

Brrda the Savage

Brrda the Savage

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Brrda, Savage Savior of the Secret Lands, has been ripped from his home and cast into the modern world!
Will he be able to reconnect with humanity, or is he destined to remain a savage forever?

Published on
Booksie

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Brrda the Savage : Chapter 1

The metal monstrosities lined the paved paths. Some were motionless, flanking the endless lines of moving machines on each side. Humans without such contraptions walked on the opposite sides of the slumbering flanks, busily disappearing into and emerging out from stone structures what reached heights which could rival the tallest trees of the Secret Lands. Not the tallest, of course, but those a tier below it.

These people were so busy with their days that most hardly paid Brrda any mind as he loped nude on what he dubbed the "safe" side of the machines. Many did a double take, but very few were bothered enough to interrupt their schedule. Until they saw the tiger, that is. Having no where to hide, Retsis followed her master at a leisurly pace out in the open sidewalk.

Retsis whined. Brrda stopped, glanced at her over his hulking shoulder. "I don't know."

It had been hours since Brrda's battle with one of the metal monsters outside the limits of the city. Hours that the sun had simmered their backs, hours that the cracked gravel had torn into their soles, hours surfing through a mad ocean of blank faces. Still they were no closer to home. Brrda's stomach rumbled fiercely, and his legs wobbled in agreement. The Savage Savior knew that if he were so hungry, his loyal companion was probably famished. These humans had not bothered them more than shoulder bumps, but were the Secland Tiger to satisfy her hunger there might be trouble.

Brrda looked about, searching for a lesser beast to make a meal of. Across the path he spotted a group of small birds pecking at crumbs thrown by an old woman. They were small, but they were numerous. He motioned to his ally with a fold of his fingers then pointed to the birds. At once her ears perked, her tail swooshed. She bent low behind one of the machines, eyed the birds from around its back. Then they were off, Brrda above the machine and Retsis around its rear.

The metal roof burned Brrda's fingertips, but it hardly concerned him. He came to a rough landing upon a pair of yellow lines painted over the searing stone way. There was a thump in his chest, a lump in his throat. Everything around him seemed to stop. He took it all in. Retsis was ahead of him, almost across the way now. The old woman hadn't yet taken notice of them and was reaching into a brown bag to scatter more crumbs. Metal monsters rushed towards him on all sides. They produced a blaring scream as they approached. Brrda could see the people within, for the first time with clarity. What he saw startled him.

The driver's eyes were round as dinner plates and shining at the corners with tears. His eyebrows were arced up, his mouth agape. The knuckles of his hands turned white as he gripped a spinner the way a frightened monkey clings to its mother. A scream spilled from his mouth in all directions. But is what not the angered scream Brrda had expected. It was a scream filled with fear.

With a deep breath and a mighty heave, Brrda dashed out of the way and caught up with Retsis before vaulting himself over the roof of another machine. In one fell swoop he fell to the ground, snatched a bird which had just barely begun fluttering, and cracked its neck with his thumb. He glanced at his hunting partner and saw that she had two. Not much for a tiger her size, but enough to prevent her from harming the humans. The old woman bolted up from her wooden seat and screamed, dropping the brown bag of crumbs. The rest of the flock lifted off in a flurry, spilling feathers behind them.

Brrda crouched on his heels and bit into his meal. It was tough, chewy, but had a pleasant flavor not too different from the doves he ate back home. He brought the creature to his mouth for a second bite when a burst of fire suddenly erupted on the ground before him. The bird fell to the pavement as Brrda dove for the shelter of an alley, Retsis quick behind him. And quick behind her the source of the fire:

"A demon."

Chapter 2

The demon swerved into the alley. It screamed something in that language Brrda couldn't understand. Its voice was partially drowned out by the roaring flames raging over its body. The inferno took on a vaguely human form at times, though it became something of a fireball as it rocketed through the air. Another shout in that language, a blast of heat pelted at Brrda and his tiger.

The Savage Savior managed to leap away from the flames, though he nearly tumbled into a brick wall doing so. Retsis was not so fortunate. She dodged the initial blast, but it sparked when it hit the ground. Tiny embers burst up to the air, scorching the tiger's fur where it landed. Smoldering ashes caught on her tail, on her back, a few gray flecks in her whiskers. A low growl climbed up from her beastly throat.

Brrda looked down the alley. No stones could be found, no large sticks, nothing which could help him attack from afar. He clenched his fists, stressed the muscles in his arms. His legs tightened like coiled springs. His teeth ached as he clamped his mouth shut. His forehead pinched as he waited for the right moment. Then, when the demon's attention had been drawn to the furious Retsis, he pounced.

