

A Book Review

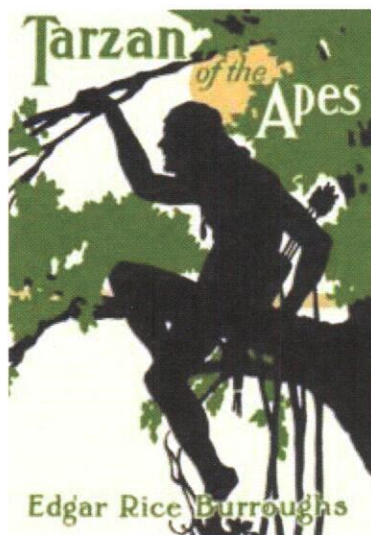
Tarzan of the Apes,

by Edgar Rice Burroughs

by Jan Ross, Staff Writer

When I clicked open my brand new iPad for the very first time, the first application I looked at was iBooks. I was intrigued by this online virtual library mainly because one light iPad vs. several heavy books in my suitcase was, for a travel writer often on the road, a big plus. But, as a former librarian and a current cheapskate, I hesitated to buy books.

Instead, I began looking to see what was available, interesting and, more important, FREE. I found an amazing variety of free books in iBooks, on the Kindle and Nook apps which I had also downloaded and even on the Project Gutenberg site. But one of the first that caught my eye and in which I was absolutely immersed for the new few weeks, was a list of many of the books by Edgar Rice Burroughs. I had loved "Tarzan" as a kid and had even some of the books in his Mars series, so I downloaded "Tarzan of the Apes" and began reading it.



Burroughs wrote "Tarzan" and his other science-fiction creations after reading dozens of stories in the pulp magazines of the early 1900's, deciding that they were pretty awful and he could write something much better.

He wrote two stories in his Mars series and "Tarzan" was actually his third book but the one that became phenomenally successful, spawning several sequels, movies, cartoons, comic strips and every item of Tarzan paraphernalia imaginable. People just could not get enough of this heroic figure, swinging through the



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Will he rescue Jane? Will he kill the lion? Will he find the lost city of gold?

jungle trees, fighting lions, riding on elephants, talking with apes and rescuing damsels in distress.

Could there possibly be a more unlikely story than this? An infant, left alone after his parents have been shipwrecked on the coast of Africa and later perishing, is picked up by an ape from his cradle and raised by her. Putting aside the fact that the apes would most likely had either ignored the child or dashed out his brains against a tree, how could this infant possibly survive in the savage jungle – and not only survive but thrive so well as to grow up to rule the band of apes? It's simply not credible.

Yet, we believe. We believe because we love and admire this man who has a moral code so strong he must help the helpless and who can survive even the most difficult of situations with only

his father's knife strapped to his side. Burroughs uses the most incredible series of coincidences, repeats the same scenarios with only minor changes and was an incredible racist and misogynist but still we don't care. We read with breathless anticipation to find out what will happen next. Will he rescue Jane? Will he kill the lion? Will he find the lost city of gold? Will he regain his memory? Of course he will. It's Tarzan, after all.

And possibly that's why I enjoy "Tarzan" and every single book in the series (25 in all – all are free and available online). Even though I can pick apart every single plot point and every single, ridiculous and incredible coincidence, I still sit enthralled with every, single story. Because I know that the hero will triumph in the end. Every single time. And that's very, very reassuring.

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