

The Train Story

Chapter 1

The inflatable boat is going up and down the waves that wanted to swallow it. There is a cry pain and tears of desperate from people who have something left behind...their whole families under house debris, without being responsible, isn't it fair?

Among them there are two children, exhausted and sad, Ahmet and Dalia. They are two refugees who lost their families in a bombing of Damascus. However, they don't lose their kindness and their humanity.



- I'm cold, I can't stand it anymore. I wish I were at home right now, said Dalia.
- Be patient. I promise you everything will be better soon.
- Do you remember those wonderful days before the war?
- How can I forget them? I still remember how happy we were when we went back from school and a dish of well smelled food was waiting for us with our mother's a loving embrace.

After a tiring and dangerous trek they see on the horizon the lights of a town. They are the lights of hope for every helpless refugee. By the sunrise the boat is in the port. When they go ashore they see all around them happy faces and open hugs to welcome them.

- Where are we? Wonders Dalia.
- I have no idea...
- You are in Volos, a beautiful city in Greece.



The children's look wandered and a hint of smile appears in their faces.

- It's nice here. Both of them say at the same time.

The following days the children are hosted by a family that offers them care and love.

However, this is not the end of their adventure as it will go on in other European countries in order to find their relatives. So, one sunny morning they say goodbye to the hospitable family and take the train from Volos Railway Station to their new destination, Athens.



The train is overcrowded, but in the children's soul this is a serene overcrowding unlike the terrible sounds of bombing. The train seems to them as a huge, tall and colorful caterpillar. It was like the teddy caterpillar they bring with them from their country. By the time they get in there, they cannot take their eyes of the window. They are watching everything someone can imagine. Actually, they watch whatever their eyes have wished to see. Mountains! Trees! Big roads! They see even tunnels, something unique to them.

But what they draw their attention is a huge plane tree. By the time Ahmet sees it, nostalgic memories cross his mind. Like those days before the war, while he was sitting with Dalia under such a huge plane tree. He remembers that he had made a swing on a brunch and they were spending hours and hours of happiness. Then he sighs and says:

- I haven't seen a plane tree for a very long time.

- Yes, indeed. Very long time. Since we were playing with the swing after school.



With the sound of the loud whistle of the their thought are suddenly interrupted. They have arrived in Athens. They are surprised when they realize that over 5.000 people have gathered in and around the station. Deafening voices are heard with offensive comments for the children and other refugees.

- What's going on? You left your caves and came here to infect us with your diseases?
- You are from Ukraine too, you ere not Greek. You have no right to talk in a way like this, another man replies.

Then this man grabs Ahmet and Dalia and takes them out of the station.

- Thank you very much. What's your name? asks Dalia, relieved.
- My name is Haris Domazopulos. Do you want to come and stay with me?
- Yes, we do! Only we aren't a burden.
- No, you are not.

During the following days the kinds hosted by Mr. Haris. They have a lot of walks with him, he buys them new clothes and also some souvenirs, something so important for them.

The next day Mr. Haris advises them to travel to Patra by train. He accompanies them to the station and kisses them goodbye.

The train starts rolling on the rails and calls them to enjoy their journey. After three hours journey and having passed the channel of Korinthos, arrived to Patra. As Mr. Haris told them, ask the conductor the way to the reception centre and tired but relieved find shelter.

They spend their night in a tent among thousands of other refugees, and the next day take the way to Patra's port, as their destination is the Italian city Bari. Suddenly they realize that they have no more money to pay for their tickets and start crying. An old lady takes pity on them as they look desperate, her parents were refugees from Asia Minor too, so she is willing to pay for their tickets.



This was their first step to Europe...