

Thumbelina – Lesson Guide



Book List:

- *Thumbelina* by Hans Christian Anderson
- *Thumbelina; Tiny Runaway Bride* by Barbara Ensor
- *The Adventures of Tom Thumb* by Marianna Mayer
- *Thumbelina; The World's Smallest Horse* by Heather C. Hudak

Videos:

- *Thumbelina* (Warner Brothers, 1994)
- Fairie Tale Theater
- Barbie Presents Thumbelina

Activities:

- Color/ Trace/ Write worksheet (below)
- Thumbelina craft – walnut shell boat, handprint flower with thumbprint Thumbelina painting or egg carton flower
- Character Puppets (below)





Thumbelina

A retelling from the original Hans Christian Anderson story

By, Kendra Bott

Once upon a time a woman wanted to have a baby. She got older and older, but still no baby came. The woman decided to ask the old witch that lived in the woods for help.

“I don’t care if it’s a boy or a girl,” the woman told the witch. “I don’t care what sort of baby I get. I just want someone to take care of and love.”

The witch gave her a seed and told her to plant it in a pot and see what grows.

Weeks went by and soon the plant grew a stalk, then a bud and flower. The woman bent to sniff the flower bud and as she did it opened to reveal a tiny girl inside. The girl was no bigger than the woman’s thumb, so she named her Thumbelina.

Thumbelina’s mother loved her and took care of her, giving her whatever she needed and wanted. A clamshell was made into a bed for Thumbelina. Her mother made her a lake out of a large bowl filled with water and added a walnut shell boat for Thumbelina to sail.

Thumbelina was very happy. Her mother told wonderful stories and taught her to sing beautiful songs.

One night as Thumbelina was sleeping on the windowsill in her clamshell bed, Mrs. Toad hopped by.

“What a sweet girl. She would make a wonderful bride for my son, Toadikins.”

Mrs. Toad gently stole Thumbelina away. When the girl woke, she was on a lily pad in the middle of the stream. She heard the toads on the bank talking and preparing a mud house for Thumbelina and Toadikins to live. Thumbelina started to cry. She did not want to marry a toad.

The fish in the stream heard her cries and chewed the stalk of the lily pad to set it free. Soon Thumbelina was gliding down the stream. A butterfly flew by and Thumbelina took off her sash and offered one end to the butterfly. The butterfly grabbed it and raced Thumbelina down the river as fast as she could. Thumbelina laughed and squealed.



The noise she made attracted a maybug. He swooped down and captured Thumbelina right off of her lily pad. As he was flying with her, his sister maybugs flew next to him.

“Look at what I caught,” he said. “Isn’t it lovely?”

“I think it’s rather ugly,” said one sister.

“I agree,” said the other. “She only has two legs!”

“And no antenna at all!”

The sister bugs laughed and flew off. The maybug was embarrassed. He dropped Thumbelina off onto a daisy and flew away.

Thumbelina was confused, but relieved. She spent the rest of the summer traveling through the woods, eating the nectar from the flowers and drinking the morning dew. She weaved a hammock of grass and slept under the stars each night. She woke every morning to the beautiful bird songs and sang with them.

Weeks went by and the days grew colder. Soon it was winter, and Thumbelina had no shelter. She walked deep into the forest where she met Mrs. Fieldmouse.

“Oh, dear. Oh, dear,” said Mrs. Fieldmouse. “You shall stay the winter in my hovel. You can help me with the cleaning and tell me stories to pass the time.”

Thumbelina was happy to have a place to stay and Mrs. Fieldmouse seemed so nice. But a few days later they had a visitor.

“Thumbelina, this is my neighbor, Mr. Mole.” She whispered to Thumbelina later that Mr. Mole was well off, with a large underground home that had many rooms. “He would make a good husband for you. You’d be well taken care off.”

Thumbelina did not want to marry Mr. Mole. He was grumpy and blind and did not like the sunlight or flowers or bird song, or anything that Thumbelina liked. She did not want to be rude to her friend Mrs. Fieldmouse though, so when Mr. Mole invited them to his house, she went.

