

Bone: Out from Boneville Study Guide

Bone: Out from Boneville by Jeff Smith (cartoonist)

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Plot Summary

"Bone: Out From Boneville" by Jeff Smith is the first book in a series of nine that follows the comic adventures of three cousins after being driven from their hometown due to one of the character's infamous schemes to become rich. They are separated in the desert, and evil rat creatures plot to kill them and kidnap them. The Bones discover that it is only the help of new friends in the valley, and their love for another, that allow them to survive.

The Bones, those of Fone Bone, Phoney Bone, and Smiley Bone, are a trio of cousins originally from Boneville. They are human-like creatures, but are also blob like, in that they are all white with long noses and generally no clothing. These cousins find themselves run out of town due to a scam led by Phoney Bone, the richest Bone in Boneville, who is also crooked in his dealings. After wandering in the desert, the trio find themselves lost. When Smiley finds a map, they believe they are saved. However, a swarm of locusts soon separates the group, leaving each alone. Fone Bone finds a group of new friends including a bug named Ted and a family of possums in a nearby valley that help him to survive the winter. He also meets a young woman named Thorn who promises to help him find his home in the spring, and who takes him to live with her grandmother Ben, a tough old woman who races cows, literally. Fone is approached several times throughout the winter by a red dragon who seems to be following his every movement and protecting him, and is also chased by rat creatures, who, although stupid, seem to want to kill him.

Near spring, Fone and Phoney are reunited at Grandma Ben's house, and agree to travel to the Spring Fair. Phoney is angry at first, but when he hears there is betting on the cow races, he heads into town alone to begin to book money for the races. In town, he finds Smiley working at a local tavern and the two begin to make their plan for the race. The rat creatures, however, are beckoned by Kingdok, the head rat, who tells them to find Phoney, and to kill Fone and Smiley. Back on the farm, Thorn, Fone, and Grandma Ben are attacked by rat creatures. While Fone and Thorn run, Grandma stays behind to fight. Thorn and Fone are again saved by the dragon, who takes them back to Grandma Ben's, whom he appears to know. Grandma, Thorn, and Fone leave for town. Phoney, working at the bar to pay his tab, is approached by the cold, frightening hooded figure who called the meeting of the rats. He tells Phoney he owes his soul before disappearing. As Grandma enters town, the bar owner, Lucius, gives Grandma a flower, while the three Bones find themselves reunited. However, in the background, the hooded one waits in the shadows.

The animated story is vibrant with color, humor, and a sense of good verses evil that makes for a delightful adventure. The characters are easily loved, and when combined with a very expressively detailed art style, the book comes alive. A wonderful book for both adults and older children, "Bone: Out From Boneville" is the beginning of a journey that shows nothing but good can triumph in the presence of friends, and that the love of a family is stronger than anything.



Chapter 1, The Map

Chapter 1, The Map Summary

Bone: Out of Boneville by Jeff Smith is a young adult graphic novel is a tale of good versus evil. As the first book in a series of nine, the story follows three cousins as they are seek to find one another after being separated. Evil rat creatures plot to kill them, and a red dragon, along with a host of new friends, save them at every turn. The Bones discover that good consistently triumphs over evil, and that love and friendship overcome all obstacles.

Chapter 1 introduces the three Bone cousins, those of Fone Bone, Phoney Bone, and Smiley Bone. Phoney Bone, in a sweater with a star on the chest, has been run out of Boneville for his shady business dealings, and Fone Bone has helped him to escape to the desert, along with Smiley Bone. Phoney Bone laments about his lost money, while Fone Bone attempts to locate a way out of the desert, as the trio are lost. The area appears to be off their maps, but Smiley states he has found a map of the mountains ahead. Phoney demands access, but Smiley charges him a dollar. He pays, but after viewing it, states his belief that the map is fake. Suddenly the trip hears a buzzing sound, and find themselves attacked by locusts. Fone falls off a small cliff, but lands safely. However, he cannot find Smiley or Phoney anywhere. He finds the map, and does not see the set of huge eyes looking at him from within a cave. Fone climbs up a nearby cliff, complaining about how he is always getting Phoney out of trouble, and swearing he will not help him again. At the top, he follows a train of cigar butts he believes to belong to Smiley, but becomes tired, and goes to sleep. As he sleeps, two rat creatures approach and discuss that he is not the one with a star on his chest, but can be eaten for supper. The red dragon appears, and chases them off. He awakens Fone to ask for a light, and Fone, thinking it is Smiley, gives him one, noticing briefly that the creature is not Smiley. He awakens, and walks over the mountains, arriving in a lush valley. He runs to a nearby cigar butt only to be stopped by a small leaf bug named Ted and his large brother, who warn him winter is quickly approaching. Ted tells Fone he will take him to Thorn, the most intelligent person in the forest. Fone and Ted walk toward the tavern, but are stopped by the rat creatures. One rat creature insults the other by calling him fat, and he then refuses to help catch Fone for dinner. As they argue, Fone escapes, but loses Ted. He finds water, decides he needs to leave soon, as the forest is scary, but before he can leave, it snows, trapping him until spring.

Chapter 1, The Map Analysis

In Chapter 1, readers meet three of the main characters in the story, those of Fone, Phoney, and Smiley. The Bones are blob-looking characters with human behaviors and characteristics, making them particularly enticing for young adults. Fone, through his consistently logical actions, presents himself as the more levelheaded character. Smiley, with his larger frame, constant smile, easy-going nature, and seemingly carefree



attitude, appears to be the fun loving Bone. Phoney, clearly an angry, bitter, selfish character, presents himself as the Bone with few friends, and little care for others. It is his fault the others have left Boneville, and his fault they are now lost in the desert. Phoney seems less concerned about helping the trio escape than he is about mourning his money. When they find a map that may help their escape, Smiley, too, shows a self preservation side as he charges Phoney money for it. As the three are attacked by locusts, Fone again shows himself as the caretaker, as he worries about the others, and tries to warn them. The author uses the art within the book to foreshadow the meeting of Fone and the dragon as he draws the large eyes of the creature looking out of a cave.

