units out back?"

"Of course citizen, step back behind the display here," the merchant pointed the way to a room behind him. Nro crossed the boundary and entered, with the Ixian merchant following close behind.

Why won't the consul see my numbers? Generalists take no ideological risks. While a brief lapse into totalitarian purest numbers was extreme — they do offer 99% assurance.

The Ixian merchant changed tone and addressed Nro. "What of your plans to sway the consul?"

"They would not even give voice to our intentions. We must proceed with our alternate plan."

The Ixian began to transform mid-sentence, never disturbing a certain fluidity of form. The features melted and there was a chilling sound always accompanied with shape-shifting.

Nro continued, "Yeshika Ampre was close to giving us the secret of the Ixian no-space that surrounds Dune Revenant. The system lies out of phase with our universe."

"You'd best get us more detail than that, Pathay. We wish to aid your universe, but we cannot do it without certain concessions on your part. The Master Face Dancers require certain questions to be answered, and the answers to those questions lie on Dune."

"My goals are in line with the Face Dancers."

"Are they? You do not know of what you speak. Remember the difference between Face Dancers, the drones of the Tleilaxu and my race of Master Face Dancers from the Returning. During the Scattering the Master Face Dancers too were split into two factions — just as the Fish Speakers were once made of Bene Gesserit and Honored Matres. Your Scattering was a Seeking for us, and we traveled out into new realms to find what we

would. While one faction of Master Face Dancers sought to remove themselves from the regimens of biologism, a second faction sought to retain the greatest qualities of human life.

Between the two factions grew an ideological chasm, the first group calling the second 'sentimental', the second group calling the first 'vain'. The first group seeing biological existence as a detriment to the kind of being it could foresee moved to 'live' in other forms — destroying the grounding principles from under their feet that propelled them from singular life to a chaotic symbioorium of hive culture brought to its ultimate ends: anthropomorphogenesis. They followed the thread of the Tleilaxu Zensunni origins to the ultimate physical expression of the ancient credo: The one is the all. Hence the Ones With Many Faces sought to destroy their rivals. We, the remaining faction of Master Face Dancers, desired different ends. Although we are superior to humans in almost every way, we found ourselves growing solipsistic in our mutability, a contradiction in our ideology that left us weakened for an attack by the Ones With Many Faces. We still enjoy the singularity of persona that you humans give to the universe, and we with many personas still find it refreshing to indulge in a new persona as it comes along. We have many questions of Sheeana, of Duncan, of Scytale, that are as yet unanswered.”

“This is why you seek the Dune Revenant.”

“We seek what the Ones With Many Faces also seek. However, while they are combing through the multiverse in a wave that spans both past and future, we are bound by the present to search for the remnants of the past. This is the urgency of our plight.”

Pathay of course had his own intentions, and he knew that these Master Face Dancers needed his assistance.

Why they don't steal my persona is what I can't figure out. There must be a weakness in their multi-persona existence that cannot make good use of a copy.

“The encoding sequence is generated by an algorithm under the protection of the Supreme Technocrat Yeshika Ampre. Once we have that, how can you ensure that the Ones With Many Faces haven't infiltrated your ranks and will destroy Dune before you learn what you need to?”

“There is no insurance. However, we know they find it distasteful to take human form in any way. Theirs is an overt attack that will not require subterfuge. However, be it known that much of Ix has already been replaced by my people.”

What does he say! I was sure that some small percentage of Ix had had members of the Master Face Dancers as its members. What does he mean by many?

“Do not look alarmed, Nro Pathay. We offer a controlled continuation of humanity, not your destruction. The Ones With Many Faces seek to rid space-time of so finite a being as an individual. We only seek to remain your protecting watchers, ever-present, but allowing you the freedom to dabble in humanity as you have done for a hundred millennia. The Master Face Dancers have lived among you for nearly fifteen hundred years, carefully grooming and protecting you who are our greatest resource and commodity. You did not think that humans developed the Integral Economics that you are so fond of. The Integration was our gift to humanity, in a way to ensure the longevity of their servancy

to us.”

Pathay took a step back. His mind reeled at a number of permutations of events.

I did not dream they were so entrenched. If their plan is so advanced along, only my backup plans will ensure Ix's role in this affair. My end is near.

The Master Face Dancer reached out to Pathay, caressing the side of his head and the back of his neck.

“There, there, Nro. Compliance was never your strong point. There may still be some use for you on the Ixian consul, before your ego gets the best of you. Now sleep, dear human, relax and sleep away your mortality.”

A few more gentle caresses from the Master Face Dancer, and Nro Pathay eyes closed as if he were asleep. His body collapsed into his companion's arms, who began to shape shift into his mirror image, as he set Nro's corpse down onto the ground.

Chapter 8

To Know the state of the multiverse before and after the Tyrant God, imagine the image of an hourglass. His role represents the ancient idea of a key-log, being both the log-jam in the river and the tidal release afterwards. History gave way to his vision, became like an inverted pyramid that leads to the Tyrant God, just as the past becomes that which he releases upward into the pile of sand. The being of the world held fast to his exact brand of the future that we now live in. And the hidden agenda is more apparent than most would suspect: his future is authored by us, in a way that finds us producing our past ourselves. The Tyrant God becomes the geometric nullpoint at the intersection of two opposing pyramids, that works its way through the future at once grounded in the base that is humanity, and open to our greatest potential.

— Lectures of Sheeana to the gholia Muad'Dib

The southern bled was home of sandstorms unimagined by lost Dune standards. Here on this Dune Revenant, the southern bled lay at the edge of the wide southern dune sea, where the open terrain allowed the winds to build speed until they devastated the western borders with constant sandstorms. Sheeana and two dozen sisters had made this area a constant home along an agenda that she had laid out for them. The southern bled was home of the most active sandworms and the source of many spice blows. And the Dune Sea was where the Tleilaxu had been quite busy for at least several weeks.

Sheeana contemplated her Atreides origins more than she ever had done as a Bene Gesserit. Here in the deep desert, monitoring the progress of the sandworms kept her constantly aware of destiny, both personal and historical. The sisters who followed her here knew she had a vision, and the constant spice ingested by all allowed the lines to blur somewhat, blending her wishes with their wishes. She guided them in this insane frontier as a sculptor would mold wet clay.

The talent had always been there in humans. We merely needed to meet up with the Spice to release what had been locked away.

Muad'Dib had changed all that. Muad'Dib sired the Tyrant God himself, an unexpected crashing down of the Bene Gesserit breeding program. This was reason enough to break with the Bene Gesserit ways.

Rebecca is the Bene Gesserit here. She can continue their work as the Bene Gesserit have always done. Then, Murbella will do fine picking up the pieces. Murbella is her own brand of artiste, the wild strain demands that she be.

In the desert, dreams came to Sheeana. They would overpower the moment, and she knew not if they were imagined or real. She saw herself with Murbella, across the bounds of the pocket of the multiverse that held Dune Revenant. Sheeana could not tell if she was seeing the dream or if it was being created by her. And with that thought, as if in a dream, she was beside Murbella and in contact with her dilemma...

For Murbella it was a time of contemplation in the midst of crisis. The Ones with Many Faces were infringing more and more openly the last human sectors of the Old Empire. How many sisters had been lost during their relentless assaults? The fact that they would resort to any means, planet burners or bionic weapons, to expand their own influence was beyond any strategy.

They are like insects. But these insects have an agenda! More than just the hive, what is their reason? What is their goal, to fill habitable space with their own form of metamorphic biology?

Murbella walked through Chapterhouse, that was looking more like a battleground than the home of the sisterhood. Her personal attendant, Laeona, showed the harsh genetic features of her Honored Matre heritage. Just below these young features was their common Bene Gesserit features.

This one especially has a resemblance to Hwi Noree.

This was strange, since Hwi never begot children. However, genetic archaeologists had scoured the sands of the original Dune to find a few usable cells of the Tyrants bride for their own breeding program.

Hwi Noree was an Ixian, from the time that Ix and the post-Leto Fish Speakers were united.

Murbella thought of how there was no sect of Fish Speakers today. She thought about her vision, the one in which she was on Terra and she listened to the message of the fish. Just as a now ancient and forgotten cult once called that planet 'Earth', the cradle of humanity, so had an ancient people of Earth called the once fertile land between two equatorial rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, the 'fertile crescent'. *These places may disappear from the universe, but they lie within us, and, having molded us, continue to presence themselves into the future.*

The look on Laeona's face revealed the expression that Murbella was projecting. *This is the secret! I know which way to take my sisters!* Laeona asked, "Mother Superior, is something wrong?"

Murbella responded, "Quite the opposite Sister, everything is suddenly right..."

The moment faded, and Sheeana found herself back in the desert, on the outskirts of the Tleilaxu revelation. Her sisters moved about in the day to day ritual that was custom here in the deep bled during a sandstorm of this intensity. Thoughts of Leto filled her consciousness. Leto himself realized that the wild talent was not enough — *that is why he bred Siona.*

Now we are all children of Siona.

She contemplated the breeding programs. Did such things really exist? Could such a naive notion ever exist today? A human could be reanimated from 5000 year old cells. A human could merge with a sandworm. A breed of Master Face Dancers could shift flesh and release consciousness? Leto needed the breeding program as a fix, while Muad'Dib's rejection of that path insured a different option, only recently realized by Sheeana.

And now that I have resurrected Muad'Dib, I hold a unique position.

This current venture into the desert had served many purposes. A team of sisters had been dispatched to reclaim the spice filters set into the sands, while Sheeana had lead this

second group to discover what the Tleilaxu had been up to. Sheeana had given Scytale and the Tleilaxu a modicum of freedom on their moon Novo Tleilax in exchange for the Paul ghola. Only once in all the years that had passed on this new Dune did Sheeana ever have to intervene in the actions of the Tleilaxu counsel. A small task force led by Teg to Novo Tleilax cleaned up the problem.

No gholas of Leto! No use of Ghanima or Jessica cells in axlotl tanks!

Sheeana had the last Leto cells destroyed, and brought Scytale to the edge of death to provide him an idea of the importance of his judgement in axlotl tank constructs. Now Scytale was up to some construction in the deep desert, which had been inaccessible for some time due to the storms. The Tleilaxu had chosen a calm area within the fiercest sandstorms to ship untold numbers of Face Dancer Mules and replicators down to Dune Revenant for a purpose yet undiscovered. Sheeana dispatched a message to Teg with the sister Isha on their findings, and a change came over her as she looked out into the rough sandwinds.

Shaitain knows my thoughts. And I am one with Shai-Hulud.

Different possibilities now seemed to meet and split in a way to which she was acclimating herself. She was leading humanity down a different path than the Golden Path. Now that the idea of a path for humanity had been established by Leto, Sheeana realized his was but one of many paths.

To become a Sandworm!

Sheeana began to realize the intentions of the Tyrant God. He had both indicted the Bene Gesserit for not starting the Golden Path that he had initiated through self-sacrifice, even thought the Sisterhood surely saw the need for such a Way for humanity to walk along. Furthermore, Leto had foreseen the downfall of the Sisterhood.

Murbella's new Sisterhood will become a bureaucracy at worst. The best she can strive for is a school unlike any before it, with all the strengths of family and none of the weaknesses.

I understand Leto's dream. We each are making it possible even now.

Sheeana could follow much of Leto's line of reasoning in becoming one with the sandworm. She began to envision the time when he first made the transformation. The sand-trout, the little makers, naturally moved to encapsulate water, and Leto used this natural tendency to his advantage. They slowly covered his body, and over time his body adapted. With the passing of the centuries (What attention to such a slow process!) his dream was continually honed to a sort of preternatural perfection. Sheeana would weep when she thought of what Leto gave up (*What pain he endured!*) in establishing the Golden Path. Such dreams were already coming to Sheeana. She had a glimpse of Arafel, the darkness cloud at the end of the universe, and was sure in certain ways that although it could indicate that the Golden Path was in danger, there were many New Paths yet undreamed.

She slipped into the dreams not while asleep but while walking, only to awaken some miles from where she had begun. Other times, the dreams would come to her mid-sentence, living some elaborate plot, only to awaken at the exact point she had left off, never skipping a beat. One dream, the most piercing and prophetic, showed her that the future was causing the past while at the same time the past was causing the future. She saw her-

self and her sisters as sandworms in the future providing for their struggle that defined them now in the past, all their separate New Paths converging back to the Golden Path. She felt she was giving the Tyrant a chance to express his love for Hwi Noree, and that they all gave young Leto something to strive for, a way out of the shadow of Muad'Dib. And she saw Duncan there. And she saw those from the future watching Duncan. Before the dream ended, she saw herself far in the future dreaming the idea of spice for the first time, creating it so that humanity could tread the paths of destiny.

Who was the first to know Melange? I must wait so long to answer this question.

When the dream passed, the sister Maia was speaking to her.

“Mother Superior, the sandstorm will break just beyond that ridge to the West.”

“The Tleilaxu encampment will be there.” Sheeana had learned to step from the dream as easy as one would change one’s mind.

“What are your instructions for us?” Maia had the look of the dreams upon her. Sheeana insured this in all her sisters by the constant supply of Melange. “I have seen what we may expect to find here. I dream... something that I am not sure I understand.”

Sheeana reassured her, “You are a Bene Gesserit, so you know how to control your fears. But I have freed you from some of that, so let the fear rise a bit if you would learn from it.”

Maia nodded. “Shall we proceed?”

Sheeana’s only answer was to continue to walk west towards the Tleilaxu, her sisters one with her in a shared destiny.

Maia needs more development. She has fears and regrets but acts anyway. “Rather act out my final days as human and relinquish my humanity than have it taken from me by the Ones With Many Faces.”

Chapter 9

As Dune was, so will it be again! And the Deserts we see are receding, by the will of Shaitain, as ordained by Muad'Dib. Fear not, my Fremen, for the challenge is upon you. That the Desert vanishes does not mean that you should abandon your desert ways. For the desert should be within your heart, and the winds of the sandstorm should be the raging of your souls. And after the Desert is gone and the people grow water-fat, it will be upon you to keep the faith. And your faith will be as the heat of the noontime sun. And you will hold fast to your ways like unto the preciousness of water in the hottest seasons. Only then will the desert return.

— Reconstructed Letters of Harq Al-Arda to the Fremen

Thunhun sat for a moment after Yanima explained the transmission from her sister Yeshika. They sat in the public garden on Ouadra, storm clouds above and the cool breeze of the coming rain. Faint rumbles of distant thunder preluded his breaking of the silence.

“Yeshika never jokes the way she did it that transmission. I think she is in danger.” Yanima leaned forward, her elbows on her knees.

Thunhun heard what she was saying, but followed a train of thought that she had evoked moments ago until he reached an almost Mentat conclusion.

“The Master Face Dancers have infiltrated the Ixian consul, I’m sure of it. There’s something else I haven’t told you. I’ve been doing some personal research into the Duncans throughout history. I think one of them has the ability to see me watching him.”

“What? That doesn’t seem possible! Which Duncan?”

“*The* Duncan. The Duncan who awoke the Paul gholas’ memories. The founder of Idah-Mirabla. Do you think it has something to do with Duncan’s Net?”

After he spoke, Yanima noticed how much Thunhun looked like the Duncans. Short of being one of those Duncan Revival Schools, like Hayt-Idah, he could pass for a clone.

I’m always surprised that Idah-Mirabla let such a close gholas pass through.

She responded to Thunhun’s questions with a question: “What are the implications of the Spice Dreams then? This is all our opponents need to fuel their campaign against us. We’ll fall to the wayside like Mesmerism or Regression Hypnosis.”

“Maybe we don’t need their help.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“I’ve done a bit of extrapolating, taking what I’ve inferred by the Duncan watching us, and what we’ve gleaned so far about the Ones With Many Faces. If Duncan’s Net allowed him to see the Master Face Dancers, and we know that somehow the Ones With Many Faces are a faction of that group, we know that they could see Duncan. “

“Where are you going with this.”

“I think the threat of the Ones With Many Faces is occurring across space-time. Their perfection of shapeshifting has gone beyond everything we’ve imagined. They have found a way to spread like a cancer throughout the present, past, and future. I’m not sure of

their intentions or how they're able to do this, but it doesn't look good for the children of humanity."

"All this leads us to Yeshika and Ix."

"Ix is the crossroads in more ways than one."

"You think that whatever is causing Yeshika to be alarmed ties back to Dune Revenant?"

"We need to talk to your sister. The Technocrat Emperor of Ix may need to reveal the secret of the Ixian cloaking of that planet. We need to find out the truth about Sheeana."

