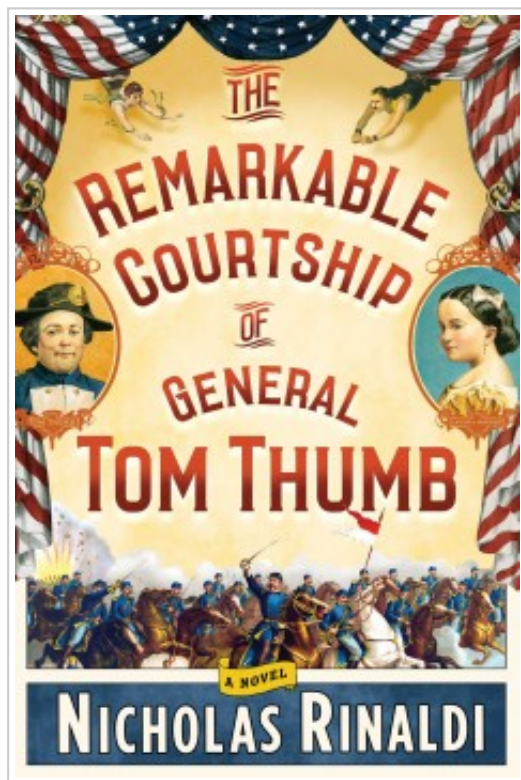


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## The Remarkable Courtship of General Tom Thumb

by Nicholas Rinaldi

**Price: \$26.00**(Hardcover)

Published: August 12, 2014

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

**From the Publisher:** An irresistible novel set against the backdrop of the American Civil War and based on the real life of Tom Thumb, a young man only twenty-five inches tall, who became America's first internationally recognized entertainer. By a writer whose previous work has been called "sprawling and elegant" (The New York Times Book Review), this novel weaves together a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at life during the Civil War and a moving tale of one misfit's odyssey to find his place in the world. Discovered at age four by P.T. Barnum, Tom Thumb soon finds himself traveling internationally, sitting on the laps of the queens of Europe, and entertaining the masses. He meets Czar Nicholas and the King of Saxony, and is invited to the Tuilleries by Louis Philippe. After marrying Lavinia Warren, Tom and wife are hosted at the White House by President Lincoln....

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## What We Say

Oddly, Tom Thumb simply doesn't come across as that interesting in this novel based on the life of the diminutive entertainer. Made famous by P.T. Barnum, "General" Tom Thumb became a worldwide sensation, traveling the globe, meeting heads of state and generating intense interest wherever he went. Barnum suspiciously hires a female little person but Thumb can't help himself -- he falls in love with her and they marry in one of the most media-driven events of its day (think Tiny Tim getting hitched on "The Tonight Show" or more like Charles and Diana for comparison sake). His life and story are inherently compelling and the backdrop of the Civil War provides drama. But Rinaldi's story never quite comes across as specifically about Tom Thumb. It might be to a story's credit that we forget who we're talking about and their unusual height, but surely it would inform Thumb and his every day dealings with the world in ways large and small that would make his perspective and take on the world truly unique? But time and again throughout this picaresque tale, Thumb merely registers as one more person and not a terribly interesting or insightful one. His life was too rich to keep this novel from being actually dull, but Rinaldi never quite brings him to life and the background -- Lincoln, Walt Whitman, the war, Queen Victoria -- remains far more vividly etched in your mind. Poor Tom Thumb is overshadowed in his own tale. -- Michael Giltz

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