

Stellan Skarsgard Boards Denis Villeneuve's 'Dune' as Villain Baron Harkonnen



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Stellan Skarsgard is the latest high-profile actor to board **Denis Villeneuve's** highly anticipated *Dune* adaptation. The *Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again!* actor is joining the *Dune* cast as the villainous Baron Harkonnen, who plots with the galactic emperor to destroy the Atrides family, including **Timothée Chalamet's** protagonist, Paul Atrides.

[The Hollywood Reporter](#) broke the news that Skarsgard is boarding Villeneuve's big-budget adaptation of Frank Herbert's infamously dense novel. He'll join an impressively stacked cast that already includes Chalamet, **Rebecca Ferguson**, and **Dave Bautista**.

Skarsgard will be playing one of the story's villains, Baron Harkonnen, the patriarch of a family that previously ruled the desert planet of Arrakis, and who holds a longstanding grudge against the currently-ruling Atrides family. Together with the galactic emperor, Baron Harkonnen plots to overthrow the Atrides family and take control of the planet's export: a rare, hallucinogenic spice drug.

Skarsgard has carved out a niche for himself as a go-to Hollywood villain (or a lovable professor type), so an evil fallen nobleman seems like the perfect role for him. I look forward to him vamping it up as much as possible in Villeneuve's film, which stars Chalamet as Paul Atrides, the son of the ruling family who is forced to escape into the wastelands and ally himself with the desert's nomadic tribes in order to overthrow the empire.

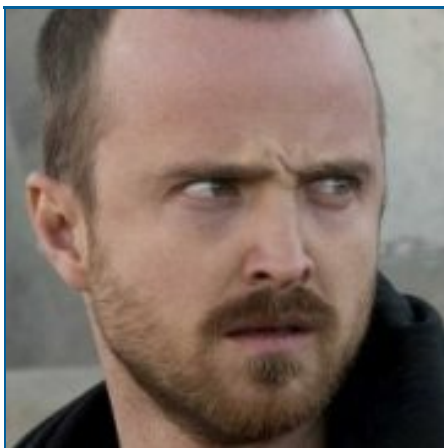
Here's the book's synopsis:

Set in the distant future amidst a feudal interstellar society in which noble houses, in control of individual planets, owe allegiance to the Padishah Emperor, Dune tells the story of young Paul Atrides, whose noble family accepts the stewardship of the desert planet Arrakis. As this planet is the only source of the oracular spice melange, the most important and valuable substance in the universe, control of Arrakis is a coveted—and dangerous—undertaking. The story explores the multi-layered interactions of politics, religion, ecology, technology, and human emotion, as the factions of the empire confront each other in a struggle for the control of Arrakis and its spice.

Dune has long been a passion project for Villeneuve, who co-writes the script with **Eric Roth** and **Jon Spaihts**. Herbert's massive, complex sci-fi saga is famously difficult to adapt, with David Lynch trying and failing in 1984 with the feature film starring Kyle MacLachlan. But Villeneuve has [described](#) his version as "Star Wars for adults," which hopefully means the confusing sci-fi epic will be condensed into something more palatable. Splitting his film into [two parts](#) will probably help too.

No release date has yet been set for *Dune*. Production will likely begin soon.

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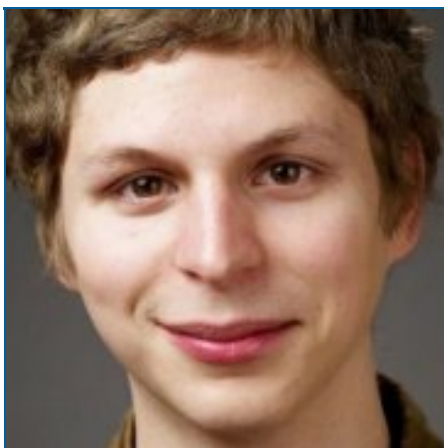
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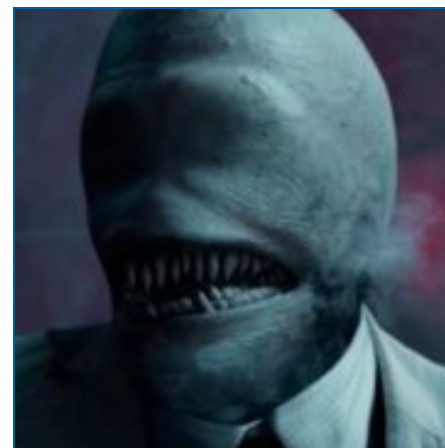
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