It seemed in slow motion for him. He was in the air, his fist falling towards the blazing monster. Fire tore down the hairs into his arms. Blisters began to boil on his knuckles. He could hear the crack of the flames as his sweat leapt through it. He howled as his skin cooked. But the attempt was not in vain. The savage's fist met solid mass within the inferno. It was soft, like flesh, but it was solid. The demon was knocked away by the blow, crashing into the side of a building. Cool air rushed in to slap Brrda's reddened appendage. Gravity pulled him down with a thud, though he stayed on his feet. He winced as his arm screamed, and after a moment he howled with it.

Though only his fist had truly kissed fire, the air around the creature was hot enough to steam Brrda from wrist to neck. He sucked air through his teeth when his howl subsided, and peered at the blazing beast through strands of greasy, brown hair. If he had hit it with all the force intended, he was sure it would have gone down, but the heat made him hesitate. The demon was still on the wall, but the inferno had fallen into human shape again. He could see it clearly now, its eyes and mouth glowing white hot. It shook its head, as though dazed, before pushing into the air again.

Brrda's arm was seared. Do I dare try that again? he wondered, looking at his one good arm. The burned one could barely move at all, and when it did it hurt as though swarmed by a colony of angry bees.

At once he was off, loping on three limbs across the gravel floor. Retsis followed at his heels, splashing through puddles. Behind them the demon floated uneasily, apparently still trying to regain its senses.

On the side of the building was a wall of metal vines and strange platforms. Brrda scrambled up, though he knew Retsis could not so easily follow. She found a way, leaping to the lowest platform and catching it with her front paws and chest. Her hind legs kicked wildly, but the fight wasn't enough and she began to slip. Grabbing the scruff of her fluffy neck, Brrda hauled the Secland Tiger onto the platform. He rightfully assumed that first platform to be the most difficult, as the rest were more closely together than the bottom one from the ground.

The duo scaled the wall, aware that the demon had shaken off the blow and was again in hot pursuit. They beat it to the rooftop and dashed to one end. Normally the leap to the next building would have been a simple task for the wild man, but with a scorched arm it was a risk he couldn't take. The demon drifted up behind them. Retsis circled around behind her master, roaring loudly and baring her fangs. It was the warning of an animal that knows it's trapped.

Several moments passed with not a movement from either party. Retsis held firm behind the Savage Savior, rubbing against his back with her soft fur. Brrda, one arm clutched in the other, stared into the glowing eyes of the demon. The demon had come to a stop several feet away, drifting above a deep puddle in the stone surface. Though the fires of its body roared as they devoured the air, the demon made no move, locking its eyes with Brrda's.

The two stared off for what seemed like hours. Dark clouds formed overhead, as though attracted to the tension. Brrda felt the waves of heat licking up his nose. Behind him was a jump he could not make and a drop which ended on stone that would most certainly crush him. Before him floated a demon straight from the

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underworld, ready to char him at a moment's notice.
Brrda closed his eyes, breathed long and deep through his nose.
And then he jumped.

Chapter 3

Concrete spider webbed beneath his fist. A trail of wavering heat showed the demon's swerving route of escape. It screamed something loud and high pitched. Brrda's eyes flicked to the side, watching the beast carefully. Before his feet hit the ground there was a chunk of broken roof in his hand. There was a crumbling sound as his toes finally touched something solid, then another as they were dragged by the weight of his spinning body. His chest twirled, his ribs released, the anchored arm lifted away from the surface. His stony glare was set firmly on the flaming beast. His arm came around, cold chunk clenched tightly.

All at once his fingers flipped up, opening the cage around the rock. His palm pushed forward slightly, nudging it in the right direction. It broke through the air like a meteor, tossing wind off its sides. The demon's panic was clear. It hovered left, then right, up a little, back down. Brrda was sure it would hit. Sure the demon's movements were because it couldn't move quick enough in any direction.

Thunder rumbled from the dark clouds overhead.

The stone hurtled through the air.

Brrda held his breath. Winced at the first few drops of rain on his burned wrist.

Retsis clawed at the ground and ducked, watching the stone fiercely.

There was a great crash. This time not thunder.

The ground smashed, raining small pebbles into the air.

To the left was a tail of flame and smoke, the dying remnants of a sudden burst which had jettisoned the demon out of the rock's trajectory. Brrda snorted as his eyes flew to their target. His beefy hand snatched another stone. Too slow! With a similar crackling burst the demon rocketed forward. It reached up with a blazing arm, as though reaching for the ball of fire that jumped to life in its hand. Flame fell through the air like a whistle, burning on Brrda's abs. He roared in pain, dropping the chunk of rock. Refusing to go down but in too much distress to counter, the Savage Savior tensed his muscles, splaying his fingers like claws. Another ball sparked on his chest. This time he was pushed back by the pain and the heat.