They walked through the underground tunnels, some just under a layer of leaves. It was dark underground, and Thumbelina tripped over a small hill. It turned out it was the body of a swallow.

“Don’t mind that,” Mr. Mole said. “Birds are dumb. They just fly and sing. This one is dumber than most it seems, for it didn’t know when to fly south for the winter, and it froze to death a few days ago.”

Mrs. Fieldmouse agreed with Mr. Mole, but Thumbelina felt sorry for the bird. She draped her shawl over the bird’s chest as the other two moved down the tunnel.





“Are you one of the birds that woke me with music during the summer?” she asked the swallow, kneeling to put her head on its chest.

Thump-Thump. Thumbelina jumped back in surprise. The bird was not dead. She had just heard his heartbeat. Thumbelina was filled with joy. For the next few weeks she nursed the bird back to health.

“Thank you,” said the swallow one night. “I am much better and can fly home in the morning.”

“Oh, no, Mr. Swallow,” said Thumbelina. “It’s snowing hard right now. We are in the middle of winter. You must wait ‘til spring.”

All winter Thumbelina cared for the bird, not telling Mrs. Fieldmouse or Mr. Mole about her new friend, because she knew they wouldn’t approve. Mr. Mole asked Thumbelina to tell him stories and sing to him.

“Your stories are wonderful,” he told her. “But I do not think I enjoy your singing. It sounds too much like the birds.”

Thumbelina smiled. He did not mean this to be a compliment, but Thumbelina loved the bird songs, so she enjoyed being compared to the birds.

Mr. Mole asked Thumbelina to marry him. They would get married in the spring.

“What marvelous news!” Mrs. Fieldmouse said. “He will be a good husband to you.”

Thumbelina did not want to marry Mr. Mole, but she did not want to disappoint Mrs. Fieldmouse. She knew that she would need a warm place to spend the winters, and Mr. Mole was not cruel to her, so she said yes. But she would sorely miss the sun and the birds and the flowers.

Spring came and Mr. Swallow prepared to fly away.

“Come with me,” he told Thumbelina. “Climb on my back and we will fly somewhere that is warm all year round, always summer, never winter.”

Thumbelina had no idea there was a place in this world that winter didn’t visit. She was relieved to have another option than marrying Mr. Mole.

“That sounds lovely,” she told Mr. Swallow and hopped onto his back.



They flew for hours and the sun felt luminous on Thumbelina's shoulders. They soared over mountains and lakes and grassy plains. Finally, they landed in a grove of trees next to a lake. There was a beautiful garden of wildflowers on the other side of the lake. Thumbelina found a walnut shell and turned it into a boat to sail to the other side of the water.

