



The Heaven Makers

Frank Herbert, ????, ????, (translator)

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Immortal aliens have observed Earth for centuries, making full sensory movies of wars, natural disasters, and horrific human activities . . . all to relieve their boredom. When they finally became jaded by ordinary, run-of-the-mill tragedies, they found ways to create their own disasters, just to amuse themselves. However, interfering with human activities was forbidden, and by the time Investigator Kelexel arrived to investigate, things were really getting out of hand. . . .

The Heaven Makers Details

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Author : Frank Herbert , ???? ??? (translator)

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From Reader Review The Heaven Makers for online ebook

Luke says

short and sweet classic herbert

wasn't sure at first seemed a little dated but thankfully stuck with it and realised like most of herberts (non dune) works that the plot is really a vehicle for the themes he explores...really enjoyable and has a very satisfying finish. probably his most accessable book i've read

Kat Hooper says

Originally posted at Fantasy Literature. <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/reviews/the-heaven-makers-by-herbert>...

The Chem are a race of aliens unknown to humankind. Because they're immortal, they're bored. So, for entertainment, they broadcast drama TV from Earth. Fraffin is one of the most successful producers of human drama. Authorities from his home planet suspect he may be manipulating events on Earth, which is forbidden, so they send Investigator Kelexel to find out what's going on. But Faffin has a way of dealing with snoopy investigators. All he has to do is trap them by tempting them with Earth's secret pleasures.

In actuality, Faffin is indeed interfering with humans and creating his own dramas to boost his ratings. For his current project, which he's been setting up for decades, he incites a well-respected man to brutally butcher his wife. Before being taken to jail, the man asks psychologist Androcles Thurlow to look after his daughter, Ruth, who is Thurlow's ex-fiance. When Thurlow gets involved, he realizes something really weird is going on. Inspector Kelexel realizes it, too, but then he becomes infatuated with Ruth, just as Faffin knew he would.

The Heaven Makers has a few problems. Characterization is shallow, there's some horrendous psychobabble, parts of it drag (especially the murder trial), and there's an annoying lecture about ethics and immortality at the end. Yet the story is mostly entertaining and, for such a short novel, it suggests some ideas and asks some questions that are worth thinking about.

An obvious idea that Herbert plays with is the notion that immortality leads to boredom and that danger gives spice to life. The Chem find their long safe lives so dull that they feel the need to live vicariously through humans who experience pain, loss, and death. Another idea, which I think I appreciated a little better, is the thought that small personal conflicts can represent big epic conflicts. In the past, Faffin the producer incited big events such as wars to entertain his alien brethren. Lately, with Ruth's family's story, he's looking into the possibility that a small personal conflict may feel even more devastating and be more gripping for his viewers than big global events are. As a human, I can say that, yes, my little personal sufferings sometimes seem weightier than a world war.

The Heaven Makers was originally serialized in 1967 in the magazine Amazing Stories and was released as a short novel in 1968. I listened to Blackstone Audio's recent version which is 7.5 hours long and is read by Scott Brick. As I've mentioned numerous times, I love the way Brick reads old science fiction.

Paulo "paper books always" Carvalho says

This was one quick read and unfortunately from nowadays standard is not that interesting. This book deals with two stories that eventually join. In one hand you've got immortal alien beings (Chem) that use humanity as we use television and in the other hand you've got the current story that aliens are seeing dealing with a Man in a story with murder and love.

The story deals mainly with psychological aspects of humanity and at the same time with the concept of immortality.

Quite interesting ending where Frank Herbert shares his views on both topics. It's a nice reading, fast and what you can expect from Herbert. Dealing with nowadays standard is considered a novella, with 150 pages, and outdated. But for those who want to read the primordials of Sci-fi give a try with this one.

G. Salter says

Frank Herbert is of course best known for his science fiction epic *Dune*, arguably the bestselling science fiction book of all time.

"The Heaven Makers" is about 1/3 the size of *Dune*, about 1/5 as complicated, and feels stylistically very much like a mass market sci-fi paperback, the kind of thing you can find 100 of in any used book store.

However, Frank Herbert does something really unusual in "The Heaven Makers." It's complicated and philosophical, but it's also gripping and hard to put down. The philosophical questions the book raises about immortality, corruption, and whether we are alone in this universe are fascinating and compelling. The most unusual and original alien I have come across in a long time.

While some books tackle hard issues but have very thin characters, "The Heaven Makers" is populated by characters who feel pretty real and whom you come to care about.

Bottom line, because the book is short it isn't as good as *Dune*, but it does the very best it can with its chosen medium. It's like a *Doctor Who* episode without the silly plot twists and lots more punch.

Bruno Silva says

Um livro curioso sobre extraterrestres que controlam o planeta Terra desde o início dos tempos, elaborando e construindo histórias manipulando as pessoas nas suas ações e comportamentos e gerindo a sua imortalidade. O livro incide sobre um dos percursos da manipulação de um personagem que faz com que 2 pessoas suspeitem que estão a ser manipuladas e a mulher é alvo de cobiça pelo investigador dos imortais. No processo de manipulação o interessante é verificar quem acaba por ser no final o verdadeiro manipulador.

Fantasy Literature says

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Tim Poston says

A classic. Ludicrously described on the cover as "a gripping novel of the far future" while the action centres on 1960s mid-America (plus aliens), but don't let publishers put you off. The techno trappings are well enough done -- though we'd imagine micro-drones nowadays, for instance -- but the real focus is on individual and group psychology ... of humans and Chem.

One of Herbert's best.

Pejman Shojaeion says

L. says

Kind of small-scale, considering the implications of the story...

ali sayyah says

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Alicia Reese says

Brilliant, as expected from Frank Herbert.

SOREN says

Eloise Sunshine says

If you start thinking about it, then actionwise there wasn't much happening in this story, perhaps a handful of situations, no more. But from the psychological point of view, there was much to be enjoyed. Actually, that is the main reason why I love fantasy at all! The unusual setting and rules allows us to see what people would do in an extreme situations, when they are "pushed" over the edge, forced into difficulties, whether mental or physical, that don't occur in our everyday life on planet Earth.

What bothered me though was that these so-called eternally living creatures weren't really that smarter than we are. It sounded kinda unreal to me. And also that Mr Herbert absolutely had to bring the matter of religion into the conversation. I'm sure it would've been just as good without the eternal question about God...

Gil T. says

Frank Herbert had me hooked with the Dune series, so what else can he deliver? The Heaven Makers, read by Scott Brick, is definitely an intriguing story. Love how the watchers look like "short Bela Lugosis" The story goes that we on Earth are being manipulated and recorded for the entertainment of a species of immortal beings. Not cool, man.

Manana Skhiladze says

Well... I still don't like the manner of writing (it is kind of disgusting for me) but may be it is the translator's

fault. The book itself appeared to be very interesting, made me rethink about some existential problems I thought I already had answer to. What is it like to be an eternal being? On which stage of your eternal life moral dogma's borders "normal" people have become to fade away or you just born with this way of thinking? What is madness? What is freedom? ... This book really leaves you things to think about even if you're an adult and already "have all the answers". Definitely, "The Heaven Makers" is a very good choice for a thinking person.
