

**THE AMAZING
IMAGINARY ADVENTURES
OF PENELOPE AND
THOMAS**

A BED TIME STORY SERIES

By John M. McMaster

This book series is dedicated to Hannah my daughter who listened with amazement as I told her the first Penelope story one evening as we looked up at a picture on her wall and wondered why someone would collect all the different things in the wall cabinet. And to my son Harry whose many questions always made me dig deeper than my own imagination had ever gone. And to Katie who listened even when the stories sometimes didn't make any sense at all but still smiled and said. That was good daddy.

Daddy

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE (THE GOLDEN KEY)

Once upon a time there was a little girl and her name was? PENELOPE.

Penelope lived in a big house at the top of a hill. Through the front door up the winding stair case there in front of you is a door. Open the door and there on the wall is a cabinet. In the cabinet are all the special things that Penelope has collected from her amazing imaginary adventures with her friend Thomas.

One morning Penelope woke up and jumped strait out of bed. She was very excited because her mum was taking her for a picnic to the beach.

“Oh, where is my bathing suit?” said Penelope.

“Penelope!” her mum shouted up the stairs, “Thomas is here.”

Penelope ran down the stairs to tell Thomas that she couldn't play today as she was going to the beach. Penelope's mum saw that Thomas was very disappointed and a little bit jealous.

“You can come with us if it's ok with your mum Thomas”, said Penelope's mum.

Thomas didn't even stop to say a word he just ran as fast as he could to ask if he could go. All the way home he repeated,

“Oh please let her say yes, oh please let her say yes, oh please let her say yes”.

He burst through the door and before he could say a word his mum said,

“Yes Thomas.”

How does she do that thought Thomas?

“Oh thank you mum”.

“I’ve already packed you some things for the beach. Have a great day”.

At the beach Penelope and Thomas decided to be the King and Queen and build the finest castle fit for their kingdom. The tide was out and the sand was damp, great for building castles.

”What’s that in the water Thomas?”

“It’s a bottle Penelope, and it’s got a message inside.”

“Quickly Thomas, let me read it.”

It read, *“To anyone who finds this note, please help us. We have been locked in the dungeons of a castle beneath the sea and there is no one left to let us out. This note is our only hope that someone will find us.”*

“We must help them” said Penelope.

“How?” said Thomas, “I can’t swim?”

“Close your eyes Thomas, and our imaginations will take us there.”

They sat on the wall of their sand castle and closed their eyes.

Suddenly they were swimming far beneath the sea. Thomas was going slightly red in the face, as he was still holding his breath.

“It’s ok to breathe” said Penelope.

“This is cool” said Thomas, “were are we going?”

“To help those poor people locked in the dungeons.”

“Oh, ok!” said Thomas.

They could see a light in the distance.

“Come on Thomas we’re nearly there.”

As they came closer they saw a spectacular castle surrounded by a city that seemed to cover the whole ocean floor.

“There’s nobody there.” said Thomas.

“Strange” said Penelope.

“Scary” said Thomas.

They swam through the window into a long corridor.

“Shouldn’t we use the door?” said Thomas.

“Come on” said Penelope “Hurry”.

It was dark and in the distance they could hear a faint sound like someone was saying help us. Deeper and deeper they swam into the castle and they could now here clearly the sound of someone shouting, help us! Penelope and Thomas were now walking on the bottom. The sound of shouting had stopped and they walked slowly through the dark corridors.

“I don’t like this,” said Thomas.

“It is a little spooky,” said Penelope.

Suddenly a shark appeared out of the darkness.

“Quickly Thomas hide between these walls!”

They both jumped out the shark’s path between the two walls. Then something grabbed Thomas’s arm.

“Ahhhhh” shouted Thomas “get it off me, get it off me.”

“It’s ok” said a voice “it’s me the one you came to save.”

“Don’t do that” said Thomas, “I nearly had a heart attack.”

“Thank you for coming” said the man, “we have been waiting so long for someone to rescue us.”

Penelope could see through the darkness that the dungeon was filled with thousands of people.

“How did you all get here?” said Penelope.

“The king was a greedy man and stored up a great treasure from ships that were lost at sea. His treasure grew so much that he was afraid that someone would steal it. He commanded his servants to lock up anyone who looked like a thief. Eventually everyone started to look like thieves to him. Finally he locked up his servants even me his most faithful servant and even his Queen. All alone with his treasure he had no one to serve him. As he grew weaker he tied the dungeon key around the neck of a giant eel with a royal red ribbon and locked it up with his treasure. Unfortunately the eel guarded the treasure so well that he ate the king one day when he came to count his money.”

Thomas’s eyes were opened so wide as he stuttered.

“And let me guess, you want us to get the key off the eel’s neck to let you out, right?”

“Penelope”, he said, “I think this would be a good time to head back to reality.”

“Come on Thomas we have to get that key.”

“Somehow I thought you might say that” said Thomas.

They walked up the winding stairway to the thrown room looking around for the doorway to the king’s secret treasure room.

“Well, I guess we can’t find it” said Thomas. “To bad!”

“Look Thomas here, behind the thrown, a secret door.”

“Be careful Penelope!”

Penelope pulled opened the door and looked inside. It was dark and narrow.

“Come on Thomas lets go.”

“Ladies first” said Thomas.

“Ok, but if I get eaten Thomas be sure to grab the key, the eel won’t be so hungry after eating me.”

“Ok, I’ll go first” said Thomas.

They made their way down the long dark tunnel. Finally they could see a light ahead. As they turned the corner they entered a room that sparkled with all kinds of gold, silver, diamonds and every precious stone you could imagine.

“It’s spectacular” said Thomas. “I’ve never seen so many beautiful things in one place. The king was very lucky.”

“Not really” said Penelope, “what use was all this treasure if he lost his whole kingdom to protect it?”

“I guess your right Penelope.”

“Now all we have to do is get the key to set his kingdom free.”

Suddenly they started to spin around and around in a swirling pool.

“Penelope what’s happening” cried Thomas.

“I don’t know Thomas.”

Penelope looked up and saw the giant eel swimming round and round making the water spin faster and faster.

“Hold on to my hand Thomas” said Penelope.

Penelope reached up and grabbed on to the eels tail. The eel snapped at Thomas’s heels.

Penelope climbed up the eel’s back.

“ Hold on Thomas!” shouted Penelope “I’m nearly there.”

She reached up and untied the red ribbon.

“I’ve got it!” said Penelope.

“Now what?” said Thomas.

Penelope took the red ribbon and tied it over the eel’s eyes.

“Ok Thomas, get to the passage.”

Penelope and Thomas took the key back to the dungeon and freed all the people.

“Thank you” said the servant “From this day on you will always be known as the king and the queen of our city beneath the sea.”

He handed the key to Penelope and told her it would always remind her of the heroic thing she did for the city under the sea.

A wave washed up the side of Penelope and Thomas’s sand castle splashing their feet. They opened their eyes and as the water washed back the sand, there was the golden key.

Penelope took the key and put it in the cabinet to remind her of the amazing imaginary adventure under the sea with her friend Thomas.

The End and the Beginning of another amazing imaginary adventure.