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Maria Yiassa

# Liberty

## the ship of freedom



Illustrated by  
Elena Tsaprouni

PAPADOPOULOS PUBLISHING

LIBERTY-THE SHIP OF FREEDOM

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MELINA ILIOPOULOU - MARIA YIASSA

# Liberty

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*Dedicated to all  
the people of the sea...  
To the sailors who travel  
with the songs of the wind for company,  
to the captains who set  
the right course for the ships,  
and to all the crews who fall asleep  
to the lullabies of the waves.  
Because thanks to them,  
ships are not just machines  
- they are dreams that travel!*

M.I. and M.Y.





One of us knows what shipping, cargo, ports, and ships mean. The other knows what a classroom, children full of questions and dreams mean. What do we have in common? Our love for stories – and one question: why not bring these two worlds together?

The idea for this book was born from a simple conversation: how can we bring children closer to shipping? How can we show them that, behind ships, there are people, struggles, hopes, and the entire journey of a place?

Melina, coming from the field of education, saw the need for children to be introduced to stories that are not found in school textbooks, but are worth telling. Maria, with her experience and passion for shipping, knew where to look in order to unravel its most interesting aspects.

The Liberty ships, with their adventurous journey and their role in the history of Greece, seemed to us as the perfect starting point. For us, it is very important that

children learn how deeply Greece is connected to the sea – not only through the map, but through stories that awaken pride, curiosity, and imagination.

Through this collaboration, we explored, learnt, and – most importantly – brought different worlds together. And to be honest... we enjoyed it ourselves, just like children do.

If we have managed to plant even a seed of love for shipping in a child, then it was worth the effort. Because in order to love something, you must first come to know it.

Melina Iliopoulou & Maria Yiassa



# Paper Boats

That is why every true traveller  
always creates the country they travel to.

NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS  
*Travelling: Japan-China*

Ever since I was little, I have spent my summers making paper boats. Time holds its breath and, inside my imagination, I sketch my future in a shipyard full of dreams. I cut, fold and glue with the tips of my fingers. With each careful crease, a new paper boat is born, ready to set sail on the waters of my imagination. Time seems to stop for a while, and I become the captain of a fleet with no end.

My shipyard is filled with ships, but not just any ships: cargo vessels, tankers, and a few Liberty ships, my favourites. Each one has its own secret, its own mission. Some are packed with treasures; others sail to magical ports that no one else has ever seen. My boats are white and pure, untouched, like a blank sheet of paper or, if I decide to, I fill them with colours and shapes that come alive as I touch

Little Yiannis spends his summer holidays on an island in the Aegean Sea, where the sun blazes golden across the water and the wind seems to carry dreams through the air. He folds paper boats that make him feel like a young captain and an explorer, ready to discover unknown horizons.

Beside him, his grandfather releases stories of distant oceans and forgotten shipyards. The present intertwines with the past through the legacy of the Liberty ships, vessels that carried supplies, weapons and hope across the darkest waters of World War II. When the war ended and the flames of conflict died down, many Liberty ships passed into the hands of Greek shipowners, becoming the foundation of a new beginning for Greek maritime trade and helping the nation rebuild its connection with the sea.

As the little boy's paper boats sail alongside the legends of the past, a new compass is born within him, not only for sailors, but for all who dare to dream.

*This is a journey of initiation into the sea,  
into memory and into the quiet strength of purpose.  
Because sometimes, a simple paper boat  
can carry you much further  
than you have ever imagined.*

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