

“The Ear”

Text and illustrations by **Piret Raud**

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Picturebook, fiction

Age: 3+

Rights sold: English, German, Latvian, Polish, Slovenian

One morning, the Ear wakes up. Something is completely out of the ordinary: she’s all alone. Where is the head on whom she’s lived her entire life? How should she carry on? The world is so big and I’m so alone, she mourns, confused and utterly headless! What good is an ear without a head? she sobs. Without a head, I’m no one! But then, the Ear hears a croak. Is it someone who might need her?

Piret Raud’s picture book *The Ear* is inspired by the life of Vincent van Gogh.

Awards:

2019 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children’s Books, special prize of the Jury

2019 Good Children’s Book



Reading sample

'The head always knew what to do, because the head was the brains. But without a head, I am no one,' sobbed the Ear.

Suddenly, she heard someone say 'Croak!'

It was a frog.

'Dear Ear,' asked the frog.
'Could you perhaps listen to me sing?
My heart is heavy and when I sing I feel lighter.
My voice is terribly croaky, but I still long
to sing for someone.'

The Ear kindly agreed.

She didn't need the head
to listen to the frog's song.
The frog felt better for singing
and the Ear felt a little happier too.

The next day an elephant came to see the Ear.

'They say you are a good listener,' said the elephant.
'I feel terribly sad. If you could listen to my worries,
my heart might feel lighter.'

The Ear gladly agreed. The elephant told a story
about how a twist of fate had brought him across
the sea and far from home.

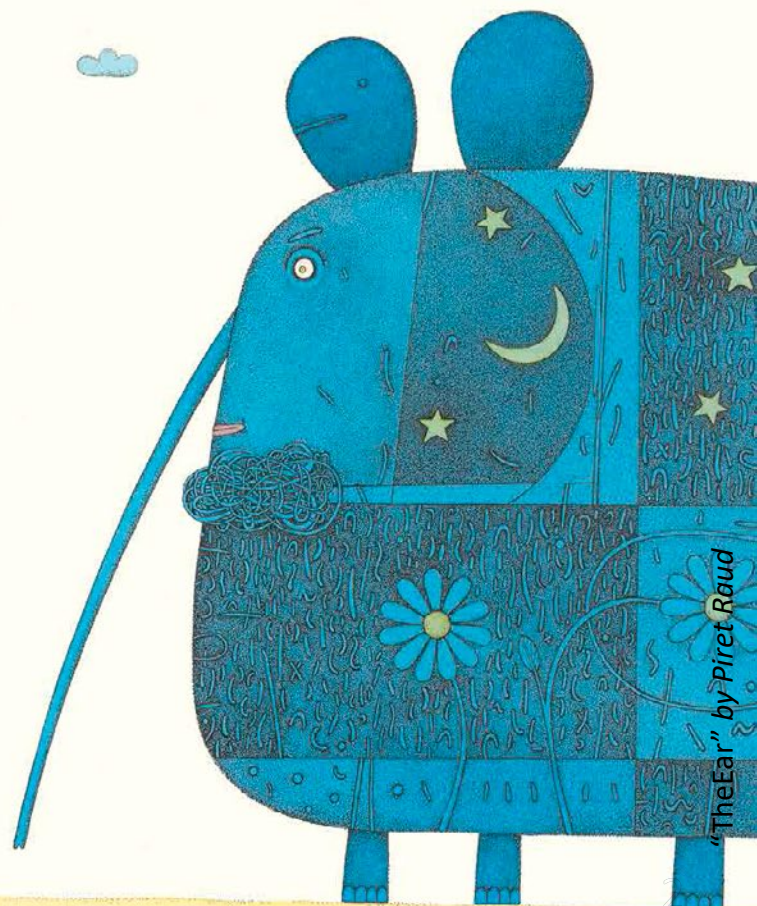
'My home is in a faraway land. I miss my
grandmother.
I miss the stars in the southern sky, the baobabs
and the blue daisies.'

The Ear was sorry for the elephant,
but the elephant felt brighter.

When the elephant had left, a hare showed up to
meet the Ear.

'Dear Ear, I must confess! I have done something
bad
and it worries me. If I could tell you about my
mischief,
my heart might feel lighter.'

The hare told the Ear how she had eaten a
snowman's nose.
'The snowman melted long ago, but it still bothers
me.
I will never eat someone's nose again.'



The Ear understood her, and the hare stopped worrying.

Before long, the Ear was famous for being the best listener in the land. Creatures came from far and wide hoping for a chance to be heard.

The Ear listened to everyone's problems, and everyone felt better. The Ear was pleased that she could help them all, just by listening!

But one day an evil spider appeared.

'My dear little Ear,' said the spider, with a voice as sweet as honey.

'I like you the best, the others are so stupid. The frog can't sing at all, he just croaks awfully, and the elephant has an ugly trunk and should go back to where he came from.

And that hare is a nasty thief! Only you and I are cool!'

The Ear didn't like hearing the spider's poisonous words.

Listening made her ache.

The spider had something bad to say about everyone.

She talked and talked, and all the while she wound her evil thread around the Ear.

Now the Ear ached all over. She tried to wriggle free but she was trapped.

'Oh, I wish the head was here!' she thought.

'He could shut that spider up!'

But there was no head.

