

The Savage Lands: Tarzan #3

Andy Briggs

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Tarzan swings back into modern literature with this non-stop action-adventure novel that puts a new spin on the ape-man and his friend Jane.

One hundred years ago, Tarzan swung from the jungle into the pop-culture landscape of America in Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes*. Since then, hundreds of novels, movies, comics, television shows, and radio programs have cemented his place in entertainment history, but in recent times his image has begun to stale. Enter screenwriter and author Andy Briggs, whose work on films such as *Judge Dredd* and *Aquaman* have established his skill in writing action-adventure stories. With the blessing of Burroughs' estate, Briggs has reintroduced Tarzan to a new generation as a 21st century eco-warrior facing down the problems of the modern-day Congolese jungle.

The Savage Lands is the third in the new series of Tarzan books and pits the ape-man against his English cousin, Lord Greystoke. Greystoke has traveled to the jungle under the premise of finding his long-lost relative but is secretly looking to mine a lost city for its jewels and coltan deposits, an element used in electronics ranging from cell phones to laptops. Tarzan's friend Jane, a feisty teenager who can hold her own, is drawn into the conflict when her father agrees to help Greystoke find Tarzan in return for millions of dollars that would allow him to abandon his illegal logging operation and return to America.

The adventure and suspense is almost non-stop. From mighty battles between warring groups of gorillas to facing certain death in the belly of an erupting volcano, even the most reluctant readers will be kept interested from beginning to end.

Along with the action come many scenes of violence, including an insane, cannibalistic queen ripping into the flesh of a man who is unconscious but still alive. The violence is not gratuitous, but parents will want to check out the book themselves to decide if it is appropriate for a younger child.

Readers may want to start with the first book in the series because occasionally something is mentioned that is not fully explained. For example, one character says, "I had nothing to do with the unfortunate Ugandan affair," but it isn't clear what that affair was. If the excitement of this novel is any indication, however, readers will clamor for the whole series regardless of which book they start with.

CHRISTINE CANFIELD (Winter 2014)

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