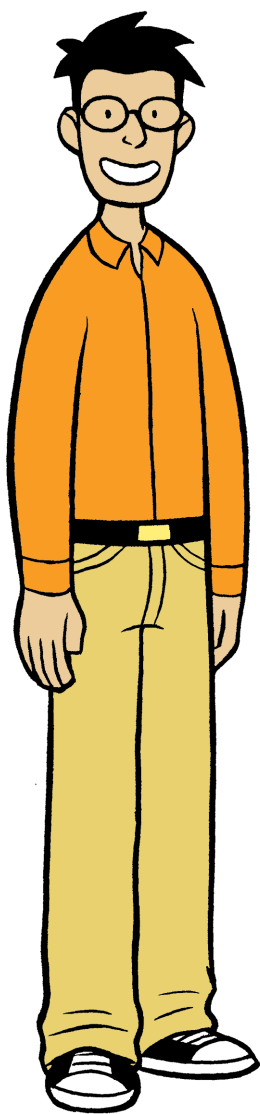
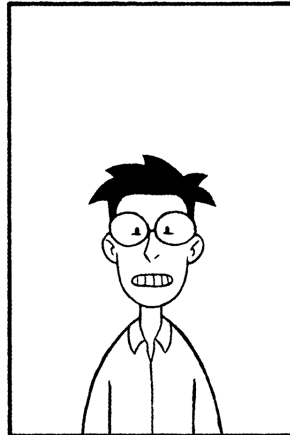
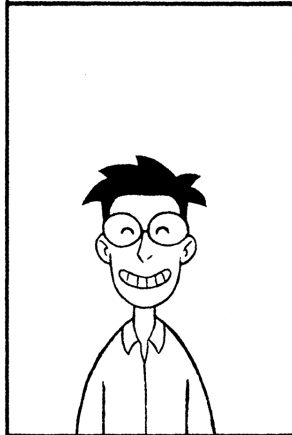
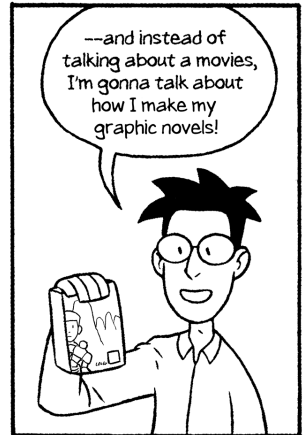
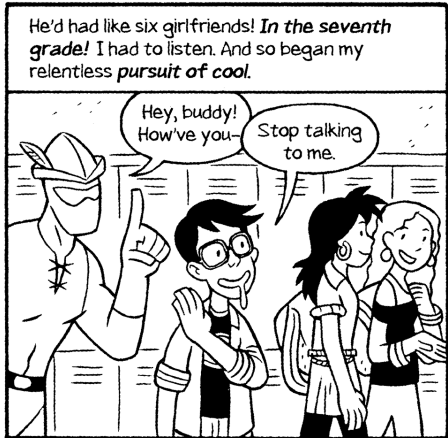
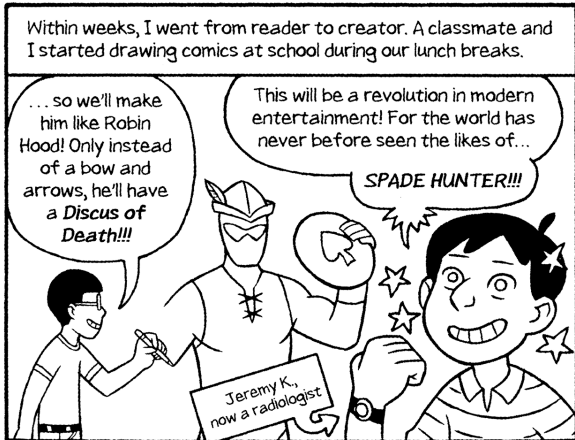
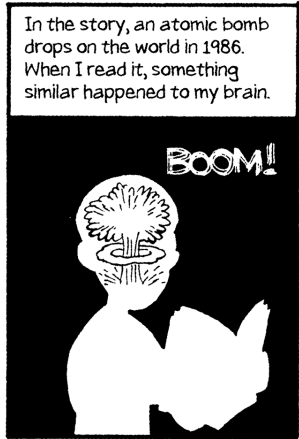


The Gene Luen Yang Bonus Feature







Through the rest of high school and into college, I read--



--and read--



--and read.



