

YORA BIG EARS



Auntie Deb

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Written by **Auntie Deb**

Pen name of **Deborah Sarty**

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Published By: Independently published

For information, contact: Deb's Quill Kids' Stories at www.debsquill.com.

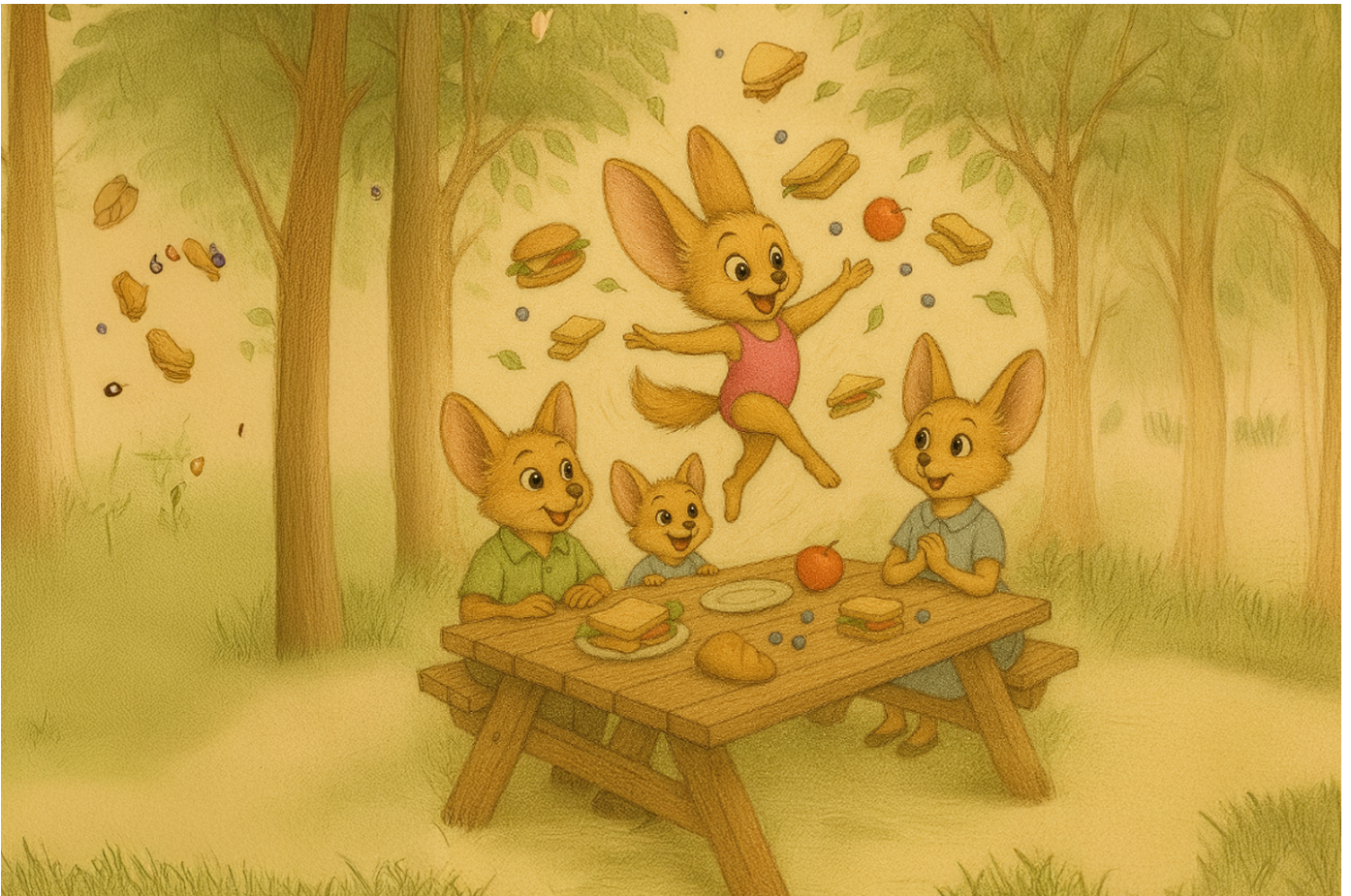
Chapter 1:



Yora is a girl fox living in a forest with her parents, and friends.

