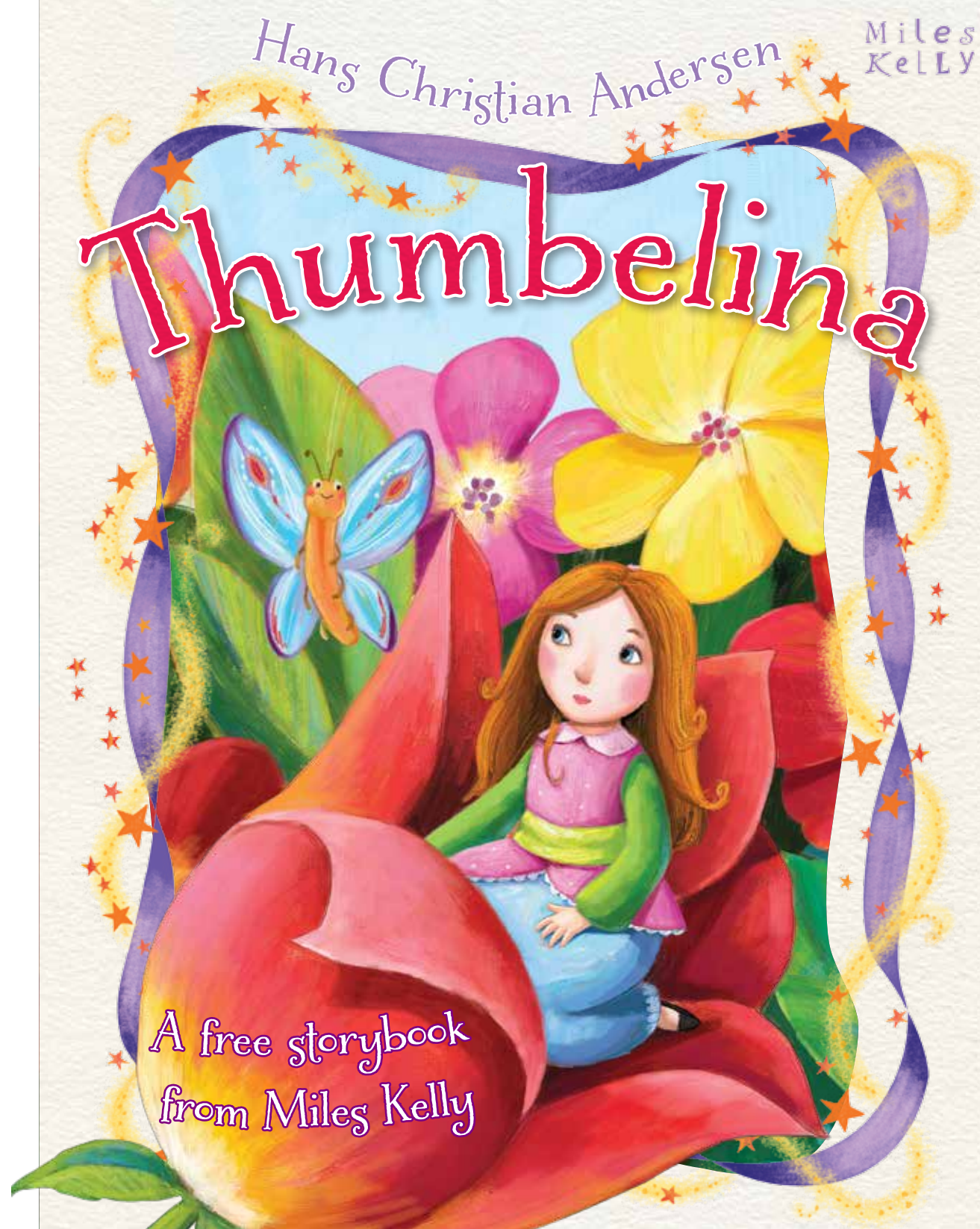


Hans Christian Andersen

Miles
Kelly

Thumbelina



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Thumbelina chose one of the loveliest large white flowers. To her surprise, in the centre of it there was a little man with bright shining wings, wearing a golden crown. He was the spirit of the flower. There was a spirit living in every flower, but he was king of them all.

Thumbelina and the flower king fell in love with each other at once. They were soon married, and the best wedding gift was a pair of wings for Thumbelina, so she could flutter from flower to flower just like her husband. Everyone rejoiced – especially the swallow.