It was not the end of the demon's barrage. Fire after fire exploded on Brrda's bare body, some generously missing more vital locations to make roast of his toes. He howled, stumbled back on his raw heels. Lightning cracked across his eyes as his skull met with the sharp edge of a building banister. The fall dropped him out of the way of a deadly blast which had been directed at his face. Colored bubbles popped before him, dizziness swept over him. Something wet dripped down his neck.

Rain or... or blood?

A low growl came into his ears. It was feral and familiar. He heard Retsis' claws cut away as they leapt over the concrete. Heard her spring into the air. The angry cry of the demon. The light yet devastating puff of fire. The slump of a six-hundred pound cat falling to the ground.

Brrda weakly opened his eyes. Several feet away his companion writhed, the fur of her belly ablaze with the demon's handiwork.

Several drops landed on his forehead, reminding him of the approaching storm. His vision returned to normal as he gazed up into the sky, a hopeful glint in his eyes. The clouds began to weep, as though they had heard his plea for help. Though he was in pain, Brrda couldn't help but to smile. That was all he needed to turn this around. The water to put out the fire.

But his heart sank when he turned back to face the demon. Steam rose off its body in towers. The licking flames had grown smaller, and taken on a blue color closer to the demon's solid body, but they were still not extinguished. Not enough to ground the flying hellion, not enough to prevent it from balling up another heated burst. Brrda managed to roll away, taking the opportunity to tumble his seared flesh through a newly formed puddle. A few small sparks landed on his arm, but they hurt no more than the bites of jungle mosquitoes. His smile returned. The rain would not win the battle for him, but it had granted him the use of his greatest asset: his strength. With a triumphant cry, the savage was in the air. He soared towards the demon, who drifted back a bit. Drifted back right into position. Brrda willed his body down, crashing into a large puddle which had formed in the crater he'd made earlier. A wave washed over the demon, putting an end to any orange that fought its way off it's body. Now Brrda could see the demon more clearly for what it was. Blue

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embers still struggled for life, but their heat was not enough to hide the monster's body in blaze.

Brrda pounced, pressing forward with his fist. It took but one punch. One punch filled the sky with the sound of cracking bone. One punch threw the demon to the ground. One punch sent it skidding across the surface of the roof. One punch put out what few fires remained. One punch left it unable to move. One punch revealed its true form.

One punch uncovered the girl beneath the flames.

Brrda loped over to her. At once he felt guilt rush into him. The feeling of her arm's bones crumbling beneath his knuckles still tingled in his hand. The sound of her cracking humerus haunted his ears. He fell to his knees beside her, scooping her delicate head in his arms. Blonde hair strung through his fingers. Her chest did not move with life, but a look at her lips showed that they puckered slightly with small breaths.

Not a demon. Remorse brought tears to his eyes. Not a demon. Just possessed by one. I should have known. I should have been more careful.

Mournful eyes looked over their kill. Her body was covered in bruises from the conflict, and it seemed as though Retsis had gotten at least one good scratch in on the girl's hip. Carefully he rolled her onto her side, inspecting her back for damage. Though he still seethed at the conflict, he knew better than to blame the girl for possession. And now, he had decided, she was his responsibility.

But a strange feeling came over him as he looked down her naked back. The same feeling which had taken hold of him when he had seen the picture of the woman outside the city limits. His heart throbbed as his eyes followed the contours of her body. As if on their own, his fingers gingerly traced a path down her spine. A shiver lashed through him, but it was quickly overcome by a powerful heat rising in his cheeks. Fire surged through his veins. It brought to life every inch of his being. His heart beat a mile a minute as it, too, seemed to burn.

"No!" He cried, grabbing at his head. "No. Stay out of me, demon!"

Brrda screamed, tossed his head from side to side. Behind him, Retsis perked up. She eyed her master with caution, not sure what to make of his flailing and screaming. Without warning he was off, dashing across the rooftop as though death were on his heels.

It was hours before he stopped. Hours after he had run out of breath. Hours after his limbs had lost all feeling. Hours of tumbling through puddles and bathing himself thoroughly in cold water. Hours until he was certain the demon had not taken hold of him.

And at last, at the foot of a staircase to the sidewalk, he collapsed to the ground and succumbed to the desire for rest.

It was there that he slept, unaware that he would awaken elsewhere.

Unaware that he had collapsed on the doorstep of Lady Killman.