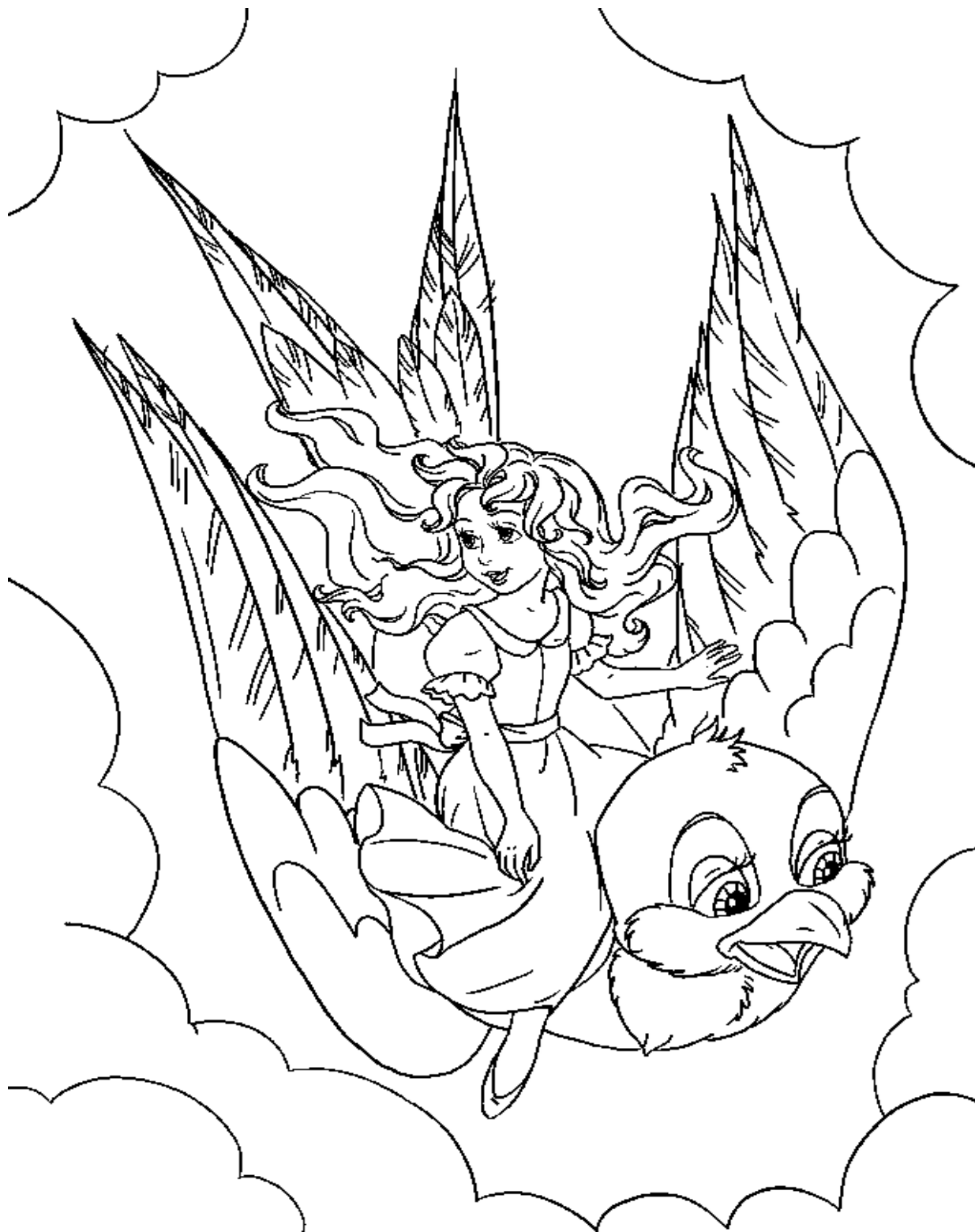
There were tall white flowers with long petals. Thumbelina went to get a closer look and was surprised to find a boy coming out of the petals.

"Hello," he said. He had a golden crown on his head and wings on his back.

Months later, Thumbelina married the fairy king, who was the boy in the flower. He was a much better prospect than Toadikins or Mr. Mole, for he enjoyed the sun and warmth, just like she did. He loved Thumbelina's songs and they both enjoyed the flowers and birds. Mr. Swallow visited her every year when he traveled south for the winter. Thumbelina was very happy.

