

TOON COMIC BOOK SNAGS DR. SEUSS EARLY READER HONOR

Chappaqua, NY—It's no secret that kids love comics. And thanks to the emergence of the graphic novel, comics have reached a new level of popularity. They're even making their way into the classroom. Now, TOON Books is re-introducing comic books to a natural audience—children who are just learning to read, as well as older kids who are honing their reading skills. ***Stinky***, by debut author Eleanor Davis, was just awarded a Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor, presented annually to a distinguished book for beginning readers that demonstrates creativity and imagination in engaging children to read.

TOON Books was launched in 2008 by Françoise Mouly, Art Editor of *The New Yorker*, and her husband, Pulitzer Prize-winning comic book artist Art Spiegelman, author of the groundbreaking Holocaust narrative, *Maus*. It's the first line of high-quality hardcover comics written specifically for the emergent reader. Some TOON authors and illustrators are familiar to the world of children's literature, while others are well-known comics artists who have not previously created kids' books.

New this Spring are ***Luke on the Loose***, by *New York Times* bestselling artist Harry Bliss, in which a little boy chases pigeons in a havoc-filled romp through New York City, and ***Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!***, by award-winning illustrator Geoffrey Hayes, in which irresistible mouse siblings sneak into the backyard of their new neighbor, who might be a thief—or maybe a monster.

TOON Books feature original stories and characters. Each book is vetted by educators to ensure that vocabulary and narratives are age-appropriate. As an aide to parents, teachers, and librarians, each book is rated using the Lexile scale.

There's a place for comics in the classroom, and not just for reluctant readers. Comic books help to teach visual literacy. The state of Maryland's Comic Book Initiative, which uses TOON Books, is seen as a model of a comics program that can work in standards-based classrooms.

TOON Books, www.toon-books.com, an imprint of RAW Junior, has been featured in *School Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. RAW Junior is also responsible for the LITTLE LIT series, with contributions from Neil Gaiman, Paul Auster, Lemony Snicket, and David Sedaris, among others.

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Source: TOON Books

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