



Jungle Heat

Bonnie Dee

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Congo Free State, 1888

On a mission deep in the jungle, Oxford anthropologist James Litchfield comes face-to-face with a local legend: a wild man who wanders with mountain gorillas and lives as one of their own.

The chance encounter with the savage, whom James calls Michael, leads to a game of observation and exploration. Their mutual curiosity turns to an attraction—one that Michael has never experienced and James is desperate to deny.

When members of the expedition unearth James's secret discovery—a living specimen of man at his most primitive—Michael becomes a pawn in their quest for fame.

As their relationship deepens, James is compelled to protect Michael from the academics who would treat him as nothing more than a scientific acquisition and London society, which threatens to destroy their passionate bond...

Jungle Heat Details

Date : Published June 2010 by Carina Press

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Author : Bonnie Dee

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Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Historical, Historical Romance

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From Reader Review *Jungle Heat* for online ebook

Janna says

This review was originally posted at my blog.

Genre & Keywords:

M/M, Historical Romance, Expedition, Anthropology, Savage, Africa/London/Scotland

Why I read it:

I received an ARC from the Publisher, through NetGalley

Storyline:

While on an anthropological expedition in the jungle of Africa, James is saved from a leopard by a savage man. The man turns out to be living among the mountain gorillas. James succeeds in winning his trust and calls him Michael. They develop a friendship and explore their physical attraction until James' colleagues learn about Michael too, James becomes seriously ill and Michael is captured. The group ships back to England and takes Michael with them, treating him as an animal. Recovered from his illness, James fights for recognition of Michael's humanity and continues this fight back in London, while he and Michael have to conceal their blooming love.

My opinion in short:

