Jenna Ortega Believes She Auditioned for Zendaya's Role in Dune When She Was 15: 'Everything Was Very Secret'

PEOPLE– The actress thinks she might have almost been a Fremen before serving up frights in 'Beetlejuice Beetlejuice'

Jenna Ortega thinks she may have auditioned for *Dune*.

In a new interview with BuzzFeed published on Monday, Aug. 26, the *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* actress, 21, shared why she thinks she may have been up for the 2021 role that eventually went to Zendaya.

About halfway through the nearly 12-minute clip, the young star (who played with a group of dachshund puppies for the duration of the conversation) was asked what's a role that people would be surprised to hear that she auditioned for.

Jenna Ortega.BUZZFEED

"I think I auditioned for *Dune* when I was about 15," Ortega said with a smile.

She added that she was a big fan of the franchise and was "really excited" because Denis Villeneuve "is one of my favorite filmmakers."

The *You* alum admitted that although there weren't a ton of details available at the time, she's pretty sure she and the *Challengers* star, 27, were up for the same role.

"I think it was Chani. I think it was Zendaya's – but they weren't saying that. Everything was very secret," Ortega said.

It’s not uncommon on some projects for an actor to not know what role or film they’re auditioning for; they may be given a completely different scene or character to play.

Dune was originally released in December 1984. The David Lynch-directed film saw Patrick Stewart, Sting, and more as cast members. Actress Sean Young was the first to play Chani in the sci-fi drama.

The 2021 remake saw Zendaya take the reins as Chani alongside Timothée Chalamet, who was cast as Paul Atreides. The pair reunited for *Dune: Part Two*, which was released in March 2024.

The second installment brought in $711.8 million at the box office.

Elsewhere in the BuzzFeed interview, Ortega, recalled her favorite behind-the-scenes memory from filming *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* — the follow-up to Tim Burton’s 1988 film *Beetlejuice*.

For the remake, Ortega stars as Astrid Deetz, the daughter of Winona Ryder’s Lydia.

Jenna Ortega in BEETLEJUICE BEETLEJUICE 2024.WARNER BROS. PICTURES

“I really like the third act climax, just because we have a big scene in a church. That was so much going on. We shot it for about three weeks, everybody’s in it,” she said. “It was a lot of fun to shoot, but also going to the underworld for the first time and understanding that we kinda had to walk on a tilt.”

She also admitted that she “weirdly got shy” when meeting the film’s lead star Michael Keaton for the first time.

“But he’s so sweet, he’s so funny, he’s so charming, so professional — I feel like I learned so much, even by watching

him," Ortega said. "It was really strange to see him become Beetlejuice because he was unrecognizable."

The actress continued, "It was the first time I think I had ever really seen someone completely disappear. No bit of themselves involved, so that was pretty special."

Beetlejuice Beetlejuice is set to be released in theaters on Sept. 6, 2024.