



Bone, Vol, 1: Out from Boneville

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After being run out of Boneville, the three Bone cousins, Fone Bone, Phoney Bone, and Smiley Bone, are separated and lost in a vast uncharted desert.

One by one, they find their way into a deep, forested valley filled with wonderful and terrifying creatures...

Humor, mystery, and adventure are spun together in this action-packed, side-splitting saga. Everyone who has ever left home for the first time only to find that the world outside is strange and overwhelming will love *Bone*.

Bone, Vol, 1: Out from Boneville Details


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Author : Jeff Smith , Steve Hamaker (Colorist)

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From Reader Review Bone, Vol, 1: Out from Boneville for online ebook

Kelly Furniss says

After reading a run of dark graphic novels this was a fabulous refreshing change.

The characters are so cute and loveable in this fairy tale like story set in an imaginary land.

We follow Fone Bone, Phoney Bone and Smiley Bone as they try to escape the uncharted desert but as they do this they get split up and each separately come in to a mysterious valley filled with scary creatures. The tale is simple and the imagery almost childlike but I could not help being drawn in to their world. A great entertaining funny comic book/ graphic novel, it had me right from the beginning and what makes it great is it is an accessible book for children right through to adults. You can't help but adore these little characters!.

Amanda says

Out from Boneville is the first installment in the Bone series featuring Phoney Bone, Fone Bone, and Smiley Bone. When the three cousins are run out of Boneville because of Phoney Bone's latest scheme, they get lost and separated in the desert. Fone Bone (our hero) finds a secret valley where he encounters weird weather, strange friends (a cow racing grandmother and a tiny green bug), frightening foes (homicidal rat creatures), and a strangely protective dragon that no one else can see.

I really enjoyed my first Bone book. I've been meaning to read some of this series for about a year, and I was not disappointed. The characters are engaging, and the world is interesting. Many reviewers have compared Smith to Tolkien in his world-building, and although I wouldn't go that far at this point, I can see why they say that. The original strip was in black and white, but the use of color is really exceptional in this book, so I'm glad Scholastic decided to add it. It's funny, it's original, and I can't wait to find out what happens next!

I would recommend it to kids in 4th grade and up. It's got a few frames that would upset the most sensitive parents, but the content really is fine for older kids.

Joe S says

People I love think this is a friggin masterpiece, and I love them less for it now.

I picked up the first volume of Bone because I'd heard it had such amazing comic timing, a great storyline and relatively solid artwork. No one mentioned that the dialogue reads as though it were written by a fifth grader, the humor is predictable and the story is so threadbare and uninteresting I began making up my own story for the panels. And to say that the artwork is well done is like saying the dreamcatcher hanging from my niece's rearview mirror is well done -- not inaccurate, but jeezus do I have higher standards for art.

Ryan Chapman says

I read Bone way back in the early 90s when it was serialized in comic book form, before these gorgeous collections by Scholastic. I recently revisited these and found them to have aged incredibly well. Like the best narratives for young audiences, the adventures of the three cousins Fone Bone, Smiley Bone, and Phoney Bone resonate with adults as well. The only other analogue that comes to mind is some of the work by Pixar. Jeff Smith has created a timeless series that I hope to read to my children someday. For now I'll make do with forcing it upon all of my friends.*

*If you don't believe me, just go to a bookstore and start reading it. I bet you'll walk out of there with at least a few volumes under your arm.

Penny says

3.5*

Aw I like this.

Çimen says

Well, first of all we have the charming cousins,

sense of humour,

love,

and a dragon.

But there are mysterious events going on,

and there are monsters,

and something very sinister lurking in the dark.

This is just the beginning of the story...

I'd bought an original black&white version of this one a few years ago and that was quite lovely too. The way the story progressed rather quietly, with the panels just speaking for themselves...Now I'm reading the colored versions, I can't wait to read it all.

Patrick says

This comic shook up the comic industry something fierce when it came out.

From what I understand, it was one of the first big comics to not use any narration boxes or thought bubbles at all. The story was entirely what you saw people doing, and what you heard them saying.

Needless to say, this is a *huge* change from the 60's style of superhero comic where people were constantly flying around and thinking stupid things to themselves like, "It's a good thing I can use my freeze breath to stop this forest fire!"

The first time I read it, I didn't know any of that. I just thought it was a good story.