I loved this M/M version of Tarzan. The premise intrigued me but could've easily turned into a ridiculous story if not handled carefully. Ms. Dee made it into a unique story that remains erect. The image of Tarzan never popped into my head while reading this book, because the heroes are refreshing, likeable, well developed, three dimensional characters. They have a beautiful and genuine chemistry that had a great appeal. The historical setting, which is not really my favorite, added in this case to the internal conflict of the relationship. I felt involved with James and Michael, from the first to the last page, even at those moments when I wasn't reading in *Jungle Heat*. I can highly recommend this novel, especially to those who are willing to take an exotic journey with two sexy and sweet men from the 19th century.

~~~~~

**Rating:** 4.5 of 5 stars

**Heat level:** 2.5 of 3 flames

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What's more to know about this book:

• *Characters*

Both main characters were very refreshing and quite unique compared to those I've read about in the m/m genre so far. Now, these are not necessarily qualities I look for in my romance characters, but I found both James and Michael rather interesting personalities to spend some time with. They could've easily become caricatures because of the Tarzan-like plot and setting, but thank goodness they had way more depth and substance than that.

James is endearing because of his primness - formed by the social rules of his time - and, on paradoxically, his passion for Michael and his cause. Aside from that he worries about how genuinely Michael's attraction and feelings for him can be: he's sure Michael will realize he's not gay once he sees the first woman.

Michael on the other hand has none of those worries. He has no shame or sexual awareness beyond his own feelings, and no social pressure. He doesn't understand why he can't show his feelings and he feels

conflicted by James' behavior in public. This relational conflict, which is based on their very different backgrounds and social awareness, is portrayed very well by the author. This compelling romance thrives on that conflict and it's what keeps me as a reader invested in both protagonists due to the way the author handled it.

• **POV**

The story is told in third person from both men's point of view, alternating from one to the other. Michael's POV is, especially in the beginning when he's still more primitive, rather interesting. It's easy to pick on little errors as Michael knowing things he couldn't know, like his own eye color in the next sentence: "He needed to look into those eyes again – eyes as blue as the sky, as blue as his own." But I choose to focus on the uniqueness of Michael's intriguing perspective, and maybe it was my mistake to read this type of examples as his own thoughts (although they felt that way rather than an omniscient narrator's).

With only a little suspension of disbelief regarding Michael's POV, the choice for the alternating perspectives worked perfectly in this story, since the characters come from such different worlds, literally. It was an intriguing journey into those opposite men's thoughts and feelings and it resulted in a wonderful exploration of their relationship.

• **Plot**

The plot is well developed and rich of unexpected twists and turns. It's not completely set in the jungle (where the story has a more universal feel to it) but also partly in 19th century London and Scotland and on a ship (where the historical time period has more influence on the relationship). The developing romance between the two protags is the main focus of the plot, but not without them having to deal with threats from other people and society. Luckily they also have people in their team with whom they can fight against the enemy's team, literally and figuratively. So, there's enough conflict (from within as well as from outside the relationship) to bring suspense to the story. The ending was happy and satisfying, although I didn't care too much about the last chapter in which we got treated to a look in the future where James and Michael continued their HEA, it was a bit too sweet for my taste. But it gave the story a nice round closure.

• **Smexing**

M/M. The sex scenes are very erotic. Especially when the heroes are still in the exploring phase of their physical attraction, the sexual tension is very tangible. After that phase, tenderness and emotions become more and more part of their love making. Then the sex scenes, still hot and explicit, support their growing connection and show their love.

• **Writing style**

Ms. Dee's writing is lucid and expressive. I didn't have to make much of an effort to picture the setting or situation in which the characters were. The short sentences were descriptive and clear enough to make an image of the events without having to reread parts of the scenes. I enjoyed it very much that she wrote this story mainly from within both heroes, which helped to see the depth of the characters.

Favorite scene/quote:

The scene where Michael allows James to touch him for the first time (to see to his wound). This is from Michael's POV, he's Odd One, and he has named James Sky Eyes:

To have this foreign creature touch his skin was beyond description. Powerful warmth shot through him, filling him with heat like sunlight. His cock, which had been growing steadily harder from the nearness of the stranger, began to ache, and he wanted to reach out and touch Sky Eyes in return. He needed to know what his brown hair felt like, to stroke his fingers over smooth skin instead of fur. He wanted to see the stranger stripped bare of the layers he wore on top of his skin.

Odd One held still while the stranger smeared the sweet-smelling stuff on his wound. The area was sore, especially when Sky Eyes pressed against it, but he didn't care. He whimpered in

pleasure and submitted to the tender touch.

Linking:

Bonnie Dee's website | Yahoo group | on Goodreads

Buy *Jungle Heat* here

Read an excerpt here

R * A Reader Obsessed * says

3.5 Stars

Reimagined from the classic Tarzan and Jane romance, this nice m/m featuring primitive Michael and the scholar James who discovers him, was really quite enjoyable.

This had a little bit of everything - initial jungle adventure, steamy sexual awakening, and apt angst. Throw in a self serving benefactor and academics fighting for the right to study such a scientific wonder, and you've got a story with some interesting plot points.

