A Princess of Mars by Edgar Rice Burroughs

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Introduction

The novel *A Princess of Mars* is a fantastic novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs, the first in his Martian series. The genre of the novel in English-language literature was defined as planetary fantasy. It was based on the scientific hypothesis of the existence of an inhabited but dying world, created by the famous astronomer Percival Lowell. The cycle was popular and influenced Ray Bradbury. Carl Sagan pointed out that reading Burroughs' novels in his childhood prompted him to tackle astronomy and the problems of extraterrestrial life. Traditionally, the book is considered sci-fi, but in the English-speaking world, it is referred to as the subgenre planetary romance, adjacent to fantasy (the action, unlike cosmic opera, unfolds on one planet in the pre-cosmic era). The action of novels of this type takes place on someone else's exotic planet and includes sword fights, monsters, and magic. The civilization of Mars fancifully combines the signs of a developed society and a pre-technological one (Martians know how to create an atmosphere and have an air fleet artificially, but the army is equipped with cold weapons; they are divided into tribes governed by absolute rulers) (Porges; Bleiler; Basalla).

The protagonist of the novel is John Carter, who has heroic characteristics and is a captain in the army of the Confederate States, as portrayed in the novel set in 1866. The various ways in which Carter fulfills his role in the novel make him the hero, such as his characteristics in the novel that demonstrate him as a hero during the defeat of the Confederates in the Civil War. His decision made him a hero when he decided to go to Arizona to extract gold. There are many examples in the novel, which are discussed below, that make him a hero. For example, after a skirmish with the Indians who killed his friend, he is attacked by a strange paralysis, but the hero does not die and, having found a second body, is on Mars. Initially, he enters the nomadic tribe of the Tarkas, one of the races that inhabit this planet. The tribe does not look much like people, is prone to cruelty, and leads a nomadic way of life. Thanks to the lower gravity on Mars, Carter has outstanding physical abilities and acquires a heroic position in the tribe and the friendship of one of the leaders, Tars Tarkas. Soon, the Tarkas destroy the airship and capture the beautiful Princess of Helium. She belongs to the race of red Martians, similar to people who created a high civilization.

This paper discusses the main character in the novel *A Princess of Mars* and analyzes factors in the novel that make John Carter a hero. The paper defines Carter as a hero and then discusses the various ways he fulfills that role (Slotkin; Burroughs).

Analysis

Carter's heroic traits during the wanderings of Mars: During the wanderings of Mars, Carter's heroic qualities inspire high feelings in Dejah Thoris, but she is seized by the Prince of Zodanga, the eternal enemy of Helium. Thanks to the help of the Tarkas, John Carter destroys Zodanga and attaches it to Helium. He marries Dejah Thoris and becomes the Prince of Helium, but soon a catastrophe begins: there is not enough air on Mars, since the atmospheric station where the air is artificially produced stops working. Carter leaves his wife to start the factory but awakens in his body on Earth, which has lain in Arizona for more than ten years. He remains alive on Earth in eternal melancholy, contemplating the red disk of Mars. John Carter, Captain of the U.S. Army, is originally from Virginia. The date of birth is unknown; he is ancient, although he always looks like a thirty-year-old. He does not remember his childhood. The height is six feet two inches (188 cm). The author-narrator (identified with Burroughs himself) writes that before he died in 1886, John Carter ordered that he be buried, without opening or embalming the body, in a crypt that can only be opened from the inside. Dejah Thoris is the princess of Helium, the daughter and granddaughter of its rulers, Mors Kajak and Tardos Mors (Helium is a second city ruled by two leaders). She is an extraordinary beauty, and in the first three novels of the series, the storyline about the capture of Dejah Thoris by various leaders of Martian states serves as the main storyline. Tars Tarkas is a representative of the Thark race and its supreme leader. He is a cruel Martian nomad, distinguished from his fellow tribesmen by his ability to love.

John Carter's other heroic traits include those shown when the character, played by Antonio Sabato Jr., is a captain of the U.S. Special Forces looking for terrorists in Afghan villages. Unsuccessfully interfering in the course of a deal between opium merchants and the owner of a local teahouse, Carter finds himself with multiple gunshot wounds in a field hospital under an oxygen mask. In a feverish delirium, two American military men, one white and one Black, hang over him, informing him that he will not survive until morning and that he has become a participant in an experiment. He will be sent to Mars (not to the Mars he knows, but to an alternative one in Alpha Centauri). They show a mysterious 16-gig flash drive where all his genetic information will be entered. John shows them the middle finger in return. Once again recovering, he observes the conversation between the blonde woman in a hayrack and an unpleasant thug with an ugly face wrapped in rags, shot in blurry, sunny, impressionistic tones. They are talking about whether to save Carter's life or finish him off on the spot. As a result, the blonde completes the discussion with a satisfactory quote from the novel's finale, "The Irony of Fate or with a Light Steam."