In an age of spacefolding machines and synthetic spice, one would think that interstellar travel would become a commonplace event. Given the shift in travel from the mythic times of the Tyrant God, which was conducted only out of His will and his allocation of resource, travel was surprisingly uncommon. The millennial celebration of the Fish Speaker Schools had been an exception to a society that was not interested in travel, despite the ease in which it was made possible. The advent of the techniques of Persona Shifting some centuries before aided to the decline of the urge to travel. As the popular saying went, "I've never been there, but I've Shared with someone who has," the borrowing of the experiences of others lended itself to a more passive attitude to place.

Still, a certain amount of travel was always needed, and GIOAD managed to reap some benefits and set style precedents that kept the interests of certain Schools through the interests of a certain number of strategic Individuals within key Schools. Some of the GIOAD travel companies, which specialized in interstellar transport of goods, were finding it harder to find people to accept these jobs, until they subsidized the couriers of Persona Shifts from distant regions.

Lack of demand and specialized Fish Speaker School interests resulted in a severely regulated travel system that made it difficult for just anyone to travel offworld. Yanima was connected to the Ixian High Consul, and her status as the sister of Yeshika Ampre gave her familial rights at a level that both GIOAD and the Fish Speaker Schools all recognized as nothing short of *carte blanche*. Within a few days, Thunhun and Yanima had wrapped up the loose ends so rapid a departure would create, and they were enroute to Ix on a GIOAD transport.

The transport resembled the traditional heighliner from antiquity. These were run by Guild Steersman (travelers tended to notice a smoother ride), envisioning the mechanics of the journey with the aid of the latest in orange Synthspice gas.

Thunhun was eager to Spice Dream during the Spacefold. He had once Persona Shared with a multiverse physicist who claimed that the folding technique enhanced the accessibility of stray timelines. Guilds Steersman had to study elaborate techniques to focus their travels through such a mire of causality.

Thunhun told Yanima of his theory that they might be able to perceive some sort of stray Dream Noise while space folded.

"I'm surprised that you never tried this before," Yanima goaded him. "You must not be as curious as you were when we first met, with all your new recognition at Idah-Mirabla."

"When does any Individual travel? I never got the chance before."

“Now that you’ve spoken at the Millennial Celebrations, I’m sure you’ll be an honored guest across the universe.” Thunhun smiled. Yanima had that effect on him often, although they did not Persona Share as much as was common among friends.

We Dream of a past where people spoke to one another to communicate. In a universe where Persona Sharing has become a business transaction, we are friends out of the same interest in this ancient art form.

“Now I want you to relax and not to focus on anything.” Yanima held his hand. “You relax, and don’t stray far from my lead. If we’re to pick up Dream Noise that’s too rough or choppy, I want you close by.”

They held close until reality slipped away...

...sharply, in every direction, they appear in the dark.

The Ones With Many Faces looked out at the multiverse from their own brand of senses. They causated each gesture like a ripple in a three dimensional pool, waves of sensing expanding outward, finding the objects of their communal thoughts like sonar beacons. Echoes returned as ideas and impressions, a blending of the physical world and the world of ideas. They had changed beyond even the Master Face Dancers in their mutability, allowing form and the formed to reside as one in their being. And the constant reminder of the Individuals from which they evolved acted like a limiting virus, a common tie to us that the Master Face Dancers had somehow grown to respect, although in a way that was quite inhuman. The Ones With Many Faces saw the Individual as their own brand of Original Sin, their Fall from the ultimate mutability that they strove for. They sought the eradication of the Individuals not on the grounds of any maliciousness, they sought to remove them in their role as a strange attractor of a brand of Order that drew their attention away from the Ultimate Chaos they sought to embrace...

...a question in the dark, distorted voices, call and respond.

WE ASK THE STATUS OF THE INDIVIDUALS?

We Comply To Our Request With Segmented Factual Reports From Our Various Sectors.

(Images of Duncan and Scytale in one area, Sheeana and Leto in another, Paul, Teg.)

(Sheeana’s voice: “The Golden Path unfurled? Out of the diversity of mankind.”)

COMPLIANCE RECOGNITION ACCEPTED WE SHALL BEGIN.

Waves of sensing expanding around the focus. Echoes returned with ideas that the questions invoked. They embraced this Chaos, so dampened by the very existence of the Individual Order, driving the Ones With Many Faces through the multiverse in search of a way to remove the concept of the Individual. They sought liberation. Our mutual demise was their jihad. The Ones With Many Faces reviewed what had transpired, regrouping, planning...

Sector One reports combine sisterhood offering great resistance to the futars and our shapeshifters.

(Image Murbella, various sisters in battle.)

(Murbella’s voice: “I want one of them captured alive. We need to trace them back to their makers.”)

Time projects show that Murbella succeeds with assistance of Old Tleilaxu to CONTINUE humanity with help of gholia conceptions and enhancement possibility.

SUGGEST STUDY OF FISH SPEAKER SCHOOLS.

Sector Two reports steps taken to uncover the Dune Revenant.

(Image of Master Face Dancer Lrolan and Nro Pathay.)

Those from whom we evolved, Those Master Face Dancers, choose compliance with Individuals. They seek Individuals as a fixed ground to base persona. Indications are resistance to Memory Sharing among several key groups.

CONTINUE OBSERVATION OF... INTERRUPTION!

...eyes in the dark looking back.

WHO WATCHES US? IMMEDIATE RELOCATION OF SPACE-TIME FOCI!

Causated gesture rippled, the pools waves sensed inwardly, fleeing the objects of their communal protection. Echoes faded and folded out of consciousness, a dim impression grown dimmer, a blending of the physical world with the void until nothing. Dark. Silent. Gone...

The Spice Dream ended abruptly, timed with the announcement that the transport was entering real space from out of the fold. The humorous mood of only a few moments before was eclipsed by this dire revelation. Both Yanima and Thunhun remained silent for several minutes after their Spice Dream.

Yanima was the first to break the silence. "We were forced out of the Spice Dream. I don't know if it was due to the ending of the Space Fold or if those Face Dancers had something to do with it."

"The Ones With Many Faces pushed us out of the Dream. What I'm worried about is how well timed our exit from Spacefold coincided with our Dream."

Thunhun thought his next sentence in silence:

If the Guild Steersman was replaced by a Master Face Dancer, it would explain the convenience of our Dream.

Thunhun grabbed hold of Yanima and pulled close to her ear. "Persona Share with me." He whispered it pressed against her head, kissing her hair.

In tight proximity, they allowed the blending of their memories and experiences. They could instantly catch up on everything they had thought about but did not desire to speak aloud. The Persona Sharing allowed no secrets, and it opened the possibility that others would learn your secrets if they Shared with someone you had Shared with. This was not a time for secrets.

Yanima and Thunhun were soon locked into their mutual thoughts.

Thunhun's flood of ideas hit her like a technical manual of his life. Ideas. Permutations of these ideas. Meta-ideas.

The Master Face Dancers are at war with the Ones With Many Faces. They are holding onto Individuality while the Ones With Many Faces seek its destruction.

Cancer has infected the multiverse as it were an individual. Parasites within parasites. Cancers within cancers. They spread both in the past and the future. Unbound.

Yanima's wave of ideas was graceful, aware of the art of dreaming. They had hard aesthetics. Forms attended by Care.

Master Face Dancers in the Guild? This means Master Face Dancers seek to sow the no-

fields with their watching presence. They hide in GIOAD. They lay waiting on Ix. We were meant to 'discover' the Ones With Many Faces.

They help us, to keep us alive. They are the beekeepers. We are the bees that produce the sweet honey of Individuality and Persona. They crave us.

As the Sharing, each was left with a sense of urgency. That Ix and the Dune Revenant were locked in a course that spoke to the future of the Individual and the multiverse. And one final thought, personal, between the two of them...

As they exited the transport into the craft that would take them to the transit station below on Richese, they both questioned what it meant to love someone at a time of such duress.

Chapter 10

Before the Spice Dreaming technique could be employed to mine the past for truth of actions, Murbella's merger of the Bene Gesserit and Honored Matres was viewed as a result of the impending threat of the Master Face Dancers returned from the Scattering. The Returning had less to do with her decision, which hinged upon two factors from the distant past: Murbella was led to an ancient concept for which she appropriated the name Fish Speaker School. And she was led there by the evil that the old Harkonnen managed to work on St. Alia from beyond the grave.

— Memoirs of Yanima Ampre

Having a few hours before her meeting with her dubious guests, Murbella spent the morning armed within a new battle carapace that enhanced her already supple prana-bindu combat prowess. Kitrana Blaise assisted Murbella in fitting the carapace, and making her aware of the new enhancements. Blaise had been promoted from Custodian of Arms and Combat Training, a role she held since the Bene Gesserit battle with Honored Matres on Taltios, to General of The Bene Gesserit forces.

The time has come to fight the Ones With Many Faces.

“In addition to the new modulating plasma weapons mounted in the wrists, we've added a bio-magnetic shielding, in case they try to acquire memories through touch.” Kitrana was combat hardened and thorough. She had once met the first Miles Teg in covert battle he had led, in which she outfitted his troops with certain weapons her sister had developed.

Murbella's training was already hyperkinetic. The Honored Matre sexual imprinting went deeper than eroticism, it fused cellular awareness into every region of her body. Her leg could kick in a combat situation without direct impulse from her brain. The fact that she was with child did not hamper her combat ability in the least.

I simply need to keep aware of the womb, and protect it from danger and will away the stress of the situation. I will the calm upon me.

After the demonstration, Murbella and Kitrana discussed the News of two recent battles with the Ones With Many Faces, one waged by Bene Gesserit and the other by Honored Matres.

Perhaps our common enemy will unite these two sisterhoods.

Murbella and the Honored Matres. It was a complex idea for her, as she was raised by the renegade sisters who perfected their twisted variation of Bene Gesserit technique for the two thousand years of the Scattering.

Once we trained as Honored Matres enter the mode of combat, woe to all in our paths.

As they walked to the receive their arriving guests, Kitrana gave results that the Bene Gesserit outpost on Chasuba had been leveled, and only a handful of sisters had survived.

Kitrana read Murbella's silence as disapproval of her war effort, “I assure you, Mother

Superior, that the Master Face Dancer's every movement had been under constant surveillance. We have at least gained that much from this sacrifice." Murbella did not bother to bathe or changed into more formal attire for her meeting with the Honored Matre envoy.

As Kitrana read off the statistics of the two most recent victories by the common enemy, Murbella spiraled out her plans the possible and the probable. She knew Sheeana was planning perhaps the most radical change the Universe had ever seen. Rebecca, off with Sheeana in the folds of no-space, became the only link to the old Bene Gesserit order and the New Sisterhood that would come if any of them survived the Ones With Many Faces.

I hold on to the idea that Rebecca is still the True Bene Gesserit, for rest assured, Sheeana is not. Nor am I.

Her thoughts had been on Saint Alia, the sister of Muad'Dib, and her tragic death that had spawned a dozen major religions and a dozen dozen cults over the ages.

I must not fail the Honored Matres or the Bene Gesserit as we failed her. There is an answer to those who represent the margin and the rupture of a society. The answer is to bring them to the center.

Murbella focused on this time as the dawn of some integration between her two peoples. As Kitrana finished her report, two sisters flanked them before entering the reception hall.

Murbella shot a glance at Kitrana. "I asked for no escort."

Kitrana had been prepared for this response. "With all respect, Mother Superior, as in my role as military commander, I thought it in your best interest and ordered the escort myself."

Murbella nodded her acceptance.

Drastic measures for dark times.

Within the reception hall stood Honored Matre Guerina and two dangerous looking companions. Guerina had known the Spider Queen that Murbella had deposed and represented the more conservative factions resistant to change.

I must break this Guerina's will today.

The meeting only served to annoy Murbella at how wrong the underlying framework of the Honored Matre philosophy was.

They are chased from the Scattering in a mass exodus, a Returning brought on by their fear of the Master Face Dancers, who are only the dawn of the greater chaos. They would have done well to keep to some of the old Bene Gesserit adages.

"There are factions among the Honored Matres. Some would see you as the Great Honored Matre, while others see your path as weak, and seek to usurp your position."

"How dare you speak to me thus!" She gestured to the two sisters at her side, poised to kill at any moment. "You come begging for assistance and now you'd question my strength."

Guerina's escorts poised themselves ready for a possible incident, but the Honored Matre gestured them to stand down. "I only speak of what transpires among those of the Returning."

Murbella pitched her Voice strategically. *This is the leader of Bene Gesserit and Honored*

Matres who speaks now! “I will not pay heed to any of this unthought chatter.” Her Voice leveled. “Do the Honored Matre factions that are against me not want the assistance of their Bene Gesserit cousins?”

Murbella turned to Kitrana. “How many Honored Matre worlds have been destroyed so far?”

Kitrana performed the data extraction from her Mentat archive. “As of last reports this morning, the Honored Matre world of Alcius has just fallen, bringing the count of Honored Matre worlds up to thirty-four.”

Thirty-four worlds destroyed, hundreds of billions of lives ended or assimilated, and these bitches question my lead.

Guerina bowed low her head at the numbers.

The color drains from her face. Those numbers will turn her to my side.

Guerina lifted her head. “Perhaps I can do something to convince the factions that an alliance is the only course of action, Great Honored Matre.”

Murbella met Guerina’s eyes with a firm but reassuring gaze. “Do so quickly, for the Face Dancers do not wait to kill.”

Chapter 11

The hive was agitated; many new occurrences had been filtering through its folds — the Duncan, the Scytale, the temporal Sheeana. But the newest resurgence, the Again Muad'Dib, had caused ripples — no, storms — throughout the collective of the Ones With Many Faces. When the whole was disturbed to this level, they would see a need to take action. The persona waves darted and reflected across a million experiences, but still, they cannot breach the berth of their nestling arrogance, of the shelled newness that their hive has encased then heavy within. The Muad'Dib was known to many. So many still were moved by his myth. We seek to nurture what our beloved Individuals seek in the beloved Again Muad'Dib. For their rich experience insures the most succulent crop of stolen life experience when we seek to reap our deadly harvest.

— Master Face Dancer commentary

When Duncan Idaho and Miles Teg entered the newly built Tleilaxu Center, Scytale was seated behind a monitor, flanked on each side by a personal guard. The guards were obviously Face Dancers, but as colossal as they were dexterous. Duncan noticed that the genes employed to create these two came from the Tyrant's Fish Speaker guards — with enhancements to the usual phenotypes. Scytale was making good use of the Bene Gesserit breeding records to facilitate his new axlotl creations.

Scytale looked up from his screen to greet them.

“My Masterpieces. Examples of two uses of the genius of our gholas creations, one constructed to our specifications and beyond our wildest expectations, and the other beyond our wildest dreams reconstructed for our purposes.” The blue light of the screen cast a preternatural aura about his elfin features.

Who is more the ghoul, he or we?

Duncan's thoughts jumped from appearance to personal history. Few had history together as they did. Hayt had not cared for his Scytale. Duncan cared not for this one.

Teg waited for Scytale's features to lose the Tleilaxu grin before he spoke.

“We're here for answers, not questions.” Scytale was unmoved by Teg's position.

How many times had gholas wanted answers? This time was not unlike every other, except that only now had he begun to regain the hopes for a Tleilaxu future.

Am I the chosen one? The last one who was saved to prove how close we Bene Tleilax were to becoming extinct. I have been awakened.

His thoughts were often punctuated by the words ‘whores’ or ‘witches’, and yet he had to admit that his association with the Bene Gesserit had taught him the possibility of trust among the powindah. And the Honored Matres had proven that no enemy could be underestimated.

What were these two up to?

Teg spoke, “Sheeana is destroying the axlotl tanks that contain the gholas of Jessica and Alia as we speak.” Scytale paled, and after a silence Teg continued, “Do we have

your attention now.” Scytale had not felt as cornered as he did in this moment during his imprisonment on the no-ship all those years. Yet still he managed a smile, one that the Tleilaxu were notorious for, to smugly betray for all his thoughts: *Powindah! Shokran. You still prove yourselves my tools.*

Scytale turned the momentum of the conversation as he turned from Teg to face Duncan.

“Do either of you even begin to hear the arrogance with which you speak? You are our creations! What would you know of the grandeur that we work toward?”

“I’m not the only project of yours that has ‘exceeded expectations’, Scytale — don’t you understand that your method, your Tleilaxu grandeur, has become obsolete? The Master Face Dancers and the Ones With Many Faces are no longer even remotely human. They are your monsters! You have only succeeded in creating what can only be called an alien species. And they are interested in every move we make. I know this.” Scytale faced Duncan, taking an uncharacteristic step toward him.

Does Duncan speak to them? How can this be?