The End

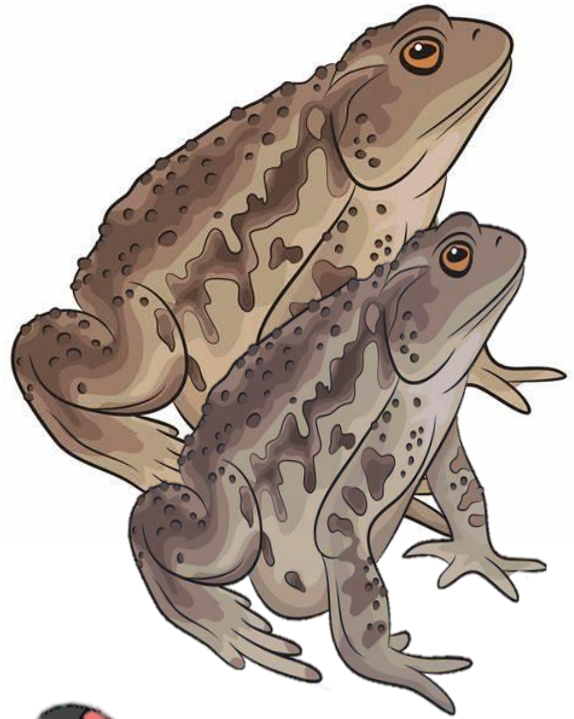
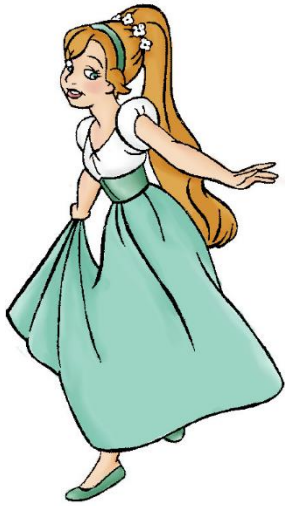


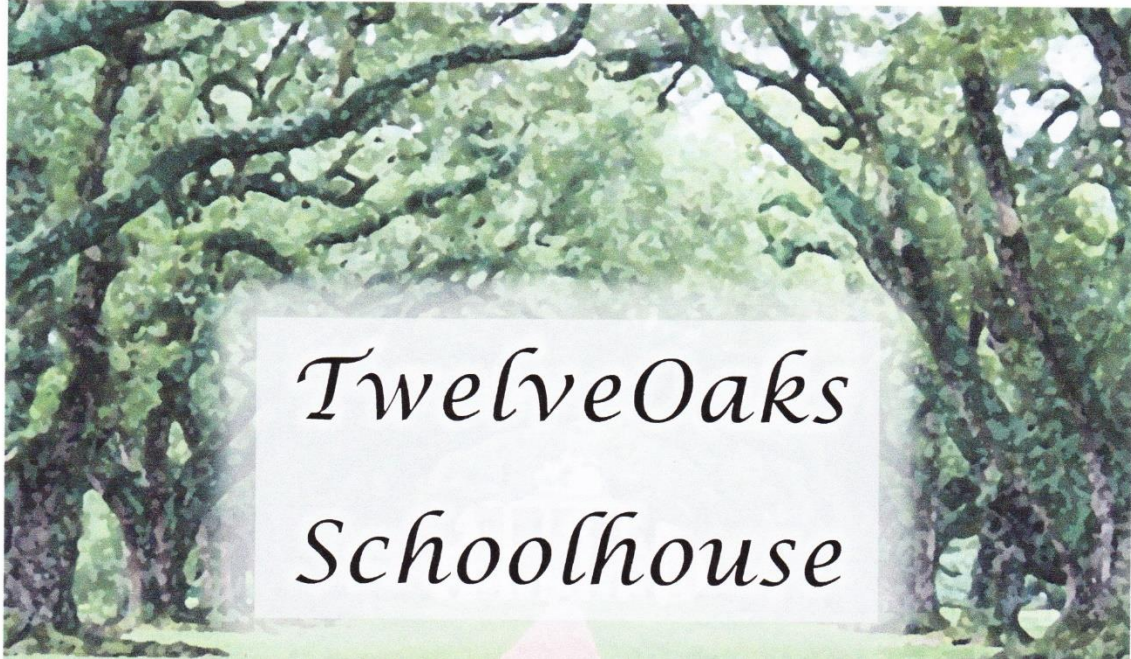


Thumbelina

Thumbelina Puppets

Print on cardstock, laminate if you wish, cut out and glue to craft sticks. Use puppets when telling the story of Thumbelina.





Feature Stories and Fairy Tales ~ Thumbelina

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