The interactions between James and Michael were well portrayed and realistic, wonderfully showing how their feelings begin and evolve. The love they have for each other despite external and internal forces constantly trying to tear them apart, was very romantic and sweet. James simply wants what's best for Michael - he just has to realize that it's him that Michael not only desires, but knows steadfastly that James is all he'll ever need.

Again, this was an easy, interesting, sexy read (and audio listen, if you're interested).

***~*~*Hyperion & Interabang*~*~* says**

AMAZING. AMAZING. AMAZING!!!!!! I absolutely ADORED this book and definitely didn't want it to end. I want more!! I give this ALL the stars ... way WAYYY more than just 5!!!

Alona says

I truly enjoyed this fun yet touching story.

It's impossible not to fall in love with Michael.

The combination of his physical strength and the life he lived for years among the apes, with his naïveté, his child-like behaviors, is absolutely adorable!

My only "problem" was the somewhat rushed ending.

Ele says

****4.5 stars****

"He was no longer alone, no longer Odd One. He had family, a mate and a place where he belonged.

He was a man. He was Michael.

Magnificent. Absolutely fantastic and, probably, my favorite by the author. Read it!

Lyn says

Audio 2.5 stars

Story 2 stars

I knew before starting this book, I would have to suspend belief and I was prepared to do just that.

This story did not meet my “what if Tarazan was gay” expectations. I was expecting some level of action and didn’t get much of anything. All I got was an anthropologist (James) who encounters a wild man (Michael) while out on a mission in the jungle. James tries to protect Michael and makes promises he is too powerless to keep. James making empty promises had me disliking him. Michael gets confused and hurt countless times, which was damn heartbreaking.

Yes, these two form a sweet relationship in secret, and get their HEA but it was a very dull journey.

If I’m willing to suspend belief, I want to be wowed not bored.

Elsbeth says

- Narrator: Philip Rose

3,5 Me-Tarzan-You-James stars

Very nice *Tarzan* re-tale but now in MM version. I enjoyed the Brittish narrating.
The audio was a bit too long for my liking, so I read the last 25%.

In the jungle, he'd lived in the moment, passing through one day and the next without an idea of a future. Now he saw many days stretched out ahead of him, all of them spent with James.

But being human had taught him that having something he cared about meant he had something to lose. Perhaps being human meant always having a slight fear of loss floating at the edge of his mind.

Tess says

4.5 stars

Loved it!! Lush historical with a beautiful love story of two men who are true soul mates. This seemed to be so much more than just an m/m Tarzan. It was exotic, fascinating and gripping yet with a tender and sensual romance. The hard-earned HEA was perfect. Very much recommended for any fan of historical m/m romance!

SheReadsALot says

MM version of a Tarzan tale?

Bonnie Dee tells a remarkable, well researched and thought out tale of angst and primal needs. Odd One has been raised by gorillas for most of his life, not knowing what he was but just that he was different. Until a group of anthropologists make camp close by in his African jungle home. He saves one of the anthropologists from a leopard attack and his life will be forever changed.

The anthropologist Odd One saves ends up becoming Odd One's teacher of all things human. James Litchfield, Scottish and in the closet (It's 1888, so can you blame him?) can't help but feel a pull towards Odd One who James' christens Michael.

Michael is a wonderful character who will stay in my mind for awhile because of the hard life his had lived. The way The author conveys his emotions without actual dialogue spoken from Michael in the beginning and throughout the story...it was beautiful.

Reading James and Michael's friendship and trust built...it was so good. The sacrifices they made (Michael did sacrifice more than James but James learns how to be the man Michael deserves)

And the elemental passion they felt for one another? The way James would try to hold it together and all Michael had to do was say "Stay. Now", grab James' arm and manhandle him to a flat surface?

Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

Michael and James together? In one word:

I need to pound my chest and do some animalistic mating calls out like Michael...it was...he was...when he...Oh...My...*fans self*

These two men face hardships throughout their trip (Africa and in the UK). Of course there's a bad guy, Sir Lewis. He and his lackey capture Michael and treat him like property, not as a man. It's sad. But justice and love prevails and an excellent story was told (Okay I did feel the judge was too nice and the outcome came too easy but you know what? I don't care as long a HEA was provided. And it was. So I'm shutting up.)

MM fans should definitely give this story a try, because it's a scorcher. I wished I learned this version of Tarzan instead. It's so much better MM style. ;)

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

I am LITERALLY the only person out of all my friends to not love this book, so please feel free to ignore me. However, there is no way around it... this book made me *really* uncomfortable. I've read a few slave/captor type fics, and I tend to enjoy them in a sci-fi setting. However, in a historical setting, I read most of this story feeling **disturbed**.

This is a retelling of the **Tarzan** story, where Tarzan is a Caucasian boy raised in the jungles of Africa by a family of apes and is only discovered as an adult and "rescued." This is obviously an M/M version, with the romance coming from Michael (aka, Tarzan) and James, his "rescuer."

Now, I've read a lot of reviews of this book, even the critical ones, and no one else seemed to be disturbed or uncomfortable with the whole **captured/enslaved** aspect. However, that power dynamic between Michael and James really got to me. I didn't feel like they were coming to the relationship as equals because once Michael got captured, he literally was dependent on James to free him in order to survive. It turned my stomach to read about all of the stuff that "modern man" put Michael through, and I wanted to put down the story more than once.

I also didn't feel much emotional connection between Michael and James. I think it had to do with the perceived power dynamics in my head, because I kept getting an icky feeling while reading about the more romantic elements. I didn't really see why Michael loved James, who didn't seem to deserve his love, IMO. Even though James fought for Michael in the best way that he thought he could, it didn't seem to be enough for me.