Duncan read the reaction on Scytale’s face and followed through. “You’re holding onto ideas that no longer have intrinsic value. It has slipped through your slippery Tleilaxu fingers. You have preserved the rules for all these millennia, but the game has changed, the players have left. And Teg and myself aren’t the only ones returning angry.”

In that moment, with Scytale stepping back in slow motion away from him, reality shifted, as if suddenly Duncan realized that he had been dreaming the entire scene. Duncan found himself holding onto his Net, reeling in a image of many who were coming. They were already in spacefold, and Duncan could almost hear the spacefold algorithms of a Guild-like spice navigator focusing their intention of destination upon the Dune Revenant.

They are coming after us! Teg, Scytale and myself. Only I don’t know who they are.

Duncan noticed that Scytale still hadn’t completed his back step, when a series of images and visions exploded into his mind. He saw the Tyrant asking the Universe to become Leto and the Master Face Dancers worshipping this reversal of the history he knew. Duncan saw the Ones With Many Faces fearing Paul. They kept referring to him as the Again Individual, and the Paul who was not Paul.

And Duncan Idaho realized his role in the universe had been the unique gift of the Tyrant.

I have become the embodiment of the friend of humanity. My Atreides loyalty has evolved over all these millennia into its most basic state: loyalty to humanity.

His oracular web had now captured several disparate groups, that he now saw as part of what would be the future of humanity. The cancerous of the Ones With Many Faces, the sentimentality of the Master Face Dancers who escaped to warn them and protect the concept of individual humanity, the hybridization of Bene Gesserit and Honored Matre that Murbella was cultivating into fruition, Sheeana’s sisters who would become the worm as had Leto.

For the first time, Duncan realized the one use of melange that had escaped him be-

fore.

Metaphor. Melange, for all its enhancements and secrets that it has revealed to us over the years had one use that we had overlooked. It is a metaphor for the mixture of all these elements into a new humanity, ever-changing. This is Leto's Golden Path that I am walking down! How ironic that I should find myself a 'prophet' of the great Via Guldur.

Teg was suddenly saying something, something that caused Duncan to move away from his Net and back towards where he had been. In Scytale's room, Teg was motioning to a handheld vidbook.

He's about to warn us of something. I can tell by his expression.

Something had hold of Duncan from inside his vision, some force that would not let him free himself.

Teg is warning me about something! But I can't respond...

Duncan stretched the limits of looking, gazing in a way that seemed to just come to him. Despite how unnatural it seemed, he willed this new gaze inwardly. The Master Face Dancers came to him, only after he peered into the corners of his hyperreal peripheral vision. There were several of them in strategic places of his heightened perception, each holding out a special form of his attention, each pinning his awareness outside of the normal framework of the moment. Duncan saw Teg motioning toward the door and a sudden look of concern on Scytale's face.

They are coming for us, and they are holding me here helpless!

Duncan tried to fathom a way out of his dilemma. The paralysis of his body seemed to give him extra time mentally, time perhaps to devise a plan.

As if they live with one foot in my vision.

Duncan's fear rose for a moment and it reminded him of one particular death that he had experienced by Leto, in which he was pinned beneath Leto's massive sandworm body, slowly suffocated and crushed under his weight. Something began to give way among his unseen captors.

The deaths I have lived distract them. This is the key to their holding me.

Duncan began to rapid fire the memories of his many deaths through his mind, layering them as one would apply paint coat upon coat. The Master Face Dancers who trapped him within the vision began to loose sight of the living Duncan, given the odd and slippery nature of a remembered dying.

I'm slipping from their hold on me.

Teg was suddenly moving at regular speed, and speaking from out of mid-sentence, "... that they'll arrive at our exact coordinates. I just can't figure how they found us, and how quickly they are moving into our local star system." Duncan intuited what had transpired, but took no time to explain it to Teg.

"Where were you just then," Teg came back, realizing from Duncan's expression that something had been amiss.

"No time to explain. Miles, they are after us. Especially after Scytale and myself." Scytale never lost his ability to look disturbing, even when frightened.

Duncan continued, "That's right Scytale. Your creations want you. They want to know

what it is like to die as many times as we have.”

Chapter 12

As the first Hermit who took the spice Knew, as Muad'Dib Knew, so the desert Preacher Knows.

Protect the spice, for it is Shai-Hulud.

For did not the Hermit first learn to hate the desert and the sandworm for taking away his people? Did he not learn to make stone his heart and go out into the desert for his revenge? And in the years that followed, did he not learn the secrets of the desert, and did not the desert both empty and fill his heart? And there did he learn of the sandworm and partake of the spice. And his wicked joining with Shai-Hulud.

— Sermon of the Desert Preacher to the Fremen

Sheeana looked out over a perfect reproduction of a sietch from the old Dune, contained within the area of Scytale's Novo Tleilaxu colony.

So this was what Scytale sought to achieve! Not only has he regenerated the Old Tleilaxu Council, he is reproducing an entire Fremen population. Is this all for the benefit of the Mahdi, for the ghola Muad'Dib?

The scene was horrific. Tleilaxu mule technicians, rapidly grown with only the most specialized skills, had been produced by the thousands to facilitate a slave construction crew. They were programmed to do certain functions and die when their tasks were completed. In this way they hand-crafted this Fremen sietch in only a few weeks.

While I was tending to Shai-Hulud in the deep desert bled, these Tleilaxu managed to rebuild a Fremen city!

Every detail was there: Stillsuits that seemed to have been worn in for comfort and authenticity, windtraps for moisture built to the ancient specifications (*Why wouldn't they be — Scytale is from the Arrakis Times.*) along the outer sietch wall toward a low dune ridge. There were even a pile of maker hooks aligned ready for a spice party to summon a worm.

These Tleilaxu Fremen will not ride my sandworms! This charade must be stopped.

Towards a newly constructed area of the sietch diorama Tleilaxu mules loaded other mule corpses into reclamation units. The whole place smelled of sickly sweet burning flesh and dank sweat, a combination that seemed to go unnoticed by the mules (some of them did not seem to have been bred with faces, let alone the ability to smell). Almost repelled to the point of reciting the Litany Against Fear, Sheeana turned the horror into another lesson for her sisters.

“Bathe in the horror of this event, and know human repulsion, and remember well this feeling. One day soon, you will no longer have your human instinct to guide you, and this memory will be a new myth that will be passed onto a new brood.”

The moment slipped by her. She suddenly was aware of herself remembering her speak-

ing these words, a déjà-vu from a past two thousand years before. Sheeana was one with the sandworm now, and her sisters (those who had survived) were one with the sandworm now. And she imagined that all of this had never happened, and yet it had happened nonetheless. And she began to remember the first ingestion of the spice, in a way that no one had ever remembered before, as her remembering of the past was actually a writing of the past. And this is what she wrote, not on a ridulian crystal or on leaves of paper, not onto a filmbook reader. Sheeana wrote these words upon the very history of humanity, not so humanity could recall the words, but that she could have humanity call the words into existence:

The First Book Of Shai-Hulud

Before the spice there was the sandworm. Before the blue in blue eyes of spice addiction.

Would the history of melange return us to the desert and Shai-Hulud — to Shaitain's furnace? Oh, the little makers and their passing of a line etched out in the sands of sun blasted days, hinting towards a water of life.

Who is the first Fremen to take the melange, to know, to wonder in its hold? Here marks the days before the marking of the blue in blue eyes. Look now into the world of this time!

What was handed over to the Fremen at that time was time itself.

Before the blue in blue eyes, much earlier we gaze, comes the ingestion of the spice melange for the first time. It becomes a reference point, etched in its taste upon the tongue, that parts the sands of time and memory as before and after melange.

Legend says he was a hermit, in a southern Dune sea — but that he had once been a part of an ancient clan of which he is the only surviving member.

So he choose his path in giving himself up to the desert, but not without a fight. The desert would have to take him with a struggle — for he would defy the sun, and the sand, and above all, he would defy Shaitain. The hermit would not surrender to him, as the desert had yet to reclaim his precious water.

The hermit had educated himself in the secrets of Shai-Hulud and in the desert ways that the Fremen had not yet learned. For the Fremen were new to this world. Legend says the hermit was the first worm-rider, and that when he first took the spice melange, the spice stole his secrets. For the spice is as unforgiving as it is ruthless, and the other Fremen who would later emulate him by taking the spice would learn the wealth of desert lore through the spice, whispered into the minds of each whose eyes would carry the blue in blue mark...

The dream gave way with the unfolding of events around Sheeana and her dozen sisters that remained with her. The others had been sent off to fulfill her plans, preparations for Sheeana's New Path.

I am living now, in the present. But I also live in the most eldritch past and most enigmatic future. I am the sculptor again.

As construction proceeded around them, sietchs being constructed to the left and right, they noticed a Tleilaxu craft that was doubling for a command center. A number of

Mastif looking Tleilaxu were commanding construction-mules when they took notice of Sheeana's party.

One of the Mastif, surrounded by a group of war-mules, broke from his duties and began to advance upon the Sisters. Sheeana, with a gesture, held her sisters' advancement, while she continued to move forward.

"Mother Superior, I must advise against you meeting them without someone at your side." It was Maia who protested, but Sheeana gave only a quick look and Maia understood.

My sister's know my intentions with only the slightest gesture. Many of them hear the calling of Shai-Hulud. The time draws near.

The war-mules marched to the left, while the Tleilaxu Mastif walked closer towards Sheeana. Unlike the specialized construction mules that were more like bio-machinery, devoid of more than the most basic sentience, the war-mules retained more human aspects. The Tleilaxu had discovered that without human drives, even gholas soldiers could not achieve the levels of combat prowess that were necessary for a military maneuver.

The Mastif Nahual greeted Sheeana, although he was still far enough away from her that he had to shout.

"Welcome, our most honored guest, to this place that is our most obeisant offering to God." Sheeana could see his teeth as he smiled even from that distance.

She held off from speaking as the two walked toward each other. Her vision was still clouding her mind, and she had a vague recollection (Other Memory? She could no longer tell) that during the time that Muad'Dib was blinded and roamed the desert as the Preacher, he spoke of this Hermit.

Am I confusing imagination with reality? Have I somehow been given the right to dream the past in my way? Now that I remember events yet to come, is the past no longer fixed?

Mastif Nahual spoke again. "You should be pleased by our gesture, we are recreating Dune in homage to the gholas Muad'Dib. Quite an accomplishment for the few years we've been at work, with our maximizing some of the problems of labor and efficiency." Again the smile.

He oozes contempt and fear for me worse than Scytale ever did.

"You realize that I am not pleased, Nahual," Sheeana layered in an uncertain amount of Voice, more out of artistry than to influence, "when Tleilaxu disobey my simplest taboos." "We only wished to create those gholas to give young Paul a mother and a daughter, perhaps as a playmate. We learned of the destruction of the Jessica and Gahnima gholas earlier today. You realize, Sheeana, that those Jessica cells are impossible to recover. We have tied off a genetic possibility for the future." Nahual teathed a smile. "A sad loss." By now the war-mules were between Sheeana and her sisters.

It is not the time to act as a threat, but to gain an ally.

"Nahual, my sisters have been out in the storm for weeks. Could you allow us comforts after such an ordeal?" "But of course. Soon we all shall find comfort in our new Fremen home."

Chapter 13

The Tleilaxu Inversion has effected more than the history of the body. It brings into question our role in the universe. What is ecology? What is natural? Given the shift in the human, how can we truly answer either question? The models we use to govern our lives upon a given planet give way, now that they are stretched out to the scale of the universe. Our cultural viewpoint collapses.

Stretch these rules out to encompass reality itself, and they fade from meaning. They fade from memory as they fade from causality. From here, from the side of our river we ask, 'What does a river represent in such a universe?', and we listen, awaiting the answer.

— from the Idah-Mirabla Fish Speaker School

Yeshika Ampre stood before a slightly larger than hand-sized object resting atop a meter high metallic stand. Yanima and Thunhun had arrived earlier, and the three met in Yeshika's chambers for both the privacy and security that the place offered. The object between, roughly spherical with exposed circuitry as was the fashion in recent years in Ix, was the focus of Yeshika's attentions. She motioned to the two guards that stood by the door, upon which they exited her chamber and closed the doors behind them. They were alone.

"I have come across... information, that I think the two of you will find most beneficial," Yeshika spoke, as she gestured across the top front of the sphere.

The device suddenly became active. Thunhun considered the fact that all Ixians were born with bio-electronic implants that could interface with any external device if so programmed. The tradition began with a cult to Hwi Noree

Three plates lifted slightly from the surface of the device, which slowly lifted from the stand until it was hovering freely in front of them like a glowglobe. Within a moment, the room was instantly engulfed in blackness.

"This device will project a holographic map of the known universes around us." Yeshika explained the references of the map, and on cue they were surrounded by a projection of galaxies and stars. "This is a representation of our universe, and this is space currently occupied by the Ones With Many Faces." The outer areas, the regions from the Scattering beyond the Old Empire, were suddenly engulfed in a red haze, which extended throughout the projected map, overtaking much of the local regions of space.

"This next display uses multidimensional wave compression to depict the multiverse." The display blinked and twisted in a way that reminded Thunhun of the shapeshifting of the Tleilaxu face dancers. The final product was a three dimensional version of other dimensions.

"The image resembles a tree of modular functions." Yanima looked up to her sister and asked, "Each bud represents a universe?"

“Exactly. But watch what happens when I interpolate the influence of the Ones With Many Faces.” Yeshika gestured, and the red haze expanded out of the bud that was our universe and cascaded into the buds that represented the multiverse.

Thunhun reacted, “You mean to tell me they are expanding into other dimensions beyond our own universe?”

“Think about it: If humans from the scattering could have explored other universes, thousands of years ago, why can’t these creatures conquer other universes?” Yeshika pointed to the device and the image disappeared.

“There are no easy solutions to this dilemma.”

Yanima spoke directly, “Yeshika, Thunhun and I are here because we need to find Dune. We have a theory about Sheeana, and we need to find her, talk with her. We need to be the ones to take the step.” Before Yeshika could answer, the doors of the chamber swung open forcibly and several of Yeshika’s personal guard entered, marching in the half trot of a police action.

“What is the meaning of this? Who has given you—” Yeshika was cut off by the entrance of Nro Pathay. Yeshika noticed the small details that even a prana-bindu mimic would have missed.

This is not Nro!

For a moment all were silent. Then, the noise of shapeshifting ensued. To watch a Face Dancer metamorphose was a sight difficult to adapt to, unless of course one was Tleilaxu. Even with the strong Mentat training inherent across the Fish Speaker Schools, the image of flesh twisting, transforming both in shape, color and texture, was more than the senses could digest. Mentats had shared the same homeworld with the Tleilaxu in ancient times, Thunhun thought, and still the sight of the half dozen guards and Pathay transforming was unnerving.

So, these are Master Face Dancers that have infiltrated the Ixian homeworld. Between Ix and the Guild, I wonder how far they extend outside the Integral Economic regions of GIOAD.

The sound of the shapeshifting in such a quiet and enclosed space was most unnerving. As no one spoke aloud, the cracklings of cartilage articulating into new positions, that scrapings of muscles across bones and joints and the simple shifting of clothing raised a cacophony that triggered a flood of questions in Yeshika’s mind.

So many among us and we never even suspected. All our precautions useless against these monsters!

After the faux Ixians had revealed their Tleilaxu origins, the Face Dancer who had been Nro Pathay now returned to his neutral state and was the first to break the speaking silence.

“Permit me to show myself in my true form, Supreme Technocrat Ampre.” The Face Dancer’s tone was low and respectful, almost sensitive to the difficulty of the present situation. “You may continue to call me Nro Pathay, as you would find that persona most familiar to relate to on a personal level. Or I may offer to you a new persona, Lrolan, with whom you may feel more comfortable speaking to. We have no root persona, but Lrolan

was an ancient diplomat and seems appropriate for the situation.”

They have no names! This is the mark of one to whom hive culture itself is an ancient creation.

Thunhun took the words to their ultimate limit, that the Master Face Dancers had a hive culture. Lrolan’s choices of the words ‘persona’ and ‘relate’ — these words spoke of some new development.

Have these Face Dancers rebelled against the dictate of an advanced hive culture like the Ones With Many Faces?

The implications of a hive culture gone to extremes taxed the limits of his mind, geared as it was towards Spice Dreaming. Nevertheless, Thunhun was firstly a historian, and the outcome of much of his deliberation was already known.

Master Face Dancers! These rebels represent a fringe group. Interaction with Individual persona has an attraction for them. This is their Returning, from a hive that has outlawed Individuation to the degree of genocide.

Yeshika tempered her anger. “How long have you been Nro Pathay?”

Not replaced but have been. She accepts him and is already accessing the potential ally in this new Lrolan.