Reading it again now, I still enjoy it. It holds up amazingly well given that it's over 20 years old. A lot of things I read from 20 years ago seem really dated. Or I find that I remember them differently than they really are. (Like Sandman.) But not this one.

It's worth your time. Especially if you want to read the "classics" in the genre. This is one of the foundation stones of modern comics.

Dealbreakers: It's in black and white. That didn't bother me at all. But I'm guessing it might throw some people off.

Sesana says

I first tried out Bone several years ago, and I just couldn't get into it. I decided to give it a second chance, because I've heard so much good about the series as a whole. The second time through, I liked it quite a bit more, but I still didn't love it. The Bones are cute and cartoony and I did enjoy that. Not really invested in whatever the bigger story is, though. At least not yet. I think this time I'm going to try to read the whole series and see what I think of it as a whole.

Vedran Karli? says

Na preporuku (i posudbu) došao sam do Bone stripa. Uop?e nisam znao što mogu ili trebam o?ekivati. Zbilja nisam znao ništa o stripu. Dobio sam jedan prili?no zabavan i pustolovni po?etak, uz prili?no simplificirani stil, sve nacrtano crno bijelo, no istovremeno na takav na?in da svaka slika bez ikakvih problema odražava stanje likova, pogotovo njihove emocije.

Sva sre?a pa sam dobio knjigu u kojoj se nalaze sve pojedina?no izašle knjige tako da ?u odmah nastaviti dalje, vidjeti kuda pustolovina vodi Bone društvo, njihove prijatelje (najbolji je crveni zmaj) te za sada prili?no misteriozne neprijatelje.

Mario says

Ohmygosh!

Well that was fun! I'll definitely be continuing on with the series.

Sam Quixote says

Fone, Phoney, and Smiley Bone are run out of Boneville after Phoney's latest shenanigans. Lost in the desert, they become separated and Fone Bone, our protagonist, ends up in The Valley, a human-dwelling part of the world, for the winter. There he meets a beautiful young woman called Thorn and her kindly cow-racing grandmother Ben. But danger looms on the horizon as the Lord of Locusts and the rat creature army are massing...

I first read Jeff Smith's Bone nearly ten years ago in the all-in-one black and white edition – a massive brick of a book at well over 1000 pages! Re-reading this first chapter in the saga, the obvious difference is Steve Haymaker's colours. They're not bad, and I'm sure they make the books more appealing for the intended kid's audience, but for me they detract from Smith's razor-sharp inks which made the comic look so awesome originally.

Because I've read the series straight through before I know it evolves into this grand, sweeping Tolkien-esque epic but looking at just this first chapter? It's not a great start and a tad boring especially if you're re-reading. It starts off slapstick-y in a Three Stooges/Laurel and Hardy way that's not very funny and then goes very Disney-esque with the talking woodland animals that's a bit sickening in its overly cutesy style. But then it's a kiddie book so maybe younger readers will respond more positively to these aspects?

I like some of the whimsical moments in the book like when winter comes it arrives in a ginormous white disc that plummets in an instant suddenly and blankets the whole world in snow. And I like how evocative Smith makes the Bone characters with their wandering wispy eyebrows – it's such a simple design but so effective!

But some of the characters look derivative like Fone Bone (the Bones are weirdly white creatures with no hair) who looks almost identical to Caspar the Friendly Ghost. The Lord of Locusts looks like Emperor Palpatine and his vast, dark army of rat creatures looks very similar to the orc armies from Lord of the Rings. Speaking of the Rings Trilogy, while they look nothing alike, the Great Red Dragon feels a lot like Strider/Aragorn in demeanour and role.

Hilariously, Bone is actually a "challenged" book which means some people (probably Christian moms) have tried to get it taken out of libraries. The reason? There is smoking and drinking in a kid's book. That's true though both are shown in only a handful of panels, they're never the focus and neither is done to excess nor are they glamorised or portrayed positively. But then some people are just idiots! The series is perfectly fine for kids.

Out from Boneville is a very slow-moving book with not a lot happening besides Smith setting up future

storylines. A lot of first volumes do this but some do it more entertainingly than others and unfortunately Bone isn't one of them. It's not an encouraging start to new readers but I can assure you if you liked the Lord of Locusts bits, the series becomes almost all about that storyline after the first two books – the cutesy stuff and bad comedy drops off very quickly. It's a mediocre first volume but the series as a whole is worth sticking with, particularly if you're a fantasy fan.

