

Thumbelina (part 2).

The frog watched and waited until Thumbelina's mother went inside the cottage to get a cup of lemonade for her. Then, the frog jumped out from behind the reeds where he had been hiding and captured Thumbelina. He carried her away to the river where he lived and placed her on a lily pad. "Rest here while I go and make the plans for our wedding," said the frog. With that, he hopped away. Thumbelina did not want to be the wife of a frog. She wanted to be back at home with her mother. She became sad and began to cry. Her tiny tears fell into the river and made ripples on its surface. When the fish in the river saw her crying, they decided to help her. They nibbled through the stem of her lily pad until it broke free and floated down the river, far away from the frog. Thumbelina flowed gently on the river until finally the lily pad came to rest on a grassy bank. She climbed up the bank and found herself on the edge of a meadow. "I miss my home, but this will be a fine place to live until I can find my way back to Mother again," she said. She wove herself a tiny hammock out of grass and hung it up beneath a large daisy which sheltered her from the dew at night. During the day she wandered through the meadow. If she was hungry, she had a bite of clover or some honeysuckle. She became friends with the butterflies and ladybugs in the meadow, and at night she slept safely under her daisy roof. One day, Thumbelina noticed that the days were getting chilly. Fall was coming. Leaves began to fall from the trees. The nights were becoming colder, too. She made herself a blanket out of cotton from the meadow, but soon it was not enough. "I am so cold and I don't know when I'll get back home! How will I keep warm in the Winter?" cried Thumbelina. She began to take long walks, looking for a place where she could be safe and warm. One day, she found a small burrow inside a tree. She poked her head inside to see if anyone lived there. Inside the little burrow lived a friendly old field mouse. The burrow was snug and cosy, for the mouse had lined it with cotton and hay from the meadow. "Excuse me," said Thumbelina quietly, "may I come into your warm burrow for a moment?" the old field mouse almost never had any visitors in Autumn, and was happy to have one. "Come in, come in! You poor dear. Come over by the fire and have a cup of tea."