

Synopsis

of

The Little People

A small plane lands at a remote field in the Andes of Argentina and a young pregnant woman gets off, one of the men deferentially greeting her as Fraulein Braun, having her correct him that she's now Frau Hitler. They move off towards the waiting car.

In a present-day apartment in California, fourteen-year-old Danielle "Dani" Shawn is watching a video of the Nazis for a paper she is doing on Anne Frank. Her mother, Teresa, interrupts her as they have to leave. As they drive, Dani warms her singing voice and then sings a song with her unbelievably beautiful voice. Her mother is so entranced she doesn't notice a red light and when Dani warns her, she slams on the brakes and slides into the empty intersection. They stop safely, but a truck coming the other way isn't so fortunate, slamming into their stopped car.

Dani awakens in the hospital to find her father, Jamie, and step-mother, Liz, relieved that she's conscious again. She startles them by remembering exactly what happened, the expression on their faces when she asks where her mother is giving her the answer that makes her sob in agony.

They drive on the beautiful roads of the Puna district on the Big Island of Hawaii, Dani staring out the window listlessly. Liz suggests she might like to enter a singing contest being held at the resort her father is building, perhaps make some friends before school starts in the Fall. Dani tells them she is never going to sing again, blaming herself for the accident that killed her mother. Dani's new home is lovely, secluded in the woods, but she is despondent.

Dani doesn't want to go anywhere, but Liz insists she come with them and in the car reveals they're taking her to a dog-breeder where she can pick out any dog she likes. Dani perks up at the idea, never having been able to have pets in her apartment, but tells them she wants to rescue a dog from the pound. Her parents think that's a lovely thought and Dani picks out a little female dog she names Teri after her mother. Watching Dani play in the backyard against the forest with her new best friend, Jamie and Liz think maybe things will work out eventually.

Jamie takes Dani with him on his motorcycle to the resort his construction company is just finishing, Wulflair, set on the ocean with the dramatic Kilauea and Mauna Loa volcanoes inland from it. It's a beautiful resort but the environmentalists picketing at the entrance don't like it. Jamie introduces Dani to the owner of the resort, a man in his late sixties named Wulf Thiler who cautions her about letting her dog loose in the swimming pool, Dani carrying Teri in her backpack. As her father goes to check on

some things, Dani explores down on the beach with Teri romping, and as she crosses a wooded peninsula below the resort she finds several buildings enclosed by an electrified fence with an armed guard on a dirtbike watching her. A large pipe leads out into the ocean.

She retreats and goes back to the resort, her father explaining that the plant is very hush-hush, Thiler having a secret new process to make fresh water from sea-water, and he has nothing to do with it. She asks her father why he and her mother didn't stay together and Jamie explains as best he can, Dani telling him she missed him and was mad at him for a long time. He knows. She tells him she misses her mother and he says he does, too, both embracing in tears.

Thiler in his office gets a phone call from the plant manager telling him about Dani being outside the fence, Thiler suggesting they might worry more about the environmentalists, suggesting they may run a test against them.

Dani is reading a book in the backyard when Teri finds something of interest in the woods and disappears, Dani going after her. She finds Teri sniffing at a trail beside a stream and they follow it through the trees to where a short waterfall goes into a lovely pond surrounded by forest. Enchanted, Dani sits on the edge of the waterfall above the pond and talks to her mom, saying she misses her and knows she wouldn't have wanted her to stop singing. Teri barks in agreement and Dani sings for the first time since the accident. On the other side of the pond, the fronds move by themselves as some unseen eyes watch Dani singing on the ledge, and as she heads back to the house a male Irish voice proclaims her a living angel.

On a sightseeing expedition, the Shawns view the Kilauea volcano visitor's center looking out over the awesome volcanic field as the guide tells the geologic history of the Hawaiian Islands. Leaving, they find a fire truck and emergency workers at an auxiliary road down the mountain, learning that a minor eruption engulfed a vehicle carrying environmentalists and a Washington bigwig.

From the water treatment plant, Thiler and his manager view the scene through binoculars, voicing satisfaction that the environmentalists have been taken care of and, judging by the test, the real thing is going to be spectacular, Thiler saying perhaps they'll circle at a safe distance to watch it happen.