Carter's personality traits: After all these impressive visual introductions, Carter discovers himself completely naked in the middle of a stony desert. Above his head are two moons and unknown purple nebulae. When he tries to take the first step, he flies up like a grasshopper. Moving in a way familiar to those who know the source, caused by the difference in gravity, the hero finds eggs and a clothesline with rags behind the nearest rocks. He manages to build himself something like a loincloth. Then he is surrounded by a mob of cabinets of Aborigines with horny growths on their

heads, clad in plate armor and red shirts. Carter is put in a collar with a chain and introduced to the local boss, who is fat and ugly even against the background of his fellow tribesmen and repeatedly asks him to jump again. During a sortie against a whole horde of giant spiders, the American Marine shows that he is neither sly nor weak. Then, he is removed from the chain and allowed to eat a wriggling worm, thanks to which the inhabitants of Mars overcome the language barrier. The hero, and simultaneously the viewer, is introduced to the course of events.

Carter's heroic traits make him part of the hostile and wild tribe of the Tarkas. Here on Mars, there are people called Helium, who are ruled by a princess and are oppressed in every way, explained by the fact that they care about the good of the planet and that only through their efforts are oxygen and life still preserved in it (a little bit of socio-political satire for the rage of the day). As proof of this, a giant flying ship painted in diesel-punk style appears from behind the mountains. The Tarkas excitedly shoot at it with thin guns, and the hero jumps and jumps, observing with his own eyes the intrigue unfolding on the deck of the burning ship. The young blonde woman in a hayrack is a princess, and the figure with a face wrapped in rags is a traitor. Carter captures the princess; he is promoted for valor among the Jeddaks. The princess, who is fascinating in her armor and high boots, puts the carcass in a cage, and Carter is given a battle harness to cover up dubious tattoos with hieroglyphics (either the hero's memory of service in the USMC or the actor's own, made on vacation in Phuket).

The princess needs to be urgently delivered before the eyes of the local fat, ugly boss so that he can decide her fate. On the road, Carter, with varying success, seeks a common language with the princess (magical worms here, in search of understanding between a man and a woman, are predictably powerless), fires at the unpleasant flying creatures with green insides, and makes friends with the Tarkas field commander. He also learns that the princess's people are in charge of an air-purifying station, thanks to which the planet has not yet completely shut down, and a giant ship is heading there. The culmination is a conversation with an ugly, fat man sitting in an environment of many guards and human concubines clothed in bikinis, in such a chic castle as Conan the Barbarian himself would not hesitate to destroy. As a result of the conversation, Carter is put in a casemate, his friend is sent to the penal battalion, and the princess is appointed as a concubine. In the casemate, the traitor wrapped in rags approaches the hero. He unwraps them—and who do we see? It turns out that the U.S. military also threw him onto Mars—for a bribe. Like Carter, having discovered in himself an extraordinary ability to leap, the treacherous drug dealer also fell in love with the princess, and now he is ready to commit all sorts of madness for her. For example, he is ready to destroy the air-purifying mechanism and strangle all life on Mars! Burroughs began to write the novel in 1911, having not succeeded in business. The manuscript was completed on August 11, 1911. He concealed his literary work, fearing that it would destroy his reputation.

Conclusion

The story's hero is John Carter, captain of the Confederate States Army. After the defeat in the Civil War, he decides to go to Arizona to extract gold. After a skirmish with the Indians who killed his

friend, he is attacked by a strange paralysis, but he does not die and finds a second body, which is apparently a heroic trait of the character. Carter falls into the nomadic tribe of the Tarkas, one of the races that inhabit this planet. The Tarkas do not look much like people, are prone to cruelty, and lead a nomadic way of life. Thanks to the lower gravity on Mars, Carter has outstanding physical abilities and acquires a high position in the tribe and the friendship of one of the leaders—Tars Tarkas. Soon, the Tarkas destroy the airship and capture the beautiful Princess of Helium. She belongs to the race of red Martians, similar to people who created a high civilization. Carter helps her escape.

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