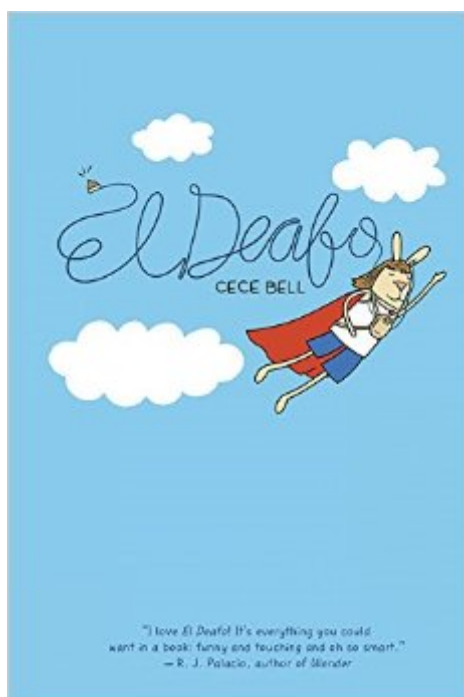


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El Deafo (Turtleback School & Library Binding Edition)



Synopsis

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ONLY. Going to school and making new friends can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers! In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, author/illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age and her subsequent experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful--and very awkward--hearing aid. The Phonic Ear gives Cece the ability to hear--sometimes things she shouldn't--but also isolates her from her classmates. She really just wants to fit in and find a true friend, someone who appreciates her as she is. After some trouble, she is finally able to harness the power of the Phonic Ear and become ""El Deafo, Listener for All."" And more importantly, declare a place for herself in the world and find the friend she's longed for.

Book Information

Library Binding: 248 pages

Publisher: Turtleback; Turtleback School & Library ed. edition (September 2, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0606361480

ISBN-13: 978-0606361484

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (385 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #183,253 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 in [Books > Children's Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Biographies](#) #27 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Physical Disabilities](#) #1320 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies](#)

Age Range: 8 - 11 years

Grade Level: 3 - 6

Customer Reviews

Cece is my daughter and I am so very proud of her for baring her soul to write El Deafo. She worked 5 years to write and illustrate her graphic novel and it carries so many, many messages to everyone who reads it. I had hoped Cece would write this book ever since she started having her Sock Mobkey books published. I believe she is benefiting from her book-related travels and experiences as much as her readers benefit from her book. Thanks for askin'. Sincerely, A Proud Mama

I was diagnosed with a hearing loss at age 16. As an adult with a now severe hearing loss, I wanted to scream "YES!!!!" on just about every single page. I especially love that Cece is likable and not whiny about her situation. It shows how someone with hearing loss can feel stupid when it's not about stupidity at all. I want my family to read this. I want my friends to read this. I want the whole world to read this!!!! Cece's descriptions are dead on and this book is so important for those of us trying to live a normal life in a difficult situation. I'm forever grateful for *El Deafo*. And my friends, please keep the lights on and your face towards me. Thanks!

We appear to exist in a golden age of children's graphic novel memoirs. Which is to say, there are three of them out this year (*El Deafo*, *Sisters*, and *The Dumbest Idea Ever*). How to account for the sudden tiny boom? If I were to harbor a guess I'd say it has something to do with publishers realizing that the genre can prove a profitable one (hat tip then to *Smile*).

We're beginning to enter into an era where the bulk of the gatekeepers out there, be they parents or teachers or librarians, are viewing comics not as a corrupting influence but rather as a new literary form with which to teach. Memoirs are particularly interesting and have proven to be a wonderful way to slowly ease kids into the big beautiful world of nonfiction. That said, not everyone's youth is worthy of a retelling. To tell a memoir well you need to have a narrative arc of some sort. One that doesn't feel forced. For CeCe Bell, her first foray into graphic novels is also telling the story of her youth. The result, *El Deafo*, is a remarkable look at a great grand question (What to do when you can no longer hear and feel different from everyone you know?) alongside a smaller one that every kid will relate to (How do you find a good friend?). Bell takes the personal and makes it universal, an act that truly requires superhero skills. Until the age of four CeCe was pretty much indistinguishable from any other kid. She liked her older siblings. She liked to sing to herself. But a sudden bout with meningitis and something changed for CeCe. All at once her hearing was gone. After some experimentation she was fitted with a Sonic Ear (a device that enabled her to hear her teacher's voice) and started attending classes with other kids like herself. A family trip to a smaller town, however, meant going to a new school and trying to make new friends. When faced with problems she reverts to her pretend superhero self, *El Deafo*. With subtlety Bell weaves in knowledge of everything from reading lips and sign language to the difficulties of watching un-captioned television. At the same time the book's heart lies with a single quest: That of finding the absolute perfect friend. The rise of the graphic novel memoir of a cartoonist's youth with a child audience in mind really hit its stride when Raina Telgemeier wrote, *Smile*. That dire accounting of her at times horrific dental history paved the way for other

