

RIPLEY VS. THE DOCTOR: BFI POLL REVEALS UK'S TWO FAVOURITE SCI-FI CHARACTERS

NOW YOU DECIDE WHO COMES OUT ON TOP



Thursday 11 December 2014, London.

The votes are in and the BFI today announces the final two vying to be named as the UK's favourite Sci-Fi character of all time. The BFI launched its poll to find the nation's favourite Sci-Fi character back in August, with the poll held as part of its major nationwide celebration of Sci-Fi on screen, **DAYS OF FEAR AND WONDER**, presented together with **O2**.

Thousands of Sci-Fi fans from across the UK have so far taken part in the poll, with the front runners today named as the *Alien Saga's* fierce feminist **Ellen Ripley** and *Doctor Who's* eponymous regenerating hero, **The Doctor**. The final two have beaten off fierce competition from the likes of

Han Solo, G'Kar, HAL 9000 and Spock in the quest to be named the UK's number one – the full top ten can be found below.

The vote reopens today, pitting these two iconic characters against one another - woman vs. man, film vs. TV – and only one can be victorious. Voting closes at Midnight on Monday 15 December and the final result will be revealed on Wednesday 17 December.

Ever since he stole a Tardis and fled, the renegade Timelord known only as **'The Doctor'** has been thrilling TV audiences and teaching children across the globe about a new kind of heroism. A time-travelling space detective who never uses violence, the BBC's flagship character has rightly become the longest-running sci-fi hero in history. Warrant officer **Ellen Ripley**, of the spaceship Nostromo, was expecting a calm status trip back to Earth, until the crew were awoken by a mysterious transmission, and a bulb-headed Xenomorph picked off her colleagues. Life would only get worse as Ripley was discredited on return to Earth, and impregnated by a Xenomorph. Sigourney Weaver's powerhouse performance meant Ripley is rightly considered to be one of the greatest of all female protagonists.

Of the 6.5K votes cast so far:

- Film vs. TV: 38% of characters originated in Film, while 62% originated on TV
- Heroes outweigh villains, with 82% of our voters siding with a force for good
- The 1990s emerges as our voters' golden age for Sci-Fi characters, with that decade boasting 28% of all the characters voted for

Further statistics and the final places for the rest of the top ten are outlined below.

You decide: Casting a vote to decide the final winner could not be easier. Simply head over to <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sci-fi-poll>

and choose your winner, or alternatively you can vote on twitter using the hashtag #BFISciFi and then adding either #VoteDoctor and #VoteRipley.

The naming of the nation's number one Sci-Fi character will mark the end of the BFI's SCI-FI: DAYS OF FEAR AND WONDER. The project saw the largest collection of sci-fi film and television ever presented in the UK, including the release of classic Sci-Fi titles including *2001: A Space Odyssey* into UK cinemas and on DVD and Blu-ray, over 50 classic and rarely seen Sci-Fi films available online through BFI Player, and an extensive season of sci-fi film and events held at the BFI Southbank and over 200 venues across the UK.

POLL STATISTICS

TV vs. Film

38% originated in Film

62% originated on TV

Decades

1920s 1%

1950s 3%

1960s 7%

1970s 16%

1980s 22%

1990s 28%

2000s 20%
2010s 3%

Gender

Female 33%
Male 60%
Other/non-specific 6%
Both 1% (The Master from Dr Who latest regeneration has taken a female form)

Heroes vs. Villains

Heroes 82%
Villains 15%
Other/ambiguous 3%

Type

Alien 19%
Human 67%
Robot/Computer 14%

The Top 10 from 3-10

No.3

Anakin Skywalker / Darth Vader (Star Wars)

There can be no more iconic depiction in the fall of man in all of cinema than the epic journey of young Jedi, Anakin Skywalker. Things started promisingly for the Force-sensitive human male, until a noxious combination of temptation and heartbreak sent him on a downward spiral to the Dark Side, and a reign of terror as the throaty Darth Vader in service to the Galactic Empire.

No. 4

Kerr Avon (Blake's 7)

The BBC's 1970s space opera was renowned for its bleakness and lack of sympathetic characters. But Paul Darrow's performance as Avon, perhaps the most villainous of all the show's renegades, nevertheless became the fans' favourite. The show started off as an ensemble piece, but Avon quickly became the lead character.

No. 5

Captain Malcolm Reynolds (Firefly)

When it comes to cult television, actor Nathan Fillion is regarded as one of those people who has 'been in everything'. But without doubt his most iconic role was Mal in Joss Whedon's short-lived space western, Firefly, and its cinematic spin-off, Serenity. Whedon had wanted a hero who could be "everything that a hero was not," and Fillion's performance as a man with little moral purpose other than to keep his crew alive has been heralded as one of the most complex on TV.

No. 6

G'Kar (Babylon 5)

G'Kar started off being fuelled by bitterness and hatred, and died as something approaching a God. Throughout the space opera's saga that explored big themes of war, peace, religion and sacrifice, his storyline was perhaps the biggest. While locked in a revenge battle, G'Kar took a drug that gave him telepathic abilities, but the side-effect made him Messianic. By the end he was a holy figure, and The Book of G'Kar a spiritual tract for the Narn.

No. 7

HAL 9000 (2001: A Space Odyssey)

A sentient computer whose physical form is never depicted might struggle to count as a 'character' in the strictest sense. But it's a testament to Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley Kubrick's vision that he/it/she endures. As the antagonist, the Heuristically programmed Algorithmic computer controls all the systems of the spacecraft Discovery One. What could possibly go wrong?

No. 8

Rick Deckard (Blade Runner)

Most actors would be happy with just one appearance in our Top Ten, but Harrison Ford makes it in twice. The first appearance is as Rick Deckard, a bounty hunter for the police in a dystopian San Francisco. Deckard starts out as a selfish, self-involved man with little consideration for the 'Andys' he is stalking. But the story's emotional core plays out through Deckard, who encounters a deep empathy for all forms of life.

No. 9

Han Solo (Star Wars)

Harrison Ford's second character to appear in the Top Ten is the roguish Captain of the Millennium Falcon. Originally indebted to Jabba the Hutt following the loss of valuable cargo, Han Solo was drawn further into the Jedi orbit, motivated (at first) by the reward for the safe return of Princess Leia. But there was nobility behind the bravado, and Han would go on to be an influential general in the Rebel Alliance.

No. 10

Spock (Star Trek)

Spock's life is defined by conflict, the battle of logic against passion. His Vulcan-human heritage fuels that conflict and puts him at odds with his impulsive, often reckless Captain, James T. Kirk. But his steadfast loyalty to the man would always win out in the end, creating the genre's most enduring bromance.

– ENDS –

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About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations

- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

SCI-FI: DAYS OF FEAR AND WONDER will be the BFI's biggest season to date, with over **1000** screenings of classic films and television programmes at over **200** locations across the UK. It includes a three-month programme at BFI Southbank, from **20 October until 31 December 2014**, with special events, guests and screenings right across the UK. With outdoor events at iconic British sites, classic Sci-Fi titles released into UK cinemas and on DVD and Blu-ray, 50+ films available online through BFI Player, a BFI Sci-Fi Compendium and much more, **SCI-FI: DAYS OF FEAR AND WONDER**, presented together with **02**, will celebrate cinema's most spectacular and visionary genre, exploring how the fear and wonder at its heart continues to inspire and enthrall in one of the largest and most ambitious Sci-Fi projects ever created.

www.bfi.org.uk/sci-fi @BFI #BFISciFi

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images and clips for journalistic use in can be found at www.image.net under **BFI / Sci-Fi: Days of Fear and Wonder**