

Thumbelina

The Story of a Brave Little Girl

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CHARACTER

THUMBELINA A very small, very brave girl.

MAMA Thumbelina's mother and the narrator of our story.

FROGGY MOM A bossy, controlling mother.

FROG BOY A wimpy, belching toad.

BEETLE A hip crooner with a guitar.

SPIDER A malevolent trickster.

SPARROW A wounded, gentle creature who befriends THUMBELINA.

MOSQUITO A Dracula-esque insect who gets into a karate match with THUMBELINA.

CLOUDS Large, white puffs that bring on the impending storm.

POND FRIENDS

A FUNNY BUG, on his way to work.

A GOLDFISH, getting ready for school.

A BEAUTIFUL THING, sunbathing.

AT RISE:

MAMA, in traditional motherly dress, bounds onto the scene, which is a current tableau of all of the characters, including a sleeping THUMBELINNA.

MAMA

Oh, hello! I didn't see you all there. Are you ready for a story? It's the story of a very small, very brave little girl, and how she found her way home. I am her mother, but everyone just calls me Mama.

(Beat.)

Ever since I was a little girl, all I wanted was to have a child of my own. So I hoped and I wished, and I wished and I hoped. And when that didn't work, I hoped and I wished and I wished and hoped some more. And then one spring day, after hoping and wishing as much as I could, a rosebud bloomed, and laying asleep on its petals, was the tiniest, most perfect little girl.

(THUMBELINA, asleep in a flowerbed, is unveiled.)

MAMA

Because she was no bigger than a thumb, I called her Thumbelina.

(Beat.)

But even though she was very small, there was something very big inside her.

(THUMBELINA stretches, yawns, and out comes a beautiful, strong voice which carries a note that goes on for miles.)

MAMA

(Proudly.)

That's my girl!

(Beat.)

Thumbelina!

THUMBELINA

Yes, Mama?

MAMA

I think it's time you and I had a talk.

THUMBELINA

What is it Mama?

MAMA

Thumbelina, life is a very unpredictable thing. You never know what tomorrow will bring you. One day I was a lonely woman, hoping for a daughter to come along, and then, when I woke - there you were! So, not everything unexpected is bad. But sometimes, things happen in life that require you to be very, very brave.

THUMBELINA

Like what, Mama?

MAMA

You'll know it when you see it.

THUMBELINA

And what do I do when I see it, Mama?

MAMA

Don't ever give up hope, and always know that I am here waiting for you when you come home. Promise me you'll never forget.

THUMBELINA

I promise, Mama.

MAMA

Now you are not like other girls, Thumbelina. You are very small. And people will try to convince you that you're less because you are different. But you show them what you're made of. No matter what it takes.

THUMBELINA

I never want to be away from you, Mama.

MAMA

If there are times when we're separated, just know that I'm never far away. Promise me you'll never forget.

THUMBELINA

I promise, Mama.

MAMA

(To audience.)

And for so long, we were so happy. But then one day, while I was asleep, a froggy mother was just hopping by the window, and spotted my little Thumbelina.

(FROGGY MOM hops on by and does a double-take when she passes a sleeping THUMBELINA.)

FROGGY MOM

Ribbit. Ribbit, ribbit. Oh! Ribbit. What a pretty little girl. And so small. She'd make the perfect wife for my froggy son!

(FROGGY MOM slides a sleeping THUMBELINA onto her back, and hops in a bumbling circle to her froggy home.)

MAMA

And just like that. The froggy mother scooped up my sleeping Thumbelina and hopped as silently as she could way far away, across moats, and brooks, and slimy ponds, until my little girl was captive in their froggy home.

(FROGGY MOM lays THUMBELINA down across from a sleeping, snoring FROG BOY. The snoring is so loud and obnoxious it wakes THUMBELINA.)

THUMBELINA

What...where am I?

FROGGY MOM

Ribbit. You're home now, little girl.

THUMBELINA

What are you talking about? This is nothing like my home!

(Beat.)

And what's that horrible smell?

FROGGY MOM

That, my dear, is your new husband!

(FROGGY MOM probes her son, who finally awakes with a rattled, loud snort.)

FROGGY MOM

Rabbit. Son...meet your new wife.

(Beat.)

Well, aren't you going to say hello?

(FROG BOY opens his mouth and out comes
the loudest, most horrific burp.)

FROG BOY

Hello.

THUMBELINA

No way am I marrying you!

FROGGY MOM

Little girl, mind your manners! Is that any way to speak
to your new husband?

THUMBELINA

My name is not "little girl", it's Thumbelina. And there's
no way I'm going to marry a smelly, frog boy like him.

FROGGY MOM

Who couldn't love that face...

(FROG BOY mugs for THUMBELINA.)

FROGGY MOM

Look at those warts! That perfect green skin. Those movie
star good looks. Isn't he simply irresistible?

(FROG BOY lets out another gigantic belch.)

THUMBELINA

I'm somehow finding it rather easy to resist his boyhood
charms.

FROG BOY

(With gigantic belches.)

Oh, Thumbelina, say it isn't so!

THUMBELINA

If you'll just direct me back to my home—

FROGGY MOM & FROG BOY

No!