When I graduated from college, I gazed across the decades of adulthood stretched out before me, thinking and praying about what they would hold. I came to a realization:



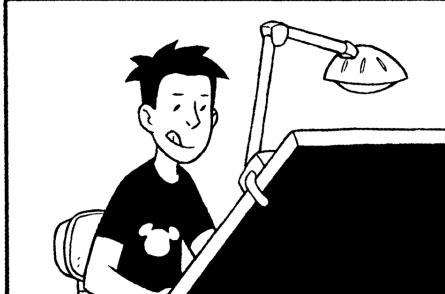
I got to work. At night, I scoured the Internet for information on making, publishing, and distributing comics. I downloaded interviews of self-made cartoonists like Jeff Smith, Scott McCloud, Dave Sim, and Colleen Doran.



I saved up enough money to professionally print a single issue of a comic book (about \$3000 at the time) and then went part time at my job as a programmer.

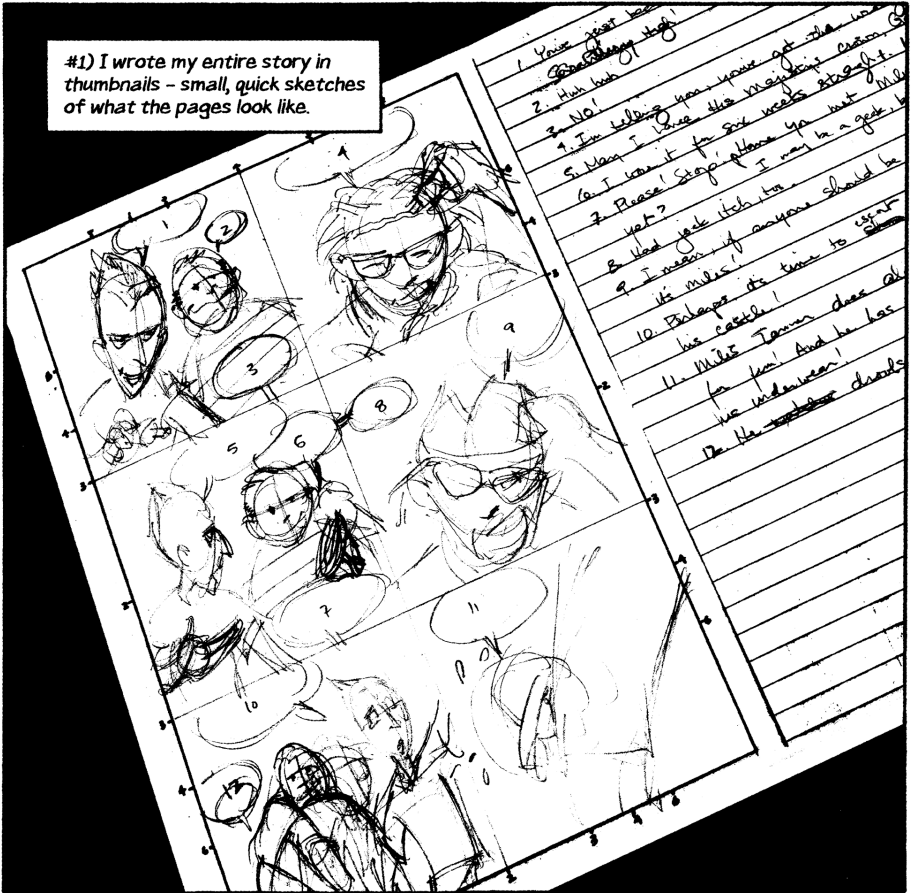


On my days off, I made my first comic book since grade school.