books in the same vein. So where did my library choose to catalog that graceful memoir? In the biography section? No. In the graphic novel section? Not initially, no. For the first year of its existence it was shelved in nonfiction under the Dewey Decimal number 617.645 T. That's right. We put it in the dental section. So it was with great trepidation that I looked to see where *El Deafo* would end up. Would it be in the section on the hearing impaired or would the catalog understand that this book is about so much more than the *Sonic Ear*? As it happens, the book appears to be primarily cataloged as a memoir more than anything else. Sure the information in there about the deaf community and other aspects of living as someone hearing impaired are nonfiction, but the focus of the story is always squarely on CeCe herself. The real reason I found the book as compelling as I did was due in large part to the way in which Bell tackles the illogical logic of childhood friendships. So many kids are friends thanks to geographical convenience. You're my age and live within a certain radius of my home? We're besties! And Bell's hearing impaired state is just a part of why she is or is not friends with one person or another. Really, the true arc of the story isn't necessarily CeCe coming to terms with the *Sonic Ear*, but rather how she comes to terms with herself and, in doing so, gets the best possible friend. It's like reading a real life *Goldilocks* story. This friend is too bossy. This friend is too fixated on CeCe's hearing. But this friend? She's juuuuuust right. So why bunnies? Bell could easily have told her story with human beings. And though the characters in this book appear to be anthropomorphized rabbits (reminding me of nothing so much as when guest stars would appear on the children's television program *Arthur*) there is no particular reason for this. They never mention a particular love of carrots or restrict their movements to hop hop hopping. They are, however, very easy on the eyes and very enticing. This book was sitting on my To Be Reviewed shelf when my three-year-old waltzed over and plucked it for her own perusal. The bunnies are accessible. In fact, you completely forget that they even are bunnies in the course of reading the book. You also fail to notice after a while how beautifully Bell has laid out her comic panels too. The sequential storytelling is expertly rendered, never losing the reader or throwing you out of the story. One librarian I spoke to also mentioned how nice it was to see that the dream sequences with *El Deafo* are always clearly delineated as just that. Dream sequences. Fantasy and reality are easily distinguishable in this novel. No mean feat when everyone has a twitchy little nose. Maybe we've peaked. Maybe we're seeing as many graphic memoirs for kids as we'll ever see in a given year. But that can't be, can it? We all have stories to tell, no matter what our upbringing looked like. There's always some element in our past that's relatable to a wide audience. It's the clever author that knows how to spin that

element into a storyline worthy of a younger audience. There isn't a jot of doubt in my mind that CeCe Bell's book is going to be vastly beloved by nearly every child that picks it up. Engaging and beautifully drawn, to say nothing of its strength and out-and-out facts, *El Deafo* is going to help set the standard for what a memoir for kids should be. Infinitely clever. Undeniably fun. Don't miss it. For ages 9-12.

I found *El Deafo* to be charming and sincere and affecting where appropriate. It tells the story of a young girl who loses her hearing and who learns to navigate elementary school as a bit of an outsider. Some classmates regard her as a freak, some over-compensate, but her worst enemy is her own insecurity. Gradually she overcomes. What's best about this book is that the deafness, while integral to Cece (the author and main character)'s experience, it is not the subject of the book. Worrying about fickle friends, and cute boys, and how much to comply with the rules, is universal. You will relate to her experience even if you have never had to deal with a physical impairment. The book is never didactic but it will teach those of us who have never had a deaf friend how to communicate with them more effectively, and perhaps will inspire additional compassion in some. The book is perfectly appropriate for children (age 7+?) and adults.

I am in fourth grade and I'm 10 years old. I thought *El Deafo* was boring sometimes - I felt the story repeated itself in the book. I liked that book showed a real problem - a problem that could happen to anybody. The author made me feel that I could see the way the character and I could understand the situation very easily.

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