“Only recently. I would have continued to remain hidden by his visage if not for the haste with which our Spice Dreamers seek the Sheeana.”

Yanima interrupted, “So you know that she is still alive?”

“More than that. She plans. As do the Ones With Many Faces plan, as do we all plan. The Sheeana wishes our coming. Perhaps she even wills it from the hidden Dune.”

Yeshika Ampre considered the options and offered, “You ask for much. If I reveal the quantum encryption that hides the hidden Dune, do I rescue our universe from the Ones With Many Faces, only to surrender to our being the playthings of the Master Face Dancers?” Rumors a thousand years old implied that the Master Face Dancers were linked with the Handlers of Futars during the Returning, and that the overall impression of them were enslavers of humanity. Yeshika turned her back to the group and walked toward a small table by the room’s largest window. She lifted from the top a small device, a simple crystal storage pin, not larger than a needle, the kind used to transfer data from a neural implant.

Nro/Lrolan spoke to her while her back was still turned. “Perhaps we have something else to offer you in return.” As Yeshika inserted the storage pin into a cranial slot behind her left ear, she took notice of something in the pattern of words that Nro/Lrolan was using. Her Ampre-Noree training embodied the height of all Ixian technological thinking. Patterns, cryptography, analysis were all second nature to her line.

Lrolan speaks from his own will, but does not notice the code behind his ‘choice’ of words?

Yeshika needed to hear him speak more, to decode what she suspected.

A message from Nro Pathay?

Yeshika continued the conversation. “What is your offer?”

“Give the pin to Thunhun and Yanima. I shall send three of my companions with them

to the hidden Dune and Sheeana. However, Yeshika Ampre, you should accompany me to a new destination. We shall depart for the original planet Dune, to behold what this world has become.”

There it is, a Fibonacci Sequence within the placement of letters in his phraseology. First, third, fifth... thirteenth.

Yeshika decoded a short message.

‘Ix true.’ Nro is still true to Ix. What does this mean?

Lrolan’s guard motioned Yeshika toward Thunhun and Yanima. Yeshika handed the pin to Yanima, and cupped her hands around her sisters.

Two groups leave now for two Dunes. Noree watch over us, as Sheeana surely does.

Chapter 14

SHAITAIN: *“Where do you find yourself now?”*
HERMIT: *“There is only man and Shai-Hulud here.”*
SHAITAIN: *“What of the past and the future?”*
HERMIT: *“They meet as we do now, standing in the desert sands.”*
SHAITAIN: *“What does the desert’s voice say now?”*
HERMIT: *“That Time and the Observer must stand still with each other.
This and this alone.”*
SHAITAIN: *“What of the Other Voices?”*
HERMIT: *“All take shelter from the winds of the sandstorm.”*
SHAITAIN: *“Are you not but water?”*
HERMIT: *“Is Shai-Hulud not the fire of the sun?”*
SHAITAIN: *“What action will you take?”*
HERMIT: *“Waiting.”*
SHAITAIN: *“Then the sandworm shall consume you.”*

— The Apocrypha of the Hermit

The thunder of the approaching lighters grew louder. Teg counted out loud to make their numbers known.

“Two, three ships... Scytale, we need to be armed if we are going to save any of our lives.” Scytale made a quick hand gesture to his guards. Moments later, several war-mules returned with plasmaguns. Duncan and Teg each were handed plasmarifles, and Teg motioned positions to the various men. Sounds of energy weapons discharging could be heard outside of the Neo-Tleilax Center. Two of Scytale’s burley personal guards attended the only entrance to the chamber.

Duncan thought of Paul.

His fate rests in the hands of Rebecca and the men Teg has worked so hard to train.

Teg was ordering war-mules to key positions. He turned to Duncan. “You’d best move Scytale back to safer point. I’ll send word to the Rabbi’s men that we have a situation.” Now sooner did Duncan look at Scytale than the chamber’s door vaporized with the characteristic haze from a plasma blast. As the haze cleared, the two guards lay slumped on the floor. As plasma blasts pierced the haze from outside, Duncan grabbed Scytale by his arm and jerked him to a rear door of the chamber.

Teg backpedaled behind the room’s communications console, which Scytale used to monitor the axlotl production rooms as well as communicate with the various Masters on Dune below. Teg watched as several war-mules were blasted by plasma-fire coming from outside. Under his command they rallied with return fire.

“You three, retreat back with me! The rest, return fire until my men arrive! We need more men!” The smell of plasma burn just hit his nostrils as he launched into action.

Teg covered the retreat of three of Scytale’s personal guards, and then headed for the same door that Duncan moved through. Just before he entered he caught a glimpse of the

enemy that was advancing into the Center.

Ones with Many Faces! Not Master Face Dancers! Not even remotely human, these monsters. How did they find their way here? Must have discovered the foldspace encryption.

Duncan and Scytale ran past several halls that led to axlotl labs. Scytale fought Duncan's grasp.

"They will destroy all of our work. We have acquired new permutations of gholia cells. I cannot leave this work behind!" *Ten years of gholia blending will be lost today.*

Duncan held firmly onto Scytale. They ran around a corner that turned past the white walls of the axlotl chambers only to find more Ones With Many Faces.

They must have found a second entrance!

Several vaguely humanoid creatures blocked the end of the long, sterile hallway. Duncan look for an alternate route, but there was none.

Trapped.

Then the Ones With Many Faces performed the strange melding that had earned their name to the few survivors that lived to tell what these abhorrent face dancers had evolved into. The shape shifting took on a new dimension as the humanoid figures began to meld into each other and into a trap. Soon, a web of flesh and limbs snapped towards them.

Duncan's heightened reflexes allowed him to both throw Scytale backwards and roll out of the way of a dozen arms grabbing to constrain them.

Where are their weapons? They want to capture us alive.

Duncan fired into the multicreature with his short plasma rifle, after rolling back out of its grasp. Each discharge blasted a series of holes into the centralized torsos.

Big enough to jump through.

The creature screamed as many screams. His breath quick and heart racing, Duncan looked back quickly to see Scytale was gone, turned back around the corner.

No time to get him now.

Ignoring the abhorrent stench, Duncan leapt through the wound, out through the other side of the multicreature.

A quick reversal and Duncan was firing several bursts into the back of the creature. Heads relocated behind itself to find its lost prey, but it was too late. The multicreature lay immobile before him. An explosion sounded from the axlotl chambers.

As much as I regret to, I must reach that old Tleilaxu Master before these things do.

Duncan ran back toward the direction of the blast. Teg was still by the entrance of the main chamber, several war-mules firing blasts into the primary breach.

"They are not advancing very hard. I think this might have been a distraction. That's when I heard this second explosion." Duncan and Teg ran down the hall in the direction of this second explosion. There Scytale had been enveloped in a multicreature similar to the first one, a cage of limbs and elongated hands the held a struggling Scytale as it moved away. On six legs, with a motion that crossed a spider and a horse, it raced towards a hole that breached the end of the axlotl hall to the outside.

Scytale began to scream, but a cupped hand gagged off his cries as it inserted itself into and around his mouth.

Teg raised his plasma weapon to fire, but the multicreature, with blinding reaction speed, exposed Scytale, positioning him between the possibility of plasma fire and itself.

If we so much as take aim, it watches our move and puts Scytale into the path of our plasma fire.

Duncan thought to fire at the lighter outside — but the multicreature shifted Scytale again into the line of fire. Duncan and Teg were several strides behind it when it ran out through the sizzling hole in the wall. Once outside, it bolted with the speed of a horse at full stride towards the ship. Before Duncan or Teg could react, a second multicreature blocked the hole, and began to advance towards them.

The two stopped in their tracks to fire at the monster, but over the crackle of plasma discharges and the flailing of the creatures limbs, the thunder of the lighter's engines roared. Within moments, this second multicreature was destroyed, and Duncan and Teg watched as the lighter lifted off and disappeared from sight.

Sounds of plasma fire diminished as the other lighters lifted away. Teg was commanding the war-mules to keep one of the multicreatures alive, but Duncan thoughts were on Scytale.

They must have needed on one of us. But where will they take you, Scytale? This is a question to which I hope you will be able to provide us an answer.

Chapter 15

I wondered what we would find on this hidden Dune, especially what became of the gholia Muad'Dib. Would this world treat him as a figurehead or god, these thousands of years after his rebirth? Would he even surpass or make obsolete the idea of the Kwitsatz Haderach? What did I expect to find here — a perfect reproduction of orthodox Puritanism, a retro-throwback to the degree of spice harvesting and riding of the sandworms?

— Memoirs of Yanima Ampre

The encryption key pin was removed from Yanima's cranial socket and given over to the Master Face Dancer, who wore the form of a Ixian no-ship pilot, before they entered the vessel. Thunhun forget she was Ixian and the extent to which Ixian culture had propelled them since the mythic times of the God Tyrant.

And to think there was once a Bulterian Jihad against such things. Scholars will Spice Dream that time for centuries before any judgment can be made whether they were right or not.

The other Master Face Dancers that accompanied them wore the faces of Yanima's Spice Dreamer companions, and they entered the vessel as if this were all so routine. The pilot took his place in front of the metallic pivot-station that served as navigation control. Yanima watched his every move as they entered the vessel, especially the location of the pin after he had programmed the no-ship's spacefolding construct.

Inside the breast pocket. The one with the flap. That pin is the most valued secret in the universe right now.

Yanima sat close to Thunhun as the Ixian vessel began the foldspace process that would take them to the Dune hidden since the Sheeana times.

These are still the Sheeana times.

Yanima grabbed Thunhun's hand tightly, a gesture he thought of as affection. As the foldspace process commenced, he turned to read her facial expression.

Yanima knows something that she is not telling.

As the moments slowed, the two entered into a subtle form of the Persona Sharing that was not noticed by the Master Face Dancers present. The two let thoughts pass between them, masked as the stray thoughts of ordinary consciousness, but coded in the personal memories each had learned to use as code in the private languages that perhaps only spies, thieves, and in this case lovers, learn to use.

Thunhun received her Thoughts, merely 'overhearing' what she had to Share:

Yeshika always hid things in the strangest places when we were girls. We were left alone to play twin princesses. Tiny places.

Then, when she was Emperor, she had to contend with the likes of the extremists like Nro. Personas like his are never truly forgotten. Threads.

Yeshika always won these games. That's why she is the politician and I am the dreamer.

Thunhun kept from thinking the connections, but felt the implications.

Threading a needle. Nro Pathay not exactly gone.

Yanima distracted him from his thoughts by asking a question.

“What I still can’t figure out is why Tej-Chiani?”

“What do you mean?” Thunhun did not quite follow her.

“Just that — if Chani lived during the time of Muad’Dib, and Teg lived during the time of Sheeana, thousands of years later, why have a Fish Speaker School based on their common bloodline? There never was a genepool precedent to begin with.”

“Perhaps our friends the Master Face Dancers supplied the inspiration.” Yanima was not satisfied.

It just doesn’t follow. Why this mix?

The faux-Ixian crew was taking positions for the exit from foldspace. Yanima kept her eyes on the one who carried the encryption pin.

I guess our long-kept secret worked. Have to keep an eye on that one. He is our key to more than getting home.

As foldspace equalized into real space, they came upon the Dune Revenant. The first thing they noticed were the five moons.

As in the Spice Dream.

One of the Master Face Dancers, disguised as one of the younger Spice Dreamers, Hilia, chose this moment to revert to a more neutral form. His features filled and dampened, so that he seemed more rounded. Yanima presumed this was perhaps learned behavior, a more relaxed state for such a being. The mute-featured one that was Hilia barked a quick command.

“Prepare for entry into the planets orbit.” They had chosen a landing site outside of the populated areas, but close enough for the party to quickly reach a place where they could find more information. Their first order of business was procuring stillsuits for the desert. Yanima contemplated the hasty plans that the Master Face Dancers seemed to enact.

They want us to blend in, in order to find Sheeana. How do they know that Sheeana won’t be the one finding us?

The stillsuits were easily procured. A band of indigenous people were encountered within an hour after landing. Thunhun noticed the resemblance between these people, who were traveling by foot with a tall post and its horizontal flag, and peoples from ancient times.

Fremen. And they carry the totem of a desert pilgrimage.

The elder of the group spoke first, “I am Aryn of the pilgrimage of Sia’aba. What fools or demons are here in the deep desert without stillsuits?” The Master Face Dancers approached them while others guarded Yanima and Thunhun. Before Thunhun realized what was going on and could scream a warning, the Masters had slain the small band quickly in a blur of motion as if a swarm, absorbing their Fremen knowledge and appearance. The one carrying the pin took the role of the band’s leader, who had been named Aryn.

“Quickly, into these suits. Keep the bodies, for we may need them for their water.” Thunhun knew it was foolish to resist wearing the stillsuits of these dead men. His sense

of history made him realize that he needed to go along with the Master Face Dancers' plans.

"You are on the shore of a new sea." Thunhun heard the voice, and he looked to Yanima to see if she had heard it, too.

That voice was Sheeana's.

Chapter 16

Do the Bene Tleilax take on Leto's Golden Path? Leto's path is of endless creation. This is the inverted Platonism, where the truth is not in the ideal, but in the created, the world made manifest by the people who create it. This is the religion, the true faith. The science of Gholia becomes the rebirth of Dune itself. In a Tleilaxu Universe, the role of 'nature' changes. We are no longer under the spell of the natural, which implies a walk through the woods, but instead of the manifest, how we each are tied into the act of creation. No longer are we tossed by nature, tied to the act of creation by mere biologism. Listen, for it is the sound of the artist of being.

— Sheeana's New Paths

Within the no-ship of the Ones With Many Faces, Scytale was held captive in a status of intermixed bodies. He wondered what their agenda was and whether Duncan would bother to save him.

They want me for some reason. Did this all have something to do with the factions that Duncan suspected? Do they want to study me as an extended individual? To thwart their own dissident factions? Except for perhaps Duncan, I am the oldest singular personality.

The Ones with Many Faces had become agitated across the hive. Scytale sensed somehow their every thought as he was among them.

This faction wishes to explore the Individual to undermine its mystique. They would have like to have captured Duncan, too, I am sure.

The individual was something they had lost touch with, something the Master Face Dancers wished to preserve (perversely). However, — since they could no longer be individual, but they could assume by touch all the personalities of an individual — they lost sight of what it meant to be an individual.

There were no Individuals that they could study, no Individual existed at the level they needed. That's why they need the hyper-Individual, an immortal. Duncan and myself were close to that.

Scytale thought to himself, but found himself saying the words aloud.

"They were gods — and they were looking for God. You know not the idea of faith in God." Scytale felt something shift across the base of his skull. Then a quick spike of pain as something pierced his skin by his spine.

They are probing me. Some organic version of the T-Probe.

He found his thoughts flowing out, as if he were daydreaming and someone was keeping copious notes. Scytale heard a voice come from inside his mind.

"Greetings. Please refer to me as Thrynthl." *He uses the name of an ancient Mentat, a Tleilaxu mythic name. His accent... Strange... garbled.*

Scytale's thoughts raced faster than he could take hold of them.

They've blocked my brain's ability to stop thinking. I am along for the ride.

"Please do not resist the probe. We who are the Ones With Many Faces only wish to

close off our origins, so that we may more openly follow the wealth of paths through the eternal chaos.” Perhaps they were simply the next step in the progress of life to transform to this level. Scytale somehow found himself relaxing as the thoughts began to slip past his awareness.

Didn't galaxies collide in so ominous a destruction that no semblance of their former shapes exist afterwards — only the nebulae of shattered suns and a new central core of commingled gravities amassed obstinate to all permanence.

Damn the Tyrant God... couldn't we have discovered the nature of Duncan sooner? All those gholas... the set-back was the breeding program... reflecting on our shared history all our precautions and faith... how separate Duncan and I are.

The Ones with Many Faces had taken memory down to a cellular consciousness and beyond. They were transcending the limits of physical matter, and in the process they were arriving on the opposite side of the bell curve — infinite consciousness moved toward the absence of consciousness, or at least a transformation. They could revert at times to a group of separate sub-entities — although they seldom did — that number in the quadrillions they often traveled in groups of various numbers of pods, each pod made of several sub-groups. The Ones With Many Faces would survive and expand. Scytale realized this even as the biologic T-probe continued its sweep of his past.

The multilived personas always come back... the entity travels alone... Always two, the current life and the lives that have gone... The image of a great worm with the face of Sheeana... Kull Wahad... the God the is both gendered... my faith even taunts me. We were all hemmed in after all. All of our grandiose schemes to push the limits of the Language of God, to make manifest the genetic grandeur in a body that was the ultimate worship, have come to ruin.

