

The Complete Series

[Bone: Out from Boneville \(1\)](#)

[Bone: The Great Cow Race \(2\)](#)

[Bone: The Eyes of the Storm\(3\)](#)

Bone: The Dragonslayer (4)

Bone: Rock Jaw Master of Eastern Border (5)

Bone: Old Man's Cave (6)

Bone: Ghost Circles (7)

Bone: Treasure Hunters (8)

Bone: Crown of Horns (9)

Related Titles

[Stupid, Stupid Rat Tails : The Adventures of Big Johnson Bone, Frontier Hero Rose](#)

reviews by [george](#) and [robin](#)

Introduction

There is a scene in **Bone: Crown of Horns** that perfectly sums up what makes the **Bone** series so special. Thorn Harvestar, our heroine, needs to touch the Crown of Horns, but she can't quite reach; her leg is wedged in the mouth of one very dead Kingdok, the leader of the Rat Creatures. The situation is grave: if Thorn does not touch the Crown, the Lord of the Locusts will destroy the world. So Fone Bone, our hero, grabs Thorn's hand, shuffles his feet on the floor, and touches the Crown. Static electricity does the rest.

It's a wonderful scene-- funny, ingenious, suspenseful-- in what is the best graphic novel series of the past fifteen years. Fone Bone and his cousins get lost, and find themselves stranded in a valley full of strange creatures-- dragons, talking bugs, rat creatures, a giant mountain lion, and a princess and her grandmother, to name but a few. There they find themselves involved in a clash between good and evil, with all the usual accoutrements of the epic -- a heroic quest, during which the heroine undergoes a process of self-discovery and comes into her own-- but the magic of this series lies in its humbler details. Smiley Bone playing his banjo; Lucius giving Grandma Ben a flower; Fone Bone writing bad love poems for Thorn.

Such attention to detail is a tribute to Jeff Smith's storytelling skills-- others include fine artwork; crisp, compelling storylines; and funny, yet surprisingly complex, characters. Fone Bone, who resembles Snoopy, is also the romantic interest of the lovely Thorn. Grandma Ben is a mighty warrior who calls everyone "dear" and enters cow races in her spare time. Phoney Bone is a self-centered liar, but he's also brave and intensely loyal to his cousins. Suitable for all age groups, the Bone series is a must-buy for all libraries.

[back to top](#)

Bone: Out from Boneville (1)

ISBN: 0963660942

By Jeff Smith

Cartoon Books 1996

The Bone cousins-- Fone Bone, Phoney Bone, and Smiley Bone-- get run out of Boneville when Phoney Bone's scheme to run for mayor backfires, as Phoney Bone's schemes always do. They get split up by a swarm of locusts and end up in a mysterious valley populated by talking animals -- possums, hedgehogs, rat

creatures, dragons, and a garrulous bug named Ted.

Fone Bone, who is the hero of our story, is being followed by a fire-breathing dragon and a pair of rat creatures. The rat creatures want to eat him, preferably baked in a quiche; what the red dragon wants may be worse. After several close calls, Fone Bone meets up with two humans, Grandma Ben and her granddaughter Thorn, and with their help he is reunited with his cousins in the town of Barrelhaven. However, all is not well-- the rat creatures are massing for war, and a mysterious hooded figure wants Phoney Bone's soul...

The Bones look like a cross between Snoopy and the Schmoo, and there are three of them: Fone Bone is honest and brave; Phoney Bone is a cross between Scrooge McDuck and the Grinch; and Smiley Bone is the village idiot personified. They are the stars in what is, in my opinion, the best graphic novel series of the past fifteen years. The [Sandman](#) series is highly praised, of course (and rightly so), but there are patches in [Sandman](#) where the storyline meanders and the art is quite uneven; the quality of the Bone graphic novels is remarkably consistent. Many reviewers also ignore the fact that [Sandman](#) is best enjoyed by an older audience, whereas Bone can be enjoyed by all ages.

