

I watched “**Dune**” and I still have no idea what it’s about ...  
but I think I liked it.

By: Isabella Sayers



**REVIEW: “Dune,” a film adaptation of Frank Herbert's 1965 novel, directed by Denis Villeneuve.**

*Warning: Spoilers likely ahead.*

It’s been exactly four days since the release of the highly anticipated film adaptation of Frank Herbert's famous 1965 novel, *Dune*, and reviews have been nothing short of mixed. There are those raving about the Oscar-worthy performances by Timothee Chalamet and Rebecca Ferguson, while others spent the duration of the film asking themselves, “Where the heck is Zendaya?” That said, I’ve decided to dissect the spectacle for myself.

I’ve never been one to “nerd-out” over speculative fiction films toying with vast concepts of alternate realities (aka *Star Wars*). However, after scrolling through Instagram and seeing Zendaya and Timmy appearing as though they’ve just stepped through the gates

of heaven in Entertainment Weekly promotion for *Dune*, I'll be the first to admit that I have jumped shamelessly onto the sci-fi bandwagon.

In this captivating sci-fi saga, Duke Leto Atreides (Oscar Isaac) and his aristocratic family travel to the dangerous desert planet of Arrakis in efforts to protect the future of the House of Atreides after being called on by the Emperium. This inhospitable desert planet is home to the universe's most precious resource; spice, a hallucinogen which preserves life and is essential in interstellar travel. Immediately upon the family's arrival they are faced with warfare and deceit. Previous inhabitants of this desert planet, the Harkonnens, refer to violence to maintain control of Arrakis. All the while, Paul, son of the Duke and Lady Jessica (Rebecca Ferguson), discovers he has been born with a gift and great power in the form of dreams. In these dreams we are introduced to Chani, a mysterious and at times murderous fremen girl played by Zendaya. The movie leaves us with Paul and his dynamically secretive mother, Lady Jessica, forming an alliance with the Fremen tribe as they take on the vast deserts of Arrakis.

One thing that I, along with countless other Zendaya stans, were disheartened to discover was how criminally small Zendaya's role is in the first installment of *Dune*. It was a classic case of *Spiderman: Homecoming* all over again. Granted, I had zero prior knowledge of the *Dune* franchise, and it wasn't until Zendaya and Timmy's faces were plastered onto billboards that I decided to take an interest. Maybe those familiar with the book were more in tune with the fact that Zendaya's character, Chani, doesn't become of prominence until later on in the story. However, as someone who's expectations were formed solely on the promotion of the film's through the trailer and press, I feel bamboozled. I was certain I would be spending the best of two hours watching two people with amazing bone structure fall in love while fighting off evil. In one interview, Timothee couldn't help but to rave about how Chani is his favorite character in the film. Therefore, leaving me feeling a bit blue-balled when forced with the realization that Zendaya has no more than a grand total of 15 minutes of screen time. While there's been some serious backlash from those die-hard Zendaya fans, my disappointment was only fleeting. I had no issue falling captive to Chalamet's charming performance. Paul Atreides can take over my planet any day; in fact, this is my formal invitation for him to do as such. While Timothee Chalamet has built quite the impressive Hollywood resume, his work in this particular project only further warrants his entitlement to prosperity in film.

While the chemistry between Chalamet and Zendaya is palpable in the few scenes they share, the on-screen duo that I can't help but to swoon over is that between Chalamet's character, Paul, and Duncan Idaho, played by Jason Momoa, who is a swordmaster fiercely loyal to the House of Atreides. The relationship between the two characters is pure, and perfectly showcases their unwavering bond to one another. Duncan's devotion

to the Atreides family, and more specifically, to Paul, is refreshing bearing witness to how the intentions of everyone around him seem incalculable. It's clear as day that the Duke would do anything for his son along with Duncan, however, I can't say the same for anyone else, including his mother. This is a part of what I meant by my proclamation about having seen the film and still not fully understanding what it's about. The mother, Lady Jessica walks in the shadows. Her role is compelling, while also confusing.

Misleading promotions and character intentions aside, director Denis Villeneuve's storytelling through the use of imagery is astonishing. He certainly has a knack for creating scenes that appear to carry an ethereal glow. His use of static composition conveys symmetrical tranquility that allows the viewer's eyes to be guided peacefully through a scene. Meanwhile when the film begins taking on an emotionally charged direction leaving the audience in a constant state of conflict, the chaos and use of lines in Villeneuve's dynamic composition acts as a catalyst for viewers promoting the idea that mass pandemonium is underway. Villeneuve's creative vision paired with Chalamet's obscenely good looks, makes for the perfect visual cocktail.

This is definitely the kind of movie I would recommend seeing twice as every scene is rich and jam packed with pivotal detail that can at times be difficult to follow. Overall, *Dune* is an exceptional film and one that begs to be seen in theaters.

Here's the thing: Did I watch for the sole purpose of staring at Timothee Chalamet and Zendaya's Greek God like bone structure for two hours? Yes. But did it turn out to be a good movie? Also, yes.