

# Costuming by the Book Panel

## Introduction

The room for the panel was full, despite the time slot just after lunch on Sunday. The panel ran seventy minutes. Panel moderator Kevin Roche gave a brief introduction of the project and the teams, followed by an amazingly succinct and entertaining summary of the three John Carter books on which we based our designs.

Each of the four teams had ten minutes to pitch their concept and designs, using projected images and props to illustrate key points. Kevin then asked the panel to discuss several common points that came up during their presentations. Finally, he opened the floor to the audience for questions. The questions were very good, and evoked further discussion among the teams.

It was clear from their questions that the audience members came prepared, after spending time at the art show exhibit. Kevin's entertaining summary and his skill as a moderator made the panel more interesting, and kept it moving in the right direction and on time. We are very grateful to Kevin for doing such a wonderful job.

In the following sections, each of the teams will discuss the concepts and designs

they presented, and provide insight into the process they followed. First, though, here is Kevin's inimitable summary of the books' plot and characters.



## A Quick Guide to Barsoom

**Kevin Roche\* – Panel Moderator**

The 11 books and 1 novella, begun by Edgar Rice Burroughs in 1911, relate the adventures of John Carter, his companions, enemies, and the clan he acquires on the fantastic world of Mars (or, as the natives prefer to call it, *Barsoom*).



Our teams were **(BARSOOM)** tasked with designing for a film based on the trilogy begun in the first book, published in serial form as *Under the Moons of Mars* in 1912 and as the novel *A Princess of Mars* in 1917, and continuing in *The Gods of Mars* and *The Warlord of Mars*.

Before describing the story, a couple of points critical to our designers' efforts:

Burroughs describes Mars (or as we know it, *Barsoom*) as inhabited by 5 races:

the White, Yellow, Black, Red and Green Martians. Each has distinctive cultural aspects that must be incorporated by our designers in their work

As our story begins, the white Martians have been unseen for centuries; the Green Martians we'll be coming back to soon

The next critical point is that apparently, no one on Barsoom ever wears any clothes. This offers a particular challenge for our designers, as we want our film project to achieve a PG-13 rating.



They *do*, however, wear **harnesses**, a term I expect our teams to interpret somewhat elastically to achieve our filmmaking ends.

Right then – on to the story!

**John Carter** is a Confederate Civil War veteran, prospecting for gold out West. He hides in a cave to evade marauding Indians, where he is overcome by a mysterious cloud and passes out cold.



When he awakens, he discovers he is in a mysterious place, which he somehow knows is the planet Mars (or, as we know it, *Barsoom*). He also (somehow) knows that it is called *Barsoom*. He also discovers that on Barsoom, he is Incredibly Strong.



Shortly thereafter, another prisoner is delivered into Sola's care. It is the *incomparable Dejah Thoris*, who, unbeknownst to our hero, is the titular Princess from the city Helium.



And so it continues, as one after another: villains capture the incomparable Dejah Thoris and John Carter et al. must rescue her from peril.



He quickly learns that this doesn't matter, because the *very first* person he meets is **Tars Tarkas**, a *Thark*, or Green Martian. Tharks are 16-foot tall lizards with four arms.

Tars Tarkas captures John Carter and takes him back to his encampment as a prisoner, where he places him in the care of his softhearted daughter, **Sola**.



John Carter, of course, falls instantly in love, and now the stage is set for the rest of our story.

First, the incomparable Dejah Thoris is kidnapped by evil **Thern Priests**, and John Carter and Tars Tarkas must hie off to rescue her before they can do unspeakable things to her.



No sooner have they rescued her than she is kidnapped by **Black Pirates**. Off our heroes go again to save her before *they* commit unspeakable acts against the incomparable Princess.

This provides more than enough material for the remainder of the trilogy, and, should we wish, to film a sequel, for the remaining 8 books (with the also-incomparable *daughter* of John Carter and Dejah Thoris occasionally standing in for her mother).

And that, in a nutshell, is the tale of John Carter of Mars. Now, on to the presentations!