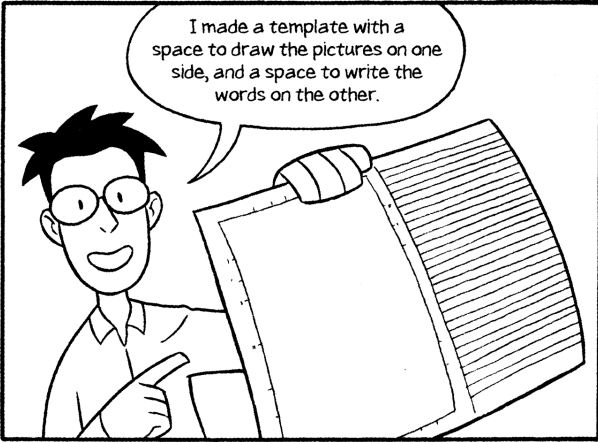


I did this by following a series of steps I learned from all those downloaded interviews:

#1) I wrote my entire story in thumbnails - small, quick sketches of what the pages look like.



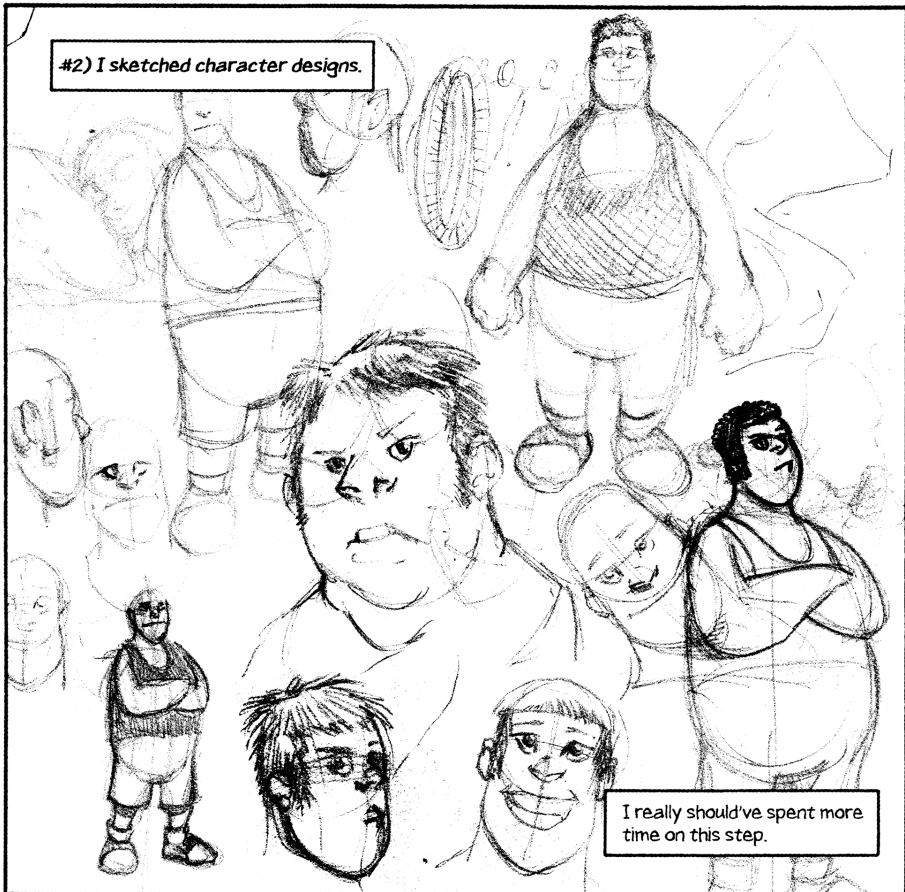
I made a template with a space to draw the pictures on one side, and a space to write the words on the other.



This let me edit the pictures without affecting the words, and vice versa.

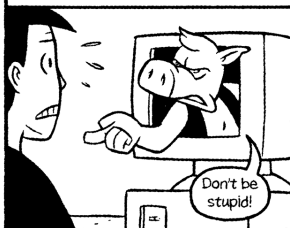


#2) I sketched character designs.



I really should've spent more time on this step.

In an interview I read, Dave Sim, the creator of Cerebus the Aardvark, made fun of aspiring cartoonists who spent all their time on character designs and never got around to actually drawing a story.



This freaked me out, so I spent maybe half an hour sketching my characters before moving onto the story. I regretted this later and had to redesign Gordon.