Thumbelina

This book
belongs to

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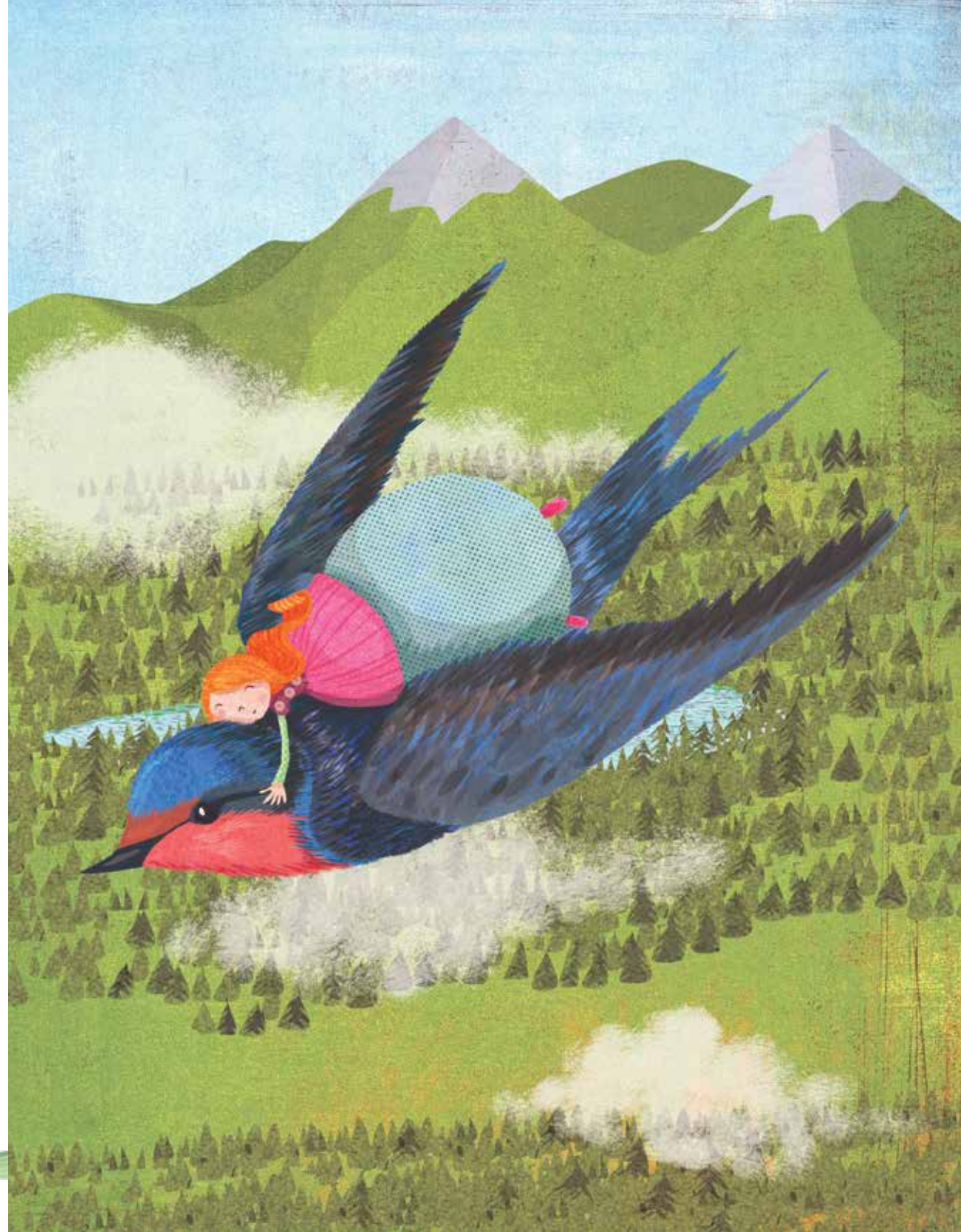


