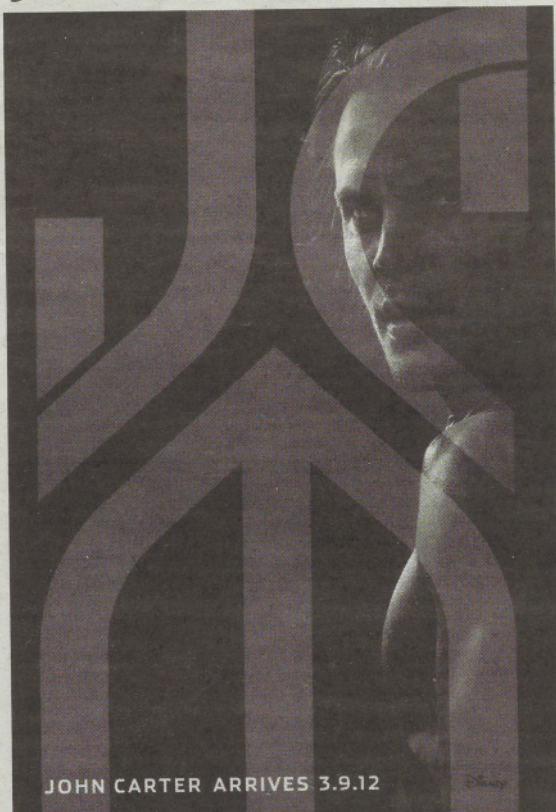


# John Carter travels through theaters universe-wide



JOHN CARTER ARRIVES 3.9.12

John Carter, played by actor Taylor Kitsch, in this action-packed film about a soldier trying to find his way to Earth.

Courtesy of Disney

By Isaac Soper  
Arts & Culture Editor

A lone Confederate Army captain of the Civil War is on the run from the tribes of the Apache and the Union when he enters a mysterious cave and is suddenly transported to Mars; though he claims to fight for no man, through the course of events, he will defend the freedom of the planet that the natives call "Barsoom."

"John Carter" was written and directed by Andrew Stanton, who wrote the "Toy Story" films, and wrote and directed a number of other Disney animated films, including "WALL-E," and "Finding Nemo." The film was his first live-action picture to date. The titular character, John Carter, is played by Taylor Kitsch, known for his roles on the television series "Friday Night Lights," and his portrayal of Gambit/Remy LeBeau in 2009's "X-Men Origins: Wolverine." The film also features the acting talents of Willem Dafoe, Lynn Collins, Mark Strong and Ciarán Hinds.

After seeing "John Carter," many people will say that it is a rip-off of James Cameron's film "Avatar," which it is most definitely not.

"John Carter" was released in 3D and 2D theaters nationwide last Friday, after being formerly written 100 years prior. The original story of the character John Carter, "Under the Moons of Mars" was published in 1912 in the form of a serial. It was written by Edgar Rice Burroughs, the creator of Tarzan, who continued the story of John Carter of Mars until 1941.

"John Carter" is directly based off of Burroughs first novelization of the John Carter series, known as "The Princess of Mars."

The film, though presented in "Disney 3D," was in fact a very entertaining and captivating film. Though the three-dimensional effects weren't particularly noticeable during most of the film, the special effects and story were very engaging, one in particular being the sequences of Carter learning to walk on the Mars surface.

In a recent conference call with Disney, Stanton explained why he was interested in taking on the "John Carter" story. "I'm a huge fan," he said. "I've read the books my whole life. And [I] wanted to see them and I'm probably one of the more rabid fans. So I didn't want it screwed up."

As with the slaying of orcs in the "Lord of the Rings" films, if the blue-blooded creatures from Barsoom would have been human, "John Carter" would definitely have an "R" rating, opposed to "PG-13," due to the amount of violence presented in the film.

The only drawback to "John Carter" is that it seems to be converted into 3D, which depending on one's preference, may or may not be worth the few extra dollars. To define the film in a genre, it would have to be classified as a western sci-fi, one that is much more entertaining than last year's "Cowboys & Aliens," and definitely worth seeing multiple times.



# Mass Effect 3 gives new experiences to all sci-fi gamers

By Brian Baldwin  
Editor-in-Chief

In the story "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," a boy calls out to villagers that he saw a wolf. They don't believe him because he has done this before. He calls out again and yet they still don't believe his story. Now imagine that the ending was different and that the wolf comes to eat the villagers in their sleep while the boy is forced to watch while dragged to safety. That is essentially the first ten minutes of "Mass Effect 3."

