

## Diana Maliszewski and Andrew Woodrow-Butcher

thought “little island” would be a great name for a shop for our littler customers!”

### Little Island “Sinks”

So, with all these supportive factors, why did Little Island shut down? The short answer: real estate. The original location closed when developers purchased the historic Mirvish Village neighbourhood, which is currently being torn down to be replaced by condominiums. Many kinds of cultural spaces – bookstores, event spaces, artists’ studios – are legally considered “commercial use,” so there is no protection for the delicate literary ecosystem of Toronto, which relies on those kinds of venues. When Little Island Comics was forced to close in 2016, Toronto lost its only downtown children’s bookshop, and the world lost its only comic book shop specializing in comics for kids.

### Little Island Emerges Anew

The library services division continued to operate for the year that Little Island was closed, and that meant they still had all the books, a lot of the furniture, and, most importantly, all the expert booksellers that made Little Island what it was! They operated out of a warehouse/office in Cabbagetown for that year, continuing to sell books to schools and libraries. Meanwhile, The Beguiling, which also had been forced to vacate its home in Mirvish Village, had found a new retail location on College Street, at the top of Kensington Market. When a storefront adjacent to the new Beguiling became available, it was too good an opportunity to pass up! This was a bonus to their retail customers. Considering how healthy business has been for the kids’ comic book store, it’s unlikely that another foreclosure will occur. Little Island Comics plans to be around for a long time. Now that Little Island Comics is literally and figuratively next door to The Beguiling, they can share resources such as the new event space and gallery. The new shops also provide a nicer, more spacious showroom for teachers and librarians who shop in person. What remains the same is the selection, staff, and spirit of the establishment. ■



### Little Island Comics

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