

edgar rice burroughs john carters

Edgar Rice Burroughs John Carters has become a staple in the realm of science fiction literature, captivating readers with tales of adventure, romance, and the exploration of alien worlds. Burroughs, an American author best known for creating the iconic character Tarzan, introduced John Carter to the world in 1912, subsequently weaving a rich tapestry of interplanetary adventures that would leave a lasting legacy. This article delves into the life of Burroughs, the origins of John Carter, and the impact that this character has had on literature and popular culture.

Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Behind the Legend

Early Life and Career

Edgar Rice Burroughs was born on September 1, 1875, in Chicago, Illinois. He had a varied early career, working in several fields including as a cowboy, a railroad policeman, and a pencil sharpener salesman. Despite his diverse jobs, Burroughs was always drawn to writing. In 1911, he found inspiration in a story about Mars, which would eventually lead to the creation of John Carter.

The Creation of John Carter

The character of John Carter first appeared in Burroughs' serialized novel *A Princess of Mars*, published in 1912. The story follows a Confederate soldier who is mysteriously transported to Mars, known as Barsoom in the series. Here, he encounters various races, including the noble Tharks and the beautiful Martian princess, Dejah Thoris.

Key points about the creation of John Carter include:

- Influences: Burroughs was influenced by the scientific theories of the time, particularly those regarding Mars. The notion of a dying planet with advanced civilizations captured his imagination.
- Themes: The stories often explore themes of honor, heroism, and the clash of cultures. John Carter embodies the noble warrior archetype, fighting for love and justice.
- Character Development: Throughout the series, Carter evolves from a mere soldier to a king, showcasing his growth and adaptability.

The Barsoom Series

The Barsoom series consists of eleven novels, each chronicling John Carter's adventures and the intricate politics of the Martian world.

Major Novels in the Series

1. A Princess of Mars (1912): The inaugural novel introduces John Carter and his love for Dejah Thoris.
2. The Gods of Mars (1913): This sequel delves deeper into Martian religion and the mysteries of the planet.
3. The Warlord of Mars (1914): Carter must confront the Thark chieftain and rally his allies.
4. Thark's Daughter (1930): This later installment explores the offspring of Carter, expanding the narrative universe.
5. The Chessmen of Mars (1922): A unique story that incorporates elements of strategy and war games.

Notable Characters

The Barsoom series is rich with memorable characters:

- Dejah Thoris: The Martian princess and John Carter's love interest, embodying strength and intelligence.
- Tars Tarkas: A Thark leader who becomes an ally to Carter, representing loyalty and honor among the Tharks.
- Sola: A Thark woman who provides insight into Martian culture and becomes a maternal figure to Carter's son.
- Jeddak: The title used for the rulers of the Martian city-states, showcasing the hierarchical nature of Martian society.

Impact on Literature and Popular Culture

Influence on Science Fiction

The John Carter stories have significantly influenced the science fiction genre. Burroughs' imaginative worlds, complex characters, and adventurous plots paved the way for future writers. Notable influences include:

- Space Opera: Burroughs' work laid the groundwork for the space opera subgenre, inspiring authors like

Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke.

- Heroic Fantasy: Elements of sword & sorcery found in Burroughs' narratives inspired later fantasy writers, including J.R.R. Tolkien and Robert E. Howard.
- Comic Books: John Carter's adventures were adapted into comic book series, further cementing his status in popular culture.

Film and Television Adaptations

The character of John Carter has been adapted into various media formats, most notably in film and television. Key adaptations include:

- John Carter (2012): A Disney film that attempted to capture the essence of Burroughs' work but received mixed reviews. Despite its financial failure, it brought renewed interest to the Barsoom series.
- Animated Series and Shorts: Various adaptations have appeared in animated formats, showcasing the character to younger audiences.
- Documentaries and Retrospectives: Several documentaries explore Burroughs' life and his impact on science fiction, often featuring discussions about John Carter.

Merchandise and Fan Culture

The legacy of John Carter has also permeated merchandise and fan culture:

- Collectibles: Action figures, posters, and art inspired by John Carter and the Barsoom series are popular among collectors.
- Fandom: Online communities and fan clubs celebrate the adventures of John Carter, discussing theories, artwork, and adaptations.
- Literary Homages: Modern authors and filmmakers often pay homage to Burroughs' work, integrating references to Barsoom in their narratives.

Legacy and Modern Relevance

Rediscovery of Burroughs' Work

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in Edgar Rice Burroughs and his works. Several factors contribute to this rediscovery:

- **Digital Publishing:** Many of Burroughs' novels are now available in eBook formats, allowing new generations of readers to explore his adventures.
- **Graphic Novels:** Modern adaptations in graphic novel form have reintroduced John Carter to a younger audience, making the stories more accessible.
- **Cinematic Trends:** With the success of franchises like Marvel and Star Wars, there is a renewed interest in classic adventure tales, including those of John Carter.

Conclusion

The Edgar Rice Burroughs John Carters series remains a cornerstone of science fiction literature. Burroughs' vivid imagination and ability to craft compelling narratives have ensured that John Carter's legacy endures through generations. The character not only represents a pioneering figure in the realm of interplanetary adventures but also serves as a testament to the power of storytelling. As new adaptations and discussions about Burroughs' work continue, John Carter will undoubtedly remain an enduring symbol of adventure, honor, and love across the cosmos.

In summary, the tale of John Carter is not just a story of a man from Earth; it is an exploration of the human spirit, resilience, and the quest for belonging in a universe that is vast and often indifferent. His adventures on Mars invite readers to dream and explore, reminding us that the boundaries of our imagination are limited only by our willingness to venture beyond the stars.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Edgar Rice Burroughs and what is his significance in literature?

Edgar Rice Burroughs was an American author best known for creating the character Tarzan and the science fiction series featuring John Carter of Mars. His work has significantly influenced the fantasy and science fiction genres.

What is the premise of the John Carter series?

The John Carter series follows the adventures of a Confederate Civil War veteran, John Carter, who is transported to Mars, known as Barsoom, where he encounters various alien races and becomes embroiled in conflicts between them.

How has John Carter's character evolved in modern adaptations?

In modern adaptations, particularly the 2012 Disney film 'John Carter', the character has been portrayed with a focus on his heroic qualities and romantic interests, while also emphasizing themes of identity and belonging.

What are some major themes explored in the John Carter novels?

Major themes in the John Carter novels include love, honor, loyalty, and the struggle for power. The series also delves into colonialism and the clash of cultures, reflecting Burroughs' own perspectives and the socio-political context of his time.

What impact did the John Carter series have on the science fiction genre?

The John Carter series is considered foundational in the science fiction genre, influencing later works with its imaginative world-building, complex alien societies, and the heroic archetype, paving the way for future space opera narratives.

Are there any recent projects or adaptations related to John Carter?

Yes, there have been discussions around reviving the John Carter franchise in various forms, including film and television adaptations, as well as graphic novels, aiming to reintroduce the character to a new generation.

What role does John Carter's romantic relationship with Dejah Thoris play in the series?

John Carter's relationship with Dejah Thoris, a Martian princess, is central to the narrative, driving much of the plot and character motivation. Their romance symbolizes the bridging of cultures and serves to highlight themes of love overcoming obstacles.

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