[back to top](#)

Bone: The Great Cow Race (2)

ISBN: 0963660950

By Jeff Smith

Cartoon Books 1996

The Bone chronicles continue as Phoney Bone tries to fix a cow race, the great red dragon visits Thorn in her dreams, and the rat creatures have another go at baking Fone Bone in a quiche. The Bone cousins (Fone Bone, Smiley Bone and Phoney Bone) are reunited in the town of Barrelhaven, where Phoney Bone and Smiley Bone have been pressed into service at the local tavern to pay off their bar tabs.

Trouble starts when Phoney Bone decides to fix Barrelhaven's annual cow race. He opens a betting booth and starts spreading scurrilous rumors about the health of last year's winner, Grandma Ben (who is not a cow); the idea is to get everyone in Barrelhaven to bet on the Mystery Cow (none other than Smiley Bone in a handsome handmade cow suit), who will then let Grandma Ben win and thereby make Phoney Bone a fortune. Unfortunately, Phoney Bone does not succeed in fixing the race, which is literally a riot, but he succeeds very well in getting himself and his cousins run out of town (again).

Other things happen: Thorn, Grandma Ben's granddaughter, starts having dreams about a little girl in a cave full of dragons; hundreds of rat creatures gather in the woods just outside Barrelhaven; and Fone Bone, who has a crush on Thorn, writes lots and lots of bad love poetry. Highly recommended.

[back to top](#)

Bone: The Eyes of the Storm (3)

ISBN: 0963660969

By Jeff Smith

Cartoon Books 1997

COMING SOON!

[back to top](#)

Bone: The Dragonslayer (4)

ISBN: 188896300X

By Jeff Smith

Cartoon Books 1997

COMING SOON!

[back to top](#)

Bone: Rock Jaw Master of the Eastern Border (5)

ISBN: 1888963034

By Jeff Smith

Cartoon Books 1998

COMING SOON!

[back to top](#)

Bone: Old Man's Cave (6)

ISBN: 1888963050

By Jeff Smith

Cartoon Books 1999

COMING SOON!

[back to top](#)

Bone: Ghost Circles (7)

ISBN: 1888963093

By Jeff Smith

Cartoon Books 2002

COMING SOON!

[back to top](#)

Stupid, Stupid Rat Tails : The Adventures of Big Johnson Bone, Frontier Hero

ISBN: 1888963069

By Jeff Smith, Tom Sniegoski
Art by Stan Sakai
Cartoon Books 2000

This book chronicles the adventures of Big Johnson Bone-- Frontier Hero, founder of Boneville, and venerable ancestor of the Bone cousins (Smiley, Phoney and Fone). Big Johnson Bone hitches a ride on a twister with his mule (Blossom) and his monkey (Mr. Pip) and lands in the middle of a valley that should be very familiar to readers of the **Bone** series. The talking animals of the valley beg Big Johnson for aid against the invading rat creatures because their guardian, a small dragon named Stillman, is of no use (Stillman can't breathe fire and is reduced to throwing rocks). Big Johnson Bone agrees to help, of course, and pretty soon he's swinging rat creatures about by their tails. He runs into trouble in the form of the Rat Queen's son, a 50-foot rat creature named Tyson, who swallows him whole. But Big Bone Johnson does prevail, and we learn why the rat creatures chop off their tails. There's also a bonus story, drawn by Stan Sakai (author of the Usagi Yojimbo series), about an obnoxious talking pig named Riblet, whom the rat creatures kidnap and then can't wait to return. This is a fine addition to the **Bone** series, although the story got a bit too Looney Tunes for me-- adults can read and appreciate most of the **Bone** series, but this one is more for kids.

[back to top](#)

Rose

ISBN: 1888963107
By Jeff Smith
Art by Charles Vess
Cartoon Books 2002
Age Level: 7 and up

A kind of prequel to Jeff Smith's Bone series, this tale follows the exuberant and fierce warrior princess Rose. About to be tested by the greatest mages in her land, Rose is confident in her own power and right to rule, though she despairs for her sister, Briar, still to be touched by the magics of the land. With the arrival of an ancient, cruel dragon, both sisters are thrown toward a wicked fate and Rose will painfully learn the truth of battle, power, and mercy.

review by [robin](#)

[back to top](#)