The art style is used again to show the evil side of the rat creatures. Drawn with more detail and frightening faces, these creatures are depicted from the beginning as darker characters. In this first chapter, they appear to be focused on Phoney, however, and only plan to kill Fone for supper. The dragon appears, saving Fone, and foreshadowing the relationship between the dragon and the other characters later in the story. Additionally, Fone's lack of attention to the dragon foreshadows their more intimate meeting later in the novel.

The introduction of Ted and his big brother is a comical moment in the story, as Ted's character is highly helpful, with speech patterns similar to those of a smaller child. He speaks of Thorne as a knowledge base, foreshadowing the meeting of Fone and Thorne later in the novel. Fone's second meeting with the rat creatures provides much more information about them. In the first meeting, the rats were simply depicted as frightening characters. Here, however, the author uses a combination of art and dialog to show their bantering conversation as one of humor and somewhat like that of a married couple. One is offended, and the drawings depict him as pouting, as does his dialog. These creatures suddenly turn from frightening to rather dim-witted and humorous. At the end of the chapter, Fone escapes, but is left in the forest alone in the snow, foreshadowing the events in the next chapter.



Chapter 2, Thorne

Chapter 2, Thorne Summary

In Chapter 2, Fone Bone is surviving through the winter with the help of his new forest friends. Mz. Possum arrives with her children and brings Fone blankets and other warm items. Fone asks if the Possum's have seen Ted, the bug, and they reply they have not. Mz. Possum leaves her children with Fone so she can run errands, and the boys help Fone move wood to his home. Inside, Fone and the boys play, but they soon run out of the house. Fone runs to follow them, only to find them in the hands of the rat creatures. He grabs the possums, and tells them to run home while he distracts the monsters. He pretends to hurt his foot, and when they growl at him, asks what they had for lunch, implying their breath stinks. The monsters discuss their lunch with one another, only to find Fone has escaped when they turn their attentions back to him. The rat creatures chase him to a small branch over a waterfall, and without thinking, jump onto the branch, breaking it. They fall into the water, and Fone actually does harm his ankle. Just as the rat creatures approach, however, Fone realizes he has landed on the red dragon. The dragon scares away the rat creatures, but Fone begins asking accusingly why he did not detain them and blast them with fire. The dragon, looking mildly amused, blasts Fone with fire instead, telling him he should "never play an ace if a two will do." The dragon tells him to go down the hill to Mz. Possum's house, and leaves.

Fone finds Mz. Possum and Mz. Hedgehog with the little possums. He tells them of his adventure with the creatures and dragon, but they don't believe him. Mz. Possum tells him to go wash the soot from his face in the river. As he approaches, however, he sees a beautiful young woman removing her clothes to bathe. Embarrassed and flustered, he makes a noise, and the woman hears him, and invites him to share the pool. Fone, with hearts around his head, does so shyly. She asks if he is new, and he yells out his name, flustered. She tells him her name is Thorne. Fone realizes the woman is the person Ted tried to help him find in the beginning. Fone, excited, explains that Ted said she could help him find his cousins and his hometown, but is crushed when she explains she doesn't know of his cousins, nor of Boneville. She doesn't believe him when he speaks of dragons or locust swarms, but clearly fears the rat creatures, and, feeling bad that she has disappointed Fone in terms of her knowledge, invites him home so he can be warm while they create a plan to find his cousins. Fone tells her the rat creatures are actually fairly dim witted, and she responds he is very brave. Fone swoons, happily in love with Thorne. As they walk to her home, she promises they will find his cousins. Fone, in a haze of emotional bliss, responds questioning "what's Boneville." He is clearly smitten.

Chapter 2, Thorne Analysis

In Chapter 2, Fone again shows his resourcefulness, willingness to work, and his friendliness as he has found assistance to help him survive through the winter. Here,



readers meet other animals of the forest, such as Mz. Possum and her children. Again, the interplay between the human-like characters and the animals makes the book highly enjoyable for younger audiences, and the artistic style portrays these creatures as highly friendly, and very likable. The third meeting of Fone and the rat creatures finds Fone saving the small possums, again revealing him as a caring, logical character. These creatures show first their frightening side as they hiss and yell at Fone, but soon return to their silly, married-couple like banter. Their attempts to capture Fone on a tiny branch show their stupidity.

The return of the red dragon in this chapter as he saves Fone indicates he is somehow tied to Fone, as he always appears to be watching. The drawings of the dragon depict his character as easy going, gentle, but highly intelligent. As he breathes fire on Fone, he does so simply to prove a point, not out of anger or meanness. The possums, too, are drawn in a way as to depict their characters as friendly and sincere. However, it is clear they do not believe his dragon story, foreshadowing constant disbelief of Fone's dragon tales.

Fone's trip to the pool to wash is drawn with a sense of fanciful amusement. Fone's head relights with fire as he watches Thorne partially undress to bathe. Thorne is drawn as a young woman, very pretty, with bright eyes and a very friendly smile. She is gentle with Fone, showing her caring, sensitive nature. Throughout the rest of the novel, Fone is drawn with small hearts around him when speaking of or to Thorne, showing he is attracted to the human woman. Fone's yelling of his name at an inappropriate time shows clearly he is flustered, and unsure of how to talk to such a pretty woman. Fone is depicted as highly excited with larger font and a happy, excited look. When he finds Thorne doesn't know of Boneville, however, he is drawn with a sense of despair, as the author uses smaller font and a more crestfallen face. Thorne too doesn't believe in dragons, but she does believe in rat creatures, foreshadowing the events later in the books as she dreams of them repeatedly, and her grandmother speaks of them. When Thorne helps Fone from the pool and calls him brave, it is clear she knows he is being brave for her. It is also clear, through the drawing of hearts around Fone, that he is again struck with her beauty and friendliness.