FROGGY MOM

Go ahead. Jump off. Swim to your heart's desire. But you'll never make it to shore. And even if you were the best swimmer on earth, there are creatures in this pond scarier than your wildest imagination, covered in slime from head to toe, mutants with a thousand legs and fifty mouths! And very sharp teeth to rip a tiny thing like yourself into a million little pieces. So if you know what's good for you, you'll just go right to sleep, and when the sun comes up you can marry my froggy son, and the two of you will live happily ever after!

(FROG BOY lets out a blissful belch.)

FROGGY MOM

Goodnight, Thumbelina.

(She hops off humming "Here Comes the Bride".)

FROG BOY

Don't be sad, Thumbelina. I'm sure you and me are going to be very happy together.

(He burps again and hops off.)

MAMA

As the darkness grew, Thumbelina became frantic.

THUMBELINA

Just for the record, I'm not afraid of the dark. The dark can't hurt you...

(THUMBELINA listens to some strange sounds in the distance.)

MAMA

But there were lots of mysterious sounds she couldn't identify.

THUMBELINA

Just because I don't know what they are, doesn't mean they'll hurt me.

(The sounds grow scarier.)

Just because I don't know what they are, doesn't mean they'll hurt me. Just because I don't know what they are, doesn't mean they'll hurt me. You just quiet down, noise. I said quiet down! Quiet down! You can't hurt me! Quiet down!

MAMA

Maybe we can help Thumbelina quiet the sounds together? Let's try and see if it works. Ready? When I count to three, we'll all say "Quiet Down" together. Ready? One, two, three! QUIET DOWN!

(The sounds grows louder.)

Uh, oh. I think we're going to have to try again. This time, louder! Okay? Ready? One, two, three. QUIET DOWN!

(The sounds grow even louder.)

One more time, I think we're almost there. One, two, three. QUIET DOWN!

(Silence.)

THUMBELINA

Thank you!

(She lies down as if to go to sleep. A clock is ticking in the distance.)

Oh, boy. The evening is rolling on and on and pretty soon the sun will come up, and I'll have to marry that gross burping boy.

MAMA

(Calling.)

Thumbelina!

THUMBELINA

Wait a minute...did you hear something?

(She asks someone in the audience.)

Did you?

MAMA

Thumbellllllllllinnnnnnnaaaaaaa!

THUMBELINA

Mama! Can you hear me? Mama?

(MAMA can't hear THUMBELINA, and so she turns away and cries.)

THUMBELINA

I'm here Mama! I'm trying to get home!

(THUMBELINA opens her mouth and lets out a belt of a long, beautiful note. MAMA picks up her head and listens, and then addresses the audience proudly.)

MAMA

That's my girl!

(SUDDENLY, a BEETLE, strumming a guitar, sporting a shaggy wig a la Lennon/McCartney circa 1964 and a Liverpool-ian accent, approaches THUMBELINA.)

BEETLE

Jolly good singing voice you got on ya.

THUMBELINA

You startled me!

BEETLE

Sorry. I heard you singing from the other side of the forest. I've been looking for a lead singer. Wanna join my band?

THUMBELINA

What's the name of your band?

BEETLE

The Beatles, of course. Can't you see that I'm a beetle?

THUMBELINA

Most beetles I know aren't carrying a guitar.

BEETLE

Well then, you know nothing about music.

THUMBELINA

Can you please help me? I have to get off of this lily pad before the sun comes up and - oh, look! - it's coming up now!

(The sun is visibly starting to rise.)

BEETLE

Why don't you just fly?

THUMBELINA

Because I don't have wings.

BEETLE

Why don't you just jump?

THUMBELINA

I'll never make it if I jump.

BEETLE

Then swim! Don't you know how to swim?

THUMBELINA

I'm a very good swimmer, but the frog mother told me that I'd be eaten alive by all sorts of horrendous creatures in the water. If I go in there, I'll never make it out alive!

BEETLE

Believe everything everyone tells you and you'll never know the truth. The frog does okay in the water, doesn't she? And she's not much smaller than you. Is she?

MAMA

These were very wise words from a beetle.

THUMBELINA

Mister Beetle, I can't thank you enough.

BEETLE

No problem, little girl. In the end, we get by from a little help from our friends. Cheerio!

MAMA

And with that, Thumbelina dove right into the water.

(THUMBELINA holds her nose, and pretends she's jumping right in.)

MAMA

At first, everything was very foggy, and she was a little bit scared, but then...when things became clearer...she actually started to take in all the interesting sites.

(With this, THUMBELINA floats around stage,
as do many interesting creatures when
they're introduced.)

MAMA

She passed a very friendly bug that was very late for work,
but not too late to say hello.

THUMBELINA

(Like "Good Day")

Blub, blub!

BUG

(Tipping his hat.)

Blub, blub!

MAMA

A brightly-colored dragon fly, taking a stroll with a
tadpole. Some goldfish in a school...

GOLDFISH

(Carrying a book.)

Two times two is four, two times three is six, two times
four is...what's two times four?

THUMBELINA

Eight!

GOLDFISH

Thank you!

MAMA

And a beautiful, iridescent creature, sunbathing.

THUMBELINA

My, you certainly are beautiful. What are you?

BEAUTIFUL THING

I'm too pretty to talk to you. That's what I am.

THUMBELINA

Well, excuse me!

MAMA

And when Thumbelina had finally drifted to shore, she was
disappointed her water adventure had come to an end.