

Bone Study Guide

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Contents

Bone Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book One: Out from Boneville.....	4
The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book Two: The Great Cow Race.....	7
The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book Three: Eyes of the Storm.....	9
Phoney Strikes Back or Solstice; Book Four: The Dragonslayer.....	11
Phoney Stikes Back or Solstice; Book Five: Rock Jaw: Master of the Eastern Border.....	14
Phoney Strikes Back or Solstice; Book Six: Old Man's Cave.....	16
Friends & Enemies or Harvest; Book Seven: Ghost Circles.....	19
Friends & Enemies or Harvest; Book Eight: Treasure Hunters.....	22
Friends & Enemies; Book Nine: Crown of Horns.....	25
Characters.....	28
Objects/Places.....	31
Themes.....	33
Style.....	35
Quotes.....	37
Topics for Discussion.....	39



Plot Summary

Bone is the story of three cousins who are forced out of their home into a strange land. They encounter forces and creatures they couldn't have imagined. The Bones are unlikely heroes, but help to save a princess and the world.

Phoney Bone is run out of Boneville after a scandalous run for the mayor's office. His cousin's Fone and Smiley go with him into the desert, although they had nothing to do with the scandal. Soon they are separated due to a great swarm of locusts. Fone spends the winter in a forest that he has never heard of before, and by the time that spring comes along, Fone meets a girl named Thorn. Thorn agrees to help Fone, saying that maybe her Gran'ma Ben could help. Shortly after arriving at Thorn's house Gran'ma Ben comes home with Phoney. The group soon plans to go to the town of Barrelhaven where Gran'ma Ben enters a cow race. During the cow race, a group of terrible creatures called rat creatures show up and frighten the townspeople.

Gran'ma Ben and Thorn go back home, where they are attacked by the rat creatures. The great red dragon arrives to save them. Gran'ma is obviously unhappy to see the dragon, but they call each other by name, much to Thorn's surprise. Unable to hide the truth any longer, Gran'ma Ben explains that Thorn is really a princess of the Harvestar line. Thorn becomes angry at being lied to but has little time to come to terms with this new information. Thorn is no ordinary princess and is in touch with the dreaming realm and is a Veni-yan-cari, or an awakened one. The evil Lord of the Locusts needs Thorn to free him from his stone prison.

Gran'ma Ben and the others are forced to head to the city of Atheia for safety. Once there, the city is attacked by rat creatures and the hooded one who leads them turns out to be Gran'ma Ben's sister, Briar. The battle rages until Thorn and Fone Bone learn where the Crown of Horns is located. Together Thorn and Fone make their way to the dragon burial ground and are able to restore the balance and destroy Briar, although they cannot destroy the Lord of the Locusts who has gotten free. The dragons come out of the earth and put the Lord of the Locusts back into his stone prison. Fone cares for Thorn but cannot stay with her. The three Bone cousins are able to head home after having saved a princess and the world.



The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book One: Out from Boneville

The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book One: Out from Boneville Summary

Bone is the story of three cousins who are forced out of their home into a strange land. They encounter forces and creatures they couldn't have imagined. The Bones are unlikely heroes, but help to save a princess and the world.

In chapter one, Phoney Bone has been run out of Boneville. His cousins, Smiley and Fone, have gone with him. Smiley carries a cigar around with him and Phoney wears a shirt with a star. They are in the desert when Smiley suddenly finds a map. The map appears to have been drawn by a small child. While they are looking at the map, a swarm of locusts appears and the cousins are separated in the thick mass of bugs. Alone, Fone travels until dark. After he falls asleep two large creatures, known as rat creatures, sneak up on Fone and look him over but determine that it is not the creature they are looking for because he doesn't have a star on his chest. The creatures decide to eat Fone, but a dragon appears and scares the two creatures off. Fone wakes up after the creatures are gone and sees the dragon only for a moment and decides that he must be hallucinating. The next day, Fone wanders into a forest. Before long, the forest is covered in a thick blanket of snow.

In chapter two, Fone has spent the winter in the forest, still unable to find his cousins. Fone happens upon a brook where he meets a girl named Thorn. Fone asks her if she can help him find his cousins and his way back to Boneville, but she doesn't know where his cousins are and has never heard of Boneville. Fone tries to tell her about his encounter with the rat creatures and the dragon. Thorn doesn't believe in dragons, but upon hearing that the rat creatures are in the forest, she insists that Fone come back to her house.

In chapter three, Fone is with Thorn at her house waiting on Thorn's Gran'ma Ben to come home. Thorn explains about Gran'ma Ben's participation in the cow race each year and that Gran'ma Ben has never been beaten in the race by any cow. Later, Thorn is looking through Fone's backpack and finds the map that Smiley had unearthed just before they were separated. Thorn says there is something familiar about the map but doesn't know what it is. Meanwhile, Phoney is in the forest and happens to meet Gran'ma Ben, who is walking home. Thorn and Fone are in the house cooking when Gran'ma Ben throws Phoney in the house. Gran'ma Ben isn't sure about letting the Bones stay there, but after Thorn explains that they are looking for their third cousin Smiley before they head home, Gran'ma allows Phoney and Fone to stay in the barn.

As chapter four begins, Fone and Phoney are doing chores on the farm. Phoney is angry about doing chores on the farm until Fone explains how the cow race works.



Phoney is intrigued at the thought of making money at the race. Once Fone heads out to do more chores, Phoney quickly starts to town without everyone else so that he can get in on the gambling. Phoney starts to the town of Barrelhaven but stumbles upon some rat creatures that are talking about a council meeting. The rat creatures quickly head to the council meeting, leaving Phoney hiding in the bushes. At the council, a hooded figure gives order that one party is to find the Bone that has the star on his chest, and a second party is to go and attack Gran'ma Ben's home and kill everyone there.

In chapter five, the rat creatures are attacking the farmhouse. Gran'ma Ben sends Thorn and Fone out of the house while she fights the creatures off. Thorn and Fone are quickly surrounded by a mass of the creatures. Meanwhile, Phoney has made his way to the Barrelhaven Tavern and sits to have a drink, where he finds that Smiley is the bar tender. A large man tries to get payment from Phoney but doesn't want money, as they only use a barter system in Barrelhaven. Back at the farm, the red dragon appears and frightens the rat creatures away from Thorn and Fone. The dragon takes Thorn and Fone back to the farm house which is now almost completely destroyed.

Chapter six begins with Gran'ma Ben appearing, looking battered but very healthy. She explains that she had fought the rat creatures before and knows what she is doing. Much to Thorn and Fone's surprise, the red dragon and Gran'ma Ben call each other by name, although Gran'ma obviously is unhappy to see the dragon.

Gran'ma Ben gets Thorn and Fone into the cart and decides they will head early to Barrelhaven for the races without explaining much about the dragon. At the Tavern, Phoney is doing dishes when he figures out a way to make money off the race by getting everyone to bet against Gran'ma Ben. Phoney suddenly hears a voice and sees a hooded figure who says they are coming to get his soul. Soon, Gran'ma Ben, Thorn and Fone arrive, where they are reunited with Smiley and Phoney. The tavern owner, Lucius Down, explains that Smiley and Phoney owe him. On a hill, the hooded figure is watching the reunion and says that Phoney has only been spared for the present.

The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book One: Out from Boneville Analysis

Fone Bone seems to be the main focus of the book in many respects. The point of view in the story will switch between a lot of characters, but Fone is one of the characters that will seemingly get the most attention. It is obvious that Fone is developing feelings for Thorn, although she doesn't necessarily seem to share the same feelings that Fone has. As the story continues to grow, so will their friendship and connection.

There is a lot of story that will be expanded on as the story continues. Lucius Down has had only a small part in the story up to this point. As the story line continues to unfold, it will become clear that he has had a deep connection with Gran'ma Ben and it is well known that Lucius cares for her. The extent of their relationship is not known by many characters in the story. Lucius Down seems to be a large man who is quick to anger.



This will not prove to be true as the story continues. There will be more information about the red dragon explained as the story continues, but he will continue to be seen only once in a while. Despite this, the red dragon will have a solid impact on the characters and seemingly always will be guiding and helping in some small way.

The hooded figure also has a deeper connection than just being the enemy. This won't be explained until much later in the story. Fone, Smiley and Phoney are all cousins, but it seems that Phoney is the unofficial leader of the group. Not because his ideas are good ones, as Smiley and Fone are quick to point out, but because it is easy to get caught up in Phoney's demands. There will be more explanation about their past and the reason for their deep connection later in the story as well.



The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book Two: The Great Cow Race

The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book Two: The Great Cow Race Summary

In chapter one the spring fair is going on. Phoney and Smiley decide that they can convince everyone that Gran'ma Ben is too old to win the race and spread rumors of a wild cow destined to beat Gran'ma Ben. When everyone bets on the mystery cow, Smiley in a cow outfit, they can keep the goods that everyone put up. Outside of town Gran'ma Ben is going for a run when people start commenting on the fact that she might not win this year. After asking around Gran'ma learns that no one is betting on her and she is quickly disheartened.