As the Shawns head into the resort for dinner, Liz shows Dani the sign about the upcoming talent competition, but Dani shrugs it off. Thiler stops to visit as they're eating and they tell him about the tragedy on the mountain that he claims to know nothing about though he smiles to himself as he leaves.

Dani returns to her refuge at the waterfall and begins singing once again. The Irish voice talks with a Hawaiian woman, both unseen, about the loveliness of Dani's

singing, saying it shows her heart is pure and he wants to reveal themselves to her. The woman is less certain, but goes along.

When Dani comes down to the pond and sings another song, she's startled to see two little people suddenly appear seemingly from nowhere, telling her how wondrous they find her singing. He introduces them as Seamus Shawn and his wife, Princess Illani. When he hears that her name is also Shawn, he exclaims they must be related, Illani telling him to get a grip. Dani tells them she just moved there, her mother having died, and they give condolences, saying they know of the house with the man who builds things. Seamus then reveals who they are. He's a leprechaun and Illani is a princess of the Menehune, both of them Little People, magic little people. They prove it by popping in and out of invisibility. They caution she must not ever tell anyone, Dani wondering who would believe it. Despite being dazed by what's happening, when they ask her to sing them another song, Seamus asking if she knows any of his old country, Ireland, she sings *Danny Boy* sending Seamus into rapture.

When Dani comes back to her house, her parents ask how she enjoyed exploring the woods and Dani can only say it's amazing. She then tells them her mother thought her singing was a gift from god and wouldn't want her to quit, so she'd like to enter the talent competition, not to win but just to sing for people again. Her parents are delighted, glad that she's healing.

They all arrive at Wulfslair and while Jamie goes to check on work, Dani goes with Liz to sign up for the competition. The woman taking their application tells she'll talk with Maestro Belotti, the entertainment director, and they should get with him to go over what she'll perform. On their way home, Liz says she's glad the resort is nearly finished and maybe they can take a vacation, asking Dani if there's somewhere she'd like to see. Dani tells them she finds the woods amazing and wants to go all over, Jamie saying that settles it. He won't tell them what he has in mind, but drives them to a motorcycle shop where he buys them all dirtbikes so they can explore together.

Practicing on the dirtbikes at the house, Liz is hopeless while Dani is a natural. Jamie has to go to work at the resort and Dani heads to explore the woods on the dirtbike, taking Teri in the backpack wearing her own little helmet. Pulling up at the waterfall, she doesn't know if Seamus is around, but when she sings, she hears him applauding her and then he pops into sight. Seamus gets her to give him a ride on the dirtbike, something he's never done, carrying Teri in the backpack on his back. He mentions that the goddess Pele finds the new resort a blot on the sacred volcano, Dani saying if leprechauns and Menehune are real, why not goddesses? Jamie approaches on his dirtbike and when Seamus pops into invisibility, Dani has just enough time to grab the backpack that appears to be floating in the air before her father gets there.

Jamie exclaims over the lovely spot she's discovered, and tells her Maestro Belotti at the resort wants her to come in to go over her act and that her mother – he corrects

himself and says her step-mother – will take her down there. Dani tells him, no, Liz is her mother and that she loves both her mothers. Jamie is touched and happy. Seamus can't resist popping into view behind Jamie to throw Dani a kiss before they leave.

Liz and Dani meet the imperious Maestro Belotti in the lounge at Wulflair, Belotti guessing that Dani will want to sing something from Lady Gaga or the like. Dani startles him by telling him she wants to sing Handel's aria Ombra Mai Fu in Italian, and then nearly offends him by asking if she can hear him play before accompanying her on the piano. He begins playing with little expectation and is completely staggered when he hears Dani. When she's finished, he's completely besotted, telling her he will get for her as best an orchestra as he can, saying he'll pay for it if Signor Thiler won't. Dani finds the whole thing kind of funny, Liz, who was tearful from her singing, telling her she can have a huge career if she wants it.