Chapter 3, Phoney Bone

Chapter 3, Phoney Bone Summary

In Chapter 3, Thorne wakes Fone, explaining that she has baked him cakes for breakfast. Confused and sleepy, he wakes up fully only when he remembers he is in love with Thorne. She tells him they have to clean the house, since her grandmother, Grandma Ben, the owner of the house, is coming home from a cow race. Thorne explains she races cows, and has some of the best in the area. Fone offers to chop wood, since it's the "man" thing to do, but discovers he is too small for the job. The two work together instead on gathering water, and Thorne reminds Fone not to mention dragons to Grandma, since they don't exist. She walks away and the dragon, speaking from the well, pipes up, telling Fone he wants her to think he doesn't exist. Thorne opens Fone's backpack to find comic books, which she has never seen, financial magazines, and his favorite book, Moby Dick. She also finds the map, and declares it seems familiar from a dream she has had.

In another part of the forest, Phoney Bone is wandering, also looking for his cousins. He laments to the wilderness that he is hungry, and that a person as wealthy as himself shouldn't have to go through such suffering. He blames the situation on Fone, who he believes left him in the wilderness. He runs into the dragon, is rude to him, and is nearly set on fire before Ted, the bug, pulls him away;. Ted explains that he saw Fone prior to winter, but not since. Phoney demands to be taken to Ted's ruler, and Ted takes him to Thorne's grandmother, but warns Phoney that she will not appreciate his mean attitude. When they arrive, Phoney insults Grandma's cows, and Grandma prepares to beat him up.

Back inside, Thorne is baking an apple pie as Fone watches. The house starts to shake, and Thorne explains that the movement is just Grandma and her cows. They look out to see Grandma beating the cow in the race, but they notice Phoney is atop the cow. Phoney, out of control, flies off the cow into the house and Grandma stops the cow by the tail. Phoney finds himself in the fireplace, where he tells Fone Grandma tried to kill him. Grandma tells Thorne she can't keep Fone as a pet, and Thorne lets her know he isn't a pet, he's almost a person. Phoney accuses Fone of being brainwashed as he tries to run away, but Fone explains the story of his rescue by Thorne. Phoney admits he has not seem Smiley. When Fone introduces Thorne to Phoney, he accuses the two of having a relationship, which they both deny. Grandma tells Thorne she can keep them in the barn. Thorne explains to Fone that if they can keep Phoney and Grandma away from one another for a few days, Grandma will be attending the spring festival in Barrelhaven, and that they all can travel there to look for Smiley. Fone goes back inside to angrily confront Phoney only to find he has eaten the pie Thorne made for Grandma. When Thorne comes in, Phoney shoves the pie into Fone's mouth, and Thorne shakes her head in disbelief.



Chapter 3, Phoney Bone Analysis

In Chapter 3, readers again see Thorne as a loving, caring character as she cares for Fone, who again is drawn with hearts, showing his love for her. Thorne discusses Grandma Ben, foreshadowing her arrival later in the chapter. The scene between Thorne and Fone as he tries to show off his manliness by chopping woods is rather sweet, and shows again Fone's attraction toward Thorne, and her own touched amusement at his attempts. However, he comments against discussing the dragon do show her reluctance to believe his story. The fact that the dragon appears from within the well to make a smart alack comment to Fone shows again the dragon is following him, foreshadowing events later in the story. Additionally, Thorne's discussion of the map and her memories of it from dreams foreshadow events later in the plot.

Phoney's grumblings about his plight as he wanders through the forest again show his own selfishness and lack of concern for others. His treatment of the red dragon is rude, and if Ted had not intervened, may have been highly dangerous, as the dragon clearly is not impressed by Phoney. His treatment of Ted is also rude, but Ted takes him to Grandma Ben anyway, again showing him as a highly helpful character. Grandma Ben is seen first in this chapter as a kindly woman, but turns highly volatile when Phoney insults her racing cows. It is clear Grandma Ben is not a weak character, but is instead strong and very capable.

As Thorne bakes a pie, Fone is again drawn with hearts, showing his love for her. The mention of the pie being for Grandma foreshadows the eating of the pie by Phoney later in the novel. The looks drawn on the face of Thorne as she hears Grandma approach shows her love for her Grandmother is vast. However, the love soon turns to fear as she realizes Phoney is out of control on a cow. The mention that Grandma stops the cow by the tale again shows her strength. Although she clearly doesn't like Phoney, and thinks of the creatures as pets instead of people, she is depicted as a caring character when she tells Thorne she can "keep them." Throughout the ordeal, Phoney's yelling and screaming show again his lack of care for others, his selfishness, and his meanness. However, through it all, Fone again shows himself to be logical and caring as he talks Phoney into reasoning. While he and Thorne are outside, however, Phoney again shows his lack of care as he eats the pie intended for Grandma.



Chapter 4, Kingdok

Chapter 4, Kingdok Summary

Chapter 4 opens with Fone yelling at Phoney for dropping the fresh milk again. Phoney laments he is being forced to work too hard, and that his money is getting wrinkled. Fone reminds him it will not be for much longer, and leaves to help Thorne churn butter. He meets Grandma on the way, who asks about a missing pair of bloomers, and the milk, which Fone lies and says Phoney is retrieving. Grandma suddenly gets a terrible feeling that something is wrong, and tells Fone to keep an eye on Phoney. When he asks Phoney about the bloomers, he admits to using them to cover up a hole he made. The two argue, and Fone points out they were run out of Boneville because of Phoney's misguided and deceitful schemes, such as placing an orphanage on a hazardous waste site, and combining a slaughterhouse with a petting zoo. Fone asks Phoney to behave for one day, so they can attend the spring festival with Grandma. When Phoney finds out money is bet on the cow races, he suddenly becomes cooperative. Fone is suspicious, but Phoney convinces him. Shortly thereafter, Phoney takes Fone's belongings, and leaves, heading toward town to get in on the gambling.