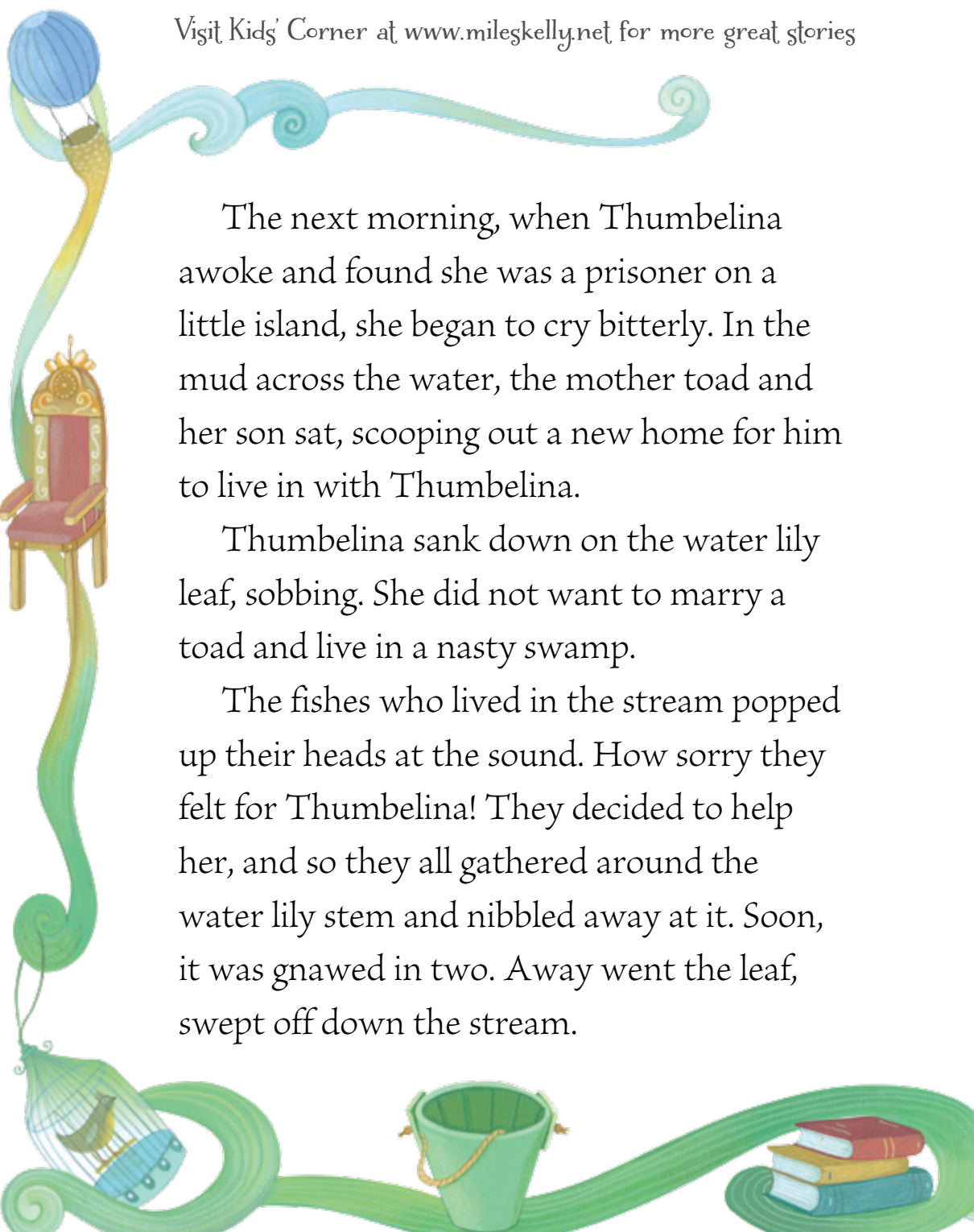


Thumbelina

There was once a woman who longed to have a tiny little child. An old witch gave her a barleycorn to plant, which grew into a large stem with a striking, brightly coloured bud, rather like a closed tulip. The woman kissed its red-and-yellow petals and – *POP!* – the bud opened. In the middle sat a tiny girl, no taller than a thumb. So the woman called her Thumbelina.