Released March 6, Bioware hopes that "ME3" will provide closure and success to the story of Commander Shepard, and finally bring multiplayer to fans that have been asking for it since the beginning. "ME3" is very enjoyable and it seems that Bioware has listened to and embraced many fan complaints, tweaking features such as planetary scanning and bringing back weapon modifications and grenades. Difficulty has been tweaked as well, ranging from "pip-squeak" to "why did you throw your controller through the TV?"

At the start of the game the Reapers, the game's main antagonist, start landing on Earth to obliterate everything in their path. You are forced to abandon Earth to fend for itself and rally other races in the galaxy to defend the planet, which is the site of the largest invasion. Depending on how many allies you gain throughout the game and the "galaxy readiness" you gain through multiplayer matches you will stand a better chance at beating the Reapers, or become a smoldering corpse.

However, the first half of the story of Mass Effect fails at tugging at the heartstrings of the player. Earth has been invaded,

civilians are being butchered and harvested and yet you are rarely reminded of how bad the situation of Earth really is. All you get is "It's going well. Hit and run tactics." You are given military statistics but know nothing of what is happening to the population. You would think that Bioware would utilize the human factor more, especially after they had your character witness the death of a child right in front of them.

The writers did show that the last few years are finally eroding Shepard's mental health. Your character avoids sleep, has constant nightmares that flash back to the invasion of Earth and always sees the face of the child they failed to save. You would think that Shepard would have already had a mental breakdown after assimilating ancient technology, hunting down a powerful secret agent, killing a Reaper, killing off the remnants of an ancient race, charging into dozens of suicide missions and, oh yeah, dying.

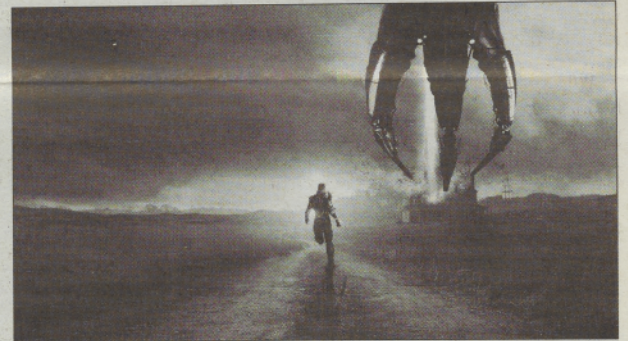
Your smaller choices also have a lot more impact if you are a careful observer. In one instance I came across when I reconnected with a former crew member. Traumatized by her experiences at the end of "ME2," she is helping refugees deal with the stresses they have. You have the choice of complimenting the work she is doing or suggest that she change her name. I chose to compliment her and after a critical event on the station she was at, I overheard a background conversation that mentioned she had been singled out and executed by the enemy.

Bioware changed some of the interactive features that fans had issues with. In "ME2" you had to go across the entire galaxy and scan for minerals to upgrade your weapons, armor and ship.

It was tedious, consumed hours and the scanning had no concept of planet scale. Instead scanning has been repurposed for finding and collecting war assets that are scattered across star systems.

The new "galaxy at war" system in "ME3" finally allows players to experience what they have been asking for since the launch of the first game. Based around the popular form of "defend against X number of waves," fans can choose to play a combination of their favorite class and race that is provided. Each victory, or defeat, changes the "galaxy readiness" that will benefit the endgame result of the storyline. However this style of game play is repetitive and gets old fast.

"ME3" is worth the money only if you are the type of person that loves immense game universes that have a lot of back story. The side missions, trying to explore every nook and cranny and all of the crew dialogue will easily surpass more than 20 hours



of game play. If you are new to "Mass Effect" I would strongly recommend starting with at least the second game, as the story of "ME3" is not friendly to new players.

This series grabbed my heart at the first game. "Blade Runner in space meets 'Heart of Darkness'" I believe were my words. However, the ending failed to give me a satisfactory end to the iconic story of Commander Shepard and didn't

involve the Reapers in the final showdown as much as it did in the previous two games. It lives up to the hype that fans expected, except for the plot needed to tug on our heartstrings concerning Earth. With the promise of upcoming downloadable content it will be interesting to see how Bioware will salvage the ending.



Female Shepard holds her weapons in front of the special effects background. In this game you battle all types of science-fiction characters to achieve the goal of beating the Reapers.

All photos courtesy of Bioware