Meanwhile, Fone and Thorne head to the pool to bathe., where Thorne is clearly uncomfortable, due to his feelings.

Phoney travels through the forest wondering why there are no roads, and comes across the possum children, who show him the right way into town. He comes across the rat creatures who are sleeping. He hides, but hears someone approach. A larger rat creature, Kingdok, tells the two that they are to meet with "the hooded one" because the "one with the star" has been seen in their territory. Back at the farm, Grandma, Thorne, and Fone realize Phoney is gone, and Grandma, still with a bad feeling, tells Fone to come sleep inside.

The rat creatures approach the hooded one, who tells them the creature with a star has been seen. They inform him they have only seen Fone, but that he is under the protection of the red dragon. The hooded one tells Kingdok to prepare two war parties, one of which will draw away the red dragon as they hunt through the hills for Phoney Bone. The other is to kill Fone. Thorne awakens from a terrifying dream that the rat creatures are approaching only to discover the farm is really under attack. Fone and Thorne rush downstairs to meet Grandma.

Chapter 4, Kingdok Analysis

In the opening of Chapter 4, readers are again shown the selfish, conceited ways of Phoney Bone as he refuses to help around the house, even though Grandma is feeding and housing the cousins. The conversation between these two characters informs readers about the types of schemes Phoney is famous for, showing yet again he does



not think of the end result of a plan, but only of his own gain. Fone calms Phoney, reminding him they need Grandma Ben to help them. Phoney is only willing to be silent when he finds out he can make money from the race, and even then, he leaves Fone and steals his belongings in order to make it to town to complete his scheme. Grandma Ben's "glitchy" feeling foreshadows the attack by the rat creatures later in this chapter. At the pool, Fone is again clearly flustered and embarrassed as he bathes with Thorne. As Phoney wanders through the forest, he again shows his lack of care for others, as he comes upon the rat creatures, hears their conversation, and does not return to warn Fone. The conversation between the rat creatures and Kingdok shows not only their humorous dim witted behaviors, but also foreshadows the meeting of the hooded one later in the novel. He is presented in this brief introduction as one to certainly be frightened of.

The art of the meeting of the rat creatures clearly shows them as evil beings. Drawn in darkness with glowing red eyes surrounded by fire, these beings are mean, and seek to harm Phoney. However, it is clear they plan to use Fone to distract the dragon, foreshadowing their attack on Fone later in the novel. The hooded one, the leader of the creatures, symbolizes evil as he orders the capture of Phoney and the death of Fone. The images of Thorne dreaming of the rats as a child suggests she has seen and fought these creatures previously. The ending of the chapter, with the arrival of the rats at the farmhouse, foreshadows the fight between good and evil in the following chapter.



Chapter 5, Barrelhaven

Chapter 5, Barrelhaven Summary

In Chapter 5, Grandma Ben holds off the rat creatures and tells Fone and Thorne to run. Fone is reluctant to leave her, but she tells him she fought the rats in the great war. The two flee and run away, falling several times and nearly being captured. Finally, Thorne stops, saying they have to go back and help Grandma, as she likely didn't know there were thousands of rat creatures. They soon find themselves surrounded.

Meanwhile, Phoney finds himself at the Barrel Haven, a tavern in town. He orders a beer only to find Smiley as his bartender. Phoney offers to buy him a drink, and the two toast one another. Phoney tells him he has a plan to capitalize on the cow race, and the two drink more beer. Smiley loudly asks if he gets to wear a cow suit, but Phoney tells him he doesn't want anyone to know they are together. The owner of the bar, however, sees Phoney, and begins yelling that he hopes he is able to pay for his beer, unlike his cousin. When Phoney attempts to pay him, however, he is shocked to learn Barrelhaven is a bartering area, and that Lucius, the owner, wants two eggs, not money. Phoney is therefore required to wash dishes to pay off his tab. He yells at Smiley who should have warned him, but Smiley pretends not to know him.

Back in the forest, the rat creatures demand that Thorne hand over Fone, but she refuses. Fone smells brimstone, and begins harassing the rat creatures, although Thorne tells him to stop. The rat creatures attempt to attack him, but the red dragon appears with Ted. The dragon tells the creatures they have broken their agreement, and when they threaten him, he tells them to go tell Kingdok the dragon is watching. When they retreat, Thorne tells the dragon the rat creatures attacked the farm, and the dragon takes them on his back, flying them to the farm house. They find the house destroyed.

Chapter 5, Barrelhaven Analysis

Grandma Ben shows herself to be highly capable and highly dangerous in this chapter as she holds off the rats and lets her granddaughter and Fone escape. Her statement that she fought the rats in the war again shows Grandma as a central character to the fight between the hooded figure and the dragon, symbolic of good and evil. The drawings of the chase between the rats and Thorne show her several times to pick up Fone as he falters, again revealing her character as a caring, loving individual determined to help her friend.

The scene in Barrelhaven is another that shows the characters of Smiley and Phoney in more detail. Phoney and Smiley reunited, but Smiley, as in the first chapter, fools Phoney into doing something that eventually leads to trouble. In this case, he allows Phoney to buy him alcohol, but does not let him know money is no good at Barrelhaven. However, unlike Phoney, Smiley's pranks appear to be more mischievous than



intentionally cruel or sly. This exchange also foreshadows Phoney's plan to make money off the race at the expense of Grandma Ben, using Smiley.

The dragon again comes to the rescue of Fone, frightening away the rats. During the conversation, readers learn the dragon and the hooded one know one another, and have some sort of deal that prevents warriors of the hooded one from entering the dragons territory. While it is unclear as to the nature of the deal, it is clear the dragon is not happy that the hooded one has betrayed the agreement. Ted is with the dragon, again displaying his character as highly helpful and influential. At the end of the chapter, readers are left with a visual impression of a destroyed farmhouse, foreshadowing events in the next chapter as Thorne and Fone find out what happened to Grandma Ben.