In chapter two Fone comes up to the betting booth that Smiley and Phoney have set up where they are giving 4 to 1 odds on the mystery cow and 100 to 1 on Gran'ma Ben. Before long Smiley comes up in his home made cow costume. Fone isn't happy about Phoney's plans to rip off the people in Barrelhaven but is unable to convince Phoney that it is a bad idea and destined to fail. That night Thorn has the same dream she always has about people trying to get a child, her, to safety and leaving her with the red dragon. Thorn wakes Fone up and they look again at the map and Thorn says she now knows that she drew the map that Smiley found. Thorn wants to ask Gran'ma Ben about it but knows that Gran'ma has a lot on her mind and decides to wait until after the race. Thorn and Fone go back to sleep.

In chapter three it is the next morning and Gran'ma Ben is in better spirits until she talks to the men in the tavern. Each one explains that they haven't bet on her. Realizing they all believe she is too old Gran'ma is down trodden again. Phoney tells her to cheer up and that he believes in her. Gran'ma isn't fooled by Phoney's pep talk and as soon as she is out of hearing distance Phoney tells Lucius that it would be wise to bet on the mystery cow and not Gran'ma Ben. That afternoon the race is about to start and Fone, who is being chased by the rat creatures, is nowhere to be found. Thorn is worried about Fone but doesn't know where to start looking.

Chapter four begins with Phoney and Smiley getting Smiley into his cow costume for the race and Phoney reminds Smiley to not win the race. Phoney goes back to his booth in the hopes that Lucius will bet his tavern. Lucius does come up to make a bet but bets his tavern for Gran'ma Ben to win. Phoney has given 100 to 1 odds on Gran'ma Ben and so quickly runs off to tell Smiley that he has to win the race, rather than lose. To make sure everything goes as planned Phoney climbs into the cow suit with Smiley as the race begins. At this same moment Fone is being chased by the rat creatures through the forest. After the race starts Smiley and Phoney slid into a pile of sleeping rat creatures and soon the rat creatures are in the race with all the cows as Fone slowly catches up to them. The whole forest shakes as Gran'ma Ben knocks the cows and rat



creatures out of her way to get to the finish line. The whole town scatters when they see the rat creatures. Gran'ma Ben wins the race.

Chapter five begins with Lucius, Gran'ma Ben, the Bones and Thorn heading back to the farm. Phoney is tied to a stick covered with egg. Gran'ma promised to cover Phoney's debts from the betting booth and Lucius is going to have Phoney and Smiley work off what they owe him at the tavern. Once back at the farm Gran'ma Ben and Lucius talk and she tells him that the dragon is back. Lucius asks if Thorn knows the rest of the story but Gran'ma says Thorn hasn't reached the turning point yet. They all get some rest after their long trip and before they start mending the house.

In chapter six Lucius and Smiley are on the roof. Lucius quickly loses his temper with Smiley and is knocked off the roof.

The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book Two: The Great Cow Race Analysis

Phoney's plan may have gone off without any trouble if it were not for the fact that Lucius was not willing to bet against Gran'ma Ben. The reason for this, other than the fact that he cares about her, still hasn't been explained yet. Lucius openly denies the fact that dragons are real but when he and Gran'ma are talking privately it is clear that he knows just as much as Gran'ma Ben does. Lucius doesn't explain what is meant when he asks if Thorn knows more or what Gran'ma Ben means when she says that Thorn hasn't turned yet. There will be other phrases in the book that will need explaining.

The two rat creatures in the story that continue to chase Fone will be seen over and over again and occasionally will seem to have a large impact on the characters. Despite this they will never be given names.

Smiley is a unique character. Often times it will appear that Smiley is very simple minded and doesn't understand anything. Other moments Smiley will do or say something that makes him seem very intelligent and capable of anticipating the moves of those around him. When Lucius loses his temper while on the roof it appears that Smiley had almost orchestrated the events that lead to Lucius falling off the building.

The truth of Thorn's past will be explained in the next set of chapters. There will be a lot of needed information given in this section but the truth of the hooded figure will continue to be kept secret for the time being.



The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book Three: Eyes of the Storm

The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book Three: Eyes of the Storm Summary

In chapter one, Thorn is dreaming of the dragons again. In her dream, this time the hooded figure appears and tells her to come closer. When Thorn gets near, the hooded figure pulls back the cloak and the face is that of Fone. The princess awakes with a start.

In chapter two, Fone is also having a dream about his favorite book, Moby Dick. In Fone's dream, he is thrown overboard and the great red dragon appears in the water just as Fone wakes up. After discussing the dreams, Thorn thinks they may be connected. The dragon comes by to talk to Fone and calls him Ishmael, explaining that Thorn and him both had intruders in their dreams.

As chapter three begins, Lucius, Smiley and Phoney are heading back to Barrelhaven, where Phoney and Smiley are going to work off the money that they owe. Fone chooses to stay behind with Thorn. Fone and Thorn are in the garden when Thorn begins explaining about ghost circles. Ghost circles are openings to the spirit world that are very dangerous. Suddenly a strong storm begins. Thorn and Fone go to the barn to discuss their dreams. Thorn and Fone are discussing the dreams and what Gran'ma Ben has been hiding when suddenly Gran'ma Ben is in the doorway, wet from the storm, and looking angry.

Chapter four begins with Gran'ma angrily storming out of the barn. Thorn and Fone follow Gran'ma into the woods in the storm and ignore her orders for them to return to the farm house. Gran'ma is still ordering Fone and Thorn to go back to the farm house when she suddenly sees a rat creature. Meanwhile, Lucius, Smiley and Phoney have made it back to Barrelhaven Tavern, where the villagers all want to string Phoney up. Lucius stops them.

In chapter five, Gran'ma, Thorn and Fone are trying to get away from the rat creatures. Fone calls for the dragon who comes to save them. Gran'ma tells Fone that the dragon won't always be there to help. She tells Fone that the dragon wasn't always there for her. Thorn and Fone decide that when they get home they need to show Gran'ma the strange map that Smiley had found in the desert.

In chapter six, Gran'ma explains that she took Thorn and hid her because Thorn is of the royal family Harvestar from Atheia. Gran'ma says they were betrayed by the nursemaid with them when Gran'ma took Thorn on to the dragons for safety. When Gran'ma returned to help Thorn's parents in the battle with the rat creatures, everyone was dead, including the nursemaid. Meanwhile, the hooded figure is talking with the



Lord of the Locusts about the Bone creature who may be able to help free the Lord of the Locust.

In chapter seven, Lucius explains about the wager and the patrons go to his side of the bar. Phoney says something about wishing the dragon were around and the villagers suddenly become very interested.

As chapter eight continues, the villagers explain that they believe the dragons to be the reason for their misfortunes. Phoney takes advantage of their worries and claims to be a dragon slayer, although Lucius tries to say there are no dragons. Meanwhile, at the farm house Gran'ma receives word that an army is getting ready to do battle and part of them are heading for the farm house. Gran'ma tells them to open a secret compartment under the floor of the barn. Gran'ma pulls out a shield with the Harvester family crest on it and a sword. They leave immediately.

The Valley or Vernal Equinox; Book Three: Eyes of the Storm Analysis

Lucius is very intelligent and loyal. Unfortunately, his loyalty will be questioned many times during the story. He also seems to easily get pulled into contests with Phoney. Phoney is able to play on the fear that the villagers have with regard to the dragons. The fact that they were tricked by his mystery cow is not so far removed from their memory that they are not angry with Phoney, but it appears that their fear is greater than their anger. Lucius will try to talk sense into the villagers, just as he did about the mystery cow, but it will go unheeded once again.

Gran'ma is very angry and seems to be frightened. She has given little bits of information that have filled in the blanks for Thorn about her dreams and other things. In the next few chapters it will be shown that Gran'ma is still hiding things and has told other lies to Thorn. Much of this will cause Thorn to have momentary doubts about her Gran'ma.

The hooded figure is seen talking to the Lord of the Locust. The hooded figure seems to want to deal with the Bone creature, presumably Phoney, rather than the princess. It will be seen later that the hooded figure is jealous of Thorn. This will all tie into the information that Gran'ma is still lying about.

The Harvester family crest has a moon and a star on it. All that the hooded figure knows is that the Bone creature has a star on its chest and that is why Phoney is thought to be the one the Lord of the Locusts will need. This will be proven to be wrong and the star on the chest will actually be the Harvester family crest.