Thumbelina was enchanting. She was dainty and beautiful, and when she sang, she

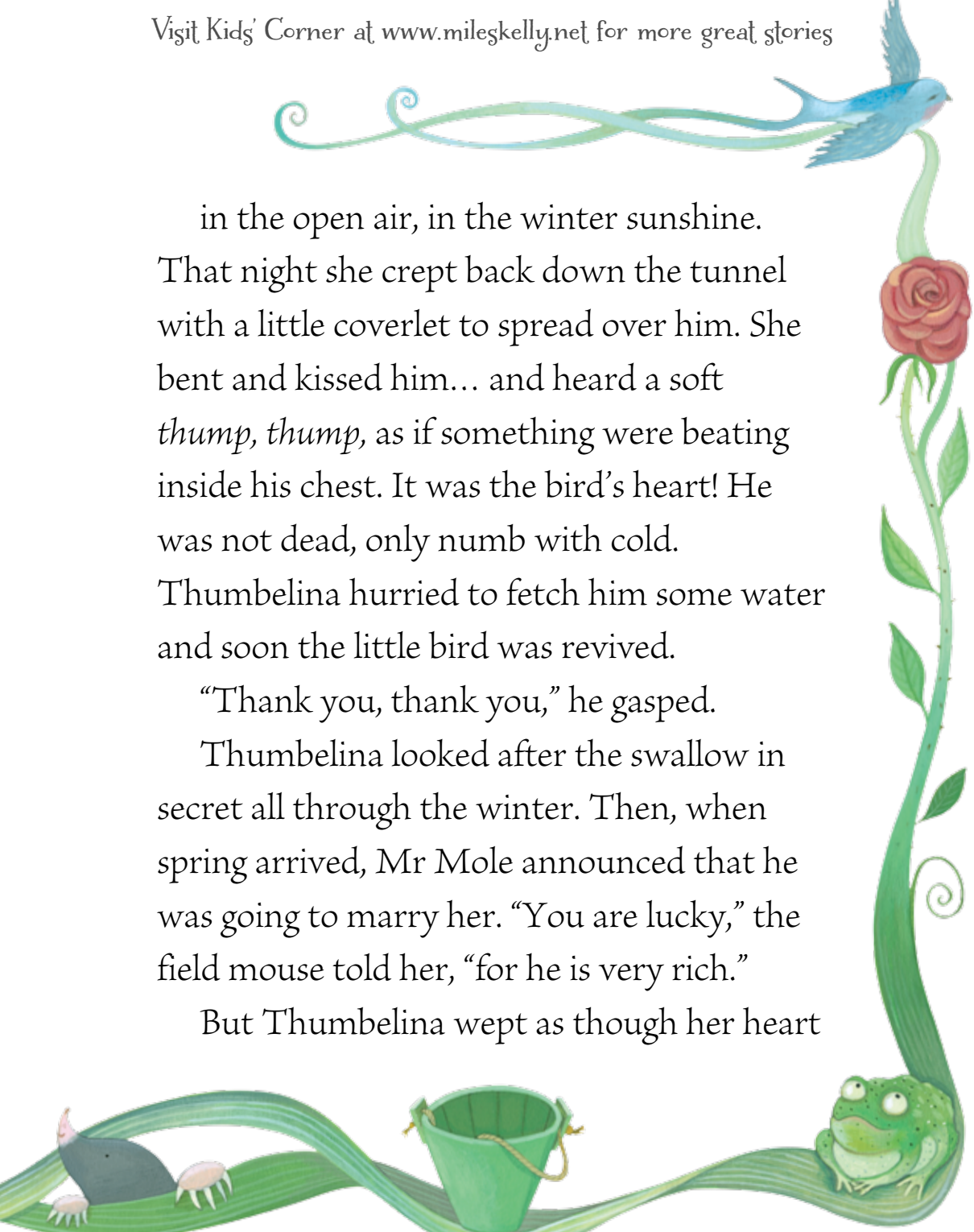




The next morning, when Thumbelina awoke and found she was a prisoner on a little island, she began to cry bitterly. In the mud across the water, the mother toad and her son sat, scooping out a new home for him to live in with Thumbelina.

Thumbelina sank down on the water lily leaf, sobbing. She did not want to marry a toad and live in a nasty swamp.

The fishes who lived in the stream popped up their heads at the sound. How sorry they felt for Thumbelina! They decided to help her, and so they all gathered around the water lily stem and nibbled away at it. Soon, it was gnawed in two. Away went the leaf, swept off down the stream.



in the open air, in the winter sunshine. That night she crept back down the tunnel with a little coverlet to spread over him. She bent and kissed him... and heard a soft *thump, thump*, as if something were beating inside his chest. It was the bird's heart! He was not dead, only numb with cold. Thumbelina hurried to fetch him some water and soon the little bird was revived.