Chapter 4

Warmth was all around. It hugged Brrda's shoulders, pinned tight over his body, wrapped its fingers around his neck. Sweat gathered on the inside of his thighs. As awareness came to him in a painful way the warmth became hotter. Hotter as his eyes opened and found only blinding light. Hotter as he turned and felt his bare flesh scrape against something rough and scratchy. Hotter as he reached up to wipe the beads from his face. Hotter as he breathed it in. He fell into a fit of coughing as the blistering heat touched his lungs.

The demon! His mind blared. At once he snapped awake. Despite feeling fever draped over his forehead and nose, he moved with a start. His muscles tensed, his fingers curled. A low growl echoed in his throat as he tore away from the binding heat.

He stumbled over something, but managed to see the flower-colored cloth he had tossed away. Glass shattered around his ankle as he fell backwards, destroying a knee-high structure and slamming his tail bone. Pain split up through his back, and seared in his bleeding leg, but he couldn't let it slow him down. With a grunt he spun to his feet and loped across the strange gray floor, feeling his knuckles burn as they crashed over it.

There was a cry from behind. Its pitch was similar to that creature. To... the demon!

Brrda turned on his heels. Several feet away was the owner of the voice, but it was no demon.

She was a tall woman, nearly six feet tall to be exact. Her skin was tight on her muscles, but she was not particularly buff. Though her voice had sounded more frustrated than angry, her body was poised to strike. Both hands were balled into fists, and her teeth were clenched together. There was a slight hunch to her shoulders, like a cat ready to pounce. Her brown eyes were fierce, and fixed on Brrda in a way only predators knew.

The Savage Savior prepared to fight, but before the springs in his legs could release he spotted Retsis behind the woman. The Secland Tiger had her back to Brrda, her large, orange haunches nearly eclipsed the rest of her, but he could see that she was alive and awake, but more importantly: calm. The tiger turned back to look at her master, her mouth and nose covered in fresh blood. Peering further around the woman, Brrda could see that his feline friend was feasting on the body of a small goat, much of its fleece still untouched and snow white.

The woman said something, again in that bizarre language. Brrda snapped his attention to her, but took notice of her hands which were now opened, palms turned slightly towards him.

"Ssh ssh ssh," the girl pushed air through her teeth.

Brrda stared at her, unsure of what to do.

Retsis seems not to mind her...

Even as he pondered the matter, Brrda could feel the heat leaving him. He realized suddenly that it had never really been there at all, except for the fever that raged on beneath his skin. More aware now of his condition, Brrda began to tire. Blood from the glass cuts had wrapped around his leg, and his muscles and lungs still ached from the marathon flight from before he'd passed out. The welts and burns on his body licked with pain, though the blisters seemed to have become mostly numb.

"Ssh," the woman breathed again. Now she motioned with her fingers for Brrda to come near. He hung back for a moment, but she Sshed again. The sound was comforting, and he recognized it as one he made himself when faced with an enraged but usually friendly beast.

Reluctantly he obeyed, taking a cautious step forward and then another. The woman backed away, yet still motioned, and though confused, Brrda followed again. She pushed open a door behind herself and tiptoed into the room, beckoning the whole time for Brrda to follow.

This room was different from the last. Instead of the scratchy gray floor it was covered in slippery white squares. Strange structures lined the walls, all blinding white in color. The girl sat on one structure, a deep bucket with a lid, kind of like a pelican. She lowered her fingers into a pool of cloudy water, which spat steam into the air, and splashed lightly, still motioning for Brrda with her other hand.

The pool reminded Brrda of the healing hot springs back home. He wondered if this water could also heal his wounds. A little more hastily than intended, he lowered himself into the water, allowing it to fill in all the crevices and folds of his body. The sensation was nostalgic, teleporting him back to a time which seemed now

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to be an entire life ago. Though these waters did not set about sewing his injuries, they did, at the least, seem to soothe them. He let out a sigh, and sunk down to his neck in the water.

A sharp sting shot up his leg. He recoiled fast, splashing water over the edge.

"Ssh," the girl breathed. Again she reached into the water and rubbed the still-bleeding cuts on his leg. It stung for a moment, but her fingers were soft and ultimately seemed to make the blemish hurt less.

Brrda tilted his head back against the wall and closed his eyes. At first he reflected on the events leading up to that moment, but the calming steam convinced him to leave it all behind. He answered its request, breathed deep through his nose, felt the woman's tender hands massage the pain from his lesioned skin.

A smile crawled onto his stoic face.

For the first time since he'd been dropped in this mad world, Brrda was at peace.

