

# WHAT IS FARSCAPE?

Farscape tells the story of John Crichton, an astronaut who finds himself on the other side of the galaxy after a mishap during an experimental flight. Arriving in the midst of a battle scene in deep space, Crichton falls in with a trio of alien convicts fleeing from captivity by the Peacekeepers, a spacefaring military force. Now, blamed for the accidental death of a Peacekeeper Captain's brother, Crichton finds himself a fugitive as well...along with pilot Aeryn Sun, exiled by that same Captain due to her prolonged exposure to John Crichton.

By itself, this premise would set the stage for traditional action and adventure, which Farscape provides in abundance. But the show expands to a greater scale than is first apparent...and at the same time, narrows to focus on an all-too-real personal dilemma.

On the grand scale, Crichton's knowledge of wormholes (a theoretical means by which space and time can be traversed instantly) makes him the target of forces who wish to use this as a weapon. Crichton finds himself caught between hopes of returning home, and the fear of opening the way for his adversaries to conquer not only Earth but ultimately the whole of reality. Meanwhile, Crichton's personal reality is consumed by his travails with Aeryn Sun, with whom he shares a growing attraction. Thrown together and torn apart again, the pair must face not only alien menaces and time warps, but also issues of trust and respect and honesty...like any modern couple. In Farscape, the grand scheme of things and the small scale of personal crisis come together in surprising ways.

Farscape also distinguishes itself with knowing references to the conventions of the science-fiction genre, playfully tweaking cliches and defying audience expectations without becoming farce or satire, and without losing the central drama of John Crichton's situation. Like their viewers, the creators of Farscape are science-fiction aficionados (listing among their past credits such series as "Stargate SG-1," "SeaQuest DSV," "The Pretender," "Star Trek: The Next Generation," "Swamp Thing," "Alien Nation," and "The Twilight Zone") and know what has been done before. Their willingness to overturn genre cliches engages their viewers in a shared deconstruction of the form and its standard routines.

In Farscape, the heroes might sever the limbs of one of their own for a chance to return to their homes...characters chide one another for falling into the trap of "technobabble"...the villains can win: and all too often do...and the lead character is plagued by doubt and indecision, rather than being a stalwart figure of unswerving virtue.

Moreover, like his creators and his audience, the character of John Crichton is a science-fiction fan and a savvy pop culture buff — his rapid-fire cultural references include riffs on Kirk, Spock, Klingons, the "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," as well as "Blazing Saddles" and Monty Python — enabling the audience to see a reflection of themselves in him. As one fan puts it, "With Farscape, these people made the kind of show they wanted to watch themselves, and trusted the audience enough to believe there would be other people who felt the same way. That kind of respect for the viewer comes through in the show, and we respond to that."

Farscape is a production of The Jim Henson Company, best known for "The Muppet Show" as well as contributions to such films as the "Star Wars" movies and "Babe: Pig In The City". Farscape employs the animatronic puppetry techniques developed for the Muppets to depict the variety of aliens encountered by Crichton during his journey. Conceived partly as a showcase for state-of-the-art animatronics, makeup, special effects, and computer graphics, the series is intended for an adult audience and explores realistic issues and sexuality as well as the fantastic.

Alongside the animatronic thespians are a cast of human actors, including Ben Browder ("Party of Five") as John Crichton, and Claudia Black (from the feature films "Anne Rice's Queen of the Damned" and "Pitch Black") as his love interest Aeryn Sun. Virginia Hey (best known to American audiences from roles in "The Living Daylights" and "Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior" but also prominent on Australian TV series such as "Neighbours" and "Prisoner: Cell Block H") portrays their ally, the serene but playful alien priestess Zhaan. Anthony Simcoe as the youthful but fearsome warrior D'Argo and Gigi Edgley as the sensual and mischievous Chiana also feature in the cast of regular and recurring characters portrayed by the finest actors in Australia. Kent McCord (an American icon for his role in "Adam-12") has a recurring role as Crichton's father.

The series is produced and filmed in Sydney, Australia and boasts some of the highest production values currently to be found on television anywhere.



[www.watchfarscape.com](http://www.watchfarscape.com)