

DEAR JEFF SMITH,

A FEW YEARS AGO, I MET YOU AT THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS EXPO (APE) COMIC BOOK CONVENTION IN SAN FRANCISCO. THERE WAS SO MUCH I WANTED TO SAY! SO MANY THINGS I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR.



WHILE YOU WERE SIGNING AND DRAWING A SKETCH IN MY COMPLETE VOLUME OF BONE, I BECAME SO OVERWHELMED WITH EXCITEMENT AND GRATITUDE, I COULD BARELY SPEAK!



THANK YOU.

HOPEFULLY, THIS LETTER WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR ME TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE FOR THE INSPIRATION YOUR COMICS HAVE GIVEN ME OVER THE YEARS.



IMAGINE AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN TEENAGE BOY IN HIGH SCHOOL MAKING HIS OWN FANTASY-ACTION-ADVENTURE COMICS AND DREAMING OF GETTING PUBLISHED BY A BIG COMPANY. YES, THAT WAS ME. THE PROBLEM WAS, THOUGH, EVERYWHERE I LOOKED, THERE WERE COMICS ABOUT SUPERHEROES IN SPANDEX. THIS WAS OVER TWENTY-THREE YEARS AGO, BEFORE COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS WERE AS DIVERSE AND WIDESPREAD AS THEY ARE NOW.



I DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE SUPERHEROES BUT I FOUND MYSELF TRYING TO DRAW THEM ANYWAY AND PUSHED MYSELF TO CREATE COMICS ABOUT SPIDER-MAN AND BATMAN. THOSE CHARACTERS WERE FUN TO DRAW BUT MAKING STORIES ABOUT THEM BORED ME TO TEARS. I CAME ALIVE WHEN I DREW COMIC PAGES ABOUT OTHER WORLDS, HUMOROUS CHARACTERS AND ADVENTURE!

YOU WERE NOT THE ONLY ONE MAKING INDEPENDENT COMICS AT THE TIME BUT THE FANTASY WORLD YOU CREATED AND THE ANIMATED CARTOON STYLE OF YOUR CHARACTERS BLEW MY MIND. I FOUND ONE ISSUE OF BONE IN THE COMIC SHOP AND I WAS AN INSTANT FAN!



YOU SHOWED ME THAT SOMEONE COULD SELF-PUBLISH A COMIC, IN A GENRE AND STYLE I LOVED, AND MAKE IT A SUCCESS.

I READ BONE THROUGH COLLEGE AND BEGAN TO BECOME MORE CONFIDENT WITH MY OWN WORK. WHEN I STARTED PUBLISHING MY INDEPENDENT COMICS, I WOULD LOOK AT HOW YOUR SUCCESS GREW OVER THE YEARS AS INSPIRATION TO CONTINUE WHEN TIMES WERE TOUGH.



THANKS FOR SHOWING ME THAT IT'S OK TO GO AGAINST THE TRENDS, TAKE RISKS AND DO WORK THAT TRULY EXCITES YOU. I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL.

ALL THE BEST,
KHALID BIRDSONG



YOU CAN READ KHALID BIRDSONG'S COMICS ON FRIEDCHICKENANDSUSHI.COM