Chapter 5

Night was long in the Secret Lands. Long, dark, and brutal. It came strong, and it came quick. The day creatures all but disappeared, knowing full well that the denizens of darkness would feast merrily upon their flesh. The birds flew up above the canopy, the rodents dove beneath loose hills. Small lizards crawled into the knotholes of the jungle's tall trees, and even the mighty rhinoceros sought refuge within the dense foliage. Not even the insects dared to march on through the night, quickly scattering to their respective homes to hunker down and wet for sunrise. Truly, all day creatures took to the shadows at night, each with the knowledge that they may never again see light.

Young Brrda was no exception.

Before he was the Savage Savior, Brrda was but a child wrapped tight in his mother's arms. His father, Orrda, pushed thick stone slates to cover the sight-holes and entrance. These stones were important on most nights when Orrda remained awake for many hours studying the language of their ancestors by the light of captured glow bugs. Light which could attract undesired attention.

"Why does it matter?" Brrda's mother asked as she held her son to her milking breast. "You put us in danger to look at those drawings, Orrda. Cover the glows and sleep."

"I have to," Orrda replied. "I have to know what these mean. Something happened, Kal. Something that took this language away from us. Something that took most of our people away from us. Something like what happened when we were young..."

Kal pulled Brrda away as she lurched onto her feet. Her eyes were hard, her jaw was tight. "This obsession of yours has already lost us my brother. I've had enough of this from you, and now you put our son at risk-

"Don't you see?" Orrda turned away from the clay tablets then. "I do this for him. Whatever came for our ancestors, whatever came for us, it will come back for him. And it will come for the rest of the jungle. How can I be expected to stop it if I don't even know what it is?"

"You will stop it," she said sternly, "because you are a man."

Orrda looked his mate, looked deep into her eyes. Brrda watched from the darkest corner of the room, tears building in his eyes.

"Your father was a man, my father was a man, our uncles were men, our cousins were men, our neighbors were men, our warriors were men. Now they are dust. Men alone cannot accomplish all things."

Kal scoffed, then snorted, then spat on Orrda's toes. "You're a coward."

"No, I-

There was a crack as Kal's fist lunged forward, pressing into Orrda's jaw. The man tumbled back, falling into the structure which held the tablets and spilling them to the ground. Brrda hugged himself as his mother's shadow loomed over his father, her shoulders rising and falling with each panting breath.

"You are a coward," she said again, her voice rising. "You are a coward, and you are weak, and you family will die because of it. Your son will die because of it." Her voice broke into a yell. "You're pathetic. Reading words you could never hope to understand. Wasting your time, risking our lives. And you have the gall to insult my father? You are nothing but a lowly worm!"

Kal's foot crashed through one of the tablets. Its shards shot in all directions, one bouncing softly off Brrda's foot. He pulled it back, sobbed quietly. Then stopped. There was a sound, like wind moving the branches.

Instantly his eyes snapped to his father's. There was a frightened look in them that said: "I heard it, too."

His mother carried on berating Orrda, stomping the tablets into dust. Stomp. Stomp. Stomp. SMASH! A black tendril shut through the floor, coiling tight around Kal's ankle. She screamed and dove for the tendril, but another snapped up and twisted tight on her wrist. Brrda pushed back against the wall, kicking his feet desperately against the floor.

Orrda moved fast, grasping a tendril in his strong fist. He squeezed, crushing it into a mess of purple and black gel. There was an ear-splitting shriek which caused the stick shack to tremble. Four more tendrils burst up through the floor, these ones thicker than the others. They flailed wildly, roping and reaching for anything to pull into the darkness. Kal gave one final shout before she was ripped away into the darkness.

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One of the large tendrils slapped over Brrda's body. It was wet and slimy, like a fish. Before the young savage could utter a word, the tendril had twisted itself around him. He looked up, tears clouding his eyes, and reached for his father, but their hands missed as he was ripped through the floor and sent spinning through a mass of writhing darkness.

Spinning, tumbling, tossed and turned by thousands of squirming tentacles. And then at once the jungle darkness opened into a brilliant, grotesque yellow which peered at Brrda hungrily. There was a sick splashing as the eye blinked. A roar reached across the land as the creature's beak spread open. And then-

Brrda rolled to the floor, his head drowning in pain as it landed with a heavy thump. He darted up, breathing in a frenzy. Retsis snapped up from her slumber, staring at her master intently and scanning the darkness around them.

The dream faded. Brrda wiped the sweat from his back and looked around, remembering where he was. His bandaged wounds burned slightly, urging him back to rest. And after a moment of hesitation, he did as they asked, returning the soft cushions and remembering what it was like to be cradled in her arms.

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