Phoney Strikes Back or Solstice; Book Four: The Dragonslayer

Phoney Strikes Back or Solstice; Book Four: The Dragonslayer Summary

In chapter one, Lucius is quickly losing the bet to Phoney because of the villagers' fear of the dragon and Phoney's claim to be a dragon slayer. Phoney offers to call off the bet if Lucius will just tell the people that dragons do exist. Lucius says that the dragons don't want people openly talking about them, but Phoney ignores him. Meanwhile, Thorn, Gran'ma and Fone are attacked by rat creatures while traveling to Barrelhaven.

In chapter two, Thorn takes Gran'ma's sword and badly wounds the leader of the rat creatures, Kingdok. Although Gran'ma, Thorn and Fone are all alive, they are separated. In the dark, Fone wanders on and finally begins yelling for the dragon. At the Barrelhaven Tavern, Phoney and Smiley hear Fone and the villagers go out to search for Fone but find only blood. They quickly begin searching for Fone, Thorn and Gran'ma. Meanwhile, Gran'ma is badly injured. Thorn takes Gran'ma's sword and cuts off Kingdok's arm. With their leader badly bleeding, the rat creatures retreat. Fone finds them and helps tend to Gran'ma's wounds.

In chapter three, Gran'ma explains to Thorn that she is no ordinary princess but a princess that is also very closely connected with the dreaming world. Thorn is what is known as a Veni-yan-cari, an awakened one. Gran'ma says that the hooded one is a Veni-yan-cari and needs Thorn to free the Lord of the Locust. Thorn becomes angry that her Gran'ma has hidden so much from her. Thorn runs away. Gran'ma gives Fone a medal with the family crest on it and tells him to tell Lucius what has happened and to go after Thorn and make sure that she gets to Barrelhaven safely. Gran'ma doesn't tell Fone what she is going to go do, however. When Thorn and Fone reach Barrelhaven, they find that Phoney is in charge and that Lucius never returned from looking for Gran'ma.

In chapter four, Fone goes out for a walk and a baby rat creature finds him. Fone takes it to show Thorn, but she is outraged, screaming that one of those things killed her parents and she will kill it as well if Fone doesn't get it out of her room.

In chapter five, Lucius returns without having found Gran'ma. Lucius is told that his tavern is now being used by Phoney, who has put himself in charge, and Lucius opts to sleep in the barn. Meanwhile, Smiley and Fone have found a place to hide the baby rat creature. Fone finds Lucius and shows him the Harvestar crest that Gran'ma gave to him and gives Lucius the message. Lucius goes to see Thorn, who breaks down crying in Lucius' arms.



Chapter six has Phoney making a speech to the town, saying that he is going to take all the extra food and supplies into the mountain himself and lay a trap for the dragon that is plaguing the town. Lucius is against the people letting Phoney take their food, but no one will listen. Phoney knows that he can take the food out on a wagon under the pretense of it being for a trap and then simply go home to Boneville with enough goods to begin rebuilding his fortune. Meanwhile, the hooded figure is sending the rat creatures and servants of the Lord of the Locusts off to begin the battle. Kingdok, now missing an arm, is sent to find the princess and the Bones and bring them back.

In chapter seven, Thorn has left the village, although this is not known to Fone. Fone and Smiley sneak out of the village to go and return the baby rat creature to its own kind while Phoney gets the wagons ready to steal the food from the people in Barrelhaven. Thorn is in the forest when she has a dream and the red dragon appears to her again. Thorn knows she must go back to Barrelhaven.

In chapter eight, the people and Phoney have made their way to the top of a mountain with all the food on a wagon for the dragon's trap. They set a very crude looking rope out to snag the dragon and Phoney gets ready to send the people away when the red dragon allows himself to be caught. Phoney is panicked, not wanting to hurt the red dragon, but knowing what the townspeople expect. Thorn shows up just as Phoney has his dagger raised. The people are demanding the dragon be put to death when the rat creatures begin attacking. Thorn cuts the dragon's ropes and he frightens the rat creatures away. The villagers realize their mistake and they turn to see their village is burning. The red dragon tells Thorn that the dragons are going back underground.

Phoney Strikes Back or Solstice; Book Four: The Dragonslayer Analysis

Phoney obviously was willing to do whatever it took to get what he desires. He was going to take the good from all of those people and had the knife and appeared ready to plunge it into the red dragon just to keep up the ruse. Phoney will continue to appear self-propelled throughout the story. Even though these characteristics define much of what Phoney appears to be, it will become clear later in the story that he does in fact care deeply for his cousins, although it seems that Phoney will try to mask this to some degree.

What has happened to Gran'ma is unknown at the end of this story. It won't be until much later that her plans and actions during this period of time are revealed.

The Veni-yan-cari have been explained in some detail. As the story proceeds, there will be more aspects of the Veni-yan-cari and their beliefs that are explained. It will also be shown that there are many different types of these religious men in the story.

Kingdok has been insulted and feels degraded in many respects. He had once been the king of the rat creatures until the hooded figure appeared. It won't be until much later in



the story that Kingdok fully explains his motivations. It will be shown that Kingdok is on a seemingly self destructive path.

Smiley has been very kind to the baby rat creature and even gives him a name. It will prove to be very helpful to them later on that they have befriended the creature. At this point in time, Fone seems to still be unsure if it was wise to have helped the rat creature or not.



Phoney Stikes Back or Solstice; Book Five: Rock Jaw: Master of the Eastern Border

Phoney Stikes Back or Solstice; Book Five: Rock Jaw: Master of the Eastern Border Summary

In chapter one, Smiley and Fone are making sandwiches when Smiley announces he has given the baby rat creature the name Bartleby. Fone is against naming the creature since they are going to turn it loose, but Smiley pays Fone no attention. While they are stopped for lunch, they are found by two grown rat creatures. They are able to fight the rat creatures off only to find that a giant cat named Roque Ja has found them. Roque Ja says he is taking them to the hooded one who is looking for the Bone with the star on his chest.

In chapter two, some of the woodland creatures that know Fone see him being lead by Roque Ja and go to gather others to help. Several baby animals, left orphaned by the rat creatures, lead two of the rat creatures on a chase toward Roque Ja. Upon seeing the rat creatures, Roque Ja is enraged that they are on his mountain. In the excitement, the orphaned animals, Bartleby, Fone and Smiley are able to begin running before Roque Ja can start his pursuit.

As chapter three begins, the animals are still running from Roque Ja and make their way to a secret cave. The cave ends at an old rat creature temple. They begin the journey down the hill. They are not far from the rat creature temple when they see the fires from Barrelhaven. While they stand looking at it, the two rat creatures appear behind them. The rat creatures are soon victims themselves when Kingdok shows up. The orphan animals, Smiley, Fone, and the two large rat creatures all run from Kingdok out onto a ledge.

Chapter four begins with Fone and the others on a ledge just out of reach from Kingdok. They make their way around the ledge when they are attacked by locusts. The Harvestar family crest falls out of Fone's backpack and scares the locusts away, but not before Roque Ja hears the commotion. The animals once again start their journey, not realizing that Roque Ja is right behind them listening in.

In chapter five, the two rat creatures explain that Kingdok listens to the hooded one because they fear the deadly ghost circles and the hooded one is the only one who can keep the circles from enveloping everything. Just then Roque Ja appears and tells them to head back up the mountain. When they reach the top, Kingdok is waiting for them. Kingdok attacks Roque Ja and the two rat creatures quickly pretend to have captured Smiley, Fone and the other animals. The smaller animals begin biting the rat creatures



and they are able to escape. Once safe in the forest ,Smiley watches as the rat creatures and Bartleby head up the mountain.

Phoney Stikes Back or Solstice; Book Five: Rock Jaw: Master of the Eastern Border Analysis

The power of the Harvestar crest has been shown in this chapter. When the locusts arrive to attack Fone it is clear that they recognized the symbol. The reason for this won't be explained in the story but the importance of it is seen again.

Roque Ja will be seen again in the story, although he will not have a major role. Kingdok and Roque Ja obviously have some animosity despite the fact that they are on the same side. They will come face to face again in the story, although the meeting will not be quite as memorable.

The cave that the orphan animals have shown Fone and Smiley will be used again in the story. It was also shown that part of what Smiley and Fone saw after coming out of the cave were hallucinations. These won't be the last hallucinations that these characters will have, although the next hallucinations will be far less subtle and believable.

Bartleby is back with his own kind. It is clear that Smiley is saddened over the departure of his new friend. It seems to be one of the few times in the story that Smiley is concerned over much of anything. He has a generally carefree attitude and is happy regardless of the situations that they continually find themselves in. Bartleby will be seen again in the story and the kindness that Smiley and Fone have shown him will prove to be well worth the time and effort.



Phoney Strikes Back or Solstice; Book Six: Old Man's Cave

Phoney Strikes Back or Solstice; Book Six: Old Man's Cave Summary

In the prologue, Fone and Smiley are lost when Ted the bug arrives and gives them the rundown of the lynch mob that Phoney was leading to destroy the red dragon. Ted agrees to take them back to Barrelhaven.