Chapter 6, Phoney's Inferno

Chapter 6, Phoney's Inferno Summary

Chapter 6 opens with Thorne running toward the house, fearing for Grandma. The dragon tells them to be careful, and that they won't help Grandma by being hurt. Thorne, Fone, Ted, and the dragon approach, only to find Grandma Ben alive and well, although she has clearly been fighting. Grandma tells them the rat creatures were weak, and that she has fought them before. Additionally, she tells them they became less willing to fight once Fone left. Thorne tells her they were almost captured, but were saved by the dragon. After a pause, Grandma says hello to the dragon, who responds by calling her by her first name, Rose. The two speak as though they know one another, and lament that it has been a long time. The dragon says it appears all is under control, and Grandma clearly wants him to leave, which he does, with Ted. Thorne questions Grandma's motives, since the dragon saved their lives, but Grandma wants only to talk to Fone. She tells Thorne to take care of the fire on the roof. When she objects, Fone reminds her they still have to find his cousins and make sure they are safe. Once alone, Fone asks how Grandma knows the dragon, but she asks why the rat creatures are after Fone. She asks if Phoney may have made them angry, but Fone points out the rat creatures don't exist in Boneville. Grandma asks why they were thrown from Boneville, and Fone explains. Phoney was running for mayor. He threw a picnic at the river, and promised free food to anyone who attended. Everyone in town attended, and Phoney had a fifty foot balloon made of himself. He tied the balloon to a giant statue of the founder of the town, an ancestor of Phoney. As Phoney stood by the statue and announced his candidacy, a gust of wind blows through the park and the statue raises up, floating toward the crowd. The statue struck a teacher, and sent her into the river. Immediately after, the guests became ill after eating bad prunes.

Back in Barrelhaven, the two Bones are working off their beer tab. Smiley is telling customers Grandma Ben is too old to win the race, as according to their plan. Phoney tells Smiley he will then wear a cow suit, and Phoney will parade him through town as the next winner. Phoney will put all his money on the race on Grandma, and everyone else will bet on Smiley. When Smiley throws the race, Phoney will collect, although it will be goods instead of money. Smiley returns to the front, and Phoney hears someone calling his name. The hooded one stands outside a nearby window, and explains that he will kill Fone for calling the red dragon. He comes closer, and tells Phoney he will soon take his soul. At that moment, however, Smiley comes back with a tray of dishes, scaring the hooded one away.

Back on the road, Fone tells Grandma Ben about Moby Dick, his favorite book. Fone is happy Grandma likes his book, but Thorne points out she is really sleeping. The trio come to a block in the road. Jonathan Oaks stands by the large tree in the road, which he says Lucius had them put into place after the rats came the night before. They pass the tree, where they fail to see the hooded one in the shadows. Fone thanks Thorne for her support the previous night, and she responds they are friends. Fone falls off his



horse, dazzled by love. When they arrive, Lucius greets Grandma Ben warmly, giving her a flower. He explains that he has helpers inside that look like Fone. Fone, knowing these are his cousins, runs toward the entrance, where he meets Smiley. Smiley hugs him tightly, clearly happy to see him. Lucius is upset that the moment between the two is taking away his workers, but he is persuaded to calm down by Grandma Ben. The three have a happy reunion outside, and don't notice the hooded figure watching.

Chapter 6, Phoney's Inferno Analysis

Chapter 6 begins by showing Grandma Ben is as tough as she claims. After battling several thousand rat creatures, she is not only alive, but fine other than a few bruises. Thorne, amazed at the existence of the dragon, expects her grandmother to display some emotion of happiness or gratitude toward the dragon. However, both the dialog and the drawing of these two characters upon their meeting show clearly that they know one another, and that there is a huge level of tension between them. The dragon calls Grandma by her first name, Rose, surprising everyone, but showing a close relationship at some point in their lives. Grandma's conversation with Fone also shows she is, or at one time was, highly involved in the battle against the rat creatures. At this point, readers finally learn why Phoney was run out of Boneville. After a series of schemes, he made the entire town ill and nearly caused a woman's death. It is no surprise, then, that the town drove him from their midst.

In the tavern, Phoney and Smiley reveal their plans to gain goods from the town by setting up the race. Phoney admits in this chapter his goal isn't money, but simply the prize of knowing he won. However, when he is alone, the hooded one comes for him. At first, Phoney appears to not realize the danger he is in, but as the hooded figure approaches and tells him he wants his soul, the images of Phoney reveal he is frightened.

Throughout the end of the chapter, as Grandma, Thorne, and Fone go around the roadblock Lucius has created, the hooded figure appears, watching them from the trees. This foreshadows events in later books as the hooded one and the dragon continue to fight over these characters. Fone's expression of gratitude in this chapter is touching, and Thorne's caring nature again causes Fone to swoon over her. Grandma Ben, too, appears to have a suitor as Lucius expresses concern over her well being, and presents her with a flower. The chapter ends with a happy reunion between the three cousins, but this reunion is somewhat shadowed for the reader by the image of the hooded one, watching the three, promising an end to the situation. This final image foreshadows later novels.



Characters

Fone Bone

Fone Bone is the main character through much of the story, as the novel follows him through his adventures to reunite with his cousins and return to his home of Boneville. Fone Bone is a human-like character that is logical, caring, sweet, and overall very friendly. He is constantly looking out for his cousins, and later in the chapter, for the animals of the forest, Thorne, and Grandma Ben. After being run out of his hometown, Fone helps his cousin Phoney to escape, only to find himself lost and alone in the forest. His friendliness, however, makes it possible for him to survive, and even to meet a young woman whom he likes very much. He is often depicted as a flustered, embarrassed individual whose feelings for Thorne make him do and say things he normally would not. His innocent nature is protected by the dragon, although at this point in the story it is unclear why. His character appears to symbolize innocence within the war between good, the dragon, and evil, the hooded one. In the end, it is his logic, friendliness, and overall cheerful nature that allows him to find his cousins.

