

Goofy, Weird, and Gross

Author and illustrator Cece Bell knows that kids “love goofy, weird, gross humor.” Maybe that’s why her books and graphic novels are so popular. Cece is the author and illustrator of *Smell My Foot*, *Rabbit and Robot*, and the *Sock Monkey* series, among other hilarious books. She is also the illustrator of several books written by her husband, Tom Angleberger, including the *Inspector Flytrap* series.

Cece and Tom met in college, where they were both art majors. Cece also has a graduate degree in illustration and design. Cece learned to draw as a kid by reading books by Ed Emberly. According to Cece, “that guy is ACES! I checked out his books from my school library every Friday, and did all the exercises over the weekends. A great way to learn how to draw.”

One of Cece’s most famous books is the graphic memoir *El Deafo*. It has been described as “a touching and funny exploration of her own deafness.” Like the main character, Cece uses humor as a defense mechanism. Growing up she felt that “if I’m funny, kids will like me and not focus on the big hearing aids coming out of my ears.”

In the same way she learned how to draw, Cece learned how to be funny by reading books. Growing up she read funny books by authors such as



Judy Blume, Beverly Cleary, and James Marshall. More recently, reading books by Raina Telgemeier inspired her to write *El Deafo*.

Cece recently wrote a story for a collection called *Funny Girl*. She feels that humor is important for kids, perhaps especially for girls who are often denied access to it. Humor is Cece's favorite genre to write. "My brain always veers towards the goofy!" she says.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Which book was NOT mentioned as one of Cece Bell's?
 - a. El Deafo
 - b. Smile
 - c. Smell My Foot
 - d. Inspector Flytrap

2. El Deafo is described as a _____.
 - a. Graphic novel
 - b. Comic book
 - c. Graphic memoir
 - d. Picture book

3. Why did Cece want to be funny as a kid?
 - a. So people wouldn't notice her hearing aids
 - b. Because she read Judy Blume
 - c. Because she liked to draw
 - d. So she could be a role model

4. Why do you think girls might be denied access to humor?
 - a. Because funny books are marketed more towards boys
 - b. Because girls don't like funny things as much as boys
 - c. Because some adults don't think humor is appropriate for girls
 - d. A and C

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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