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*Hans Christian Andersen*

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## ??? ?????? Hans Christian Andersen

Hans Christian Andersen's classic tale of the smallest girl in the world is brought to life for a new generation! Thumbelina was a very special girl: no bigger than your thumb, she captivated everyone who met her with her charm and innocence when she emerged from the center of a flower. Soon after, Thumbelina was spotted by a frog, who stole her away to marry his son. Trapped floating on a lily pad, Thumbelina was rescued by a beetle who took her back to his family. Thumbelina's adventures were just beginning as she would meet fish, butterflies, moles, and other woodland creatures, all enchanted by the littlest girl in the world. Would she ever find happiness?

## ??? ?????? Details

Date : Published 1998 by ??????? ?????? (first published 1835)

ISBN :

Author : Hans Christian Andersen

Format : 24 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Classics, Childrens, Fiction, Short Stories, Fairy Tales, Picture Books, Audiobook, European Literature, Swedish Literature, Scandinavian Literature

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## From Reader Review ??? ?????? for online ebook

### Andy Hickman says

“Thumbelina: A Little Golden Book (Paperback)” by Hans Christian Andersen

24-page Read-Along

Moved loved story from childhood.

Still have it.

“Once there was a tiny little girl who could fit into the palm of your hand.” (p1)

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### Bionic Jean says

**Thumbelina** is a much-loved fairy story by Hans Christian Andersen. It has been told and retold by many authors over the years, as well as being adapted for both television and film. It was first translated into English by Mary Howitt in 1846, from "*Tommelise*", written by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, and published as one of a series of seven fairy tales in 1835. "*Tommelise*" had been disliked by the critics at the time, for being too informal and chatty, and lacking morals.

Here is one of the original illustrations by Vilhelm Pedersen, to "*Tommelise*",

The story has undergone several minor changes, but retains its one very strong visual theme. It tells the adventures of a tiny, pretty girl, no bigger than your thumb. The idea was not a new one, however. Jonathan Swift's satire "*Gulliver's Travels*" included Lilliputians who were only six inches tall. Voltaire also, like Jonathan Swift, wrote of both giant and miniature peoples. E.T.A. Hoffmann's "*Princess Brambilla*" of 1821 even includes a tiny being inside a flower, (plus he wrote another, erotic tale, in which a tiny lady "*a span in height*" torments the hero).

But perhaps Hans Christian Andersen took the most direct inspiration from the traditional tale of "*Tom Thumb*". "*The History of Tom Thumb*" was originally published in 1621, and was the first fairy tale to be printed in English. In both tales, a childless woman consults a supernatural being, to ask for a child. Hans Christian Andersen began his tale with a witch, although part of the sanitisation process began with Mary Howitt replacing this character with an old beggar woman.

I shall now tell the story before commenting further - including the ending (because everyone knows how fairytales end) under a spoiler tag.

The story starts,

*“Once there was a woman who longed for a child of her own, but she didn't know how to get one.”*

Depending on the translation, either a witch or a beggar woman gives the peasant woman a barleycorn. Sometimes it is in exchange for food, and sometimes with mysterious hints about planting the peppercorn in a flowerpot to "*see what you shall see!*" Once planted, a beautiful tulip soon grows with a tiny girl, Thumbelina (or "*Tommelise*"), nestling in its flower. Thumbelina and the peasant woman are briefly very

happy together.

One night, Thumbelina is sleeping in her walnut-shell cradle, when she is carried off by a wicked female toad who thinks she would make a perfect bride for her son. The toad takes her far away and leaves her on a waterlily pad, coming back later. When Thumbelina wakes, and learns what has happened, she is very unhappy.

*"She did not want to live with the horrid old toad or live with her son".*

Some little fishes saw her distress, and nibbled the stalk so that the waterlily pad could drift away. A passing butterfly too seemed very taken with the pretty little girl, and Thumbelina tied the butterfly to her sash, so that she could speed along the river faster. They floated along the river this way, until a stag beetle, also smitten by the pretty little girl, snatched Thumbelina away. He ignored the butterfly, who was still anchored to the leaf.

*"He thought she was beautiful but when all the others said how ugly she was, he began to believe them".*

So the stag beetle listened to his friends, and began to tire of Thumbelina. Eventually his friends cast her out, leaving her perched on a daisy.