Phoney Bone

Phoney Bone is the schemer of the cousins, and is the unliked character in the story. While he is never cruel, he is intentionally harmful to further his own gain. His character appears several times in the story to be selfish, self centered, and only concerned about his own well being and his own monetary, social, or material gain. He risks his own existence on several occasions because his own greed or selfishness makes him unable to sense danger. His treatment of Fone, who tries continually to help him, shows equally his unsavory character traits. He relies throughout the whole novel on Fone to save him, only to treat him badly when he does. He treats Grandma Ben, who houses him, with disrespect, and treats the dragon, the symbolism of good, with attitude and cruelty. At every turn, Phoney's schemes are getting him into trouble, and yet he continues to do the same actions. Readers are left with the impression that it was one of these schemes that caused the hooded one to begin his quest to kill him in the first place, and one imagines the hooded one will not stop until he has what he desires, which will likely mean an end to Phoney Bone.

Thorne

The character of Thorne is one of the more endearing of the novel. Thorne is a beautiful young human woman who meets Fone at a pool. It is clear from the beginning that Fone is highly attracted to Thorne in a way that makes him goofy and silly, without intending to be. Thorne is presented originally by Ted as being highly knowledgeable, and does not disappoint in that area. When she has to tell Fone she does not have an immediate way to help him, however, it is clear she feels badly. In response to his needs, Thorne is



kind enough to take Fone home, showing her own nature as a caring, loving character. Throughout the story, she attempts to help everywhere she can, showing a great love for Fone, Grandma, Ted, and even showing a concern for Phoney and Smiley. She is clearly a good friend to Fone, and is highly influential in his life, and in the lives of his cousins. Although her role in the fight for good over evil is unclear by the end of this book, the symbolism of her dreams, her recollection of the map, and her knowledge of the rat creatures suggests she has a strong role in the overall war.

Grandma

Grandma Ben, or Rose, is a strong character throughout the novel, and appears to be a highly influential character in the overall plot of this series. Introduced from the beginning as a woman who is completely able to stand on her own, Grandma also has a kind streak in her, particularly in terms of her granddaughter, Thorne. As a cow racer, Grandma is known as the fastest in the area, and is extremely proud of her cows. When Phoney puts them down, she proves to be highly protective. Throughout the novel, Grandma's character is somewhat mysterious, in that she has, in the past, played an important role in the war between the dragon and the hooded one, as is shown by the tense yet personal relations between Grandma and the red dragon. Further, her knowledge of how to defeat the rat creatures and her comments about fighting them in the big war suggest Grandma was once a soldier. Her relationship with Lucius is also clearly more than it appears, as he is concerned for her well being and brings her flowers. One is left with the overall impression that there is much to Grandma Ben then there first appears.

Smiley Bone

Smiley Bone is the third cousin, and is a much different character than either Fone or Phoney. Whereas Fone is honest and innocent and Phoney is dishonest and corrupt, Smiley is simply mischievous. He is not innocent, in that he often plays tricks on Phoney that result in trouble for him. However, his tricks are not meant to be hurtful, but are often done simply at someone's expense. Smiley shows extreme love for Fone, and care for Phoney, but is also willing to help Phoney in his deceitful ways, showing he is certainly not completely innocent. At the end of the novel, however, he is still a happy, go lucky addition to the story.

Kingdok

Kingdok appears to be the ruler of the rat creatures. First called "Sire" by the two minor rats, Kingdok is not seen much in this first book of the series. However, his character is highly influential, as he is sent to collect the two rat creatures who have been chasing Fone. He is higher up the chain of command on the dark forces, as is shown by his position at the meeting of the rats. Also, the hooded one calls on him to lead the war



parties, suggesting he is trusted by the hooded one. While his role in this book is minor, it is clear he is influential in later books.

Rat Creatures

The rat creatures are the minions of the hooded one, and the warriors of Kingdok. In particular, the book focuses on two of these creatures, who remain nameless. They are not very bright, as they show throughout the novel. They allow prey to escape simply because they often argue, and their banter is generally highly amusing. Although they often attempt to frighten creatures such as Fone and Thorne, they simply do not have the mental ability to remain scary, since their bark is so much worse than their bite. However, there can be no question that these rat creatures are seeking for Phoney, and have orders to kill Fone on sight.

Red Dragon

The red dragon is another character who is highly influential in the book, but rarely seen. The red dragon first appears as Fone is being targeted by the two rat creatures. It is clear from that point forward that he is following Fone, although the reason for his behavior is unknown. He is careful to avoid detection, where possible, but clearly knows some of the forest animals, such as Ted. His role in the fight against the hooded one is also unclear, but due to his close yet tense relationship with Grandma Ben and his mention of an agreement between himself and the hooded one, it is clear these two forces have been battling one another for quite some time.

Ted

Ted is a small bug with large ambitions. Ted is first seen assisting Fone, although he nearly gets Fone killed by his older brother when he thinks Fone is making fun of him. Ted helps Fone find shelter in the winter, promises to help him find Thorne, helps Phoney locate Grandma, helps the dragon save Fone and Thorne, and helps Thorne save Grandma. For such a small creature, Ted shows himself to have a huge heart and to be very brave.

Lucius

Lucius is a small character in this book, but his role suggests he is more influential in later books. As the owner of Barrelhaven, he shows himself to be a hard worker, and a hard boss for Smiley and Phoney. He takes good care of his customers, though, and watches out for them, as is shown by his suggestion of a road block the night the forest is attacked. His relationship with Grandma Ben, although unclear, suggests a closer tie between these characters than this book shows directly.



