

El Deafo

Cece Bell

Reviewed by: Anika 17

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After falling terribly ill at the age of four, Cece finds that her hearing has been impaired. Because of it, Cece's doctors give her the ultimate Phonic Ear! The device helps her hear better and interact with other people, but it's super noticeable on her chest and ears. Things weren't too bad for Cece in her old school. She had been in a class full of people just like her, but it's different at her new school. Cece feels out of place with her giant Phonic Ear, which seems to repel everyone away from her with all the awkward stares. But surprisingly the Phonic Ear has a lot more perks to it than Cece thought! Cece can hear her teacher anywhere in the school building, almost like a superpower! Calling herself El Deafo, Cece sets off on a journey to find a true friend that will stand by her side.

Cece Bell's semi-autobiographical novel is one I found truly worthwhile! It helped shine a light and accurately portray the experiences people may have with hearing loss and deafness. The variations in hearing difficulties and coping mechanisms were things I found to be very informative. Cece Bell uses a nice blend of humor and cute adorable illustrations to present her serious experiences growing up deaf, which really helps the reader to easily understand and empathize. This makes for a child friendly novel that allows for discussion on issues like conflict management, loneliness, fitting in, and self-acceptance. Cece is an all-around likeable character with personality and a growth that all children can take part in to learn from.

El Deafo, for the most part, is a child friendly novel. There aren't any instances of anything extremely graphic that jump at attention. There is one scene where Cece's runs into a tree and hurts her eye, but it's minor. Cece also has a few fantasies about her crush, but they're all just the musings of a young child. Knowing this, I would recommend this novel for readers of all ages as new perspectives and empathy are vital to the human experience! More specifically, I would suggest this charming graphic novel to anyone 5 or 6 years or older. El Deafo would make a great gift to younger children and fans of graphic memoirs.

Recommended Titles:

Drama by Raina Telgemeier

Ghosts by Raina Telgemeier

I Yam a Donkey by Cece Bell

Rabbit and Robot: The Sleepover

Roller Girl by Victoria Jamieson