Rebecca McNutt says

Beautiful aesthetics, a chilling and yet uplifting dark fantasy tale with friendship and adventure, and a tiny hero who readers can all relate to, *Bone* is one of the best graphic novels I have ever read.

Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

Fone Bone's wealthy and arrogant cousin, Phoney Bone, has been run out of Boneville by the angry residents and Fone Bone agrees to help him, along with their other cousin, Smiley Bone. But they get lost in the desert and have used up all their water and tempers are running high. When a swarm of locusts sweeps through the valley they run for their lives - and suddenly Fone Bone is falling. Separated from the others and lost, he has only an old map that Smiley found that leads him through the mountains and into a paradise land wherein lurk some monstrous creatures.

Fone needs to find his cousins, but there are rat creatures after him and a little bug called Ted thinks someone called Thorn can help him - only Ted has disappeared and Bone doesn't know where this Thorn is. Then he encounters her unexpectedly - a beautiful human girl - and falls in love! Together they make plans for finding Phoney and Smiley - before the rat creatures get them first.

Beautifully drawn and presented, *Out From Boneville* is a delightful, imaginative, funny trip through a vivid landscape of chain-smoking dragons, talking possums, cow-racing grannies and scary monsters. Bone is an endearing hero, good-hearted and resourceful, vulnerable and sympathetic.

It has something of a "to be continued" ending, with an unsolved mystery behind the scenes that really gets you curious. Aside from that, *Out From Boneville* is self-contained and a wonderful introduction to the series - and witty too. The panels are cleverly drawn to show what cannot be included in dialogue, and it makes full use of the medium (graphic novel) in which it's presented. As an adult, this was fun to read - better than watching a cartoon on telly, that's for sure.

Seth T. says

[Bad morning.]

I wasn't sure I'd ever review Jeff Smith's *Bone*. After all, is there much that can be said that hasn't already been said? *Bone*'s so long been part of the canon of comics literature (such as one exists) that reviewing it at this point is like reviewing *Watchmen* or *The Dark Knight Returns* or *Maus*. Or for the non-comics-literate, a bit like if someone penned a review today for *Huckleberry Finn*. I mean, what's the point, really?

Still, I tell myself, there are those who haven't read the book yet. There are those who have read comics for years who haven't read *Bone* and ought to be ashamed of themselves. These are aficionados of the medium who need to be cajoled into reading something that will make them better participants in the medium. And there are those still new to the medium who might not be familiar with the canon and might not be aware of Good Places To Start. This review is probably mostly for them. And for people who might google the question, *What's the first graphic novel I should read?* (You hear that Google?)

Additionally spurring my interest in reviewing the book, I have a daughter. She's three and likes me to read to her in the evenings. I had read her *The Little Prince* and *Just So Stories* when she was two, but I thought she might get a kick out of comics before bed. She had previously seen book one of Gene Yang's *Avatar: The Promise*, which she loved because she was already familiar with the show. A father can only read so many times about Sokka and Toph getting the oogly-booglies from watching Aang and Katara getting frisky before that father just snaps—so I needed something fresh. Something new. Something I could stand to read repetitiously. So I pulled down *Bone*. She was almost instantly excited. And after she became interested and comfortable with the characters, she was wholly invested. Now Smith's characters thoroughly infest her imaginative play. She insists that she is Bartleby and her one-year-old brother is Ted the bug. I have become Jackal Bone, some fell hybrid between Phoncible P. Bone and, well, your common jackal. Though sometimes I am Kingdok and sometimes I am Roque Ja and sometimes I'm the Big Red Dragon. In any case, she and other kids love this book and rereading it several times to her over the last months has given me new appreciation for Smith's creation.

Also, there's the whole colour thing to consider. More later. Promise! First, a bit of history.

[There's always time for locusts.]

Bone was one of that first crop of creator-owned books that constituted a burgeoning movement away from the malaise of the corporation-directed folderol of the '80s. Smith spent thirteen years (from 1991 to 2004) publishing chapters of what would eventually be a 1300-page epic fantasy story. I hopped on in somewhere around the year 2000, when Smith was nearly 65% through. Waiting each month for the release of a new chapter was tortuous. I needed to see the conclusion and I needed to see it now. And then, as Smith approached his finale, several months would pass between chapters. It was grueling. Readers first approaching the book today are blessed with the option of purchasing the entire series in a handy, single-volume paperback version.¹

But rather than just talk about the book, let's start with looking at some of Smith's art. Because while, yes, his characters and dialogue and verbal storytelling are wonderful, one of the foremost joys of the book is how he conveys his narrative through artistic choices.