But Yora is different. Her ears are bigger than anyone else's. Sometimes other foxes make fun of her. It hurts, to be made fun of.

But Yora tries not to let the teasing make her sad. Instead, she likes that she can hear what no one else can—a whisper in the forest from miles away, or the soft footsteps of mice scurrying through the leaves.



But most of all, Yora loves to prance, to leap and spin and twirl and dance.

And she loves, most of all, when everyone watches her dance and claps.

She dances on top of tables. She dances on her way to school. She dances out in the forest.

Yora dances everywhere and anywhere.



One day, she saw a poster stapled to a tree.

"The Forest Talent Show! Come win first prize. Enter today. The Winner will be crowned Princess or Prince of the Forest."

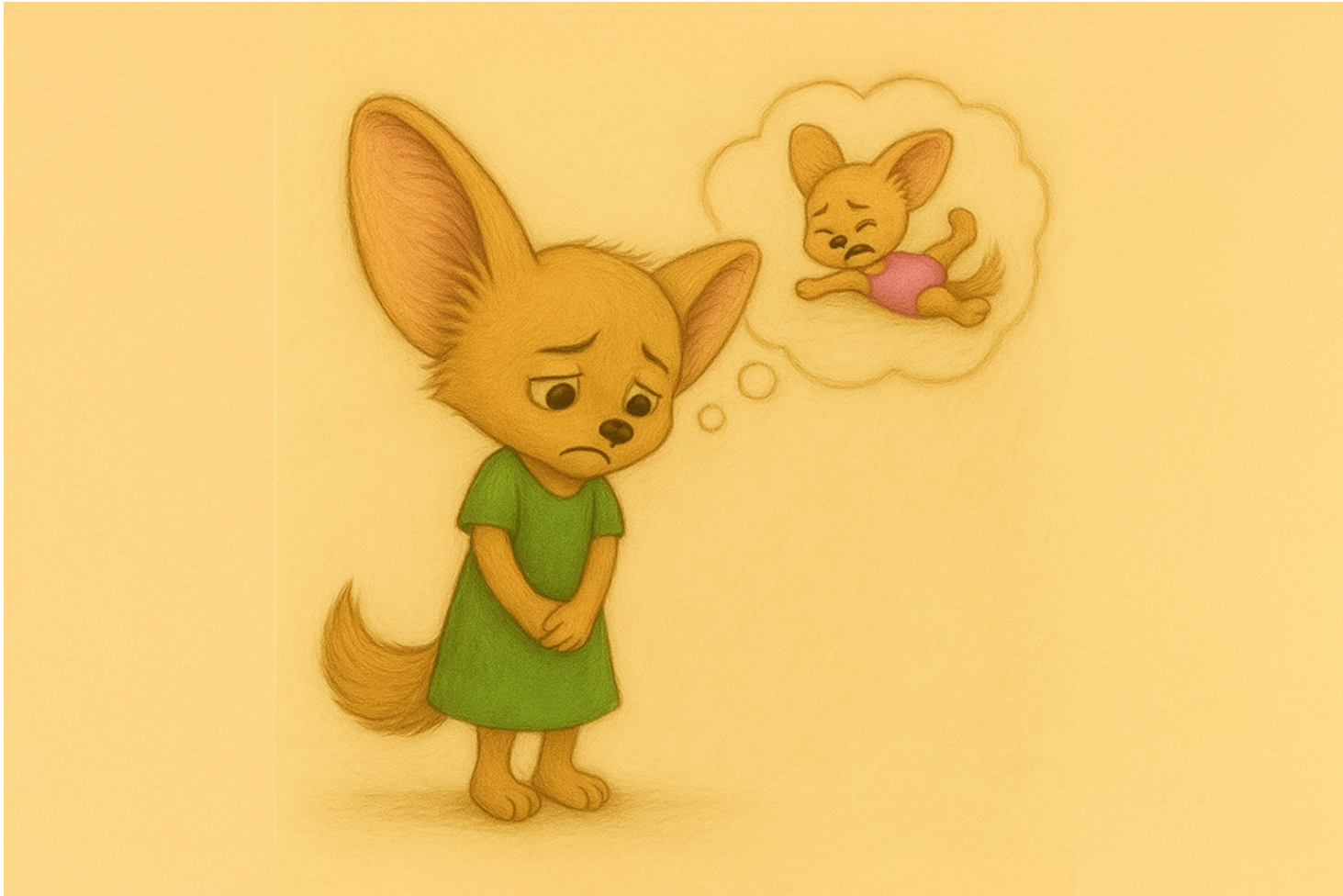
"A contest!" she cried. "I want to win. I will be a star. My dancing feet will help me win."