Dani, Seamus and Teri on her dirtbike pull up at the top of the waterfall and Seamus asks that she sing something from up there while he watches from below, taking Teri down with him. She thinks it's kind of dramatic, but assents and sings for Seamus. But when she finishes, she hears cheers and clapping from numerous unseen people and then they appear, Illani next to Seamus and the whole place crowded with Menehune. She sings more for them to their delight then meets everyone down at the pond. Leaving, she tells Seamus she's going snorkeling in the ocean the next day but agrees to meet him the day after before she goes to the talent competition in the early evening. Riding home, she exclaims to Teri about this magic that has happened to them.

In a speedboat, the Shawns pull up by the resort and dive into the ocean to snorkel. The bottom of the water is alive with beautiful fish and plants. Dani finds herself further from the boat, down by the water treatment plant, and sees below her the end of the pipe coming from the plant. The bottom beyond it falls into a trench and is covered with dirt debris. She dives to the pipe and finds a layer of gunk coming from it then notices the propellers of a speedboat coming towards her from the shore. She goes to the surface to find a boat of armed guards ordering her away. Her father and Liz rush up in their boat to get Dani and take off, all of them alarmed and somewhat irritated to find armed guards ordering them about on the open ocean, Dani telling them about the debris coming from the pipe. Liz apologizes for swearing about them, but Dani agrees with her.

Thiler's manager tells him about the incident and Thiler shrugs it off, telling him it's not much longer now. His manager begins to give him the Hitler salute, but Thiler stops him, telling him their deed will speak for them, his manager almost in tears as he says he wishes Thiler's mother could see it, Thiler responding that she does, they both do.

Dani give Seamus a thrilling ride on her dirtbike before heading off for the talent competition, remarking how good has come from the tragic incident that took her mother. Seamus tells her the things of this world constantly change, but the power that allows all to be runs steady and true, unchanging, and that Dani's heart is such that someday she'll see that clearly. Dani gives him a kiss on the cheek telling him she couldn't be happier to know him. He then gets her to agree against her better judgment to sneak him into her parent's SUV so he can go to the competition and hear her performance.

As she sings and stuns the audience, Thiler and his manager watch in equal amazement from the wings. They talk of their reluctance to have Dani die along with all the others, the manager even wondering if they could kidnap her to keep her safe. Thiler says no, she'll die along with the swine, but that he regrets it and will never forget her. When they move off, something in the wings moves slightly to show Seamus was there next to them.

Dani is getting ready for bed when there's a knock on her window and she finds Seamus insisting to come in. He tells her what he overheard and they both think the guarded plant must have something to do with whatever horrible thing Thiler is planning. Seamus gets Dani to agree to drive him to the plant where he'll use his invisibility to get in and look around.

Dani parks the dirtbike in the woods above the plant and they move down the hill to where she'll keep watch as Seamus sneaks in and out. Seamus follows a truck through the gate to get inside and eventually finds an underground facility with a tunnel leading up and into the mountain, tracks carrying a tow-car up the tunnel that also has the pipe that goes out into the ocean. He follows the men in the tow-car as they head into the mountain and up the tunnel he sees there is an access shaft pulling in fresh air with a built-in ladder leading to the surface though he follows the men further upward.

Dani's gets a call from her father on her cellphone and she assures him she's fine, just exploring in the woods and will be back later. But the ringing has alerted two guards above her and they capture her, smashing the cellphone and alerting guards at the plant by radio what's happened, marching her down the mountain without discovering her dirtbike.

Seamus finds himself trapped as the tow-car pulls an excavating machine back down with no room for him to get around it, going up the access shaft to let it pass. He decides to go up the access shaft, finding at the top a hatch concealed in a bush on the mountain. When he comes out, he sees Dani down the hillside being forced into a pick-up truck that takes her into the plant. He hurries back for access shaft.

Dani is brought into the underground facility and guarded in an office. Seamus reaches the underground facility as Thiler and his manager show up and go into the office. Confronting Dani, Thiler reveals who he really is, Adolph Hitler's son, and expresses his anger that the world was able to make his father the devil because they won the war and now he would have his revenge. Still, he won't kill Dani directly, making him sing for him one last time before having her locked in the supply closet to die from the fires of nature as he puts it.

Dani looks for a way out, finding nothing likely until there's a knock on the door saying "room service." It's Seamus' voice and he lets her out, exclaiming how lucky she is that he got into the underground room to see her being taken into the office, getting into the office when Thiler arrived.