This is a simple chase sequence, but it's composed masterfully. Fone Bone jumps from a snowbank onto a lower bank and makes a little progress while fleeing furiously from the rat creature who dives into the snow at his heels. (Excitement!) In the next panel, we see another rat creature face-first in the snow at Bone's heels a second time. (Hot pursuit!) Fone Bone comes to an impassable river and waterfall but looks down to find an escape. We and he think he's found a respite but are surprised to find rat creatures to be more driven by instinct than by reason. While the page ends with some humour, the real punchline is on the next page as the branch fails to support their weight and the three tumble into the falls below. The second panel on this page

is majestic as we see silouetted the three small figures against a mere portion of the formidable falls. If we hadn't taken in the awesome danger Fone Bone is in by panel two, Smith drives it home by completely obscuring the three characters in the tumult of the falls' base. The volatile energy in that scene is terrific. Panel four brings us relief again as Fone Bone breaks the surface with a gasp. We know how lucky he was to make it but are almost instantly dismayed in the next panel to see the heads of the rat creatures breaking the surface as well, and the pursuit is begun anew. Unfortunately, wet Fone Bone slips on the icy rocks and the tension crescendoes on the final panel of that second page.

Here's another one:

While the prior example was fraught with action, this shows Smith using entirely different techniques to build tension. Across these three panels, there is essentially no movement save for Thorn's eyes and from Fone Bone as he struggles then reacts to what he's seen. Otherwise, Fone Bone, Granma Ben, and Thorn retain the same position across the panels. The source of drama comes from a bright lightning flash in the second panel. We (and Fone Bone) see the scene unveiled for what it is, for what was wholly obscured by the dark and stormy nighttime. Fone Bone moves from being annoyed at Granma Ben to startled by the lightning to terror at what he's just seen.

It's a beautiful scene and the book is full of this stuff. Over the years since I first finished the story in 2004 I had remembered the characters and their plot points, but I had forgotten this. I had forgotten what a master craftsman Jeff Smith is when he chooses how to visually tell his story. *Bone* employs a lot of dialogue and Smith is not shy about using words. Still, he shows over and over again that he knows when to shut up and let his art speak for him and his characters. Even if *Bone* was entirely wordless and plotless, it would be worth your time for the art alone.

So then, what about words? Another thing I had forgotten was just how funny these characters can be even while in the midst of terrible, *LOTR*-level, world-collapsing events. People are dying left and right and there's a tremendous war on and Smiley Bone is still a silly bastion of joy and laughter. And to Smith's credit, that never feels trite or abusive. That the book is riddled with funny moments even in the midst of dark doings and ill tidings may be exactly what saves it from being as grim and dour and thematically grey as some of its fantasy-genre cousins. The reader never feels that lives aren't at stake but simultaneously never feels overwhelmed by that threat.

[It's true. There is.]

As well, Smith populates his story with expressive, unique, and noteworthy characters. That my daughter would adopt so many for her waking dreams is impressive and is evidence of the good job Smith does. All of the protagonists are well-rounded and individuated (save perhaps for Smiley Bone, who remains a bastion of zany aloofness throughout). Even the supporting characters are given personalities and motivations. We spend the most time with Fone Bone and his opposite lead, Thorn, and by story's close we see them grow through the challenges they've had to overcome. They are full-fledged fictional beings. Smith's villains are worthy as well. Though he doesn't so much follow after the footsteps of Miyazaki, making his antagonists sympathetic figures, he *does* at least make them interesting.

Bone's story is as full-orbed and ranging as its characters. What begins as light adventure soon turns to dark mystery. And then back to adventure. And then to epic journey and battle against cataclysmic evil. And all

woven throughout with a sense of myth and spirit. There are forces at work in Fone Bone's world that are beyond the seeing eye and tap into energies outside the realm of the sciences. And I don't mean wizards and dragons. Even though those are there too. These things work to make *Bone's* world and mythos feel substantial, solid. And it helps that his story is exciting.

Which you already knew because why else would I describe the wait for new chapters as tortuous?