In chapter one, Thorn and several other villagers that are out looking for survivors hide when two patrols of rat creatures meet. Thorn listens to them talk about looking for the Bone creature with the star on its chest or the princess. When Thorn and the others return to Barrelhaven, they find that the entire village is gone. The villagers turn on Phoney and threaten to string him up, but Thorn stops them. Thorn and the others are discussing what to do when several holy men appear with a message for Thorn that Thorn is to go to Old Man's Cave. Thorn is torn between going to meet Gran'ma at Old Man's Cave or going to look for Fone. She decides to sleep before she makes her decision. That night while Thorn sleeps, she dreams about the hooded figure again. Thorn wakes with a start and runs off into the woods alone to look for Fone.

Chapter two has a few villagers and Phoney making their way alone to Old Man's Cave. They encounter Gran'ma and Lucius on the way and explain that Thorn went off on her own. Meanwhile, Fone and Smiley are traveling when they are surrounded by rat creatures. Thorn suddenly shows up and the creatures are frightened away. Thorn tells them that she will not go to Old Man's Cave because she can't trust anyone there.

In chapter three, Thorn, Smiley and Fone are hiding a tree laughing and spitting cherry seeds at each other. Ted asks what they are doing hiding and Thorn says she has a plan to attack the hooded one. Thorn goes on to explain what she knows about the hooded one and that the more fear they cause, the more powerful the Lord of the Locusts becomes. Fone asks about what Thorn had said about not trusting anyone at Old Man's Cave and Thorn tells them that she can't remember much from her parent's attack but she knows for a fact that she didn't have a nursemaid. Elsewhere in the valley, the hooded one is meeting with Roque Ja, giving him orders to find the Bone and kill the princess. Back at Old Man's Cave, the people are preparing for the coming battle. Lucius comes and reports on the condition of the valley. Phoney is anxious to have his cousins back but there is little that can be done without putting others in great risk.

Chapter four begins with Fone, Smiley and Thorn back at the farmhouse. Thorn comes out of the barn covered in war paint and says that she plans to go assassinate the hooded one and that she is going alone. Fone demands that she go with them to see Gran'ma at Old Man's Cave. Thorn tells them that they don't know what it's like to be an



orphan, then Smiley says that they do know. Smiley says that they were orphans and it was Phoney who was the oldest and so took care of them. Fone theorizes that that is the reason that Phoney became so stingy and resourceful. Fone says that deep down they know that they can trust Phoney, and that even though his schemes are often misguided, they are always for the right reason. Thorn admits that they might be right and agrees to go to Old Man's Cave.

Lucius and his men are out on patrol when the hooded one appears to Lucius. The hooded one removes her hood and Lucius calls her Briar. Lucius says that Gran'ma Ben saw Briar's body that night in the pass after the rat creatures killed Thorn's parents. One of Lucius's men suddenly calls out that the rat creatures are attacking. Briar is gone as quickly as she came and Lucius quickly joins the battle. Back at the cave, Gran'ma Ben is explaining the dreaming realm to Phoney. They are interrupted when Lucius brings back the wounded from the fight. Meanwhile, back at the farm, Roque Ja is on the trail of Thorn and the Bones.

In chapter five, Lucius is telling Gran'ma Ben that her long dead sister, Briar, is the hooded one leading the rat creature attacks. The villagers come to find Phoney. They are desperate and feel that if they give him over the war will be finished. Gran'ma is able to convince them that giving over Phoney would make matters worse and not better, but not before Phoney has a chance to escape. Gran'ma goes after Phoney, who has taken off his shirt, and they run into Roque Ja. Gran'ma Ben and Lucius fight with Roque Ja while Phoney makes an escape, running into Thorn, Fone and Smiley.

In the battle, several are hurt and Thorn is knocked unconscious. Roque Ja is able to grab the princess and Phoney and takes them away. Fone and Smiley quickly go after Roque Ja. Lucius is badly hurt, but urges Gran'ma Ben to go on without him. Smiley and Fone arrive at the rat temple just in time to see the hooded one about to sacrifice Phoney. The hooded one talks of the sign that appeared and it is the giant campaign balloon that helped to get Phoney run out of town. Just as Briar is about to kill Phoney, Gran'ma Ben arrives and tells Briar what a mistake she has made. The princess was the one with the power to set the Lord of the Locusts free, not Phoney. And Briar has killed the princess. The Lord of the Locusts is angered and locusts appear and Briar is ripped into two pieces. The locusts quickly swarm onto Thorn, and Fone rushes to her side and puts the family crest on her, freeing her from the locust. They flee in the confusion of Briar's sudden death.

Phoney Strikes Back or Solstice; Book Six: Old Man's Cave Analysis

The people in the story had been afraid of the dragons and wanted them dead. While the people obviously were no real threat to the dragons, it could be that their refusal to accept them played a role in the dragon high council's decision to go back underground. The red dragon is still helping Fone and Thorn in some small way, although he is not allowed to intervene any more. It will be seen in the last part of the book that he will



directly defy the order to remain a part of the human's battle and will openly help Thorn and Fone.

The identity of the hooded one has been revealed. Briar has been kept alive for roughly fifteen years by the power of the Lord of the Locust. She can obviously manipulate a person's perception of how she appears. She always has a different look in Thorn's dreams, although Thorn says the evil there is unmistakable. When Lucius sees her, she is young and beautiful, just as she had been in life so many years ago. When Gran'ma Ben sees Briar she is old and withered looking. When the Locusts leave her body and she is laying in two pieces, she looks like a long decayed body in many ways. While the Lord of the Locusts gave her life, it is clear that much of what was given to Briar was only an illusion.

While the initial attempt of the Lord of the Locusts to be freed was stalled, it is not over. Learning that Phoney was not the one they were looking for was only a setback in their plans. It is clear that the Lord of the Locusts needed Briar at one point in time to take care of his affairs while he was trapped in the earth. After so much time and so much fear being spread, the Lord of the Locusts has much more power and Briar is needed a little less. Despite his growth in power, it will happen in the next few chapters that Briar will be resurrected once again when the Lord of the Locusts needs her to do more work. Despite his occasional use for her, it is clear that she has no real connection to him. Once she has outlived her usefulness, the Lord of the Locusts will not hesitate to get rid of her.



Friends & Enemies or Harvest; Book Seven: Ghost Circles

Friends & Enemies or Harvest; Book Seven: Ghost Circles Summary

In the prologue, a young man that had been in Lucius's unit when the rat creatures attacked tells Ted the bug about seeing Lucius in the arms of the hooded one who turned out to be a woman.

In chapter one, Thorn, Gran'ma, Smiley, Fone, and Phoney are all running from the explosions that started. While they are running, Kingdok appears and Smiley and Fone quickly take everyone to the secret cave that they had used earlier. Meanwhile, the men at Old Man's Cave are in a fierce battle with the rat creatures. The Lord of the Locusts resurrects Briar to finish freeing him. Meanwhile, once Fone, Thorn and the others are out of the cave at the old abandoned rat creature temple, they find that the entire land is covered in ash and the entire valley looks like it is gone. Thorn says that part of the destruction is real but part of it is illusion from the ghost circles that are being created. Thorn can tell where they are with her Veni-yan-cari abilities. Slowly, being careful not to touch a ghost circle, they make their way through the wreckage.

In chapter two, the group travels until they reach a spot with drinking water and they stop to rest. That night Fone dreams about Moby Dick and is swallowed by the great red dragon.

As chapter three begins, they are trying to decide which way to go when they are surprised by rat creatures. Gran'ma, Smiley and Phoney fight and run for a short way until they are backed into a corner. Smiley steps forward and Bartleby hops out of the mass of creatures and rescues Smiley. Meanwhile, Fone and Thorn are fought out onto a ledge where they are faced with Briar. Briar approaches Thorn but Fone steps between them with a club raised. Briar begins to laugh and says that Fone has a locust in him, and with Fone the princess isn't needed. Just as Briar is about to kill Thorn, Bartleby comes up and knocks her over. They all begin to run, with Thorn guiding them through the ghost circles.

In chapter four, Thorn is guiding them as they watch the wide row of rat creatures begin to diminish as they continue to run into ghost circles. Soon it is too dangerous to go fast, but the rat creatures give up their chase since they can't see the deadly ghost circles. Meanwhile, at Old Man's Cave, Lucius is put under watch and accused by the holy men loyal to the Harvestar family of being a traitor to the queen, although the villagers seem reluctant to believe it.

