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Dune Part Two [REVIEW]: Messiahs, Worms and Bald Heads

George Burquest, Staff Reporter

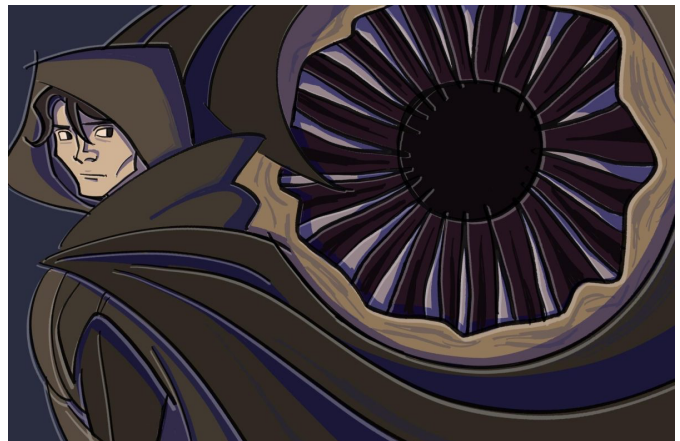
Dennis Villeneuve's 2021 film adaptation of Frank Herbert's "Dune" was both visually impressive and generally well-received, but ultimately left fans wanting more. In "Dune Part Two" more is given to them, much more.

Released in the United States March 1, 2024, it has been impossible to go on my TikTok and not see dozens of posts talking about how "Dune Part Two" might be the best science fiction film ever made. At the time of writing this review, "Part Two" has a 93% on Rotten Tomatoes and 4.6 stars on Letterboxd...

MAKING IT ONE OF THE TOP 10 HIGHEST
RANKED FILMS ON THE SITE.

My feelings towards the film have likely been tainted by the astronomical expectations I had coming in, but it is hard to dismiss the praise "Part Two" has been receiving.

First and foremost, the cast of "Dune Part Two" is filled with Hollywood's finest. Timothee Chalamet stars as Paul Atreides, his love interest Fremen Channi is played by Zendaya; Austin Butler, still donning his Elvis accent, plays Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen, and Florence Pugh even appears as Princess Irulan... or in other words Paul's side chick. The only problem was that I was occasionally taken out of my immersion in the film, unconsciously placing actors in their other famous roles.



Kay McHugh

Regarding the film's quality as an adaptation, having read "Dune," I can say with confidence that Timothee Chalamet was not who I pictured as Paul Atreides. However, the film makes several important changes, making "Dune" fit for the screen. Rather than handling it like a sacred text, Villeneuve cuts characters, and storylines, streamlining the plot to great effect while maintaining the spirit of the text.

When it comes to my favorite aspects of "Part Two," the visuals and special effects set it apart, both from its predecessor and, arguably, any other movie ever.

Despite the relative mundanity on the surface of Arrakis, covered in sand as far as the eyes can see, "Part Two" does a brilliant job portraying a beauty in vastness. Similarly impressive, Giedi Prime, where we are introduced to Butler's Feyd-Rautha, is entirely black and white and brutal.

In one of the most visually stunning scenes in the film, fireworks go off above a crowded coliseum on Giedi Prime, though instead of being colorful, they are black and white ink blotches, reminiscent of a Rorschach test. At this point, I was enamored.

One of the biggest critiques of the 2021 film was that it was boring, focused on setting exposition and introducing characters. In "Part Two," we are now privileged to awesome, violent and beautiful action.

"Part Two" shows the way characters actually interact with the world around them. Highlighting Fremen society, their customs, religion and independence are portrayed in engaging ways. But most importantly, they ride the giant worms.

While from a physics perspective, other than shooting sand out their backsides as a sort of jet propulsion, the sandworms in "Dune" don't necessarily make sense; the scene when Chalamet first mounts a worm is too epic to care. I can only imagine how much money was spent on filming the 3-minute shot where a sandworm the size of the Burj Khalifa rises out of the ground and is, somehow, steered by a thin... but not scrawny, douche from "Lady Bird."

Also, I would be doing a disservice not to mention the utterly immersive soundtrack composed by Hans Zimmer. Aside from the action, the effects, the visuals and the actors, shivers were sent down my spine thanks to the haunting, inspiring and demanding tracks.

My only problem with the film came from how big it was, and the sacrifices that came with that. Notable character deaths came quite abruptly, and did not seem to match their narrative weight. However, with a run-time of 2h 46min, and the scope of the source material in mind, unlike its predecessor, "Part Two" did not leave me with sand in my mouth. In fact, I wish it could have kept feeding me the "water of life" for hours more.

If you have not seen the first "Dune" movie, or fell asleep while watching, I would strongly urge you to go back and review before buying your ticket for "Part Two." I would also strongly encourage you to go and watch "Dune Part Two" in theaters. It is a cinematic spectacle that deserves to be viewed on the big screen.

Rating: 8.4/10