The Tleilaxu from the Scattering have Returned, yet they bring the true Integration... they have become emerged as... the Ones With Many Faces... Horrific and Marvelous. We never dreamed they would achieve so much so... The one calling himself Thrynthl was performing some kind of altered use of the biologic probe...

Scytale could almost feel it, but he couldn't quite grasp it. All at once he realized that Thrynthl was probing each of his multilevels individually, separating them and recombining them in yet another process.

Scytale shuddered as his years slowly unfolded under the commands of the Ones With Many Faces.

We have all just become a bit obsolete.

Chapter 17

*The paths of the observer and observed cross.
The paths of human and sandworm cross.
The paths of the conscious cross.
The future is now Shai-Hulud.
The destiny of humanity is Shaitain.
The angel of melange carries its message.
That Shai-Hulud consumes me is the fate of humanity.
That the Spice Dream holds its secret and all secrets is the fate of Shaitain.
That the melange is the messenger is the fate of all futures.*

— Sheeana’s New Paths

In his third year among the sisters, the sexual impulses began to stir within the young Paul ghola. As Teg was closest in age to the Paul ghola physically, some six years his elder, Paul was more apt to ask him about matters of sex. Teg’s sexuality was a game he played with the younger renegade sisters, and he even entertained a certain reluctant relationship with Maia.

“I have read in my histories that Jessica was the mate of Leto. Are you and Maia mates now?” Teg had been intimate with Maia soon after the capture of Scytale, several months before, but by no means were they mates. On this day, the day that Paul’s memories were to be awakened, Paul had approached Teg on sexual matters which he felt uncomfortable asking his mentor Duncan.

“What is the power that the Honored Matres have over men? I mean, how does it work?” This counseling occupied Teg with the thought of his Atrides origins.

This is a new world, where bloodlines such as mine, Siona bloodlines, all Atrides, are falling into oblivion.

“Sex is not a common thing, boy. It is not a toy, no matter what you see among Sheeana’s sisters or rumors you hear about the powers of the Honored Matres. Talk to Mother Rebecca, I’m sure she’ll give you an earful.”

Paul thought for a moment. “Duncan always speaks of training, of combat, of Mentat skills. Yet he never speaks of his bond with Murbella.” Duncan was not an easy topic. His sexual co-enthrallment with Murbella made him a strange choice for an adolescent’s advice.

Paul asks now, but soon he will remember all as Muad’Dib, as I was naïve before Duncan made me aware of my past life. Your only answer is silence today, boy, for the truth will come all too soon.

Teg pondered the time-honored traditions of family names. Harkonnen. Atrides. Corrino.

“This is a coin that no longer trades.”

This was the dawn of a new age, where key personas began to outweigh the collective path. Of course Paul and Leto and Siona... all Atrides, and all their genes were the propa-

gation of their uniqueness.

But their status as individuals? It is just that humanity itself has invested in this family's success.

By now, Sheeana and her sisters, the Rabbi's party, Teg, Duncan and Paul had all settled in the Tleilaxu sietch, built for them alone to serve the Tleilaxu faith. Since the abduction of Scytale, many of the Tleilaxu from Novo Tleilax had come to settle here, lead by the old Tleilaxu Nahual, although most of the Old Masters choose to stay in isolation on their home moon. It would be here that Paul's other memories would be awakened. It would be here that Paul would drink the Water of Life.

The sietch was becoming a working copy of Sietch Tabr, complete with new gholas additions produced by the Tleilaxu on the Novo Tleilax moon, called L'Katib among those gholas speaking the Fremen tongue.

Teg noticed that all the gholas seemed young, none aged beyond adolescence.

Why keep them at this age? Surely the Tleilaxu could age the gholas to an exact preset age, especially with their new T-probe enhanced axlotl tanks.

Teg took special notice of a Fremen gholas woman. She was wearing a traditional still-suit, walking with several other Fremen gholas.

As Teg watched her, realized who the gholas was, his blood warmed perhaps as it had before only in battle.

This gholas is Chani! The beloved wife of Paul.

Teg was no longer the younger gholas of his former self. He was no longer the father of his children or the husband of his long dead wife. He was no longer the general who was now spending a second life in service to a style of humanity he saw fit to fight to protect. As the Chani gholas walked past, Miles Teg was simply a man.

She is beautiful.

Teg felt strange that the gholas Paul took no notice of this new batch of gholas, as they approached a waterstill to fill the moisture-locked containers that they would use to carry water to the workers building the sietch. Teg watched her every move, as she waited her turn to fill the synthskin with water. Paul seemed impatient, wondering what could so distract Teg.

She is not Chani to him yet.

In the moment that Teg turned to Paul, trying to remember what it was they had been discussing, he turned back to see the Chani gholas standing with arms stretched out, offering the water in the synthskin.

She spoke, "Water for the living?" It was a question of the old Fremen sort.

This gholas is the copy of my ancestor.

Teg's eyes told her she was beautiful. Chani responded, as Teg merged a sip-line to the water source, "Your eyes seem the most thirsty, Miles Teg." Blood rushed to Teg's head.

"We thought you might be charmed by her." The voice took Teg by surprise. It was that of the Tleilaxu Nahual, who had come up behind him. Chani and the other Fremen gholas turned and continued their task of bringing water to the living as the old Tleilaxu Master goaded Teg.

They toy with the fabric of my being. Still I am a Bashar.

Nahual, accompanied by one of his war mules, spoke his mind. "I never agreed with Scytale's 'fascination' with you Teg — or with Duncan. But you both play a great role in the coming of the new Muad'Dib."

Teg sneered, "I'm still Atrides, is that what you're saying?"

"Of course. You represent something very special to our Paul. You are both a father and a son, are you not? I thought it only appropriate to learn from that arrangement with an additional stimulus."

I'm meant to be drawn to Chani.

"You speak of 'the faith', Nahual, but all around you are the attitudes and implements of war."

"You are a warrior, Miles Teg. I only offer you the chance to wage a war within yourself. You will be both the victor and the vanquished. And you will serve the faith." Nahual motioned for the war mule to follow him, with a gesture one would make to a feral dog. As they walk off, Nahual asked, "What would young Paul think of this new development were he to be awakened?"

Paul had been confused by the entire scene. "I think that Fremen girl liked you, Miles. You could tell by her eyes, her smile. This is the kind of girl I could love."

Teg responded with silence.

Chapter 18

*Did not Muad'Dib come to show that universe belonged to the Fremmen?
And at what price did the Fremmen drink from the cup of His Elixir of Life?
And did not the Tyrant-God Guldur show that Fremmen soul could be lost if we
strayed off of His Golden Path? As water was once scarce, so was Dune scarce.
And Sia'aba has come to show the Fremmen that on Her New Paths Dune itself
is no longer scarce but rains upon the universe.*

— From the Book of Sia'aba

The streets were littered with a scattering of people. The smells were overwhelming to Thunhun and Yanima, but soon they acclimated to the odors. The smells changed from those of filth to the local air. Throughout their march into this Fremmen village the Master Face Dancers were their constant companions.

They mimicked these Fremmen-like people exactly and even offered Thunhun and Yanima types of common greetings, ways to speak the dialect, and how to carry themselves in a way that would make them seem more natural.

Yanima remembered something the Old Fremmen had said before the Master Faces Dancers had killed him and worn his form.

"We come from the Pilgrimage of Sia'aba" ... Sia'aba is Sheeana!

They met with little assistance to finding Sheeana. Although many were familiar with the name Sia'aba, many spoke of her as if she was common as a Crucifix would have been to a Terran Christian. Few regarded her as real, and many would rant about Shaitain stealing their soul or murmur of their village destroyed by Shai-Hulud. Most scurried away or turned to a chant of a derivation of the ancient Islamiat tongue born anew on this world.

They stopped at vendor of foodstuffs, who cooked in plain view while the patrons sat beneath tents that shielded them from the sun's hot rays. Yanima noticed the heat source to be one she was unfamiliar with, a small glowing diadem beneath each cooking vessel, surrounded by a web of what looked to be a dozen centrally focused tiny mirrors.

They use the Sun to superheat some type of crystal. But it can't be diamonite, it wouldn't hold crystalline structure for more than a few uses. And how would they make it cheaply?

"Strangers are welcomed here always. Our Duncan told us ones as you would be presenting soon." The server reached out both his hands in a sort of greeting, and Yanima returned the gesture, embracing each hand to each.

The dialect is strange, but he is speaking our language. 'Ones as you'? Are we so different to what they have become? 'Presenting'? Do they span multiple timestreams?

Thunhun also returned the double handshake and spoke to their host.

"May we meet the one you call Duncan?"

"Of course you may. But first it is the time for you to join us to eat. Then we will take you to the Duncan." The food was a spice Harayra, served with a flat bread. The dal-like stew was spiced with what could only be Melange and something hot, but the dish was served with a dollop of a paste made from sweet dry fruits. One could mix in the sweet to

counter the hot of the spices, without having to drink much water. After eating, Thunhun was eager to find the Duncan they spoke of.

“Can you take us to the Duncan now? I would like for him to see us.”

“He cannot see you, for he is blind, but he will see more of you than most. He can see what you think with those metal eyes of his.”

Metal eyes. Like the Duncans from the Idah-Hayt Schools.

Before long, they had a new guide to take them to this Duncan with metal eyes. Only one of the Master Face Dancers accompanied them, the others discretely excusing themselves from the party.

After a short walk past the open sietches they were before the Duncan. And the guide was instructed by the Duncan to be left alone with Thunhun and Yanima.

His metal eyes glared at Yanima and Thunhun. He was the ghola of Duncan with the metal eyes. He held a pack of Dune Tarot cards as he sat upon the Fremmen spice rug that was woven with the particular designs. The night had come instantly, and the two inner rapid moons had risen to mid sky in a matter of moments, while far overhead the large moon al-Akrab shone full at the skies zenith. The Duncan spoke, “Sia’aba awaits your coming. Please sit to await the fate of your reading.” Yanima assumed he meant a reading of the Dune tarot and asked how he knew that they would need a reading.

“The reading will come soon, but first we must await the proper moment. Somewhere, the Again Muad’Dib begins his spice voyage. We await this awakening that is already long past.”

Thunhun thought to himself, *Does he spice dream the past? Does he await some synergy from some mystical moment past to amplify his reading? What aspect of Duncan’s Net has this ghola discovered, and how has he learned to measure the pulses of its reoccurrence to tap into its powers?*

“Somewhere Sia’aba dreams the first of all Fremmen to ingest the spice.” Yanima had the urge to drop into a Spice Dream, to scope the Again Muad’Dib’s first ingestion of the Water of Life.

The Duncan answered her unspoken desire. “Sia’aba agrees that you should learn about that time. But she asks that you look not at the events but at something else.” At this moment the metal-eyed Duncan drew a card from his tarot deck and placed it face up. The card was the Wanderer.

“The Wanderer carries a bundle, but knows not what the bundle contains. So should you carry all you see, but walk no fixed path, with the rhythmless desert step.”

By now Thunhun and Yanima had taken their places, seated in front of the Duncan on the spice carpet. Yanima saw the significance of the next card the Duncan turned around. Thunhun noticed that Yanima seemed to be drawn into Spice Dreaming due to her profound sensitivity and skill. He held tight her hand as the Duncan’s metal eyes rose from the next card turned.

The Card of the Alam al-Mithal. It speaks the judgement: “The sleeper must awaken!”

With this Yanima dipped into the throes of the spice dream.

This dream was unlike any she had had before. The sound of the Duncan’s voice seemed

within the dream. Was she dreaming Thunhun's hand? She lost a sense of the present at first, it was only the shapes in the carpet that kept her rooted in the present.

Focus on the symbols in the carpet. And the tarot cards of the Duncan.

Spice Dreaming had been something altogether different before, and it had always been about the past.

There! That pattern. Murbella writes the play The Vindication of Saint Alia! And there, a gholia Paul takes the Water of Life besides the first Muad'Dib. And another Duncan sees me.

Now something had forced her mind along a different path, a new way that she had never discovered before.

Now the future takes shape upon the carpet. Sheeana, Sia'aba is the Worm.

Yanima still could not tell if the Duncan turned over the next card or if she dreamed it from some forgotten past.

The Wawi. The man and the woman with hands joined who stare at the rising Moon. The Two who are One.

The environment had suddenly become the same as the body, and suddenly she knew. The carpet seemed to have life around her. More so, she realized that she was Dreaming the carpet, the Tarot, and Thunhun's hand that had seemed so real a moment before. Yanima understood that what she was tasting was something unpalatable to the Ones With Many Faces. From within her Dream, open and coexistent with her now, Yanima became the locus of a new disclosure.

Both times... all times are now! This was the secret of the Kwitsatz Haderach. The al-wahid al-kathir, it is the One / Many.

The Spice Dream will be the reality!

Yanima emerged from the Spice Dream, finding the island of the present upon the carpet first and in the touch of Thunhun's hand. But her eyes saw both the dream and the real as one. Thunhun was still holding Yanima's hand, as she grabbed the other one. The Duncan turn over the last card, the fate card.

The Universe.

Yanima pulled Thunhun's hands to her lips and reassured him, "Sheeana will awaken us all."

Chapter 19

The Metaphor was extended when we humans were introduced into the equation of worms and spice. Worm. Spice. Humankind. The naturally occurring and this new nature, that was born out of the courtship of man and spice, were wedded eternal with the joining of man and worm.

— The Gospel of Sia'aba

The ceremony of the ghola Paul's ingestion of the spice was to take place at the sietch of the young ghola of Liet Kynes. Rebecca was handling the procession and the actual application of the Water of Life herself, and a number of sisters that made up her party. Rebecca had been resistant to the plans of Sheeana and retained more of the traditions of the Bene Gesserit. Sheeana saw it fitting that Rebecca administer the entire affair in her absence.

The members of Rebecca's party that were or had become full Bene Gesserit sisters had done so on this Dune Revenant with the aid of the Water of Life from Sheeana's worms. As had happened several times since the arrival of the no-ship, a worm had been prepared by the members of Rebecca's party by drowning in water, thus releasing the toxin that would become the ultimate test of the ghola Paul's future.

We tamper with another Kwitsatz Haderach today. My father would not approve were he alive today.

Rebecca's father had been the leader of her party. They were Jews, which meant nothing to anyone else at that age. But to Rebecca and her party, they represented a group that had kept a common tie back to the origins of humanity several tens of thousands of years ago.

That we still survive may only represent how stubborn to change humans really are. That we keep our traditions may be not only a sign of our being Jews, but it may truly be the only thing that unites us as humans.

Duncan led the ghola Paul an open area within the chamber of the Kynes sietch, flanked by ghola Fremmen and Tleilaxu onlookers as well as by members of Sheeana's sisterate. Sheeana herself was absent surprisingly to many, although Duncan and Rebecca knew exactly where she was at this time.

She seeks the little makers even as we proceed. The fact that she is not present speaks to some impending haste in all these situations that follow.

As Duncan left Paul in the hands of these sisters, Teg and Chani were seen arriving together towards the rear of Kynes chamber. Duncan watched as Liet took notice of the two, and he himself thought it strange.

Miles, walk with care. You're toying with the image of the wife of a possible Muad'Dib.

As Paul sat upon the Fremmen styled rug, Rebecca and her sisters moved to form a circle around him. Duncan knew that Sheeana had already seen this event, and thought back to her decision to embark on her journey. She had announced her leaving to Duncan, and of course to her sisters.

Before Sheeana had departed into the desert alone the previous night, she had met with her sisters in a last meeting that would become a ritual of some future religion. Sheeana spoke simply to each sister and told them that she would return to claim each of them. Then she left, but before she headed out into the desert she spoke one last time with Duncan. Duncan recalled this meeting as Paul was prepared for the Water of Life.

Sheeana spoke of his reuniting with Murbella, of their forming a school that would continue the progression that humanity had been on since its birth.

“Worms and Spice had once proved to be the great realizations of Paul — and Kynes’ secret. The Tleilaxu from L’Katib have made a great effort to resurrect not only the bodies but the memories of our Fremmen. Learn especially from the gholia Kynes, Duncan.”

“You talk about the Worms and Spice as if it is a set quantity, as if it were part of our humanity.”

“Not a set quantity, but a metaphor. Only Leto saw it as a metaphor to enact his Golden Path — a way for humanity he would never be able to participate wholly in.”

“I knew him, remember. I knew him as more than a man, but he had the dreams of a father. A father that sired dreams of his forebears.”

Duncan looked at this Paul gholia and wondered what he symbolized in this universe. This was not some naïve Arrakis as the ancestors had known. When Sheeana was transformed into a sandworm, Duncan knew that her role would not be that of tyrant or savior.

To ask of the futures of Paul and Sheeana seems a misuse of language. There is nothing that can be said that could encompass the roles of these beings.

