

THELMA ★ THE UNICORN ★

Movie Novelization

By Kate Howard

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Chapter 1

The roar of the crowd was deafening. While the band tuned their instruments and prepared to wow their fans, the auditorium thrummed with excitement. This was it—the singer all these people had been waiting their whole lives to see . . .

THELMA!

The time had finally come for Thelma and her best-friends-slash-bandmates, Otis and Reggie, to perform live on the biggest stage, the best stage, *the* stage—the one and only Sparkle-Palooza! The crowd was cheering wildly, waiting for the concert’s headline



act: the one and only Thelma and her legendary band, the Rusty Buckets.

Thelma nestled into her favorite spot, standing confidently right at center stage, and pushed her snout up to the mic. “Sparkle-Palooza!” she crooned. “Give it up for the world’s next big musical legends . . . *One, two, three, four!*”

With a final smile for the crowd, Thelma leaned into the mic and began to sing. She let herself relax into her music. She could feel the crowd cheering, pushing her on, into the heart of her song.

The Rusty Buckets were totally *on*. They had never sounded so good. This was the moment they’d been waiting for—their chance to finally headline Sparkle-Palooza—and they were owning it.

“And now,” Thelma said as she strutted across her stage, “over here on lead guitar, my best friend, the Six String Slayer himself—Otis!”

Otis leaned into his guitar and began his solo. “Woo-hoo!” he cheered. “I’m gonna melt your face off! Ahh!”

With a grin, Thelma turned to her other best friend and bandmate. “And over here on drums,” she crooned, “the Master of the Beat—Reggie!”



Reggie looked up from his drums and bleated, “I’m a donkey.” He pounded away on his drums, saying nothing more.

“Okaaay,” Thelma said, laughing. “I thought he’d say a little more than that.”

Settling back into her spot at center stage, Thelma took up the mic again and prepared to wow her adoring fans. She tilted her nose up and said, “Now, finally, I write the songs, I sing the songs, and my name is—Thelma!” She grinned widely and added, “And *we* are the Rusty Buckets!”

The crowd whooped and hollered. Fire blasted out of the edge of the stage as the Rusty Buckets prepared to light the place up with their performance.

Reggie turned to Otis. “Hey, Otis,” he said. “Do you know what time it is?”

“Ooh!” Otis whooped. “I know what time it is. Thelma, do *you* know what time it is?”

“Heck yeah, I know what time it is!” Thelma yelled.

She backed up to give herself space to get a running start. Thelma braced herself for liftoff as the crowd began to chant, “Thelma! Thelma! Thelma!”

Thelma raced across the stage as her bandmates and the crowd cheered her on. At the edge of the

stage, Thelma leapt up into the air and, with all four legs splayed out like a starfish flew out to land in the crowd's waiting arms. She could hear cries of "We love you, Thelma!" coming from the sea of voices below her. Her face was a picture of joy, and her mane rippled behind her as she practically floated in midair over the crowd.

But then Thelma looked down—just in time to see the crowd split in two beneath her. Just moments before, thousands of adoring fans had been waiting to catch her, but now there was nothing except—

"Huh?" Thelma gasped, then landed with a loud thud on a scratchy bale of hay.

