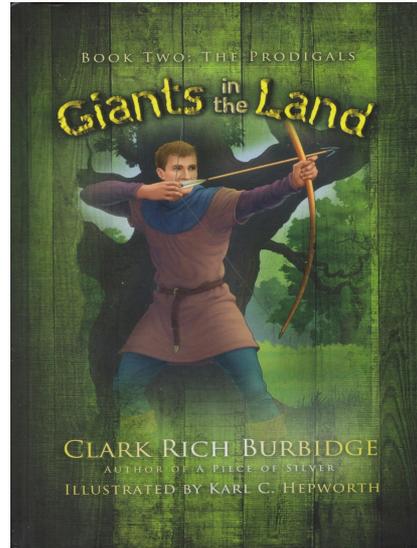


The Prodigals



by

Clark Burbidge

**Reviewed by Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopes, publisher of Time with Tannia
(timewithtannia.tripod.com)**

The Prodigals is the second installment of the trilogy *Giants in the Land*, by award-winning author Clark Burbidge.

In the first book, *The Way of Things*, humans and giants had been living together harmoniously for many generations. Then, one morning, the humans were shocked to discover that the giants had disappeared and chaos reigned. Thomas, a farmer and an outstanding hunter, accepts the challenge of searching for the giants. During his journey he overcomes difficulties by using his skills and he trusts God to help him reach his final destination. At the end of the story, Thomas dies of old age and is buried in the Land of the Giants, as an honor for his extraordinary work.

The saga continues with *The Prodigals*. The author does not disappoint his readers and brings forth another engaging, page-turner adventure.

The story begins with Thomas awakening in the Land of the Giants. Because of his character, wisdom to discern the heart of men, and his ability to judge the immediate needs of others, he is promoted to the honored position of Forest Ward.

Meanwhile in his old village, Tommy, the son of Thomas's daughter Hope, is going through a phase of adolescent rebellion and growing pains. Although he is respectful and obedient to his parents, he dislikes farming and neglects his duties. However, he is an excellent hunter just like his uncle Samuel and his grandfather.

One day while Tommy is in the forest daydreaming at the top of his favorite tree, the village is attacked by a group of ruffians. His dad and uncle Samuel get injured trying to protect their families. While climbing down the tree, Tommy, too, is injured and is unable to assist his helpless younger sister Rose, who is taken captive by the attackers. After the ruffians leave the village, headed to the town of Westhall with Rose and some spoils, Tommy is helped by Marcus, a slave boy who escaped from the leader of the invaders. Feeling guilty for the series of unfortunate events his escape caused to the village and its people, Marcus offers to help rescue Rose.

News of this event reaches the Land of the Giants. The Giants had heard stories about the state of decadency in Westhall, an evil-centered, modest-sized town facing the Great Western range in the eastern lands, where slave trade is a normal affair. The giants send Thomas Forest Ward and Earthwatcher to investigate and to proceed according to the Way of Things. Upon arriving, Thomas Forest Ward assesses the situation and decides to create a rescue team comprised of himself, Earthwatcher, Tommy, and Marcus.

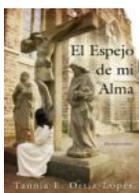
During their journey, they will encounter groups of captives being taken to Westhall to be sold as slaves to the higher bidder. Among those captives is the giant Herdshepherd, who lost his purpose in life, and Samantha, a strong-willed, spirited woman who is destined for great things.

As the saga unfolds, Thomas Forest Ward, Earthwatcher, Tommy, Marcus, Herdshepherd, and Samantha will keep the reader involved in their rescue mission and their individual development. At the end of the story, those who thought of others most have evolved to become wiser, leaders.

The surprising and unexpected end will leave the reader wondering about the odds of Thomas accomplishing his most challenging mission. But so as not to leave the reader at the edge of his seat, the author includes a sneak peek of the final installment, *The Cavern of Promise*.

The Prodigals is a story of courage, hope, mercy, and redemption.

I highly recommend it to adolescents, young adults, and to those working with them. And to those who, quoting the giant Forestmaster: "... have the gift to see in others their ability to become something more and the compassion to care for them to help them achieve it... who can find the giant within and bring it to the surface."



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