In chapter five, Fone and the others become desperate for food. Fone and Thorn decide to try and enter a ghost circle by combining the power of the locust held in them. They



deliberately walk into a ghost circle and hear the voices of those trapped inside begging to be released from the Lord of the Locusts's grasp. They become frightened and rush out, but before they are out a message from Thorn's dead mother is delivered, telling her to seek the Crown of Horns and to take the piece of the locust from Fone. Fone is unable to hear these messages and doesn't realize what is going on when Thorn takes his hands. Back at Old Man's Cave, Lucius explains that he had been in the palace guard and had chosen Briar over Rose. Lucius knows now that he chose the wrong sister. Lucius says that the only way they can survive is to go to Atheia. Meanwhile, Thorn and the others continue to travel south. They are getting nearer to Atheia when Thorn becomes almost too ill to travel. They arrive at the dragon burial ground, where the penalty for trespassing is death.

Chapter six continues with the group entering the burial grounds with no time to go another way. By the time they are out of the burial grounds, Thorn is better and Gran'ma Ben surmises that the sacred grounds helped to heal her. Once out of the burial grounds, Thorn announces that there are no more ghost circles. Back at Old Man's Cave, the villagers tell the holy men that they are going to Atheia. The holy men are reluctant but finally agree.

Friends & Enemies or Harvest; Book Seven: Ghost Circles Analysis

Bartleby isn't fully trusted by those around him with the exception of Smiley and Fone. Despite the lack of support that Bartleby will receive, he will prove to be a valuable asset and continue to be loyal, much like Lucius who is also not trusted by those around him. These characters have a lot in common in that they are both loyal to a fault and that they do not receive the credit they deserve. Lucius made bad decisions in the past but was never a traitor to the Harvestar family.

Thorn and her Gran'ma have gone from a land that was barren and seemingly utterly destroyed to one that was green and seemed much safer. It will soon be shown that once they are in the city walls of Atheia they are in a different kind of danger, but one just as real. The problems that Thorn and Gran'ma face while in Atheia stem from the fact that the royal family has been away long enough that there are those that don't want to give up the power that they have acquired because of the families absence. It will also be seen that many of these people will be willing to kill in order to keep their power.

Thorn became very sick after taking in the piece of the locust from Fone. It is never stated that this is what caused her to become ill, but it is known that she is very susceptible to the evil of the locust, more so than a normal person. It seems that it is a likely connection that it was the locust from Fone that caused her momentary illness. The dragon burial grounds also are very important in the story. They will be spoken of in reference to a past event in the next section of the book and it will also happen that Thorn and Fone will return here again despite the warnings associated with the burial ground.



Phoney continues to be self centered and focused only on himself. Despite this, he will seemingly be the only one capable of figuring out where the Crown of Horns is located. The Crown of Horns has not been explained at this point in the story and it won't be until much later that the story behind it is told.



Friends & Enemies or Harvest; Book Eight: Treasure Hunters

Friends & Enemies or Harvest; Book Eight: Treasure Hunters Summary

In the prologue of book eight, Ted the bug is helping the people from the Old Man's Cave make their way through the ghost circles. The holy men in the group still don't think that Lucius can be trusted. Lucius finds the tracks left from Thorn and the others when they came through. Lucius sends Ted on to find Gran'ma and let them know they are coming. The holy men in the group are left with the choices of going back on their own through the ghost circles or following Lucius and the tracks.

Chapter one begins with Thorn and the rest of the group outside the gates of Atheia. A small girl, Taneal, gives Thorn a prayer stone. They make their way to the front gate knowing that to be recognized would be disastrous. At the front gate, Phoney shows up with a cart full of hay claiming to have found it abandoned on the side of the road. They are able to sneak everyone into the city on the cart. Once inside the city, Gran'ma takes Thorn to meet Gran'ma's old teacher.

In chapter two, while talking to Gran'ma's old teacher, the image of Briar shows up and tries to take control of Thorn. No one can see her except Fone. They are able to stop it but the fact that it happened in the middle of the city means the Lord of the Locusts is getting much stronger. The teacher sends Gran'ma and the others away and warns them not to let Thorn be alone for a moment and not to let her sleep for fear that Briar will invade her dreams.

In chapter three, a man arrives at the gate of the city demanding to be let in because his hay cart was stolen. The guards refuse to let the man in but do take note of the report.

Chapter four begins with Phoney and Fone in the marketplace checking out what currency is used. They are attacked by a large bee and the people in the market square pay Phoney in gold for beating the bee up and tell him that they will pay more than that if he comes back the next day and keeps the bee away again. Meanwhile, Thorn is being kept awake while the teacher tells Thorn about Tarsil and how he took over after the royal family was wiped out. Tarsil has made it illegal to speak of the dragons. When Tarsil was younger, he went to the dragon burial grounds to defy the dragons but they came and badly wounded him as punishment. While this was going on, Phoney and Fone were hiding from the guards who followed them from the market square. The guards know that the queen has returned and they are looking for the queen in the city. Fone and Phoney go to warn Gran'ma and Thorn.

In chapter five, Fone and Phoney split up, with Fone going to warn Gran'ma about what he has heard and Phoney going to find Smiley. Back with Gran'ma, Ted has arrived and



lets them know that Lucius and the others are on their way there. Gran'ma tells Ted to have Lucius ready to attack on her signal so that the enemy will be trapped between Lucius's men and the city. Gran'ma admits that she doesn't have an army yet but that she will. Phoney gets to where Smiley and Bartleby are hiding. Phoney has come up with another plan after seeing the gold the people used to pay him and intends to find a way to be king of Atheia. Meanwhile, Tarsil is talking with his guards about the arrival of the queen and her daughter. Tarsil orders them found and sentences Thorn to be burned at the stake when she is captured. That night there is a secrete meeting of the council and those that are still loyal to the Harvestar family. Fone still hasn't shown up and Thorn is worried. Fone suddenly appears and says that the guards are looking for them and they aren't safe. Within moments, all the people at the meeting are gone.

Chapter six continues with Gran'ma and Thorn narrowly making their escape with Fone and one of Gran'ma's old advisers. The old man is against Thorn fighting, saying that she hasn't been trained until Thorn says that her dead mother sent her a message telling her to look for the Crown of Horns. The adviser says that if Thorn touches the Crown of Horns then life would flicker and might go out completely, which would end everything. Meanwhile, Phoney and Smiley have figured out where Tarsil has hidden the Harvestar treasure and go to get it when the villagers find them. The villagers attempt to get them to stay in the hopes that they will get the reward from Tarsil for having caught the Bones, but a swarm of bees arrives to fight and Phoney and Smiley are able to get away. Thorn and Gran'ma are on top of the stone wall when they see the small girl Taneal being arrested by the soldiers for selling dragon stones. Thorn goes to help the girl while Gran'ma goes to check on Phoney. Thorn and Fone are arrested. As they are pulled into the city, Gran'ma arrives back on the wall in time to see a mass of rat creatures positioning themselves to begin the attack.

Friends & Enemies or Harvest; Book Eight: Treasure Hunters Analysis

There was an obvious connection between Briar, Gran'ma Ben and Thorn and it seems that their names reflect this. Gran'ma Ben isn't called Gran'ma by everyone and her first name is Rose. There is a lot of hurt feelings between Rose and Briar. It seems that Briar has some jealousy issues with Rose that are never resolved. Lucius may have in part been Briar's way of hurting Rose further.

Lucius was loyal to Rose up until the end of his life. He died trying to save Gran'ma Ben. He had been spoken badly of in life but it seems that with his death he was able to put all doubts of his loyalty to rest.

The dragons, with the exception of the great red dragon, are only creatures that are mentioned or live in ancient stories. Even when the dragons are seen there are few that have any words that they speak or appear to interact with the main cast of characters. The reason for this isn't known.



Smiley often seems like an imbecile but he is a kind person as is shown with Bartleby. In the last chapter of the book, the treasure is returned to Gran'ma when Smiley tells her what is in the treasure chest and has it replaced with a food that Smiley likes. There are enough moments in the story when Smiley will show that he has foresight. It may be that when Smiley lets it slip that the treasure has been found by Phoney and it is in the treasure chest that Smiley knew what he was doing. It is clear that Smiley cares very little about monetary things.

Phoney continues to be a self centered character but Gran'ma Ben offers Phoney a chance to leave in the middle of the battle and go home to Boneville. Phoney doesn't take it because he couldn't leave without his cousins. It seems that he does have an emotional moment or two in the story, but his character often hinders the efforts of the others. Despite this fact, it is Phoney's character who is able to understand the importance of the Crown of Horns and determine where it is being kept.