"Thank you, thank you," he gasped.

Thumbelina looked after the swallow in secret all through the winter. Then, when spring arrived, Mr Mole announced that he was going to marry her. "You are lucky," the field mouse told her, "for he is very rich."

But Thumbelina wept as though her heart

would break. She could not bear the thought of living underground, never to be out in the warm sunshine again.

"I am strong enough to leave now," the swallow told her. "Climb on my back and I will take you away with me."

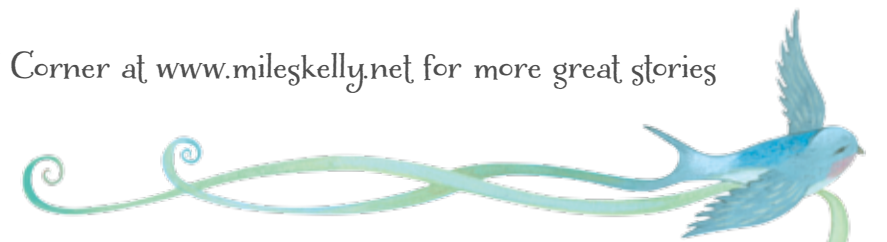
"Oh yes, please!" said Thumbelina.

So up they soared, over forests and lakes and mountains, far away from Mr Mole and the darkness of his underground home.

At length they came to a warm country, and a blue lake in a magnificent garden, where there was a palace of dazzling white marble. "Choose one of the flowers in the garden," said the swallow, "and I will put you down in it to rest."

had the sweetest voice ever heard. In the daytime, she liked to float on a dish of water in a tulip petal boat, and paddle back and forth. At night, she slept in a bed made of a polished walnut shell with a rose petal quilt.

One night, a horrid old mother toad came hopping in through an open window. The creature looked at the sleeping girl and thought, 'Here's the perfect wife for my son.' She picked up the walnut shell and hopped off with Thumbelina, out of the window and into the garden. A broad stream ran through it, and so the mother toad swam out into the middle of the water and laid the walnut shell, with Thumbelina still sleeping in it, upon a flat water lily leaf.



“She hasn’t got any feelers!” said another.

“She looks like a human being – really ugly,” sneered a third.

Then the beetle changed his mind about Thumbelina. He picked her up again and flew down. He left her sitting on a daisy, crying.

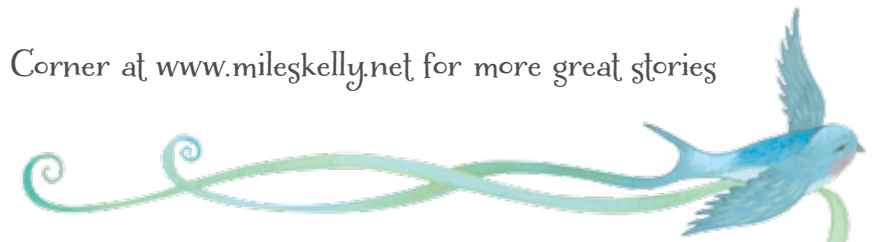
All summer long, poor Thumbelina lived alone in the woods. She wove herself a hammock of grass beneath a big burdock leaf for shelter. She ate honey from the flowers and drank the morning dew.