At the end of the day, if you haven't read *Bone* yet, you really ought to. If you like comics at all, you owe it to yourself. If you like adventure or fantasy, you owe it to yourself. If you want to read your kids something a little dangerous and a little exciting and a little funny and quite possibly the best thing your kids will have yet experienced, you owe it to yourself and to them. And if you've already read *Bone* but it's been a couple years, you owe it to yourself.

[*Thorn's such a flirt.*]

The Colour Edition

Several years ago, Smith worked with Scholastic to bring the book to a wider youth audience. Part of the marketing was to colour the book. (As originally published, *Bone* was a strictly black-and-white endeavor.) I'm not sure whether having the book in colour was one of Smith's abiding desires or if Scholastic believed they could better sell it to kids if it were in colour—but whatever the case, when you go onto Amazon or wherever to order your copy, you'll have a variety of formats to choose from. One of those is the colour edition.

[*sigh*]

I won't say that *Bone* in colour is an abomination, but only because I can't really justify that critique because I haven't read the entire thing in colour. Because what I did read was awful. Or maybe not awful. Maybe it was just uninspired. But when you lay uninspired on top of majesty, you've done something terrible. This colouring job is that. You may not think it's possible to suck the life out of a black-and-white comic by adding colour but you can. You really and truly can.

So please, for your sake and for your children's sake: buy and read *Bone* in black and white. It's beautiful and stunning and you won't feel embarrassed for the book while reading it.

The One Thing I Didn't Like Really at All

So this is weird and in a way pretty major, but I hated the ending. Now is the time for those who haven't read the book to stop reading. You already know I adore the book and think you should absolutely read this thing. It's canon and it deserves to be so. Everything hereafter is **SPOILER**.

Okay, so I was completely and entirely sold on Smith's world until the last chapter. The climax and even most of the denouement were stellar and right along with what Smith was doing with his story and characters. It all fit. Then, in the last pages, we see his principal characters make a decision that kind of goes wholly against who Smith developed them to be. I'm not sure why he chose that ending for his book.

In the story in my head, fifteen years earlier when Smith first thought of the story, he came up with an ending. Over the intervening years, his narrative grew and new ideas insinuated themselves. His characters grew in ways he hadn't originally charted out. They became something more than what he had proposed to

himself in the beginning. And over the years he added plot points and dialogues and maybe even new arcs. So when he comes to his conclusion, it obviously needs to be different in at least nuance from what he had originally planned. And yet, for reasons foreign to my imagination, Smith decided to stick with his original ending, even though it clearly did not fit with the characters he'd created and the circumstance they find themselves in.

That's how it happened in my imaginary version of what went down to make this ending the ending that got published. I recall being disappointed when I first read that last chapter seven years ago. But whatever my reaction was, in my memory, I was merely annoyed. Reading it again now with my daughter, I was actually angry. I wasn't angry that these characters made the choices they did. I was angry that they did so inexplicably—that there was no justification for their final decision. It didn't fit with Fone Bone's character arc. It didn't fit with Phoney Bone's character motivations. It felt entirely foreign to everything Smith had done prior to that moment. And that just makes me sad for the project, that perfection could be so easily evaporated in a book's final pages.

And now I'm sad.

[Anger.]

Foot Notes

1) My impatience for the final unveiling of a story is the primary reason I no longer buy single issues of any series and will even push off acquiring the collected volumes until a series wraps. If a series is good, I always regret reading it in fits and starts while it waits to complete. *Bone, Y: The Last Man, Cross Game, 20th Century Boys, and Twin Spica.*

Note within a note: The tough thing about my newly acquired methodology is that it's inhibiting to smaller publishers. For instance, *Twin Spica's* publisher Vertical saw such poor sales on the series that even in the month the twelfth and final volume was released, older volumes were out of print with no plans to bring the series back. Beyond merely being a shame because it's such a good series, this makes it bad news for those who would wait until a series concludes to begin collecting.

[Review courtesy of Good Ok Bad.]

Mariah says

This book was only OK. At the beginning I had a hard time keeping the "Bones" straight. Also, I didn't like how vague it was in the beginning about them getting kicked out of Boneville. Then, they all got split up somehow and then they all wanted to go back to Boneville. I thought this didn't create a strong storyline.

However, I started to enjoy the book more, around the last 30 pages. The characters were more developed and I felt like there was actually becoming a plot. This book ended on a "cliff-hanger," but not a strong one.

My boyfriend and I are reading this book and the 2nd book for our monthly Couples' Book Club read :)