Friends & Enemies; Book Nine: Crown of Horns

Friends & Enemies; Book Nine: Crown of Horns Summary

In chapter one of book nine, Thorn and Fone have been badly injured and are in a dungeon cell where Thorn is having a dream remembering everything that happened the night her parents were killed. In her dream, her mother tells her once again to seek the Crown of Horns. Meanwhile, Gran'ma is on the castle wall watching the advancing rat creatures when two guards come up and bow to her. Suddenly below, Briar appears and offers to let the men live if they surrender to the Lord of the Locusts. Tarsil refuses and pulls back his hood, revealing his hideously scared face that the dragons left him. Briar pulls back her hood and her face looks like what Tarsil's looked like before the dragons exacted their revenge. Briar swiftly flies to Tarsil and slices him into two pieces and the battle begins with Gran'ma Ben giving the orders. Back in the dungeon, Taneal comes with Smiley and Phoney to rescue Thorn and Fone. Once out, Thorn heads to the gate. Thorn and the others battle for a time when suddenly the rat creatures retreat. Everyone is confused as to why they would leave so suddenly when Thorn realizes there are ghost circles descending around the city.

In chapter two the story of Mim, the queen of the dragons, is told, and how the Lord of the Locusts took control of Mim. Although the dragons loved her they encased her in stone to save the world from the Lord of the Locust. Although imprisoned, this did not destroy the Lord of the Locust.

In chapter three there is a sudden earthquake and an eruption from the ground. While everyone is getting over the earthquake, Phoney says he has a plan to get back to Boneville with the treasure that Tarsil had hidden. Fone refuses to leave Thorn's side. Thorn says that Mim the dragon has been able to get free because of the Lord of the Locusts's growing power. Phoney suddenly says he knows where the Crown of Horns is located, at the dragon's burial ground. Thorn suddenly leaves. Bartleby comes and lets Fone ride on him as they chase Thorn.

In chapter four, Bartleby and Fone catch up with Thorn. Fone agrees to go with her. The battle at Atheia begins again, with Phoney staying right beside Gran'ma. When the rat creatures retreat for a moment, Gran'ma asks Phoney if he wants to go home. He says he can't leave without his cousins, and so he goes with Gran'ma to find Briar. Meanwhile, Thorn and Fone split up so that they can both make it to the burial grounds. Fone and Bartleby make it there but Bartleby is too frightened to go in.

In chapter five, Gran'ma and Phoney make their way down an underground passage. Gran'ma and Phoney are soon surrounded as they walk into a trap. Meanwhile, Thorn gets near the Crown of Horns and Kingdok is suddenly in front of her. Thorn refuses to



fight him until he bites Thorn on the leg. She kills Kingdok but is unable to free herself from his jaws to touch the Crown of Horns. Fone arrives and rubs his hands on Thorn and then touches the Crown of Horns. At that moment Briar is destroyed. Thorn and Fone begin running and are rescued by the great red dragon who says the other dragons are coming to kill them.

In chapter six, Mim appears in the sky and shortly the great red dragon approaches with Fone and Thorn on his back. The dragons that had been chasing them turn on Mim and return her to her stone prison. The battle is over and a short time later there is a ceremony to crown Thorn queen of Atheia. Lucius had died in battle and Gran'ma Ben takes his body home. Once back at the Barrelhaven Tavern, they are snowed in for the winter.

In chapter seven, after the winter is over, the Bones get their things together and head back to Boneville with Bartleby.

Friends & Enemies; Book Nine: Crown of Horns Analysis

The majority of the plots have been concluded by the end of the book. It is obvious that some things haven't changed, such as Phoney's selfish characteristic, and there are other questions that are left unresolved, but they are seemingly lesser questions. The strength of the family bond is seen again at the end of the story when Fone decides to go home with his cousins rather than stay with Thorn. It is obvious that he cares a great deal for her, and she cares for him. It appears that if Phoney and Smiley hadn't been returning to Boneville that Fone would have stayed with Thorn, but this is never actually stated.

It isn't clear what actually happened to the Lord of the Locust. It seems likely that he has simply been returned to his stone prison but still not destroyed, just as he was the first time that the dragons had to stop Mim. There is never any mention of Fone and Thorn going into the Dragon's burial, although it was against the rules. The great red dragon showed up to save Thorn and Fone and made it sound like the dragons were going to kill Fone and Thorn for trespassing, but after the dragons have to fight Mim, this is never spoken of again. The great red dragon shows up to escort the Bone cousins for a short distance and to tell them goodbye, but never says much about the other dragons.

The names in the story appear to link a group of characters together. The Bone cousins all have odd names that sound comical, while Gran'ma Ben's first name is Rose, her evil sister is Briar, and Rose's granddaughter is Thorn.

Phoney proves to be self-centered throughout the whole story and even is willing to take the fortune with him back to Boneville. It seems at times that Smiley Bone must be smarter than he lets on and much more caring than Phoney, as is shown when Smiley begins to care for the baby rat creature. It is Smiley who tells Gran'ma Ben that the fortune is in the wagon and helps her replace it with stale bread. It could be argued that



Smiley simply doesn't understand the value of money, but as soon as Phoney asks for one of them Smiley is quick to offer one of the pieces of bread to Phoney in exchange for a gold coin. This brief exchange seems to indicate that Smiley has more going on than is readily shown.

The Bone cousins take Bartleby back to Boneville with them. It was said when they first saw the rat creatures that no one in Boneville had ever seen one before. There is the question of what they will do with Bartleby, but it does seem that the creature is very different from the others of his kind, perhaps due in part to the kindness that Smiley showed him.



Characters

Fone Bone

Fone Bone is one of the main characters in the story, and the story will often be shown from his perspective. Fone Bone follows his cousin Phoney Bone when Phoney is thrown out of Boneville. Fone is responsible and very caring of those around him. He will even do something kind for the rat creatures that tried repeatedly to eat him throughout the story. Fone develops strong feelings for Thorn, but at the end of the story Fone decides that he must go back to Boneville with his cousins. The reason that Fone decides to leave isn't explained, but it appears that part of the reason he goes home is because he doesn't want to be separated from his cousins.

Fone isn't considered to be much of anything through the story by most that look on him. Despite his short stature and inability to fight, he proves to be a valuable asset for Thorn. There are many times throughout the story that Thorn seems ready to give up or is extremely down heartened. Each time it seems to be Fone that gives her strength and pushes her forward even though he himself isn't sure what they are supposed to be doing. He is relentless and faithful even when he himself is in incredible danger.

Phoncible P. Bone

Phoncible is one of the main characters in the story. He was thrown out of town after his disastrous campaign to be mayor. To save money, Phoncible, also referred to as Phoney, bought bad prunes and the entire town got sick after a party that Phoney threw when he was running for mayor. Through the story, Phoney struggles to find a way to get rich. Each time there is an underhanded scheme that he tries to get his cousins to back him up on. Phoney never has a plan work out the way he wants, but he continues to act like the leader of his cousins. Fone explains to Thorn that it was Phoney that took care of him and Smiley after they became orphans. Fone blames this for the reason that Phoney is always out to get rich quick and looking for new ways to make money.

Phoney continually proves that he cares about no one but himself and that money is his main concern. He is willing to take everything that people have in return for promises that Phoney has no intention of keeping. The only time that Phoney seems to be concerned about anyone but himself is when he thinks that Fone might not go back to Boneville with him.

Thorn

Thorn is first introduced as a poor farm girl living with her grandmother. Fone Bone quickly develops feelings for Thorn, although she appears to feel nothing more than friendship for him. Thorn quickly begins a new chapter in her life after the arrival of Fone Bone. Upon his arrival, there are things awakened within Thorn that eventually show



that she is a princess that has been in hiding her whole life. Thorn is no ordinary princess but is also a veni-yan-cari, a person that is most in touch with the dreaming, the state that connects both the living and the dead world. Because she is a very powerful veni-yan-cari, she is wanted by the Lord of the Locusts so that he can be freed of his prison.

Thorn is very young and so is angered and hurt when she realizes that she has been lied to her whole life. Despite the fact that Thorn feels betrayed, she eventually is able to move beyond her hurt and accomplish what she has been chosen to do. The struggle that Thorn goes through emotionally is easily seen when Thorn is talking to the great red dragon in her dream. In her dream she begins as a child when he is asking her questions, but slowly she becomes a mighty princess warrior.

Gran'ma Ben, Rose

Gran'ma Ben is Thorn's grandmother and is thought to be a simple peasant. It isn't until her home is attacked by the rat creatures and the great red dragon shows up to help them that the truth of Gran'ma's past is explained. Gran'ma Ben had been the queen before she left and is the sister of Briar, the servant of the Lord of the Locusts. Gran'ma Ben is known in Barrelhaven for winning the cow race each year.

Smiley Bone

Smiley Bone goes with Fone Bone and Phoney Bone when they leave Boneville. Fone Bone admits that he has brought Smiley along to torment Phoney. Smiley Bone is the one that finds the baby rat creature and names it. Smiley always has a cigar in his mouth and Fone Bone follows the cigars for a time when they are first separated.

Lucius

Lucius is the owner of the tavern in Barrelhaven. He is infatuated with Gran'ma Ben and bets on her to win the cow race when everyone else in the village bets on her to lose. Lucius is accused as being a traitor because he is seen in the arms of Briar just as the rat creatures attack. Lucius dies saving Gran'ma Ben.