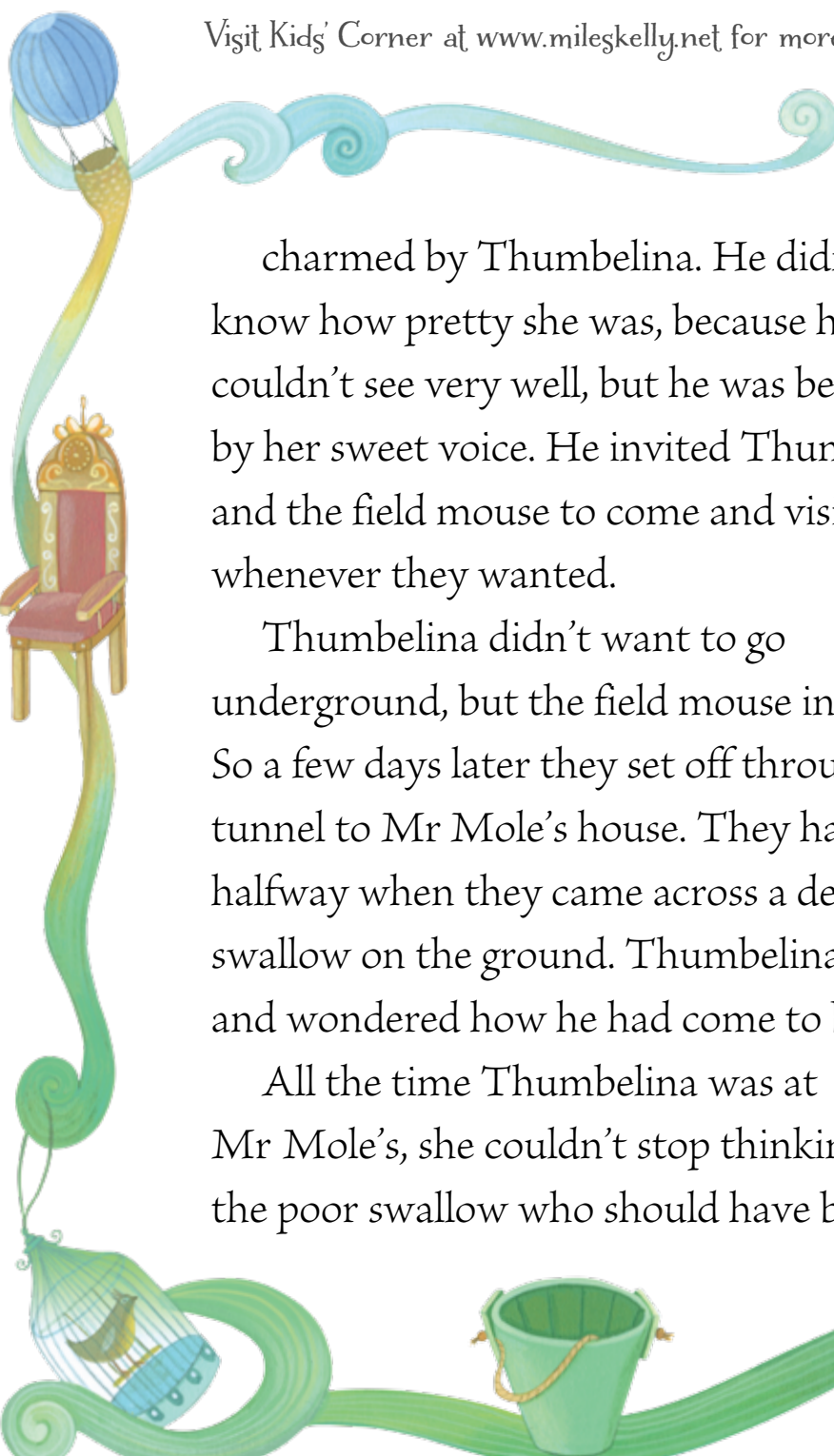
But then the winter came. Snow began to fall and Thumbelina shivered with cold. The big burdock leaf withered with all the other plants and flowers, and Thumbelina had to search for new shelter.

In a nearby grain field she came across a little field mouse, who was very kind and took pity on Thumbelina. “You can live with me in my house,” the tiny creature said. “All I ask is that you keep my house clean and tidy and tell me stories, for I love stories.”

So Thumbelina did as the field mouse asked and she was comfortable and content.

A few days passed and the field mouse’s friend, Mr Mole, came to visit. The mole was totally