Rebecca’s sisters flanked the Paul gholia, but it was Maia that administered the Water of Life, pouring its blue liquid into the gholia Paul’s mouth.

He has yet to be awakened to his memories, yet Sheeana insisted that it be carried out this way.

Teg shot a glance at Duncan, the only other present who had been awakened from past memories. The look was of disapproval.

And horror.

As the Water of Life began to creep into Paul’s being and the twisted hold of its transforming agony overtook him, Duncan heard Sheeana’s challenge from the prior night.

“Duncan, you would like to understand this mystery, but it is not available to you. You are a part of Leto’s path. And it is that path that I can only obscure, as I act to open us to the New Paths. You live in a beautiful but deadly paradox, Duncan. In this regard I envy you, and I pity you.” The gholia Paul let out a scream, and it reminded Duncan of Murbella’s own brushes with madness and her possession by the memories of Alia.

All horrors come back to Harkonnen in my mind. It is my first and most cherished scar. My measure of the human and the inhuman.

Upon the ingestion of the Water of Life, Paul felt as if his soul was faded away in the trance. He could not move, even moving the fingers on his hands caused great pain. The muscles around his eyes tightened, and forced his eyes open, yet they were no longer the way images entered his mind. They stared blankly past the never. The beating of his heart

grew faint, his respiration almost arrested.

The Water Agony comes!

Rebecca glanced up, only to see Duncan look away.

Paul writhed as not only his personal memories, but the memories of all his ancestors flooded into his mind. Memories raced into his consciousness and then down, thousands of years a second.

He screamed out in a perfectly accented Aramaic, "Betrayed, on this my Last Passover!" Rebecca caught the reference.

Lambs' blood for protection, yet he is his own Lamb.

Paul again gave a long cry, "Why! Why bring me back again!"

Paul let out a sobbing "No" as the Sisters gathered around him, attending his weakened body.

Duncan felt the watchers again, from somewhere, and saw himself there among them. Duncan's thoughts escaped from the scene, longing for the only peace he knew. And he found himself focused on the woman he loved.

I no longer belong here. I must return to Murbella.

Chapter 20

Hence we come to know what the ancients knew: That there are two eyes. One eye is that through which he who undergoes transmutation is perceived, while the other eye is that through which the transmutation itself is perceived. These are two of the New Paths that have been made clear to the Possessors of Two Eyes.

— The sayings of Sia'aba

The planet was once known as Dune. Now it was a charred and lifeless rock orbiting its sun. The star had been visible in the skies of forgotten Terra, and had been called Canopus. This was not what concerned Yeshika Ampre as her Master Face Dancer captors escorted her out onto the surface. They wore environmental suits, as the atmosphere had been long burned away during the wars between the Bene Gesserit and the Honored Matres during the Returning. Yeshika thought she heard the sound of falling rain.

Yeshika Ampre was escorted by a Master Face Dancer, while Lrolan and two others walked beside them. She watched Lrolan for a sign that would reveal why they were here.

For a sign of Nro Pathay perhaps.

Lrolan spoke through the communication devices in all the helmets of the environmental suits. “The Master Face Dancers offer everything to you humans, and Heaven, too. We ask for so little in return: Only acceptance of our way to guide you, so that we may cherish this dying thing called the Individual.”

The savor of your humanity was lost long ago. Even your Bene Gesserit could not rekindle its dying fire.

“We do not ask to be saved, we do not ask for Heaven.” Yeshika saw nothing yet, although the presence of the Fibonacci sequence by phoneme and syllable continued to step through its message.

Lrolan smiled through the plaz of the helmet. “We cannot let you face extinction at the hands of those you call the Ones With Many Faces.”

Yeshika remained sober, watching. Then it happened. She noticed the exact moment the change came, although Lrolan's companions did not detect the subtle shift. Lrolan himself never fully realized what was happening to him: By the time Nro Pathay's consciousness reemerged, Lrolan was no longer. Yeshika felt as if she dreamed a phoenix rising from its ashes, but she couldn't tell if it was Nro's rebirth or the rebirth of Dune.

Am I Spice Dreaming? What is happening to me?

Nro Pathay's first thoughts upon re-emerging from the consciousness of the Master Face Dancer were of victory over the body that he now amazingly inhabited.

All my theories were true. Now whose techniques are of value, Yeshika Ampre?

He remained righteous. His first course of action would be to rid them of their Master Face Dancer Companions. Within each of the two sleeves of the cloak that covered the environmental suit were two thin stilettos. Nro made a gesture to Yeshika toward the Master Face Dancer beside her.

Nro plans to kill the two Master Face Dancers beside him, leaving me to deal with the third. And the one inside the ship.

Without warning, the two stilettos flashed from his sleeves, slicing through the robes and into the environmental suits. A hissing sound emerged as the oxygen began to stream from the holes. The Master Face Dancers' shocked faces contorted as they tried to shape shift themselves to plug the holes in their suits, and ward off their leaders attack. But this Lrolan body, guided by its new master, continued to plunge the knives into the suits, and deeper into flesh.

Yeshika allowed the Master Face Dancer to turn his attention toward the commotion and then she acted. She focused the prana-bindu training that had been part of the Hwi Noree line into her cocked fist. Grabbing her victims robes at the shoulder, she waited for his quick turn back toward her to deliver the singular blow. The punch crashed straight through the clear plaz of the environmental suits helmet, mashing plaz fragments and bits of metal past the cracking bones of the frontal skull. Brain death was almost instantaneous.

Yeshika looked up to Nro, but he had already left the two bodies and was running inside of the ship. As he entered the craft to finish off the last of the Master Face Dancers, she caught a glimpse of something at the edge of her peripheral vision. At first it seemed to be some black Ixian artifact of beauty and danger and power, but soon it proved to be but a shadow, cast from a jutting of rock and the metal slag of what was some machine.

An ornithopter or perhaps a spice harvester.

Yeshika forgot about Nro for a moment and about the corpse that lay at her feet and stared at this shadow. The greys and blacks played tricks on her. A gnostic darkness, a point growing from the horizon and illuminating only if in more darkness, as if it said to her: *Look, here it is!*

Something was about to happen here on ancient Dune. This is why the Master Face Dancers were so interested in coming here.

Yeshika hadn't noticed that Nro Pathay had come up beside her.

"Only the two of us now, Technocrat Emperor."

"Explain, Nro Pathay, how you engineered such a turn of events?" Yeshika spoke to his genius and his ego, for she didn't know quite know what she was facing.

Chapter 21

*And thine the Human face, and thine
The human Hands and feet and breath,
Entering thro' the Gates of Birth
And passing thro' the Gates of Death.*

— William Blake, *Jerusalem: To the Jews*

The Little Makers came soon after Sheeana lay down in the deep desert sands, surrounding her body, to which they reacted as they would have were she an open body of water.

This is what they do, encapsulate open bodies of water, or in this case a body containing water. The miracle of this cycle has begun this way countless times.

The skin-which-was-not-her-own had surrounded her for a number of hours, exactly how long she could not tell. The huge quantities of the Spice Melange which she had ingested both to initiate herself into this new mystery and to take off some the painful edge of the transformation blurred her sense of time.

Dull the pain. Gods! I still fear I'll loose consciousness from the agony.

Sheeana used the pain as a fulcrum, prying open more than just a dilation of time. Staring out from eyes squeezed shut, images poured outward, leading from the color-sensitive cone cells in the retina. The form of expressionism emanated from the brilliant clarity of an ever-present awareness.

More sandtrout added themselves to the skin-that-was-not-her-own, and while her body was only in the beginning stages of the change that would transform her one day into a sandworm, her metamorphosed mind was already cracking out of its chrysalis, edging out into the light.

The situation was losing form, the present reality melting, and she slipped outward to a dream...

Sheeana entered Leto's body. Almost sexually. Then all shifted. She was giving birth to Leto, but his Golden Path was looped back upon itself. Again a shift, twisting. She felt Leto in her bowels, her stomach contracted. She was experiencing with all parts of her anatomy and in ways that could only be imagined. (The Ones With Many Faces know these ways.)

"How much had you endured, dear Kinsman. Let us cry this once together." Sheeana reached out to kiss his brow as Leto lay twisted in his own skin of sandtrout. She had been there when he first became the sandworm, or if she hadn't she willed that she was now.

He noticed her and told her feebly, "I am sick."

"Those who are healthy need no medicine."

Leto reached out a hand to her. "Why do you take to the Golden Path?"

Sheeana said nothing, but holding his small child-hand found herself comforting him with a song, her musical voice lulling the infant Leto wide-eyed staring at his father the Prophet and weaving his Golden Path.

Her own pain brought her back in a rapid reshuffling of pasts and futures, reality upon reality realigning to the point where she had entered. She clawed at herself as if the victim of some flesh-eating disease. She observed how some local part of herself was clutching her body in a tight circle, but Sheeana was free from this. She turned to the book she had begun, the visionary tomb that she had penned upon the very history of humanity that first time in the desert.

I'm writing the history of man and worm and spice. It shall be as I write it.

The title had always been there, the next had always been at the heart of all Fremmen perhaps. It had been so for Leto and Muad'Dib. Now she slipped into the book again to continue its history...

The Second Book Of Shai-Hulud

In the days before he first took the spice, the hermit would play games with the great sandworms. He would allow them to take notice of him and rise towards the surface from the depths of the dunes. Then when the worm surfaced, to consume its found prey, it would emerge to find the hermit had vanished. So powerful was his way that he could elude Shaitain himself by burrowing into the sands, or slipping into a shadow, or evaporating like a noontime mirage, which disappears faster than water itself.

So in this way Shai-Hulud was taunted. And the hermit lived on a long time in the desert — longer than even he could remember.

Few others saw him ever, but children remembered tales that their parents would tell of the time that the old desert hermit came to their sietch to repair a stillsuit boot pump. They remembered these tales and held the image of him to adulthood, and they would tell their children. And as adults, these children-grown would shriek when an ancient man would emerge alone from out of the desert, wearing a stillsuit of a style that was old in the time of their grandparents. He would need to replace a catch-tube or a synthskin on his stillsuit. And he would again return to the desert from which he emerged.

Legends grew around the hermit, but none could be verified. Only centuries later would the first Spice Dreamers discover him past the oral histories of the first Fremmen. For he lay at the root of many a life-history, that he first crossed the path of Shai-Hulud, that knew Shai-Hulud, that it was said he spoke with Shai-Hulud...

The dream gave way and Sheeana found herself not in her transforming body, but at the center of a web of human creation, human knowledge, and human culture. She stood in the place that would be reserved for a human.

Yet I am no longer human.

And as quickly the human web receded, until it was only one object on a horizon filled with new objects.

New Paths.

These paths were not comprehensible to the Master Face Dancers, who were ground in the ultimate materialism of exploiting the human as their private commodity. More so, these paths were inaccessible to the Ones With Many Faces, as their very type of being, although more advanced in every other way as the ultimate adapters, was rigidly bound

to the universes of humanity.

Sheeana felt the presence of the Ones With Many Faces and allowed their reality to become hers...

...as if hiding in the dark, they slinked back even further when her gaze caught them.

The Ones With Many Faces curled back among the ripples of each-to-each. The profoundly independent suddenly became bound to that which they had mastered. They could not take from this place, for it was so strange in the sense of forbidden and closed off.

THE SHEEANA SEES US! BUT WHERE DOES SHE LOOK OUT FROM?!

We are afraid of the Sheeana's gaze. For it is not with Us That Are All. From what sector responds thus?

We are afraid for the Sheeana has left, and yet she captures us in her Gaze From Where?!

WE MUST ALLOW FOR THIS. WE MUST NOT FEAR HER. HOW? WHERE?

Oh! We are afraid. Will she teach this to the Fish Speaker Schools? We will be rid of all of them, but then we will be alone. Most alone.

The Ones With Many Faces whirlpooled back and back again, rippling with a pathological swirling. Forever forbidden with only a sense of a warning from Sheeana.

My powers are weak now, but beware of my new race...

Sheeana was snapped back to the fiery pain of her body. For a long moment the pain flooded all her perception, then slowly that which had just transpired became clear to her.

And suddenly the Ones With Many Faces seemed small in this perspective, for it was true that they were no longer human. Their evolution had been but the cruelest of tricks played upon themselves.

They sought to escape the role of human trapped in a human web. And all they managed to do was give up their individuality in exchange for becoming the web itself. They are more trapped than the humans they seek to extinguish. Perhaps one day, when the last of the humans made the step out of their worlds onto the New Paths, the organic nature of that old human web could take on a grand life of its own, interweaving itself with the other Aeons of the New Paths.

Chapter 22

“He is only mortal like you. He eats as you eat and drinks as you drink. So if you follow a man like yourself, you will certainly be doomed. Does he give you a promise that when you are dead and turned to dust and bones, you will be raised to life again? How far-fetched what you are promised. There is only the life of this world: We die and we live, there is no rising from the dead for us.”

— Ancient islamiat scripture

Yanima murmured something that Thunhun could not quite catch. He turned from her as the Hayt-Duncan drew his next card from the ancient Dune Tarot.

“This card takes the form of influences from the outer world.”

Ix.

“Ix symbolizes something more than her homeworld. Here Ix crosses the influence of The Universe. Too many people begin to think like machines. Time to think again like the animals.”

Hayt-Duncan turn over his penultimate card.

“This is the card of hopes and fears.”

He turns the card over.

“This is card represents the outcome.”

He turns over the last card.

Thunhun addressed him. “We need to find Sia’aba. Can you take us to her.” He worried about Yanima’s trance, she didn’t seem able to break out of it. The Hayt-Duncan commented on Thunhun’s thoughts, or perhaps he only watched the visible concern on his face as he helped her to her feet.

The Duncan with the metal eyes gathered up his cards. “Sia’aba has her now. She is in divine hands now. Like the cards read, Ix crosses Universe.”

Yanima spoke something in a tongue Thunhun could not decipher. Hayt understood her.

“She says, ‘You will find Sia’aba out along the ridge of Chin Rock.’”

Hayt Duncan explained that the ridge of Chin Rock was out in the desert bled.

Sheeana guides us to the desert bled.

There was commotion in the streets. Vendors’ carts tipped over as something rolled towards them. Thunhun grabbed Yanima, who could hardly walk on her own. More chaos from the direction in the street where the Duncan with metal eyes read the Dune Tarot. Then a series of screams.

“Like the time Muad’Dib’s eyes were burned out by the stone burners, Thunhun, the Ones With Many Faces have come for us, too.”

She’s talking as if she is still within the Spice Dream, as if what she sees now is some manifestation of the images from then.

Thunhun grabbed her and started to run. Just then the Duncan was caught between the lumbering chaos of flesh, all eyes and hands and legs, and the two as they departed. The

creature bowled him over, his cards flying off in every direction.

Dragging Yanima the whole while, Thunhun took a quick turn past a corner of merchants, when he noticed a tight gap in a wall between an older building and a newer one that had been built on top of it. He tossed Yanima through the opening and then squeezed himself inside.

The flesh chaos did not lose them so easily. But the great number of people in the market worked to their advantage. They were able to elude the Ones With Many Faces. Before long they were out in the open desert.

More landscape of what has happened on Dune Revenant.

They had escaped from both Master Face Dancers and the Ones With Many Faces into the deep desert bled. Yanima's mind played back the events of both the flight of Paul and Jessica from the Harkonnens and that of the twins Ghanima and Leto into the desert.

Where is my twin, Yeshika — can you now see as I do?

Thunhun had to guard her every step, for although her eyes were open, she did not see.

Like the child Leto who saw for the blind Paul, I lead her through the desert.

This place would be their crucible. They walked for a time that seemed without end. And Thunhun suddenly had the feeling that perhaps he was the blind Muad'Dib, and Yanima was leading him.

A herm marked a spot where someone had once taken the time to pile the stones as a sign. The herm's stones were shaped to indicate a direction, towards the rock outcropping over the next dune.

This is our test at being 'Fremen'.

Then they arrived at Chin Rock.

Chapter 23

Our fear rises up, a bird burning up in the light of disclosure. The smell of burning feathers. Human intelligence is weak. And we expect love to be a solution — for infinite suffering. And what choice do we have? Within us the anguish is infinite, and we fall in love. Is there some other alternative — other than comically making love on a Procrustean bed? Infinite anguish!

— from the selected human memories of Sia'aba

The chamber was in silent darkness. Then a man's voice disturbed the perfect silence.

"What cruel fate has made me fall in love with you."

Again silent darkness. Now a woman's voice was to break the calm again.

"As our love is sweet, a terrible wind stirs in the desert."

Teg and Chani lay beside each other in his sleeping chambers.