*"There she sat and wept, because she was so ugly that the beetles didn't want to know her; yet really she was as pretty as can be - as perfect as a rose petal."*

Thumbelina lived in the forest for almost a year, becoming very thin and cold. She tried to protect herself from the elements, but when winter came, she eventually went in search of help. A kind old female field mouse took pity on her and gave her shelter. The field mouse tried to convince Thumbelina that her best chance was to make a good marriage, suggesting her friend whose

*"house is even bigger than mine, with huge rooms, and he wears a gorgeous black velvet coat".*

Thumbelina heard over and over again how handsome and rich the mouse's friend was, and eventually this friend dug a tunnel from their house to his. He was a mole.

The mole did not like any of the same things Thumbelina did. He could not sing; he did not like the sunshine or the flowers. He did not even seem to be bothered about the dead bird at the entrance to his house. Thumbelina felt sorry for the bird, a swallow, and tried to bury him, but he revived, so Thumbelina secretly cared for him all through the winter until he recovered, and *"flew away into the dazzling sun"*.

Thumbelina found the prospect of being married to such a creature repulsive. *"She did not care for the boring old mole"* because he spent all his days underground and never saw the sun or sky. But the field mouse urged her on, arguing that the mole was such a good match for her, *"And he's rich - with the finest kitchen and cellar. You should be thankful"*.

(view spoiler)

It's hard to know why this story became such a classic, and particularly why it still has such universal appeal. I strongly suspect it must be the image of the pretty, doll-like little girl inside a tiny flower. The original critics seem to have been rightly concerned about the lack of a moral frame, however. What message is this sending to young children? What of the peasant woman, who is left bereft so shortly after she is given her heart's desire? Or the butterfly, chained forever to the leaf and left to die?

Is the message that if you are pretty you can have everything you want? Or is it that if you are pretty, you never have to do anything for yourself, and everybody will always help you? Is it that if you are ugly, like the toad, or the stagbeetle, you are also bound to be cruel? What are we to make of the entrapment theme, or of marrying the prince of your dreams? Why did Walt Disney choose to make a apparently reasonably faithful adaptation of this story as an animated film as recently as 1994? For my part I almost daren't delve into the subtext of this story.

But then, this is a fairy story, with a fairytale ending. And the more stories I read by this author, with their ugly outcasts, their rejections, humiliations or disappointments, the more I realise that he was inventing fantasies to express his own troubles and deep desires.

I just wish I could get the annoying song out of my head. Danny Kaye sure has a lot to answer for ...

Link here at your own risk!

*"Thumbelina, Thumbelina, tiny little thing  
Thumbelina dance! Thumbelina sing ..."*

**Amina says**

I don't like this story, never had and never will, the writing was good but I have a huge problem with the beauty concept in it, the fact that thumbelina was sad because she thought she wasn't beautiful so that even a bug refused to have her, that the toad and his mother were ugly without even knowing them et j'en passe.

## Sara Kamjou says

NK92 says

I kind of liked it. There's pros and cons.

One, its kind of about faeries and animals and the girl loves plants and animals and being outside.

But, its centred around marriage and theres a bit about arranged marriages and marrying animals and I don't think that's cool for a kids book

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### **LaCitty says**

Racconto molto delicato e pieno di eventi fantastici davvero deliziosi, dalla nascita della protagonista da un fiore alla sua scoperta del mondo alle vicissitudini che la portano ad essere promessa sposa prima di un rospo, poi di un maggiolino e infine di un talpone. Il bene, si sa, alla fine trionfa, ma il racconto rimane lieve e mai stucchevole. Una scoperta!

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### **Amber says**

3.5 stars

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### **Christopher says**

I recently watched Don Bluth's *Thumbelina* movie for the first time and did not much enjoy it; I found so much wrong with it (including a gaping plot hole) and hoped that if I read its source material (Hans Christian Andersen's short story of the same title), I would find that to be much better, but that is unfortunately not the case. I really wish that I liked this short story more than I do because I normally really enjoy Hans Christian Andersen's stories. They are usually full of very detailed description that paint vivid pictures in the mind of the reader, and they are also usually complex; it is usually clear that Andersen put a lot of thought into the story and planned its events out in advance, and the ending usually makes sense and is in keeping with the character's previous conflicts and/or desires, but none of that is the case here. In comparison to other works that I have read of Andersen's, description here is minimal, and the story feels rushed. The events don't seem to connect with each other, as if Andersen made them up as he went along. (There is nothing wrong with this method of writing as long as it doesn't hinder the quality and the cohesiveness of the story, but it unfortunately *does* here in my opinion.) The ending comes out of nowhere and does not feel earned since there is no buildup to it (which is one thing that the movie does admittedly do much better). I am just not much of a fan of this short story at all, and I think that it is, at least in part, due to the fact that I am used to higher quality from Andersen.