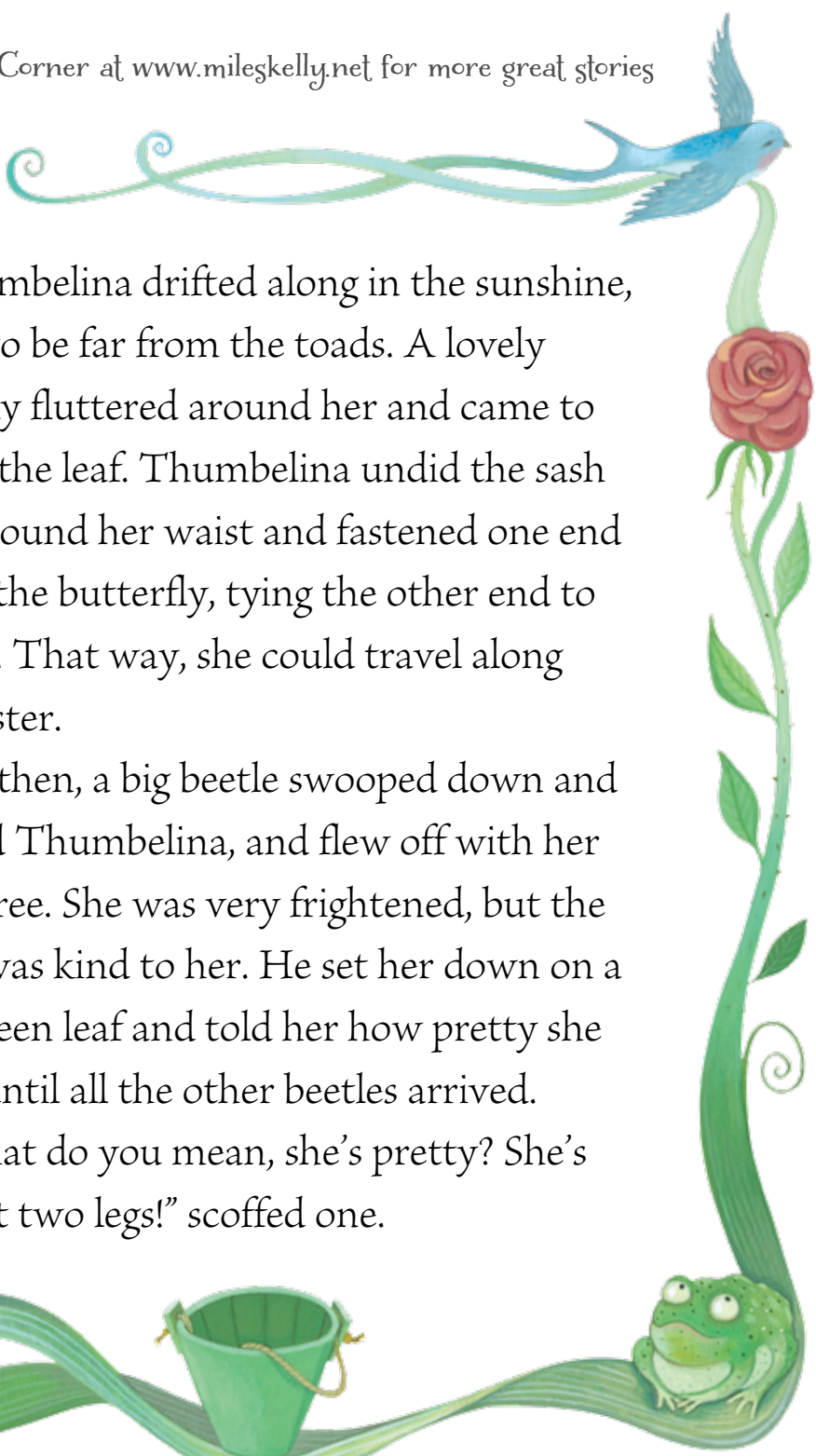




charmed by Thumbelina. He didn't really know how pretty she was, because he couldn't see very well, but he was bewitched by her sweet voice. He invited Thumbelina and the field mouse to come and visit him whenever they wanted.

Thumbelina didn't want to go underground, but the field mouse insisted. So a few days later they set off through the tunnel to Mr Mole's house. They had got halfway when they came across a dead swallow on the ground. Thumbelina was sad and wondered how he had come to be there.

All the time Thumbelina was at Mr Mole's, she couldn't stop thinking about the poor swallow who should have been out



Thumbelina drifted along in the sunshine, happy to be far from the toads. A lovely butterfly fluttered around her and came to rest on the leaf. Thumbelina undid the sash from around her waist and fastened one end of it to the butterfly, tying the other end to the leaf. That way, she could travel along even faster.

Just then, a big beetle swooped down and grabbed Thumbelina, and flew off with her into a tree. She was very frightened, but the beetle was kind to her. He set her down on a large green leaf and told her how pretty she was – until all the other beetles arrived.

“What do you mean, she's pretty? She's only got two legs!” scoffed one.