Nowadays, I spend much more time designing my characters.



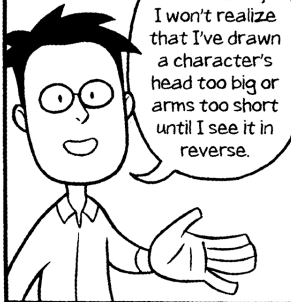
#3) I penciled each page.



I now pencil my comics – including the one you're reading – on vellum, this see-through paper you can get at any art store.



I do this because I've found that I can catch a lot of my mistakes by looking at the mirror image of my drawing.



When I was working on Bristol, I'd take my drawings to the bathroom and look at them in the mirror. With vellum, I can just flip the page over!



#4) I inked each page.



I inked most of *Gordon #1* with a #4 Winsor Newton Series 7 brush and a bottle of India ink. I did the panel borders and word balloons with Rapidograph pens.

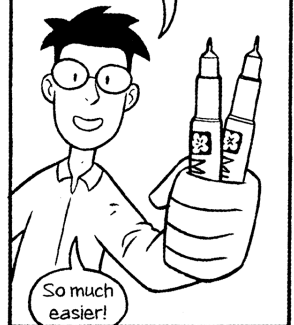
I've since abandoned both the brush and the Rapidographs. They were just too hard to maintain!



Now I use a Japanese brush pen instead of the Series 7 brush--



--and Pigma Micron markers instead of the Rapidographs.



#5) I lettered each page.

AW COME ON, FROSH!
IT'S AN HONOR!

HOLD STILL,
NOW.

NO!
STOP IT!

YOU GOT THE
"ROYAL CROWN"
GORDON?

YUP. WORE IT FOR
SIX WEEKS STRAIGHT.

HAD JOCK
ITCH, TOO.

STOP IT!

PERHAPS IT'S TIME
TO SHOW THE KING
TO HIS THRONE!

I have to admit, back then, I had
the most inefficient lettering
scheme ever.

I typed all of the words into a
computer, printed them out,
cut them into strips, pasted
the strips onto my pages, and
drew word balloons around
them.

Whew! It
was messy *and*
time-consuming!

These days, I do all of my
lettering with Photoshop. I
use a font - the one you're
reading now - that's based
on my own handwriting.

#6) I scanned the pages into the computer and laid them out using a desktop publishing program.



When everything was finished, I mailed it off to the printer (Brenner Printing in Texas) on a Zip Disk.

Remember these?



I paid the printer for their services, but not with \$3000 I'd saved up! Instead, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles footed the bill!



Peter Laird, one of the creators of the Ninja Turtles, founded the Xeric Foundation, which gives grants to self-publishing cartoonists twice a year. I applied and got it!



After about a year and a half's worth of blood, sweat, and ink, all those steps resulted in the first issue of *Gordon Yamamoto and the King of the Geeks*.

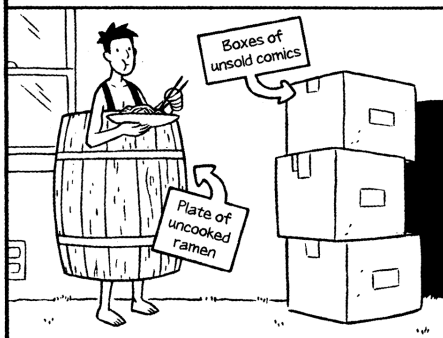


Making comics got under my skin in a big way, for reasons that I hadn't really foreseen. There certainly was the thrill of seeing my stories in print, but making comics also introduced me to some incredibly talented cartoonists.



These cartoonists have encouraged and challenged and inspired me. A few have even become my closest friends.

The one thing comics didn't get me, at least in the beginning, was money. I lost well over \$6000 in my first few years of self-publishing.



I went back to full-time work (this time as a high school teacher) and arranged my life to make space for comics.



Over the next few years, I wrote, drew and published two more issues of *Gordon* and three issues of its sequel, *Loyola Chin and the San Peligran Order*.



Eventually, *Gordon* and *Loyola* were both republished by the good folks at SLG Publishing. They published them first as two individual books, and again in a collection called *Animal Crackers*.