Interestingly, I found that **I often have these sorts of issues while reading Bonnie Dee books**. I've read many of her works, and I've had numerous occasions where I found myself in a moral or ethical quandary. For example, I really struggled with Finding Home, in which there are issues with age of consent and power disparities (my review here), and even in Bone Deep, where there was another case of a historical with a pseudo-captive/slave theme (my review here). **Bonnie Dee pushes me, and sometimes it works for me and sometimes it doesn't.**

In terms of the **narration**, I thought it was okay but lacking a little in emotion. I actually didn't love the voice for Michael because it sounded a bit like a parody of an "ape man" to my ears. I thought the narration by Philip Rose was okay but nothing special.

I see why my friends all loved this one, but, for some reason, it just rubbed me the wrong way.

Nick Pageant says

"I met you on somebody's island
You thought you had known me before
I brought you a crate of papaya
Then waited all night by your door
You probably wouldn't remember
I probably couldn't forget
Jungle love in the surf in the pouring rain
Everything's better when wet"

Ingie says

Written December 31, 2015

4 Stars - Adorable characters, a well done *Tarzan* re-tale and a good audio listening

Jungle Heat is a M/M re-tale of the old famous Tarzan of the Apes story by Edgar Rice Burroughs (from 1912). This time told by Bonnie Dee who writes a lot of nice historical M/M romances I usually like. — As this one.

~ 4 stars and Happy New Years cheers!!!

I truly enjoyed this 9 hrs audiobook (very well narrated by Philip Rose). Recommended listening for all fans of hot jungle men, aka a sexy well shaped amazing Tarzan, and romantic yummy *men loves men* romances set in a historical time.

Congo Free State, 1888

The Oxford anthropologist **James Litchfield** is on a mission in the Congo jungle when he meet a wild man ('**Odd One**') who wanders with mountain gorillas and lives as one of their own. He gives the name **Michael** to the beautiful "Tarzan" man. — The adventure begins...

'Something had crackled like lightning between them and whispered like the wind through the leaves. This stranger had signaled with his eyes all kinds of things Odd One couldn't understand. He needed to look into those eyes again—eyes as blue as the sky, as blue as his own.'

‘While they were occupied, Michael worked one foot then the other out of the shoes. He sighed in relief when his stocking-clad feet sank into the thick carpet, and then he began struggling to undo the tie that held the stiff white collar around his throat.’

A lovely touching story..

I really truly liked this storyline topic. *Jungle Heat* isn't the very super best 5 star novel I listened to this 2015-year but with a moderate amount of added heartbreaking parts, lovely romantic M/M steam, interesting characters (loved both MC's at once) and a believable development of things and the characters, was this all in all a very nice and pleasing audiobook listening.

This story is set in a time over hundred years ago and there are (of course) some very touching parts —like racism, superiority and cruelty to those who were different— here. Thankfully not too much evil och explicit cruelty though. Most of all was this about love and the jungle man Michael's journey to a completely new way of life. I believed in these men since and strong love, the steamy parts were nicely done and the way it all ended (with a romance novel's HEA 'course) was heartwarming.

It's New Years Eve...

Add a good narrator with a perfect way of reading this book.

Conclusion: my \$4 was well spent (..a bargain) audiobook bucks.

I LIKE - old interesting stories in new shapes

Next summer (2016) will there be a new Tarzan movie. This time with the Swedish gorgeous actor Alexander Skarsgård. Not M/M 'course but anyway... (view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

~☆~Døni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

~4.5~

Poignant, heartwrenching, and thought provoking.

"Civilized" men take a human raised by apes and turn him into a sideshow freak. The Odd One is christened Michael by James, the man who found him, the man whose life Michael saved.

This book takes Michael on a terrifying journey from the jungles of Africa to late 19th century London, where he becomes a pawn in a game of greed and power.

Michael only wants James. James is Michael's mate. But James keeps telling him, "Man and man not good. Secret."

Michael doesn't understand. And why should he? Where he comes from, there are no rules about love. Who's civilized now?

I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. They trespassed upon my thoughts.

—Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Michael being caged like a violent animal turned me inside out, and I needed James to do more, to BE more.

In the end, there's only this: a thatch-roofed cottage, the scent of herbs, sunlight gleaming, and paint streaking canvas in a symphony of joy.

Chelsea says

PERFRCTION!!

Absolutely loved this book! James and Michael were amazing, I adored their characters and their love story!

The narration was **SUPERB**, Phillip's voice for Michael was spot on! Absolutely perfect!

Highly **highly** recommend this audio book!

Eli Easton says

I've always found the Tarzan story really sexy. I loved the film version with Andie McDowell. When I saw that Bonnie Dee had written a m/m version of the story, it went right to the top of my TBR pile.

This was a tough nut to crack, because not only do you have the regular story (British explorers discover a man raised by apes and take him back to England as a sort of oddity attraction), but you have the complication of a gay relationship in a time when it was illegal and unthinkable in England. Bonnie handled that realistically, with the British MC being secretly gay and very conflicted over his attraction to Michael, the Tarzan character.

I particularly enjoyed the scenes written from Michael's POV, and seeing his thinking evolve. The love scenes were appropriately hot and there is a lot of angst over Michael's fate but, of course a good HEA. I think maybe overall it had a little more 'ugliness of man' angst than I really needed, even though it was

totally appropriate and realistic, just a bit hard to read at times. Recommended.