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### **Meowkel says**

Bruh why didn't she come back to her fucking worried mother?! She chose that prince over her mom?! Seriously? What an a-hole! Hahaha but it's a fun read.

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### **Syeda Nasir says**

Thumbelina is an example of folklore, written for children between ages six and ten. This story centers on how Thumbelina, a tiny girl the size of a thumb, escapes after being kidnapped by a frog. The language was clear and easy to understand but contained too much detail. Also, I read the audio version

of this book so I do not know what the illustrations look like. The voice and tone of the speaker was not very great so this made Thumbelina a little dull. Moreover, I did not like some of the themes that were presented in this book since they seemed to be a little inappropriate for young girls who are reading this. What was the author trying to convey? That you can only be good if you have a pleasant appearance? And if you are pretty, then you can have anything you desire? If you are ugly, like the toad, then you are bound to be cruel? Therefore, I felt that this book was heavily lacking in the moral department.

I also felt that the plot was slightly lacking concerning the involvement of Thumbelina's mother. She was very worried for Thumbelina but never got to see her again; it was almost as if the author forgot about her, making the ending incomplete. I think that children may potentially like this book, but may also feel that it conflicts with their values and morals, depending on the environment that they were reared in.

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### **Kim. E. says**

Thumbelina, written by Hans Christian Andersen in 1835, is one of the books in the Golden Age of Illustrated Series, which refers to a time frame from the last quarter of the 19th century until just after WWI when writing norms changed.

One of the personal challenges for myself this year is to read 30 children's books that I didn't read when I was a child myself.

Thumbelina is a little tiny thumb sized girl wanted by a woman when she asked a witch to help her meet her dream. Thumbelina faces many adventures throughout, and is a nice story.

Book also includes a biography of Hans Christian Andersen that was very interesting. At one point in his life he lived with Charles Dickens for five years.

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### **Ahmed Ejaz says**

*There he had a nest over the window of a house in which dwelt the writer of fairy tales. The swallow sang, Tweet, tweet, and from his song came the whole story.*

### **OVERVIEW**

A woman wants to have a child. She wishes a Fairy for this. The Fairy sells her a seed, tells her to plant it and when the seed will have grown into a flower, there will be a child inside it. The woman finds a girl in the flower when it has grown. The girl is barely 1 inch high. So small. That's why the woman named her **Thumbelina** . She is also called Little Tiny. One day, a toad kidnaps her to marry Tiny with her son. But the tiny escapes from being married to the toad's son. And from here onwards, she meets the animal who wants to marry her with another animal whom she doesn't like. Again, she escapes from it by the help of swallow who she has helped when he was wounded.

### **THINGS I LIKED**

#### ***Thumbelina, the Protagonist:***

I liked her sooo much. She is just adorable. Now she is one of my favourite protagonists.

### ***The Scenes:***

They are so easy to imagine. I was feeling that I was watching it rather than reading.

### **THINGS I DIDN'T LIKE**

#### ***What About the Woman?***

She didn't appear after the toad kidnapped Tiny. Author didn't mention her. Like he just forgot her. Or he just wanted to bring Tiny in the story. That was really odd.

### **RANDOM THOUGHTS**

This story is kind of adventurous. Tiny goes through many difficulties and tries to sustain herself in different seasons.

I must say, Hans Christian creates very adorable lead characters. I have read his another story few months ago, named "The Little Match Girl". I also liked that story's protagonist. BUT he makes his protagonists to suffer so much. He strongly attaches us with his protagonists and afterwards he makes them to suffer, suffer and JUST suffer.

I am not objecting this thing. I know that's the part of writing. But these things make me little upset. I don't know why.

But I am happy Hans didn't end up this story like the "The Little Match Girl".

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### **Mekiah Johnson says**

I love Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales, I am a sucker for them, but while this one was good, it wasn't as good and as strong as his other ones. So I am giving it three or four stars.

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### **Ahmad Sharabiani says**

Tommelise = Little Tiny or Thumbelina, Hans Christian Andersen

"Thumbelina" (Danish: Tommelise) is a literary fairy tale written by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen first published by C. A. Reitzel on 16 December 1835 in Copenhagen, Denmark, with "The Naughty Boy" and "The Traveling Companion" in the second installment of Fairy Tales Told for Children. "Thumbelina" is about a tiny girl and her adventures with appearance- and marriage-minded toads, moles, and cockchafers. She successfully avoids their intentions before falling in love with a flower-fairy prince just her size.

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**Anna J. Shelby ? says**

My favorite fairytale!

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