

CHENNAI: It is never easy to comprehend a science-fiction film and Canadian auteur Denis Villeneuve's latest epic "Dune" is no exception. Set roughly 20,000 years in the future, audiences are welcomed to a world where man has created colonies throughout the universe.

Written by Villeneuve along with Eric Roth and Jon Spaihts, "Dune" has been adapted from Frank Herbert's 1965 book by the same name. The novel minced no words in stating its allergy for big corporates, ecological radicalism and racism.



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Interestingly, adaptations of Herbert's literary work have been tried in the past. In 1984, David Lynch's version appeared and disappeared without much ado. Admittedly, Villeneuve's (well known for his critically acclaimed "Sicario" in 2015, sci-fi "Arrival" in 2016 and 2017's "Blade Runner 2049") current effort is much more engrossing than Lynch's.



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Paul Atreides (essayed by Timothee Chalamet) is the hero, who is not quite sure of the enormity of his powers and his continuing doubts about this seems like a handicap to the gigantic task before him. His father, Duke (Oscar Isaac) has been put in charge of the desert planet Arrakis. It is the source of a mysterious substance called spice, which extends human longevity and also provides fuel for space journeys. The deserts of Arrakis are also home to deadly worms that can emerge without any warning, as well as an oppressed race, Fremen, who hate “spice harvesters” and view them as exploiters.





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“Dune” is best watched on the big screen — it is grand and spectacular. But unlike some of its ilk, which do not go beyond show and pomp, Villeneuve and his team (with brilliant cinematography by Greig Fraser and production designed by Patrice Vermette) have given us a nuanced telling of this popular sci-fi tale.

And it is played out with an intense ensemble cast of Rebecca Ferguson, Charlotte Rampling and Jason Momoa. What is more, Villeneuve allows the drama to build very, very slowly before letting it rise to a crescendo.

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