Objects/Places

Boneville

Boneville is the town from which the Bone family originates.

Barrelhaven

Barrelhaven is the name of the town where Grandma Ben attends the spring festival, and where Phoney and Smiley work to pay off their bar tab.

Deren Gard

Deren Gard is the place from which the Red Dragon originates.

The Forest

The forest is where Fone finds himself stuck, and where he meets Thorne and Grandma Ben.

The Rat Creatures

The rat creatures are a group of evil rat type characters that are currently seeking Phoney to bring him to Kingdok and the hooded one.

The People of Boneville

The people of Boneville are the ones who ran Phoney out of town after his announcement for his candidacy for mayor went awry.

The Animals of the Forest

The animals of the forest are Ms. Possum, her children, Mz. Hedgehog, Ted, his brother, and the other creatures who help Fone to live through the winter.

Cow Racing

Cow racing is the event Grandma Ben participates in each year.



The Great War

Grandma Ben fought the rat creatures and met the red dragon while fighting in the Great War.

The Pool

The pool is where the forest creatures go to bathe and get water, and also where Fone falls in love with Thorne.



Themes

Good vs. Evil

The battle of good versus evil is a common theme in any form of children or adult literature. In this book, the fight between good and evil is symbolized by the battle between the red dragon and his forces, and the hooded one, and his minions. Those on the side of the red dragon are often those with traits most others would find appealing. Fone is extremely friendly and innocent, and appears to be the target of the dragon. Thorne, a friend to all, is also on the side of good, as are the other forest animals such as Ted, Mz. Possum, Mz. Hedgehog, and the others. Grandma Ben has clearly fought against the evil forces of the hooded one previously in the "big war" as she calls it, and fought along side the dragon, although their relationship now seems strained. Lucius appears to be on the side of good, in that he clearly has a relationship with Grandma, and helps to save Smiley and Phoney. On the side of evil, however, are the hooded one, Kingdok, and the rat creatures. The hooded one is obviously evil, as he hunts for the soul of Phoney, and orders the death of Fone. Kingdok, the leader of the rat creatures, appears to be the right hand man of the hooded one, and as such, helps to lead the raid on the forest. The rat creatures, although stupid, attempt on several occasions to kill or harm Fone or other animals. This theme is present throughout almost every aspect of the novel, and each character can be categorized as either good, or evil.

Friendship

The power of friendship is a strong theme throughout the novel. Each character in the story has a strong friendship connection to other creatures in the novel, and those connections are often the reason for their survival. Ted, the leaf bug, becomes a friend to Fone. As a result, he offers to take him to Thorne, who helps him find his family, helps save him from the rat creatures, and helps take him back to Grandma after the attack. Thorne, a friend to Fone, helps him to find shelter, escape from the rats, and find his family. Grandma, also a friend to Fone, helps him to escape the rats and to make it to Barrelhaven. Lucius, a friend to Grandma Ben, helps by blocking the road to rat creatures. The red dragon is a friend to Fone, and saves him on several occasions from the rat creatures. Fone is a friend to Mz. Possum, and therefore helps to watch her children. Mz. Possum, in return, helps to keep Fone warm through the winter. Through their friendships, the characters in the novel are able to survive, and even thrive, showing that friendship is a powerful force against nature, evil, and any other entity.

Family

The strength of family ties is another theme throughout the novel. Fone Bone loves his cousins. Even though Phoney Bone is inconsiderate, selfish, and self-centered, Fone



Bone consistently tries to help him. He leaves Boneville, hikes into the desert, becomes lost, and searches through the winter to find him. He even helps him to stay with Grandma, even though he has been troublesome. Phoney, too, loves his cousins. He complains about Fone and Smiley consistently, and is highly selfish and self centered. He even steals his belongings. However, when the hooded one is threatening to kill him, Phoney immediately tells him to leave Fone alone. Smiley, too loves his cousins. Although he gets Phoney into trouble often, Smiley is happy to see Phoney. Additionally, when Smiley sees Fone, he is overjoyed he is not harmed. These three cousins, although they argue, clearly love and care for one another. Thorne and Grandma, too, have a family relationship that is loving. Thorne cleans the house and bakes grandma a pie before she comes home. Additionally, she returns to the farm even though it is under attack, in an effort to save her grandmother. Grandma Ben, on the other hand, risks her life to fight off the rat creatures while Thorne escapes. Ted, too is highly protected by his older brother. All of these characters are helped and loved by their family members, even if they sometimes argue and fight, showing that in the end, the strength of family love wins over nearly anything.

Style

Point of View

The author uses a third person point of view throughout the novel. This view is useful, in that it allows the focus to change between the characters within the novel as the author needs to explain the plot. This point of view creates a reliable voice, in that the author is able to report actions of the characters as well as emotions. The point of view also makes it possible to report the situation in a non-biased manner. The dramatic battle between good and evil could not be shown as thoroughly if it were not for this point of view.

The story is told entirely through dialog and artistic rendering, as the book is a graphic novel. This method allows the reader to see the action as well as for the author to imply action without the need for dialog. This also allows the author to focus the storyline on specific characters at specific times, and to change back and forth often, without losing cohesiveness. There are entire pages that are drawings only, without dialog, showing chase scenes and other non-dialog moments. Without being in third person, these artistic renderings would have been impossible. Further, without the drawings, the story would be impossible, since many scenes cannot be told through dialog alone. It is only through the combination of third person dialog and art that the plot is able to unfold.

Setting

The novel is set in a variety of locations. It begins in the desert outside of Boneville, where the three Bone cousins find themselves lost after being thrown out of town. The area is hot, dry, and without water. The land is also home to locusts. Right off the desert, however, lies a fertile forest, with a variety of inhabitants. The area is lush with vegetation, and when Fone finds himself trapped for the winter, the forest proves to be home to a number of individuals that help him overcome. Mz. Possum and her young children and Mz. Hedgehog both assist Fone in staying warm, and Ted, a leaf bug, helps him find Thorne. The forest also has a river and a pool the residents use for bathing, which is where Fone meets Thorne.