"I love you, Chani, and I would die for you."

"Again the whirlwind comes, and a pain that will deliver us."

Her love was generous as it was dangerous. Teg felt he could die from it. The chamber was in silent darkness. Teg and Chani were inside. Paul said, "Do you take my bride to the purest place of all?"

Rebecca had been Paul's constant companion since the agony. Paul still suffered from the emotional pain of his Awakening. The memories were still settling, ordered somehow by the smells they brought on.

The smell of wet fur suddenly filled his nostrils.

Like a chairdog who had wandered out into the rain on ancient Caladan.

Rebecca had the two sisters would had fed and bathed him leave the sietch. She asked, "Are you well enough for visitors, Paul?"

Duncan arrived first into the room, followed by a ghola that stung Paul's eyes when he saw him. Rebecca left them, and Duncan stepped aside so this ghola could have a better look at him.

"Liet Kynes. Are you aware of who you are, ghola?" Duncan was stunned by the ease with which Paul resumed the commanding voice.

"I am aware that I am Liet Kynes, Usul. These are strange times, but again I see that you have found yourself as the base of another pillar."

The sight of Kynes awoke inner memories of the desert with Paul.

"It's good to see familiar faces. And I am glad you called me Usul and not Muad'Dib. Why Duncan, which moon shall I choose for my new name?" Paul let out a cynical laugh. But what was new to Paul, even though he had been Kwitsatz Haderach, was tired and true to Duncan. Paul held the crosshairs of time and space within his mind, but Duncan had died a thousand mortal deaths.

"Let us hope you pick L'Kitab, the writer, and pen us a wonderful future: For I've had my fill of L'Gaib, the outer worlds, and L'Akrab, the scorpion." Duncan succeeded in making Paul smile.

“Why not choose L’Soyal, the rain of sand, and bury us once and for all. Gholas!” That was Kynes, though he managed to make all of them laugh, not cynically, but fully from the belly.

“Liet, you never had a sense of humor before. Perhaps this ghola thing was for the best.” Paul stood weakly and greeted them with a Fremen gesture.

“I still have no sense of humor, Usul.”

Paul liked that Kynes was not his ancestor, that he shared no other memories with him.

That evening, Duncan arranged things so that he could be not missed, as he was tired from the day events with Paul. He had officially retired from the night and was resting for what might be an attack any moment by the Ones With Many Faces. In fact, he slipped past his personal guard and wandered to a no-ship at the spot where he first touched the soil of this rapidly twisting world.

The no-ship that first brought us to this Dune Revenant, all those years ago.

Duncan had engineered the entire plan to coincide with the Awakening of Paul. But on board the no-ship there was an unsuspected surprise.

Rebecca? I’ll not let her stand in my way.

“I thought this would be the course of action you would take. I saw the way you looked, the way you looked away, when Paul took the Water of Life.”

She’s not here to stop me. Rebecca wants to return with me.

“I’m going alone. I don’t even know if we will make it past The Ones With Many Faces, or if Murbella is still alive.” Duncan had a strange feeling that he would have seen her death in his Net had it come.

“No need to be strong and stubborn now, Duncan. We can at least make this trip peacefully together.”

Chapter 24

Would we exchange the concept of our human history and instead focus our knowledge towards life instead of the chronicles of death? Individuals even now are ready to participate in something extraordinary, a movement for all the peoples of the Returning, a movement that would integrate our cultures. These are individuals who, if spoken to, if organized, could raise a cry that would be heard across the universe. Never in history has there been a more worthwhile moment. And it needed be done out of the fear of war between Bene Gesserit and Honored Matres, out of the fear of the menace of Tleilaxu science run amok. All we need to do is to take the first steps and speak the first words.

— Rebecca's notes on Integral ideology

"I still don't trust them." Kitrana could not hold in the feeling any longer. "And I know that it is irrational, and I know it goes against all my Bene Gesserit training."

Kitrana and Murbella were working out details with several field generals and bashars from around the Old Empire.

"The one thing you forget is that I was a Honored Matre before I became your Mother Superior." Murbella landed the verbal blow gently, without detracting from its sting.

Kitrana bowed her head for a moment in silence.

The conflict with the Honored Matres needed to be resolved in reaction to the Ones With Many Faces. The New Sisterhood would be the Fish Speaker School.

How many worlds had been filled with their terror. These Honored Matres had been expelled from their worlds, and they would punish the new worlds they conquered, even though a greater punishment followed close on their heels from the approach of the Ones With Many Faces.

[...]

Murbella fighting the Ones With Many Faces inside of the carapace.

[...]

Guerina had been able to convince the major houses that were enthralled by the various Honored Matre worlds from the Returning to join the Bene Gesserit and the economic alliances that had once been the major houses of the Old Empire together for this battle. However, there were dozens of logistical elements that had been left undetermined.

There just wasn't enough time.

[...]

Intrigue with Guerina and Kitara of some sort. They squabble and they quip, but

Murbella notices the common bond is not enough.

[...]

News of Master Face Dancers capturing a world of Honored Matre playfems.

Murbella sought a severe retribution.

They could have forewarned the Old Empires, instead they sought to subjugate. I will make them pay doubly for training me in their ways.

Chapter 25

Fremen — listen to the words of the desert preacher. His words cut to the truth like a crystknife, he speaks to show the truth to all Fremen. But beware, his words are also like the poison of the Gom Jabbar! Do not let them poison your heart. Without the faith, even truth can sting like lies. His message is not unlike the sword with two edges: When cutting at the enemy, take care lest you cut yourself!

— A letter from the Again Muad'Dib to the ghola-Fremen

Sheeana awoke anguished by the beginnings of her bewildering transformation.

Was it waking or sleeping, now that she was freed from the diurnal lockstep? And still the voice managed its message from so many layers of lives deep within her.

'The Sleeper must awaken.'

Sheeana knew that this phrase spoken had been a mantra to erase his hurt. She knew this Leto as grandfather to the Leto with whom she now shared something.

We choose a different melange, to blend human with sandworm.

The little makers were already beginning their work, hardening her skin in their shell, making her stronger, as she walked through the desert. She walked for a day without tiring, and she walked in the full of noon without harm from the twin suns.

Leto never knew his grandson, what his grandson would achieve. Then Sheeana knew this man as a ghost, wisping in the ear to a concerned father. A father concerned for his son Paul on a water world. She was the one that whispered the insightful phrase into Leto I's ear that night on Caladan.

'The Sleeper must awaken.'

All things, even this, are close to despair. And now I have lost one, that one Promethean gift, that of forgetfulness.

[...]

Sheeana as half-worm returns to Paul and the Tleilaxu Fremen

Sheeana sets them on the New Paths.

[...]

There was a spirit of mutual cooperation that would not be observed from the martial point of view. One could not fight evolution, one could not fight being. The outcome of a war with the Ones With Many Faces would see the end of the individual that sought to resist.

Unless that individual were transformed.

[...]

Sort of “We have work to do. “and “The storm is coming that humanity cannot weather, so we must adapt.”

They present us with a potential for a new allegory, not human, not interpreted by time or place or milieu. Atman and Purusha were only ways to point toward this thing. Now the time has come to take first steps.

Of all the memories first unearthed by the first Spice Dreamers, are those of the Hermit’s first riding of Shai-Hulud....

[...]

The Third Book Of Shai-Hulud

In the Hermit’s long life in the desert, he learned the language of all the creatures within. It was a language he learned to dream but did not speak as we do. It is said that Shai-Hulud, grown tired of chasing the Hermit through the years, approached the Hermit by emerging from the sands while the Hermit slept in the shadows of the two moons of Arrakis.

Shai-Hulud submitted that the Hermit had gotten the best of him all these years and was a greater being than perhaps the sandworms themselves. The great worm offered to let the man ride on his back, suggesting that the Hermit’s old feet must be tired after all their long years. The old man agreed to climb on Shaitain’s back, using his walking stick to climb atop the leviathan. The worm shuffled across the sands and asked the Hermit if he enjoyed riding across the sands. The Hermit replied that it was perhaps the greatest way to travel the sands. The Hermit, who felt things before they happened, asked the old worm whether he did not travel below the sands most of the time. The worm responded that yes, Shai-Hulud did travel below the sand.

“Would you like to try? ... Oh no, you are too frail, too human, for that.” Shai-Hulud thought to end the life of the Hermit by rolling onto his side, crushing the Hermit into the sand.

But the Hermit sensed the treachery of Shaitain, and wedged his walking stick into the space between two sections of the worms armor. The Hermit said, “You see, I am not so frail. I am able to keep you above the surface while I ride you.”

The worm had been subdued, but some of the ancients still dreamed that melange had been made possible by a pact between man and the worm. That before there were little makers, and that the spice was a dark trap to ensnare the soul of the Hermit who grew too powerful in Shai-Hulud’s desert.

And so the Hermit would be seen riding Shai-Hulud by some member of the Fremen who strayed too deep unto the forbidden deserts. Stories of Fremen spared by a worm with a man topside were often sworn as true by the second moon.

Chapter 26

You are not eagles. Which is why you haven't comprehended the blissfulness of terror in your minds. Not being birds, how do you propose to nest on an abyss?

— The sayings of Sia'aba

[...]

Thunhun and Yanima find Sheeana.

"Please sit, and take your shoes from your feet." Sheeana spoke. And they made themselves barefoot. "Behold, this is how all humanity sits, with a hope to be delivered, and fear that plots escape."

She explains the Place of Dune Revenant giver.

She reveals what is about to happen on old Dune

We must bare the new responsibility that our new freedom will bring. We are no longer bound to the memories of the Bene Gesserit or the genealogies of the Bene Tleilax. But our next steps are truly our own.

The archetypes of the unconscious were once exploited by religious dogmas. The seemingly arbitrary nature was over laid with a set of rules, as set of rules which in fact no longer applies.

[...]

The Fourth Book Of Shai-Hulud

For the first time the hermit knew that melange was a story in itself. For on that day the hermit smelled that smell like cinnamon, and unlike cinnamon. The hermit was riding Shai-Hulud on that day when the hints of melange sought out and engaged his senses.

Shai-Hulud noticed this and told him that this was the spice, and that the hermit would only be truly great if he took of it. And the hermit did partake of the spice melange, and he slipped into the spice-trance as none other has since. For it was at that time that the paths of humanity were first intermixed, communicated, experienced and transcended. Many say that his spice-trance was a totality of being brought inside an instant; while others believe that his spice-trance still continues today.

The hermit forgot his place regarding the desert, forgot his taunting of Shai-Hulud. He stared into the infernally hot maw of the great worm. Some say that the hermit and Shai-Hulud faced each other for several days, while an eternity of mysteries moved between them. For the very fabric of thought between beings was different at that time, and each could share the history of another. And so melange became the great quickener.

As spice was begotten from the worm, it was Shai-Hulud who emerged first from their

shared trance. And seeing the hermit before him, he said, “Your water now returns to me. And Shai-Hulud consumed the hermit while he was still in his spice-trance. It is told in later days, by those who dream with spice, that this is how the hermit’s knowledge passed on to the Fremen. For as the Fremen learned, so was the art of the dream passed on. And so was the dream passed on. And so does the dream continue.

Yanima asked Sheeana, “What is the book of Shai-Hulud? It isn’t in any of the histories we have dreamed.”

Sheeana replied, “Look again. It is there now as it has always been. Could you have overlooked it, or could something else have occurred?”

The two slipped into a dream. Turn and weave, and then they found her truth to be a history where there was none.

She changes the past!

“I am the one that seeds the Scytale Fish Speaker school on behalf of the Bene Tleilax.” Sheeana was frank. “And not for any reasons of mercy.” She rolled onto the back half of her worm body when she spoke, lifting her front half slightly above and towards them for emphasis. “In a multiverse where the very laws of local physics define reality, certain combinations that work become not only necessary but precious. This is why I have stepped in to ensure we don’t lose another Nazca tribe to imperialism, or lose the population of another Easter Island to lack of proper resources.”

Yanima and Thunhun were filled with a dread that would not be explained. Neither could doubt her, for they had witnessed her truth to be so, but neither could quite understand the implications of her addition to history.

“Can we even call it an addition at this point. It has always been in the history,” she said.

They had many questions for Sheeana. Had she been able to shift them into a new time stream, never again to realize the past as an element to the New Paths? Were the New Paths a way to achieve an architecture of reality where the Ones With Many Faces were no longer a threat? Or had Sheeana enacted a mystery that had overthrown all time, just as Muad’Dib had done with Arrakis, or Leto had done with the Universe?

Chapter 27

Of the many things I learned about warfare, the most valuable lessons came from mixing what I had learned from my Bene Gesserit mother. Then warfare becomes the Art of Deception. Although you are capable, display incapability to them. When you are committed to employing your forces, feign inactivity. When your objective is nearby, make it appear as if distant; when far away create the illusion of it being nearby.

— Miles Teg, *The Art of Warfare*

Duncan had moved through foldspace before. He had emerged out of no-space before. He had even come back countless times from death. But on this voyage, his thoughts noticed none of these transitions. His only desire was to reunite with Murbella. His no-sphere crossed the barriers from out of encrypted space, he had set the craft's navigation to the foldspace to Chapterhouse. When Murbella was not there, he quickly requested of the sisters left behind her whereabouts. He found her exhausted and delirious from war preparations and spice ingestion. She was recuperated now, preparing once again for the battle to come.

Murbella appeared before him as he always saw her in his mind's eye. He saw her from that deep place that linked him with every ancestor that led up to this moment. It was not a Bene Gesserit prana, nor an Honored Matre trick. It was not the outcome of a breeding plan or the product of millennia of carefully guided bloodlines. It was pure mammalian in many ways, as it was a sexual bonding. It was a special human bonding, too, as there was an attraction that elevated the hormonal reactions to an artful addiction. But ultimately, theirs was a love that would come to symbolize the precious next step that humanity would need to walk.

Waves.

[The Master Face Dancers are enlisted to help in the coming war against the Ones With Many Faces.]

There were only certain places where the Ones With Many Faces could successfully launch an offensive. One was in a certain star system with two planets. One of the planets was heavily occupied by Honored Matres, while the other had somewhat been reclaimed by Bene Gesserit infiltration since the rise of Murbella as Reverend Mother Superior. This system also lay across a certain nexus, on which the Ones With Many Places seemed to be working from the other side to make their entrance into this war. Murbella had planned for the two sisterhoods to make a stand at this system, with their forces between these two worlds.

“Like the Greeks at Thermopylae”, Guerina responded.

But Duncan thought of another metaphor.

Like that first Harkonnen attack on Arrakis.

The battle waged on. As the hordes of the Ones With Many Faces emerged from space itself, some of them having adapted beyond the need for ships or propulsion, they were met

by war ships of all types, even Murbella's exoskeleton troops. Some of them had emerged out of foldspace right on the surface of the planets, where they were met by armies of humans and war machines.

The one image that burned itself into the mind of Murbella was that of an enemy that would win in the long run against humanity. And one pressing need.

For humanity to survive, we must absorb something of what these Ones With Many Faces are.

Chapter 28

Metanormalities become the basis of cultural shaping. In virtually all sacred traditions, for example, mystical cognition is honored above all physical abilities. Yet we seek to bind all things toward the common goal of a post-human Integration. We need to all take perspectives, and hence living becomes part of something more. This living calculus vows to refuse rest until all perspectives are liberated into their own primordial nature.

— GIOAD Integral Theory

Something began to happen on Old Dune. A thing became a relic not only of itself, but of those that handled the thing, knew the thing and used the thing. But when the thing was destroyed, what became of these memories? To know a thing was to learn to release all that a thing was used for, was touched by, and had potential for. This was what began to unfold on Ancient Arakkis.

Harkonnen metaphors of war and evil, seeming so tied to the human, would also become obsolete in the unfolding.

Perhaps the Final Duncan would now learn that it was Alia who made this transition possible from Murbella in The Vindication of Saint Alia?

The Old Dune was set in motion now, as was Dune Revenant, along a path that resembled somewhat the motion of a sun, seen not from space, but as the sun would be seen by the earliest human ancestors, from the shores of some planet.

Alia and every calendar of human history.

It was said that the movement of the Sun was considered to be the eyes of Shaitain, and that at its heart there was a place cool and temperate to the faithful, all of its heat emanating outward as a protective shell and a warning.

Yeshika became included in the light, manifest in her own eyes, but owing its source to an unseen other. *It is Yanima's Spice Dream that lets me see things as they are here.* Yeshika was now the light, and the light was now included in the light. She looked out at this barren Dune, but she could see it was teeming with a kind of life. *Sandworms everywhere! No... humans! This place is populated with humans from the past.* Yeshika knew that the darkness of the dead Dune had been but a veil, and that in the shadow was ease, and the real.