Briar

Briar is the sister of Gran'ma Ben. When Thorn was little it was Briar who led Thorn's family to their death. Briar was cut in half by Thorn's mother but was brought back to life by the Lord of the Locusts. It is the locusts that keep Briar's body pulled together.



Lord of the Locusts

The Lord of the Locusts is an ancient evil that was entombed in stone an untold number of years before when it took over the most powerful creature alive, Mim, the queen of the dragons. The Lord of the Locusts wants to have either the Bone that has a star on his chest, or Thorn. With either of these two, the Lord of the Locusts can escape his stone tomb. The Lord of the Locusts is never seen in physical form without the body of Mim. The Lord of the Locusts uses the rat creatures and other servants to wage war on the people that live in the valley.

Ted

Ted is a small insect that helps the Bones and the others in their fight against the Lord of the Locusts. Ted is first seen by Fone Bone when he is lost in the forest. Ted carries messages between Gran'ma Ben and Lucius when they are beginning the battle in Atheia.

The Great Red Dragon

The Great Red Dragon appears mysteriously in the book to save Fone Bone several times. Gran'ma Ben tells Fone that there is no such things as dragons, but later it turns out that Gran'ma Ben and the dragon have a history and know each other well. Thorn later remembers that it was the great red dragon that took her into his cave and protected her when her family was attacked. The red dragon saves Thorn and Fone Bone after they have touched the Crown of Horns and the other dragons come to kill them.

Mim

Mim is the queen of the dragons. She has been driven mad by the Lord of the Locusts who now controls her body. The other dragons love their queen but could not separate her from the Lord of the Locusts, and so to save the world they encased Mim in stone. Mim is able to escape at the end of the book but was quickly stopped by the other dragons.

Bartleby

Bartleby is a baby rat creature that Smiley Bone finds. The creature seems unable to talk when they first meet him and Smiley raises him until they can find other rat creatures to take him. When the Bone's are attacked again in the story, Bartleby appears out of the mass of rat creatures and rescues them. Bartleby goes back with the Bones to Boneville.



Objects/Places

Boneville

Boneville is the home that the Bone cousins are from. Although this place is never seen in the story, it is constantly spoken of and is the place that the Bones desperately want to return.

Barrelhaven Tavern

Barrelhaven Tavern is the tavern that Lucius owns. Phoney and Smiley try to cheat Lucius out of the tavern but are unable. It is at the tavern that Phoney is able to convince the villagers that he is a dragon slayer and will save them from the dragons.

Atheia

Atheia is the kingdom that Gran'ma Ben and Thorn came from. When they return to Atheia, they have to keep their return a secret because those who have the power in Atheia don't want to give up their control. It is here that the major battle begins.

Cow Race

Gran'ma Ben has won the cow race every year for several years. Smiley and Phoney decide to try and rig the race so that they can bet on Gran'ma Ben and win everyone else's goods. It is during the cow race that Smiley and Phoney are in a cow suit and stumble upon a pack of rat creatures.

Rat Creatures

The rat creatures are servants of the Lord of the Locust. They are not known for being intelligent. These rat creatures make up a large portion of the Lord of the Locusts's army.

Veni-yan-cari

Veni-yan-cari is the name for those that are most closely connected with the dreaming state. Translated it means the awakened one. Thorn finds out that she is an Veni-yan-cari, and for this reason the Lord of the Locusts needs Thorn.



Ghost Circles

Ghost circles are said to be poisonous nightmares that the Lord of the Locusts sends out. If one stumbles into one of the ghost circles then one disappears and dies. If one is in a place that suddenly becomes a ghost circle, then that person is trapped there and is the Lord of the Locusts's prisoner. Through Thorn and Fone's power they are able to go into a ghost circle. It is here that Thorn receives a message from her dead mother.

Balloon

Phoney had a large balloon made for his campaign as mayor. The balloon got loose and chased many of the citizens of Boneville. Briar somehow found the balloon and took it as a sign that Phoney is who she was looking for.

Crown of Horns

The Crown of Horns is what Thorn is told by her dead mother to go and look for. Phoney realizes that the Crown of Horns is kept in an ancient sacred dragon burial ground. Thorn and Fone are able to touch the Crown of Horns, destroying much of the power that the Lord of the Locusts is controlling.

Dragon Graveyard

The dragon graveyard is a sacred place where no one is supposed to go. Lord Tarsil defied the dragons and went to the graveyard. In return, he lost his arm and was badly scarred in the face. Phoney realizes that the dragon graveyard is most likely so heavily guarded by the dragons because it is where the Crown of Horns is located. It is here that the red dragon reappears to help Thorn and Fone after they have touched the Crown of Horns.



Themes

Good Against Evil

There is a clear theme of good against evil that is shown in the book. The most immediate place that this theme is shown is in respect to the people of the story and the Lord of the Locusts's servants, including Briar and the rat creatures. The Lord of the Locusts is never given a form but is described in intent and action and is clearly shown as the evil force driving much of what is happening in the story. The Lord of the Locusts was said to have needed a body and so picked the most powerful creature alive, the Queen of the Dragons, Mim. Although she was beloved by the other dragons, she was driven mad by the Lord of the Locusts, and the other dragons were forced to entomb her in rock. Mim is shown several times in the story through memories and once when the Lord of the Locusts is allowed to escape. The Lord of the Locusts uses Mim and her power as well as Briar and the rat creatures. When the Lord of the Locusts speaks, there are words coming from under the earth but nothing else to indicate what the creature would look like without Mim's physical form.

There is also good against evil seen with regard to many of the individual characters in the story. There are characters that have to fight with the right thing to do throughout the story. Good against evil is also shown on a smaller scale, with regard to Phoncible Bone and Fone Bone. Phoncible, also referred to as Phoney Bone, is a very greedy individual with no regard to the feelings or well-being of those around him. Fone Bone is the direct opposite of Phoney Bone and often seems willing to give everything within himself to help those in need. While Phoney Bone isn't completely evil, it is easily seen that he is clearly bad in many respects and is often against his good cousin, Fone Bone.

Good against evil as a theme also is shown in the battle between Briar and her sister Rose. Rose is described by Lucius as being sweet and kind. It is Briar who is fighting to help free the Lord of the Locusts and Rose who is working to help the people that will suffer if the Lord of the Locusts is freed. The sisters are much alike in many ways, but it is clear that Briar has willingly given herself over to evil while Rose has fought for what she believes is good.

The Struggle for Survival

The struggle for survival is seen in different ways throughout the story, although some of them are rather minuscule. At the beginning of the story, the Bone cousins are in the desert and are trying to stay alive and find some place to go where they will be safe. Even though he is clearly overreacting, it is clear that Phoney Bone is worried that he will die of dehydration while in the desert. After they are separated, Fone Bone has to live in the forest where he must learn to survive on his own. He will have help from some of the characters, such as the red dragon, and this help will be much needed when the rat creatures learn of the Bones' existence in their forest.



The struggle for survival is also seen in the rat creatures. Not only do they have to struggle against seemingly constant hunger, they must also worry about their safety from those that they fight with. The rat creatures are often willing to lie and abandon each other during the course of the story because they fear for their own lives. Once the war begins, the villagers will also be seen struggling for their survival. They will be forced to fight, although it will be clear that many of them don't have any experience. Watching those that are caught up in the war will be the most evident way that the struggle for survival is shown in the story.

The Importance of Family

The theme of family emerges almost immediately in the story. The three Bone cousins have all been run out of town and into the desert, but it is quickly shown that Smiley and Fone didn't have to leave their home. They went with Phoney Bone because they are all family. Fone Bone will explain to Thorn that it was Phoney Bone who stepped up and took care of his cousins when they were little. Fone Bone doesn't agree with much of anything that Phoney decides to do, and yet will continually go along with him. Smiley also will make decisions that Fone doesn't agree with, such as the decision to take in the baby rat creature, but Fone will be unable, or unwilling, to say no.

The theme of family is shown once again between Thorn and Gran'ma Ben, also known as Rose. Thorn is understandably upset when she learns that her grandmother has been lying to her all along about her family. This causes Thorn a brief period of time when she claims not to trust Gran'ma Ben. Despite her reservations, Thorn admits later that she has known all along that she could trust Gran'ma Ben. Gran'ma Ben had been lying to Thorn for an extended period of time but was doing so because she believed it was the best for Thorn. Much of what Gran'ma Ben had been refusing to talk about appeared to be hurting Gran'ma Ben, but she kept it hidden away.

The only family bond that isn't seen restored in some way is the bond between Briar and Rose. They were sisters but had chosen much different paths for themselves. Despite the fact that they were on opposite sides of the war, it is clear that the family connection affected them both on some level. Briar seemed happy when she was about to kill Rose, saying that Rose had always been mother's favorite. The family connection was important in many ways for both of these people.