But then she saw the other acts. There was a juggling bear and a dog playing the sax.

There was a frog that played the drums with its feet. And a wolf singing opera.

How could she compete with them?



She felt slow and clumsy compared to the others.
When she tried to twirl, she tripped over her feet.
When she leapt into the air, she fell on her behind.

A creeping worry filled her head. She tried to smile, but all she could manage was a sad frown.

"I can't win against the others. I may as well not even try."



If she couldn't dance, maybe she could juggle.

But when she tried, she kept dropping the balls.



She tried to leap like like the frogs in the pond, but tripped over her own feet and fell on the forest floor.



She was sadder than she'd ever been. Tired, she gave up and sat under a tree and cried.

"Nothing I do is good enough!"

Her ears drooped. Her tail lay flat. She felt much too small for the forest.



As Yora sat under the tree, feeling sorry for herself, she started to hear the forest sounds. A whisper rising from the ground. The swish and creaking of branches swaying in the breeze. The plop, plop, plop of acorns falling to the ground. And the sweet sound of birds singing.



Yora smiled. The forest was singing its secret song — to her. A song that only she could hear. She jumped up and started twirling and dancing to the forest's beautiful music. There was no stage. There was no spotlight. There was no crowd. There was no applause. There was just sunlight and fresh air. And the pure delight of listening and dancing.



The show began with shouts and cheers from the audience. There were so many acts, and each one dazzled the audience.

A wolf strode out before the crowd, and bowed low. Then he swung his violin underneath his chin and started to play.

Yora watched from the side of the stage. The wolf played his violin so beautifully that she had to dance to it.



The next act came amid a hush from the crowd. Penny Pig in a gown of blue sat at the piano and started to play. She played and she sang, and she tapped her feet.

Then she stopped, and stood, and curtsied low. The crowd cheered and clapped. And Penny cried. And Yora was sure that Penny would win.



Then Yora rose. It was her turn. She was so scared but she walked onto that stage anyway, and danced to the song only she could hear.

No one played the piano for her. But Yora heard music from the forest with her too-big ears, and she danced to it's song. She flew across the stage like a bird. She twirled like leaves on the wind. She tumbled like acorns falling from the trees.



As Yora danced, a hush fell over the crowd. They leaned in, watching every step. They **oohed** when she leapt. They **aahed** when she twirled. They gasped when she tumbled — then leapt higher still.

When she stopped, and bowed, the crowd stayed still and quiet. Yora thought, "Oh, no! They didn't like my dance."

But then the crowd jumped up, and clapped so loud, the trees shook. And they threw flowers at her feet.

Yora was so happy, she cried happy tears.



Penny Pig won the contest that night. Yora placed second. But she didn't care that someone else won. She found out something about herself. Something important.

She danced for herself, to the music she loved. The cheers from the audience felt wonderful. They did. But what felt even better was that she was true to herself. And that was the best kind of success of all.

The End



Can Foxes Really Hear That Well?

They can. Did you know that foxes can hear a mouse squeak up to 100 feet (30 metres) away — even under the snow?

That's about the length of three school buses parked end to end, or half a soccer field!

Dogs can hear sounds four times farther than humans — about twice as far as a fox.

So if Yora can hear a mouse from three buses away, a dog could hear it from six!

Humans? We can hear pretty well, but only from about half a bus length away.

And cats — well, they win the prize for hearing the highest squeaks of all!

Foxes like Yora use their amazing hearing to find food, avoid danger, and stay safe in the forest. So maybe big ears *are* something to be proud of!

About the Author



Auntie Deb is the pen name of Canadian author Deborah Sarty. She writes children's picture books for her grand-niece and grand-nephew, hoping to spark in them a lifelong love of exploring new worlds and ideas through stories. When she's writing, she's kept company by Uncle Roger and their two curious cats, Sammi and Dash.

Visit her website: www.debsquill.com

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in one book: Aurora & Borealis and Yora Big Ears