When Seamus tells Dani about the tunnel, they unravel Thiler's plot, the pipe in the ocean that carried away the debris of their excavation into the volcano now turned into a water pipe to pump water into the magma chamber to explode the volcano and create a mega-tsunami. Dani insists that Seamus go for help, Seamus wondering how a leprechaun is going to make anyone listen to him and not wanting to leave her behind. She makes him go but is startled to find him back in the office when she closes the door. He tells her the underground room is almost deserted, only a technician at the pumping controls left. They plot how they can both get out.

The technician is startled when Dani comes strolling out of the office towards him. He reaches for his rifle only to find it suddenly floating in the air pointing at him, an unseen voice telling him the goddess Pele commands him to do as he's told or the gun will fire, Dani finding Seamus' lie kind of funny. Together, Seamus and Dani get the technician to comply and bind him. They then hurry up the tunnel, Seamus carrying the rifle.

As they run up the tracks, Dani hears the water moving through the pipe in the tunnel and realizes the pumping of water into the volcano has begun. She thinks to go back and destroy the pumping controls, but then they hear the sound of the tow-car pursuing them. They run for the access shaft to the surface, and Seamus tells her to climb out, having left the hatch unlocked, while he holds off the pursuit. But Dani says they have to stop the pumping and takes the rifle from Seamus and they climb up the ladder a short ways where Seamus holds onto her from above as she turns and fires the rifle into the water pipe. It explodes in a deluge that carries them up the shaft and out the hatch into the air before falling they fall to the ground, dazed but unhurt.

Down at the plant, however, guards on dirtbikes are hurrying out, and she and Seamus run for her dirtbike, finding some of the guards are moving to cut them off from reaching help while the others chase them directly. Seamus tells Dani to head for the waterfall, Dani wondering what good that will do them, Seamus telling her she

doesn't yet know all the secrets. He goes into almost a meditative state while she hurries to keep ahead of the pursuit.

At the waterfall, Seamus makes her stop and lie down on the ground with her arms outstretched as the guards speed up on them. But then sticks rise from the ground, knocking the guards from the dirtbikes and pummeling them into unconsciousness.

As the guards lie unconscious on the ground, a truck pulls up at a distance and Dani sees Thiler at the wheel staring in disbelief. Seamus tells her they can't stop a truck and to flee, Dani jumping on her dirtbike and taking off past the pond, Seamus riding with her. He explains he summoned the Menehune through his telepathic powers with his soulmate, Illani, and he and Dani express that they're soulmates as well. The bike's engine dies and they agree they'll use the same trick they played on the technician to take Thiler.

Dani gets behind a tree as Thiler pulls up and confronts her, admiring her resourcefulness and asking how she did that with the guards. Dani lies that it was gas from a rift she knew was there, holding her breath while the guards didn't. He approaches with a gun and tells her he doesn't want to shoot her, but for his plan to succeed she must now come with him. As he rushes her, he's sent sprawling by the unseen Seamus lying in his path, and as he scrambles to recover his pistol, it rises by itself and aims at him. Dani steps out from behind the tree. On his knees stupefied, Thiler stares at the floating gun until he notices Dani hurrying towards him and turns to her. "This is for Anne Frank," she says as she delivers a right-hook to his face that flattens him on his back unconscious. Rubbing her fist, she tells Seamus "Faces are hard. That hurt," Seamus telling her it hurt Thiler more. They look at him taken out, and both smile broadly.

Dani is concluding her performance in the talent competition, dressed in a beautiful gown on a large, elaborately dressed stage with Maestro Belotti and an orchestra behind her in a big concert hall, television cameras on her with one broadcast onto a large screen to one side, the audience standing and applauding wildly even before she finishes.

On the stage unseen next to her, Seamus says he's pretending they're applauding for him and it's wonderful. Jamie and Liz watch as she bends and seemingly kisses the air next to her, the whole thing shown on the big screen. They wonder what that was about, but she's the star and the savior of the world and can do what she wants. Seamus says to her, "Soulmates for life" and she responds, "Forever" as the applause goes on and on.

THE END