



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Thumbelina

Hans Christian Andersen

There once was a woman who really wanted to have a child but did not know how to get one. So, she asked an old witch for help. I have a special barley grain, said the witch. Put it in a flowerpot and see what happens!

The woman planted the grain. Immediately a big flower bud appeared. What a beautiful flower, said the woman and she kissed the leaves. Then the flower opened. It was a tulip. In the middle sat a beautiful little girl. She was no bigger than a thumb, so they called her Thumbelina.



They made a cradle out of a nutshell with petals as a mattress and blanket. During the day, the girl played on the table. In a plate of water was a flower petal on which she could sail. She had two horsehairs to row with. Thumbelina sang beautiful songs and was happy. But one night a fat, ugly toad came in through a broken window and jumped on the table. This would be a beautiful woman for my son, said the toad, and she took Thumbelina away in the cradle.

The toad lived with her son by the river. Oh how ugly the son was. "Kroowk kroowk", said the toad when he saw the girl. Ssst said the mother toad, or she will wake up and run away. They put her on a water lily pad in the river and went to decorate the toad house. Thumbelina woke up and cried. She didn't want to live there, let alone marry a toad.



The fish that also lived in the river had heard everything and looked at the girl curiously. They thought she was very sweet and wanted to help her to avoid marrying the toad. So they gnawed off the green stalk of the leaf so Thumbelina could float down the river, far away from the toads.

And so, Thumbelina travelled on. On the way many birds sang. A little white butterfly also flew along. They liked each other very much. Thumbelina tied her little belt to the leaf and to the butterfly. Now she was moving much faster.

A little later, a large beetle flew by. He thought Thumbelina was really cute, so

he took her with him. The green leaf floated on over the river and so did the butterfly, for it was still tied to the leaf.

Thumbelina was very frightened, but she was even more frightened because the butterfly was trapped and might have been very hungry.

The beetle, on the other hand, was happy. He gave Thumbelina honey. He thought she was sweet even though she looked nothing like a beetle. But when the other beetles saw her, they thought she was weird and ugly. Now the beetle also believed she was ugly and did not want her any more. He put her on a daisy. There she cried, because she was ugly and the beetle did not want her. But in fact she was as beautiful as a rose petal.

Thumbelina lived alone in the forest all summer and autumn. Under a cloverleaf in a homemade bed of grass. She drank dew from the leaves and ate honey from the flowers.

But then winter came along with snow and cold, and her thin body would soon freeze. She was walking through a cornfield and suddenly saw a mouse hole. She went inside to ask for something to eat. The field mouse said she could stay all winter if she would clean and tell stories.



One day, a neighbour mole came to visit. That would be a good man for Thumbelina, the field mouse thought. He is rich and has a big house. Thumbelina had to tell stories and sing, and the mole fell in love with her. But Thumbelina was very unhappy, because moles live underground without sunlight.

The mole had dug a tunnel between his house and the mouse hole. In the tunnel lay a dead bird. They could see it through a hole in the daylight. It had probably died of cold. The mole and the mouse did nothing, but Thumbelina loved birds very much and wanted to help.

At night she brought the bird a bed and her blanket. She laid her head on its breast and thanked the bird for its beautiful songs. But suddenly she was startled.

She heard the heart beating which meant the bird was still alive. But it was very big.

Swallows fly to warm countries in the autumn, but this one had torn its wing and could not fly any further.

Thumbelina took care of him all winter and in spring he was strong once again. He said goodbye and flew away through the hole in the tunnel. The swallow wanted to take Thumbelina with him, but she stayed with the mouse, who would

otherwise be very sad.

But the little girl was not at all happy under the ground without sunlight. She had to sew and weave because she would soon marry the mole. Every morning and evening, she sneaked outside and felt the wind in her hair and saw the blue sky. She missed her bird friend and cried because she did not love the mole. Then she went to the cornfield one last time to say goodbye to the sun and the flowers. Suddenly she heard a twiet-twiet next to her and... there was the swallow!

Now that winter is starting, I am flying to a faraway, warm country, said the bird. Will you fly with me on my back? You saved my life.

Yes I would love to, said Thumbelina. They flew over cold, high mountains to a beautiful castle in a warm land full of flowers and green trees. There was the house of the swallow. The bird put her down among beautiful white flowers, and suddenly she saw a little boy with a golden crown and wings in a flower. He was the angel of the flower.

Thumbelina thought he was so beautiful and so sweet. The boy was frightened by the big bird, but when he saw the little girl, he was so happy. He gave her his little crown and immediately wanted to marry her. And Thumbelina would rather marry him than a toad or a mole. At the wedding she received many gifts, but the most beautiful were the wings with which she could fly from flower to flower. The boy also gave her a new name: Maja.

The swallow sang a beautiful wedding song as a farewell. He flew far away, to Denmark. There he had a nest above the window of someone who tells fairy tales. The bird sang to him, Twiet-Twiet, and it is because of the bird that we know this whole story.



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