



Sensitive Ears

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Storybook, fiction

Age: 6+

Sensitive Ears is a book full of contradictions. Here, we meet Kairiin: a little girl, whose ears are so sensitive that they cannot bear the slightest noise or disturbance. So, the little girl goes through life with pillows over her ears and fear in her heart. If drilling starts next door or loud music thumps through the walls, Kairiin becomes very seriously ill. Then, there is little boy named Teodor – a boy, who by contrast cannot bear silence. The more noise, the better, and when the electricity is off and there is no TV, no radio or no computer games to play, his parents have to scream and yell and play-fight to keep their son healthy. And one day, Teodor's family moves in upstairs, above Kairiin... What an irony, what a world.

When Kairiin is sent to the countryside to visit a relative, she almost miraculously finds help. What will happen to Teodor when he accidentally ends up at the same old farmhouse?

Awards:

2010 Nominee of the Annual Children's Literature Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia

Reading sample

When Kairiin woke next morning, the windows seemed bigger and the room itself lighter. And the fly that was walking over Kairiin's blanket did not make an intolerable buzzing when it flew off, but a perfectly bearable buzzing.

Straight away she remembered the crafty lamb and the playful Nässu, who did not want to hear about Kairiin's sore ears.

Perhaps I do have the most normal ears in the world, thought Kairiin and stretched.

"So, you woke up," came a familiar growl from the kitchen floor.

Nässu, lying on the carpet, thumped his tail in greeting, without making any effort to get up.

"Good morning, city girl!" he barked lazily.

Kairiin scratched him a bit behind the ear.

"You really slept long, lazybones!" growled Nässu and stretched out his other ear for Kairiin to scratch.

When Kairiin had eagerly eaten up the portion of porridge that had been keeping warm on a corner of the stove and stepped out into the yard, Liisbet stopped weeding the flowerbeds, washed her hands at the well and they went to the meadow to see the lambs just like the morning before.

The little lamb saw them coming from afar and ran up to them bleating.

"Baa-baa, here I am, here I am! Take me with you! I want to eat and play!"

Liisbet brought the little lamb into the farmyard again for a while and Kairiin fed it. The lamb stubbornly tried to get into the house and eyed the flowerbeds, but instead of a going-inside and flower-eating game, they played a leaping and jumping game.

The game itself was simple: first Kairiin would jump up high, then the lamb would do it. Sometimes they would jump at the same time to see who could jump higher. From a distance it looked like hopscotch or the high jump, but it was not really either. Thump, thump. Thud, thud. It was a great game and they both enjoyed it.

"Let's play planes!" suggested Kairiin, when they got tired of leaping and jumping.

"What's a plane?"

"A plane flies. It has wings."

"I can't fly! And I don't have wings either."

"Neither do I, but so what!"

"Then you can't fly!"

"I can so. Look, like this!" Kairiin spread out her arms and went wheeling round the yard, with the lamb skipping after her.

"Oh, children, children!" said Nässu shaking his head reproachfully, as he followed their antics from where he lay on the steps.