

Blu-ray Review: ‘John Carter’ Doesn’t Deserve Punchline Status But Does Miss Its Mark

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 19, 2012 - 3:26pm

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CHICAGO – I approached “John Carter” on Blu-ray expecting to fall strongly on either side of the debate surrounding one of the biggest bombs of 2012. The cyclical nature of entertainment journalism means everything that faces as much critical derision as “Carter” did when it hit theaters is likely to get a camp of loyal devotees before long and I had heard from several people that Andrew Stanton’s film wasn’t actually all that bad. It’s not. But it’s not good either. It’s just there. There are elements that work, for sure, but the thin storytelling and characters for whom it’s simply impossible to care about make it more lackluster than anything else.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

What’s to like about “John Carter”? It looks spectacular. It’s well-made, well-directed, and well-shot. Star Taylor Kitsch (having a seriously cursed attempt at trying to break into the A-list with this and “Battleship”) isn’t as charismatic as he should be but he’s not bad and Lynn Collins really should be a star. She’s beautiful and engaging. The effects are seamless and Stanton stages the action in an expert enough way that one needn’t worry about whatever he does next. The failures of “John Carter” do not lay at his feet.

So where do they lay? The screenplay, one that languished in development for longer than most people involved in the film were alive (there have been attempts to make “Carter” for decades), gets most of the blame. This story is so convoluted and so generally nonsensical that it loses the human element. It’s increasingly difficult to care about what happens to our space-jumping hero as the film progresses to the point that I actually lost track of the action. B-movies like this should be simple affairs — good guys, bad guys, GO! “John Carter” is weighed down with species names and prophecies and yadda, yadda, yadda. It makes one wonder if the reason that it took so long to get to big screen isn’t because it was never really meant for it.

The blu-ray from Disney is a nice one with a very strong transfer. The video looks spectacular, amplifying the film’s greatest strength — its confident design and look. The sound mix is excellent as well. “John Carter” already has a growing number of fans who I think are extra protective given the film’s punchline status as an all-around failure. It doesn’t deserve that. Honestly, it’s not bad nor good enough to really be remembered at all.



John Carter was released on Blu-ray and DVD on June 5, 2012

Photo credit: Disney

Synopsis:

From Academy Award-winning filmmaker Andrew Stanton (Best Animated Film, Walle-E, 2008) comes John Carter — a sweeping action-adventure set on the mysterious and exotic planet of Barsoom (Mars). Based on Edgar Rice Burroughs's classic novel, John Carter is a war-weary, former military captain who's inexplicably transported to Mars and reluctantly becomes embroiled in an epic conflict. It's a world on the brink of collapse, and Carter rediscovers his humanity when he realizes the survival of Barsoom and its people rests in his hands. Stunning special effects, great characters and villains — and complete with extraordinary bonus features — John Carter is a heroic and inspirational adventure that will thrill you beyond imagination.

Special Features:

- o Explore John Carter's Journal With This Innovative In-World Experience And Uncover A Trove Of Fascinating Details that Extend the Mythology of the Movie
- o 360 Degrees of John Carter - Experience Every Aspect of the Filmmaking Process On One Of The Movie's Biggest Production Days
- o Deleted Scenes With Optional Commentary By Director Andrew Stanton
- o Barsoom Bloopers
- o 100 Years In The Making - Follow The Journey Of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Story From Its Origins As A Pulp Novel To Its Arrival Onscreen
- o Audio Commentary With Filmmakers

"John Carter" stars Taylor Kitsch, Lynn Collins, Mark Strong, Ciaran Hinds, Dominic West, and Willem Dafoe. It was written by Andrew Stanton, Mark Andrews & Michael Chabon and directed by Stanton.



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [17]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [16]

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