Style

Point of View

The story is written in the third person point of view in comic book format. The point of view is omniscient and will switch between many of the different characters, including the Bone cousins, the rat creatures, Briar and many others. This allows the reader a knowledge of many of the plans that are going on and what role other characters are going to play. Despite the omniscient point of view, there will be many things that are mentioned that will not be explained at that point in the story. An example of this is when Lucius says that he bet on the wrong sister. It won't be until much later in the story that it is explained that Lucius chose Briar over Rose when they were all much younger.

The story is in comic book format and so there will be a large focus on the dialog that the characters have. There will be emotions and inner turmoil shown through the drawing that the author uses, but the reader will have to interpret their meaning. There are many plots in the book, but the book starts and stops with the Bone cousins looking to find a way back into Boneville. The Bone characters will travel through many different places, and although Boneville is a constant reference, it will never be shown.

Setting

The story takes place in a fictional land consisting of several different towns. In this fictional land there are deserts, forests, and magic that seems to affect everything. The bugs and other creatures in this land talk, with some having rather large roles in the story. The place that the Bone brothers are from is called Boneville, and it is the place that they are struggling to return to. At the end of the story, the Bone cousins have started their journey back to Boneville, but the reader will never see this place.

The vast land that the Bone cousins travel is simply referred to as the valley. The valley includes Gran'ma Ben's farm, Barrelhaven, Old Man's Cave, Tanen Gaurd, the Rat Creature Temple, Atheia, and many more. The setting in the story contains magical elements that make an explanation necessary for many things the characters happen upon. There are also dragons and constant references to dreaming. Dreaming will be explained as an element of their religion or beliefs rather than something that takes place while a person is asleep.

Language and Meaning

The language in the story is easily understood and is typically informal. There are some characters that speak different to show the differences in either their social stature or education. When Rose and Thorn go into Atheia, there are many of the characters there that talk much differently than those that were in Barrelhaven. It becomes evident that these characters in Atheia are well educated and highly respected people. There are



also many different cultures that must be looked at as the story develops. This will also be shown in changes in the language and what words mean. The Bone cousins have no education with regard to what the people in the valley believe. The differences between these two cultures seems to be vast. In addition to these differences, it is seen that the dragons have a culture that is unique to them. There is only one dragon that will be seen interacting with the characters in the story, but there will be a clear difference made between their cultures.

The Lord of the Locusts will speak differently than many of the characters seen in the story. The locusts are a representation of the Lord of the Locusts, but these creatures will not speak. It is unclear if they are intelligent creatures of their own or if they are simply tools of the Lord of the Locusts. When Briar is pulled back together and the locusts are seen reentering her body she calls them her pets, which seems to imply that they are not her master but a tool.

Structure

The story consists of 1,332 pages and is broken down into nine books. There are three sections in the book, named The Valley or Vernal Equinox, Phoney Strike Back or Solstice, and Friends & Enemies or Harvest. There are three books in each section. Each book is named and has between five and eight chapters in each book. The chapters vary in length and are also named. In addition, there is a section in the back of the book with a sculpture depicting Fone Bone's heroics. There is also a map of the valley. The map of the valley gives the reader a better understanding of where the characters in the story had to travel and how far they came.

The story is written in a comic book format and so there is a vast amount of dialog. All the writing in the book is in capital letters and oftentimes there is too little punctuation to understand where sentences begin and end. The speech balloons will often help to show the emotion that a character is feeling or to signify the difference between the two characters talking. When the Lord of the Locusts is speaking, the speech balloon will consistently be different than the others. There is also a difference in those that are whispering and those that are speaking that are shown in font, but the words will continue to be completely capitalized.

Quotes

"BELOVED? TH' MAYOR DECLARED A SCHOOL HOLIDAY JUST SO THE KIDS COULD COME AND THROW ROCKS AT YOU!" The Valley; Book One: Out from Boneville; Chap. 1: The Map; p. 16

"... YOUR COUSIN FONE BONE HAS AWAKENED THE GREAT RED DRAGON..... FOR THIS..... I WILL KILL HIM....." The Valley; Book One: Out from Boneville; Chap. 6: Phoney's Inferno; p. 140

"SOMEONE'S BEEN PLAYIN' AROUND IN OUR HEADS GIVIN' US NIGHTMARES, AN' YOUR GRANDMOTHER KNOWS SOMTHIN' ABOUT IT." The Valley; Book Three: Eyes of the Storm; Chap. 4: Double or Nothing; p. 335

"BUT IF THE LOCUSTS ARE BACK THEN WAR IS UNAVOIDABLE..... AND I HAVE FAILED." The Valley: Book Three: Eyes of the Storm; Chap. 6: Mending Fences; p. 388

"AN AWAKENED ONE CAN WALK FREELY BETWEEN THE WAKING WORLD AND THE DREAMING WORLD!" Phoney Strikes Back; Book Four: The Dragonslayer; Chap.3: Council in the Dark; p. 490

"SO, THEY THINK THE QUEEN OF THE DRAGONS WENT MAD ONE DAY, AND ALL THE OTHER DRAGONS WERE FORCED TO COME AND RESTRAIN HER... SHE RESISTED, AND OUR LANDSCAPE IS THE RESULT OF THEIR BATTLE— THEY CRASHED AND PUSHED AGAINST THE MOUNTAINS, AND CREATED THE VALLEY. IN THE END, WHEN THEY COULD NOT STOP HER, THEY HAD TO TURN HER TO STONE!" Phoney Strikes Back; Book Five: Rock Jaw: Master of the Eastern Border; Chap. 2: The Orphans; p. 646

"NOTHING WE'VE DONE SO FAR HAS BEEN UN-STUPID, AND WE'RE STILL ALIVE, AREN'T WE?!" Phoney Strikes Back; Book Five: Rock Jaw: Master of the Eastern Border; Chap. 4: Ghost Circles; p. 682

"YOU WERE KILLED THAT NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN PASS—THE NIGHT THORN'S PARENTS WERE MURDERED... ROSE SAW YOU—YOUR BODY WAS CUT IN TWO." Phoney Strikes Back; Book Six: Old Man's Cave: Chap. 4: Wolf Call; p. 798

"GHOST CIRCLES ARE PART OF THE LOCUST HIMSELF. POISONOUS NIGHTMARES SENT FORTH TO DEMORALIZE AND CONTROL US." Friends & Enemies; Book Seven: Ghost Circles: Chap.5: The Root Cellar; p. 944

"FOR I HAVE SEEN WITHIN HER HEART THE NAME OF THE OBJECT YOU FEAR MOST...THE CROWN OF HORNS..." Friends & Enemies; Book Eight: Treasure Hunters; Chap. Two: The Cold Spot; p. 1,023



"I DON'T KNOW WHAT DEPTH THE CIRCLE TOOK UP TO, BUT MY DEAD MOTHER SENT THIS MESSAGE... SEEK THE CROWN OF HORNS." Friends & Enemies; Book Eight: Treasure Hunters; Chap. 6: The Crown of Horns; p. 1,093

"THE EARTHQUAKE WE FELT WAS THE CRUST OF THE EARTH BREAKING OPEN — SPEWING GAS, DIRT AND LOCUSTS." Friends & Enemies; Book Nine: Crown of Horns; Chap. 3: Gaps; p. 1,190

"EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL I COULD HEAR THE LOCUST WHISPERING TO ME INSIDE MY HEAD... DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT'S LIKE? IT'S LIKE BEING THE SMARTEST PERSON IN ALL THE WORLD....." Friends & Enemies; Book Nine: Crown of Horns; Chap. 5: Chamber of Horns; p. 1250

"SO MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE THAT DAY WE MET AT THE HOT SPRINGS, AND YOU WALKED OUT OF THE WOODS WITH YOUR HAT ON FIRE...BUT NOT EVERYTHING CHANGES. REMEMBER ME WHEN YOU'RE BACK IN BONEVILLE." Friends & Enemies; Book Nine: Crown of Horns; Chap. 8: River Crossing; p. 1,329



Topics for Discussion

Compare the Bone cousins. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

Describe the relationship between Thorn and Fone Bone. How does it change over the course of the story?

Why does Fone Bone choose to follow Phoney even though Phoney's ideas often get them all into trouble? Why does Smiley go along with Phoney?

Does Phoney Bone care about anyone else? Explain your answer.

Why does Fone choose to go back to Boneville even though he would have a position in Atheia?

Describe Fone's personality. Why did Fone choose to feed the rat creatures on the solstice holiday? What does this show about Fone's character?

Which character from the book would you be and why?

What do the dragons represent to the different characters in the story?

Gran'ma Ben took Thorn away to protect her, but that decision also put Thorn into hiding when she could have been training. Was Gran'ma Ben's decision the right one? Should she have stayed in the city or have been teaching Thorn? Explain your answer.