Something is becoming apparent to me now. I'm at the verge of seeing this something that is new.

Yeshika noticed Nro watching as if he were something inert, a mere recorder of one way of looking at what unfolded.

He is instantly made obsolete.

She was instantly aware of many Dunes and many Yeshikas, all just out of phase with each other. Each of her proximate selves acted much as she would, each a bit less probable as the drift of each proximate waved steadily outward. If any one Yeshika craned to see far enough, she could see herself acting far differently, even see herself unable to cope with

what she saw. Still further out she was physically different, mentally varied. Still further and she did not exist at all.

This is the Dune Revenant.

From somewhere Yeshika heard Nro mention he had seen Scytale, through the eyes of Lrolan.

And many of the Yeshika's saw Scytale also, each out upon several horizons. Scytale was somehow returned back to his creations, who in turn, needed him there with them. He seemed to speak something to her, but it was far off. She did not hear him. Then his image faded. He was gone.

Yeshika could see the necessities of the Integration unfold across the many Dunes as a construct, as some great thinking machine which spoke of still other necessities.

Needs within Need.

Quantum machines that are at work behind the Plank Length, behind the Holzman Effect, there!

Machines within Machines.

Lastly she saw all these Dunes and their universes as the Revenants of all possibility. *Beings far from us but still something like human as in the Master Face Dancers. Beings even further out, nothing like us, but sharing origins with us, like the Ones With Many Faces.* And many more Beings that emerged, and all their desires were suddenly like ghosts before her. And their desires commingled and sometimes came into conflict.

Desires within Desires.

Slowly, the Yeshikas and the ancient Dunes began to thin out, disperse, until there was only one woman standing on the planet. Nro Pathay was beside her.

"This planet will become the new oracle."

The most disturbing image had been that of Scytale, pulled from the folds of this universe that had now seemed to congeal from out of the quantum foam of a few minutes before.

His way cannot be found on the New Paths.

There was something melancholic that Yeshika needed to express about the departed Scytale.

He no longer makes up the mix of what will be.

She thought of how different two individuals that lay at the origins of two Fish Speaker Schools could be. There was Hayt-Scytl and Idah-Mirabla.

Nro interrupted her train of thought.

"I'm seeing something through the part of me that is Lrolan. The Master Face Dancers have returned the hidden Dune Revenant from encrypted space."

Chapter 29

Learn not to revere human things too much.

— From *A Lament for Scytale*, by Yeshika Ampre

[Thunhun and Yanima see the return of Dune Revenant to non-encrypted space. More than that. Dune Revenant became ancient Arrakis.]

A self-disclosure. They were never apart.

Nowhere could she find a system in the sense of unified structures, or a plan that would protect the weak of mind from the oncoming perceptual change. *This is the very thing that the Ones With Many Faces cannot digest.*

“Leto had his Duncans, I have my Dunes.” She rolled over in her worm body.

Many Duncans. Many Dunes.

As rapidly as the Ones With Many Faces could expand into new universes, Sheeana had begun the task of opening more universes where humanity, or the Children of the Individuals, would have a probable existence.

Her New Paths are but opened roads to the future of what began as humanity.

There were certain necessities that came with ensuring the future. The allowance for Fish Speaker Schools had been one of her contributions, but it came with different prices. In evolving humanity, everything became an option. Everything a possibility. Her gift was ensuring that there was a reality for each permutation. In doing this, she closed off a subset of realities where the Ones With Many Faces were no longer present, and in some others were subsumed themselves.

“We have many visitors awaiting this moment.” It was Yanima again, from her unusual waking Spice Dream.

“Many visitors? I don’t understand.” Duinain held her close the whole time.

Comforting her and comforting myself.

When Yanima did not respond, Sheeana answered for her. “She speaks of the ships in orbit around this world. By now, the encryption pin safeguarded by the Ixian royalty for a thousand years has fallen into the hands of the Master Face Dancers. They are returning us to non-encrypted space, like a thing from the past. What they do not know is that we are expecting this Returning.”

With the Returning of the Dune Revenant came a sort of healing of history. Yeshika was there with them, as was Nro. Yanima had emerged from her trance, as had things normalized for Yeshika. Thunhun had a look of horror.

Sheeana eased his mind “All part of my plan.”

Chapter 30

Given enough time for the generations to evolve, the predator produces particular survival adaptations in its prey which, through the curricular operation of feedback, produce changes in the predator which again change the prey — etcetera, etcetera, etcetera... Many powerful forces do the same thing. You can count religion among such forces.

— Leto II's Journals

[The tasking of Paul by Sheeana is what she called it. There would be no jihad. There would be no revolution. Not just yet at least. Sheeana was still in the early stages of her transformation, and she would meet with the ghola-Muad'Dib to discuss the way things had been, and the why things are, and the way things will be.]

"It took your son about fifteen hundred years to establish the Golden Path. My plan will only take one thousand."

Paul, who was already being called the Again Muad'Dib, knew he could never completely understand her point of view.

"Death for some will be preferred to life, by those who try to hold fast to the old ways."

The Ones With Many Faces had one limitation: They arose from every human thing.

Made in our image.

In the thousand thousand years of our history that they emerged from, they were more bound to this universe, this multiverse, as they perfected their ties with its nature.

Now nature itself changes, and they are as lost children thrown into a tantrum.

Imagination understands in ways foreign to reason.

"You will have visions, Paul, as will Rebecca and Murbella, as will Duncan and Scytale." Sheeana's sandtrout skin glistened in the sun. "This is simply the way things will be."

Muad'Dib had been through months of training for the Spice Dreaming. In that time several other sister had began the transformation to Sandworm. Maia was beside him when he had his breakthrough.

"I think I can share this experience with you," Muad'Dib spoke to Maia and asked her to come near. She was covered in the little makers, who were just showing the signs of hardening now, so that she looked like a human shaped insect whose armor, still translucent, was beginning to form.

"What is it that you would like to share?" Maia's voice was also showing the signs of the transformation: It was a tone deeper, with a slight gravelly sound.

"It is something very old. It is something I just found. I just made real." Muad'Dib was touching her now, as they slipped into the dream...

The Apocrypha Of The Hermit

The smell was the first thing. It brought the visions of my Fremmen, with their children and their blue in blue eyes. For then was the time that humanity first knew of the spice, and

I was the first to partake in the being of Shai-Hulud. I, who know the motions of time as the desert knows the passage of time.

At the infernal mouth of Shai-Hulud I stood, and I took of the spice melange that was from his hot breath, and this is what came to pass. That this is known to any at all is due to the spice dream. For these words were first written not on paper with ink, nor in lines in the sand — but etched onto the co-consciousness that emerged timeless between human and worm. In this the first spice-trance, these words were written upon eternity, upon the very storms of time itself, by the mystery of melange and Shai-Hulud.

The taste was the second thing, out past its bitter, sweet, and nutmeg. All the senses were as one single sense, tasting. All the sounds were taste, as were the sight and the touch. This is the nature of the melange of the senses.

There I passed with Shai-Hulud, but I was not harmed. For it came to pass that such things were no longer able to occur in the same way as they had in the desert. For many things became foreshortened, while others extended a hundredfold. And things turned at exact but unspecified angles. And I could see with both eyes. And the sands both fell and rose in the glass.

What happened third and onward, as numeration lost meaning at this point to the degree of the infinite, was a collusion of space and time and mind and things as yet unknown and things still now unknowable.

Things past were present, and places far were near. Still things now never were, and the here was gone. A Voice had been spoken, and was yet to be spoken, and was audible to my ear. And human was with sandworm, and sandworm was with human.

“It is wonderful,” Maia noted as she held Muad’Dib close.

“I was the origin.”

But Maia knew that he was only a step.

Soon other sisters would begin their transformations. And Muad’Dib would allow his gholas-Fremen to mature and evolve slowly. And the Tleilaxu would have their roles. And centuries would pass. And the cult of Sia’aba would flourish. And the spice would no longer hold sway over the future as it had the over the past. And every hundred years or so, elements from Dune Revenant would emerge from the concealment of Ixian encrypted space, dawning into new ages of the future of humanity. The Returning. The Integration. But some things would be kept on Dune Revenant until the day it was returned from the no-Space. And these things were the New Paths.

The future of us all.

Chapter 31

*May God place us among those who bring together the two perfections!
And if He should deprive us of bringing them together, may He place us
among the people of kindness and generosity.*

— Ancient islamiat scripture

Marty and Daniel talked about everything that had gone on over tea. They wanted to tell it from their point of view.

Marty brought the tea serving to the table, where Daniel was already sitting. “I just don’t like them calling us Master Face Dancers.”

“Well, imagine having to go through life being called the Ones With Many Faces.” They both laughed.

Daniel poured two cups of tea, and added a splash of milk to Marty’s.

“They will never be happy, not with everyone being a ghola.”

“I don’t know about that. Look where we came from.”

“Oh. You just like to disagree with everything I say.”

Marty planned to write it all down some day, the whole story. All that stuff about the Bene Gesserit, and the Honored Matres, and now the Fish Speaker Schools.

“They’re like their children,” Daniel said, pouring Marty another cup of tea.

“Who are like their children.” Marty sipped the tea and placed the cup back into his saucer. “You mean Duncan and Murbella’s children?”

“No, the Fish Speakers, they’re the children of all of them. Bene Gesserit, Bene Tleilax, even the Ixians.”

Marty loved to pick on Daniel. “Next you’ll be telling me that the Sandworms are their children, too.”

“Whose children? “

“Never mind. You know they just couldn’t see the whole picture.”

Daniel finished the last sip of tea. “You mean the Honored Matres. Don’t worry, Murbella fixed that for all of them.”

“Them, too. But I was talking about the Ones With Many Faces.”

“Someday they’ll find the New Paths. But for now, they’ll just have to wait.”

“I suppose so.” Marty put an empty teacup into its saucer. “Where would you like to go for a walk today, dear?”

“So many New Paths I haven’t seen yet. Why don’t we just start walking and see where that takes us?”

Chapter 32

The Duncans sometimes ask if I understand the exotic ideas of our past. And if I understand them, why can't I explain them? Knowledge, the Duncans believe, resides only in particulars. I try to tell them that all the words are plastic. Word images begin to distort in the instant of utterance. Ideas imbedded in a language require that particular language for expression. This is the very expression of the meaning of the word exotic. See how it begins to distort? Translation squirms in the presence of the exotic. The Galach, which I speak here, imposes itself. It is an outside frame of reference, a particular system. Dangers lurk in all systems. Systems incorporate the unexamined beliefs of their creators. Adopt a system, accept its beliefs, and you help strengthen the resistance to change. Does it serve any purpose for me to tell the Duncan that there are no languages for some things? Ahhh! But the Duncans believe that all languages are mine.

— Leto II's Journals

The aftermath of the battle was decisive and timed with events of cosmic significance. The Ones With Many Faces withdrew from combat. Only later would their retreat be seen to coincide with the return of the Dune Revenant from the wisps of no-space.

The world instantly became a place of pilgrimage. A cult of Sia'aba was let loose on the worlds of several universes. For ancient Arrakis was also reborn, not as inhabited by ghola-Fremen as was Dune Revenant. For if the Dune Revenant return like some ghost of Athens, with its new golden age ready to transform the universe, Ancient Arrakis was the Oracle that would be the place of cleansing, the window to the Integration, and the gate to the Hall of Mirrors that was the New Paths.

And far from all this, but much in tune with its rhythms, came the birth of Duncan and Murbella's children.

Murbella smiled at Duncan, "You know, there is an ancient theory of 'Animal gravitation' to explain sexuality. One could say that we both had been imprinted to the other. I prefer to think that our mutual addiction had always been there, as sort of truth."

Duncan smiled. Time passed. The twin children of Duncan Idaho and Murbella were born soon after that decisive battle. The family had settled now, on Ouadra. They passed the time with their children, outside of the affairs of a universe gone mad.

"Alia wasn't an abomination after all," Murbella spoke to Duncan.

"What do you mean?" Duncan asked.

"I'm not quite sure. I am working on a piece of drama, a tragedy actually, where I'll tell the world what I think."

They possessed something of Duncan's oracular abilities that he had acquired after many lifetimes, as well as the melange of two sisterhoods that their mother had been able to integrate within herself, within her lifetime. They were but the first of children that were to come.

“I have to admit, there is something about integrating with those people from the Scattering that worries me.” Duncan held one of the two children.

“They are no longer the people of the Scattering, they are the people of the Returning. Once you get that straight you should have an easier time at accepting this change.” Murbella held one of the two children as she spoke.

Duncan could feel Sheeana’s presence, although she was beyond the space in which he now existed, on the other side of the Ixian barrier, just beginning her thousand year voyage of integration.

“From what you’ve told me, Sheeana is the one who is integrating. Imagine the task of bringing together humans, gholas, and the sandworms themselves. Our work looks like child’s play by comparison.”

“This is coming from the woman who sits at the head of two rival sisterhoods?”

“Not rivals for much longer. These two have already inspired me in that struggle.”

Duncan and Murbella’s daughters would grow to adulthood, and the concept of Fish Speaker Schools would be handed down to their children. But not only here, for Sheeana would be seeding the same from across her hidden planet, slowly revealing new secrets of the New Paths to the universe, writing the history in the dreams of her sisters who had shared her sandworm transformation.

Duncan reflected on his many lives and saw the truth in all the chaos.

What was it that Sheeana always said? ‘The possibilities are endless.’

Chapter 33

Someone ask me a question. A new voice, very old. He quotes an even more ancient voice, saying:

“So long as one always lays the blame on others, one still belongs to the mob. When one always assumes responsibility oneself, one is on the path of wisdom. But the wise man blames no one, neither himself nor others.’ — Who says this?” He asks not only me.

The crowd roars up for a moment and his voice fades. But I find his voice again. He speaks of one who was ancient to him as he is ancient to me.

He says “It was heard but forgotten. No, it was not heard and forgotten: Not everything gets forgotten. But there was lacking an ear for it...”

Again the crowd... undone. I listen for the forgotten one to find an answer to the question, but instead I find him who asked.

“Did he say it into his own ear? — Yes, that is how it is: Wisdom is the whispering of the solitary to himself in the crowded marketplace.”

The crowd returns. He is gone. I am in awe of this one thing.

— From *The Vindication of St. Alia*

Ancient Arrakis, the Dune Revenant, was on its way to becoming the Mecca of the multiverse. Master Face Dancers came to see Sia’aba and her race of human sandworms. Individuals from every Fish Speaker School came on pilgrimage to behold their origin and their destiny. Far from here, life continued on Ix, inside the non-Euclidean folds of the Royal Construct.

Life went on for Nro Pathay, Yeshika, Yanima and Thunhun.

“Did she answer the question?” Yanima asked Thunhun.

“Who?”

“Murbella.”

Many of the Master Faces Dancers had revealed themselves as being so and that they had been guiding the Ixians. Many of them feared this thing that Nro Pathay had been able to do. The thing that Yeshika was now also able to do.

There is something of the Master Face Dancers in all of the Fish Speaker Schools.

And although this cult of Sia’aba was a way to describe something that was sweeping across the universe, Sheeana had been effecting change the whole time. Her influence was the influence of Dune Revenant.

There was a principle of Integral Economics that was a very ancient concept. The Greeks, the first Atreides, had known of it as *arete*. Yeshika preferred to look for a new term, and it was not *techne*.

Nro lived to explore the wonder that he had discovered. And Yeshika ruled Ix during a great age of the Integration, at the dawn of the Unconcealing. And Yanima and Thunhun

dreamed both the past and the future.

One day on Ix, an artifact was discovered. The experts were called in to analyze this item, and no one could place it. It seemed futuristic as it was ancient and defied all attempts at dating.

The device contained a message, encoded in a technology that at once seemed Ixian and Tleilaxu. Its tone was Bene Gesserit, and its forcefulness was Honored Matre. The artifact itself is the centerpiece of several new sciences and religions across the universe.

And the message is now known to all:

One day the Fish Speaker Schools will evolve. They will turn in different directions, and the members of these Schools will twist to keep up. And just as the Great Houses gave way to the Age of the God Emperor, as the Scattering gave way to the Returning and the Integration, so will new ages follow. And the Unconcealing, called the Dawning by a million million, will follow. Born out of these times, the Emerging will follow. Then the most living of ages, called the Waking will run its course, till the quiet reflection characterized by the next age, called the Sleeping. We send this greeting to you from the last age, our age, that we call the Dreaming. We are far different from you, and in some ways we are still the same. This is our hello. You may think of us as different from you as your human ancestors. We remind you of the gifts you already have: hope, faith, and imagination. Now we bid you farewell, for you will not hear from us again.