Near the forest is the farm, where Thorne and Grandma Ben live. The farm is home to racing cows, as well as horses and milking cows. Nearby, the town of Barrelhaven is where the locals go for the tavern, as well as the yearly spring fair. In the mountains between the desert and the forest lies the gathering area for the rat creatures. All of these areas are important to the novel, in that the story follows Fone through his adventures, making changes in scenery vital.



Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is very easy going and childlike. Aimed at a young audience, the sentences are constructed in a way that is simple for young people to understand, in that there are no particular rules pertaining to grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Many of the characters are young adults themselves, making this language style particularly useful, in that it allows readers to relate to the characters. Additionally, this language adds a depth to characters that allows the reader to discover subtle differences in behaviors, simply through language alone.

The language also helps to indicate the good characters from the evil. The good characters speak as children or young adults, with shorter words and phrases, high energy, and exclamation points. Those characters who are bad tend to speak in more advanced language, with longer words, run on phrases, low emotion, and less energy. The rat creatures, Kingdok, and the hooded one all speak with little emotion, and at a higher level. This, along with the art, helps to indicate to readers whether the characters are to be trusted.

Structure

The book is a graphic novel, or comic book. It is comprised of six chapters of unequal length. Each chapter is numbered and named, where the name refers to the topic within the chapter. The chapters are short with only dialog, and many panels of art without any writing at all. Between some chapters, long amounts of time pass, but between others, no time passes.

The plot of the novel is simple, on the surface, but involves more complex themes as well. The novel is about Fone Bone and his cousins realizing friendship and family can overcome anything. Fone Bone is a kind, caring young creature who looks out for his cousins, but finds himself alone in an unknown forest. He meets new friends in his quest to find his relatives, and along the way, becomes part of a fight against evil. With the red dragon protecting him from the rat creatures, Fone finds his family.

The pace of the novel is slow, at times, but frantic at others, providing an overall easy read. With highly detailed art, entertaining dialog, and an engrossing plot, the novel is a success for young and older readers alike. The story is primarily linear, other than occasional back-story in terms of Phoney Bone.



Quotes

"So a couple of shady business deals went sour...is that any reason to run th' most beloved Bone in Boneville out on a rail?" - Chapter 1, pg. 2.

"And that's another thing! I'm tired of stew! I want to put him in a crust and bake a light fluffy quiche!" - Chapter 1, pg. 22.

"That's right kid. Never play an ace if a two will do." - Chapter 2, pg. 38.

"Hmmf! Did too see a dragon! What do they think? I lit my head on fire to keep warm? An' how come that dragon knew I was babysitting th' possum kids? What's he doin'? Followin' me around?" - Chapter 2, pg. 41.

"What a travesty! Th' most cherished and respected (not to mention wealthiest) Bone in Boneville - out in th' woods - fending off th' elements with his bare hands! Forced to eke out a miserable existence amidst th' rocks n' mud! Oh cruel, cruel fate! Why have you abandoned your most beloved son?! God I pity me." - Chapter 3, pg. 61.

"Choppin' firewood is a manly thing! An' since I'm the man, I'll do the manly thing." - Chapter 6, pg. 55.

"Oh no....it's not the bread, Bone! It's th' glitchy feelin'! It just come at me outta th' blue! Th' glitchy! It's a terrible feelin' that makes your head swim an' your legs wobble! It's a powerful omen of bad things to come!" - Chapter 4, pg. 76.

"Kingdok, prepare two war parties...take a thousand warriors in each...with the first, scour the countryside...search the road and the lands beyond the waterfall...find the one who bears the star...if the dragon is still watching, this activity will draw him off, leaving the old cow woman unguarded. Send the second party to the farmhouse...destroy it...kill the new creature. Let us hope that the death of this Fone Bone will cause the dragon to leave the valley and return to Deren Gard. Go now...we attack tonight!" - Chapter 4, pg. 91.

"Remember the first time you got us run out of town? You opened up a chain of franchises...Bone Environmental: Nuclear Reactor and Endless Salad Bars." - Chapter 5, pg. 106.

"Funny you should mention that...how many warriors do you have between here and the waterfall? A thousand? Two thousand? I believe this violates our agreement. You run and tell Kingdok that I'm watchin' him." - Chapter 5, pg. 113.

"Your cousin Fone Bone has awakened the great red dragon...for this, I will kill him...what do you care for friends? All that matters to you is personal gain. I have wasted enough time on you as it is...I have even jeopardized my own plans, but we have unfinished business, you and I." - Chapter 6, pg.. 129.

"Aw heck, I can take care of myself! I'm big! But you're small, an' you didn't have anybody to look after you." Chapter 6, pg. 136.



Topics for Discussion

Throughout the novel, Phoney Bone presents himself as uncaring, selfish, and self centered. Based on events in the text, do you believe he cares about anyone else? Why or why not? Be sure to use examples from the text.

Fone Bone is clearly attracted to Thorne. Give three examples of his behaviors throughout the novel that demonstrate this attraction.

Grandma Ben has had encounters with the rat creatures before, as well as with the red dragon. Do you think the red dragon and Grandma were friends, or enemies? Why do you think this? Be sure to use information from the book.

The red dragon appears to be following Fone Bone. Give three examples from the book that support this idea.

One of the primary underlying themes of the novel is good versus evil. Give three examples of the use of this theme in the novel, and be sure to explain your answers.

Why do you think Fone Bone continues to rescue his cousin? What do you think such actions show about the strength of the family bond? Be specific, and use examples from the novel.

Throughout the novel, friendship is a major theme. Examine three situations in which friends save friends. Why do you believe they did so? Please explain your answers.