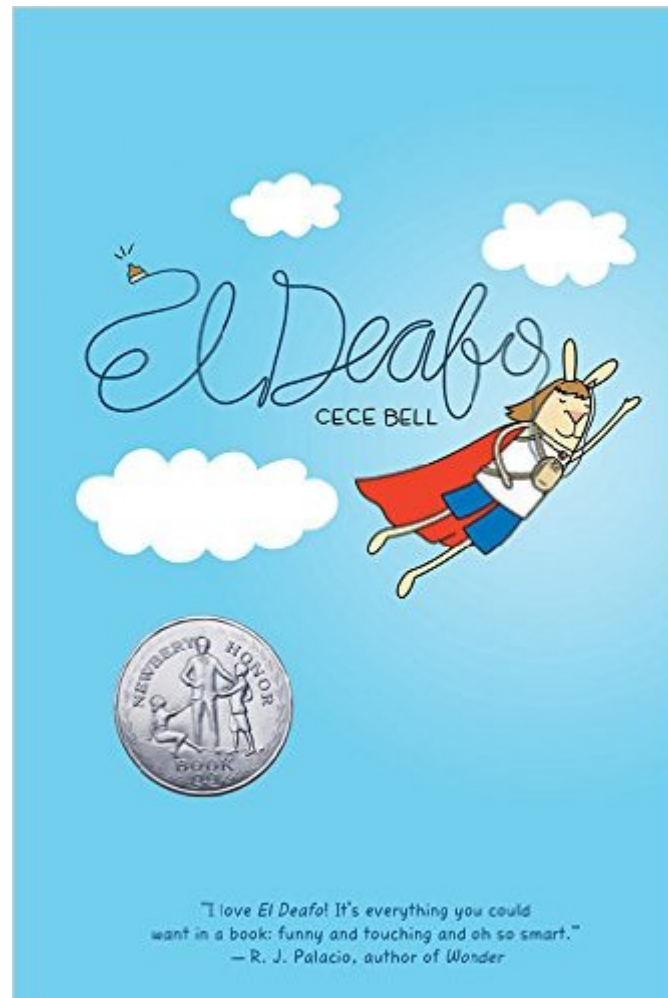


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# El Deafo



## Synopsis

A 2015 Newbery Honor Book 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. PRAISE FOR EL DEAFOSTARRED REVIEWS "A standout autobiography. Someone readers will enjoy getting to know." --Publishers Weekly, starred review "Worthy of a superhero." --Kirkus Reviews, starred review "This empowering autobiographical story belongs right next to Raina Telgemeier's Smile (2011) and Liz Prince's Tomboy." --Booklist

## Book Information

Series: El Deafo.

Paperback: 248 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams (September 2, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1419712179

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Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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

Best Sellers Rank: #1,148 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Physical Disabilities](#) #3 in [Books > Children's Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Biographies](#) #7 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Diseases](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

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.

Like Cece Bell, I also grew up as a hearing impaired kid in 1970s (hey, looks like we're ALMOST the same age!) The only difference is that I was BORN deaf, so I never knew what it was like to hear, nor did I ever learn to speak regularly. But - posing as a little bunny girl in her favorite polka dot swimsuit - Cece suddenly got sick with a brain-related illness right before she began kindergarten. So she lost her hearing, though she is still able to speak orally and also remembers what it's like to actually hear. That is why she still identifies herself as a hearing kid even though she had to wear big, cumbersome hearing aids and attend classes with deaf kids. Unfortunately, our young heroine finds great difficulty fitting in as well as making new friends. One turned out to be very possessive while another one treated her rather patronizingly - without really meaning to. And when Cece thought she finally found a "perfect" friend, she badly frightened her away when she got a very serious eye injury while playing with her. If that isn't all, Cece also ran in many frustrating obstacles when she was "forced" to learn sign language, had a hard time understanding her favorite TV shows of 1970s, and yes, even had to get glasses, too! In fact, she began to act like a surly little teenager when she was all of nine years old. But thankfully, our heroine eventually learned to cope by pretending that she obtained magical superpowers from her deafness (yes, her powerful

1970s-style hearing aid actually helped by enabling her to eavesdrop on her teacher's private conversations and well, bathroom habits.

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