

# THE LITTLE PAPER BOATS THAT WENT TO SEE THE SEA

## 小紙船看海

*A children's literature classic in Taiwan, this book saw the nation's most famous children's author and illustrator join forces to create an adventure about the small paper boats that take the leap to sail down the river and out to sea.*

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Deep in the mountains, a young boy takes a sheet of red paper and folds it into a tiny boat before placing it in a stream where it floats past villages and paddy fields, marveling at the bigger boats around it. Meanwhile, in the city a little girl creates a boat from a white piece of paper and places it in a gutter, where the water from the rainstorm washes it away into the river. When the two boats meet, they realize they both dream of seeing the sea, but will it all be smooth sailing from here?

*The Little Paper Boats That Went to See the Sea* is a classic in Taiwan and was a collaborative creation by the pioneering children's writer Lin Liang, and the innovative illustrator Cheng Ming-Chin. The first edition is now over forty years old, and while it has gone through many revisions over the intervening decades, the book is still beloved by adults and children alike.

### Text by Lin Liang 林良

Lin Liang (1924-2019) was a renowned children's author and national treasure in Taiwan. Alongside his writing, he also hosted radio programs and had previously worked as a primary school teacher, a journalist, and a newspaper editor. He had a gift for using simple words to express rich details and was extremely prolific, creating and translating more than two hundred books over the course of his career. Some of his most famous works include the



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essay collections *Little Sunshine* and *The Art of Plain Language*, as well as the children's book *I Am a Fox Dog*.

## Illustrated by Cheng Ming-Chin 鄭明進

Born in Taipei in 1932, Cheng Ming-Chin graduated from the art department of National Taipei University of Education and is an illustrator and picture book collector. He was an art teacher at a primary school for twenty-five years and an editorial consultant for several publishing houses. He also played a pioneering role in developing art education for children in Taiwan, and he has published several books on the subject, as well as titles about picture books from around the world. His best-known works as an illustrator include *The Little Paper Boats That Went to See the Sea* and *A Collection of Small Animal Nursery Rhymes*.

# THE LITTLE PAPER BOATS THAT WENT TO SEE THE SEA

Translated by Helen Wang

p.6-7

After a heavy downpour  
A little boy on the mountain  
Took a sheet of red paper  
Folded it into a boat  
And placed it gently in the stream.

p.8-9

The red paper boat floated down the stream  
And on and on  
Into a bigger stream.  
With villages on either side  
And paddy fields  
And farmers  
And oxen.  
It was beautiful to see.

p.10-11

The red paper boat floated down the big stream  
And on and on  
Into a river.  
On the river were wooden boats  
That were very much bigger  
than the paper boat.  
On the banks were factories  
With big chimneys  
Spewing out smoke.

p.12-13

The red paper boat thought to itself:  
“The river is so big.  
And there’s so much water.  
And it’s so wide!

I'm a little bit scared.  
I should find a companion  
Then we can go together."

p.14-15

After a heavy downpour  
A little girl in the city  
Took a sheet of white paper  
Folded it into a boat  
And placed it gently in the gutter.

p.16-17

The white paper boat floated down the gutter  
And on and on  
Into a drain.  
It was dark in the drain  
And the water was dirty  
And there were many things  
Floating about  
That people didn't want.

p.18-19

The white paper boat floated along the drain  
And into the river.  
After the dark drain  
The river was so bright.  
You could see the blue sky  
And the green trees  
And the white bridge.

p.20-21

The white paper boat thought to itself:  
"The river is so big,  
And I'm a little bit scared.  
I'll look under the bridge  
And see if I can find a companion  
Then we can go together!"

p.22-23

The white paper boat saw the red paper boat.

The red paper boat saw the white paper boat.  
Slowly, slowly,  
The two paper boats moved closer and closer,  
Until they were side by side.

p.24-25

“Let’s go together!”  
“Let’s go together!”  
Then, side by side  
They floated on.

“Where are you going?”  
“I’m going to see the sea.”  
“Where are you going?”  
“I’m going to see the sea too.”

p.26-27

They floated to the mouth of the river  
Where a city rose from the river banks  
With buildings as high as mountains  
And streets full of people  
And cars everywhere.  
The city was enormous!

p.28-29

They floated into the harbour  
And saw a big iron ship.  
“Is it a mountain?”  
“No, it’s a ship.”  
“What does it do?”  
“It’s not scared of storms, and can go out to sea.”

p.30-31

There was a little girl on the ship.  
She asked her father,  
“What’s that floating on the water?”  
“Two pieces of paper,”  
Her father said.  
“No,” said the little girl,  
“It’s the paper boat I placed

In the gutter yesterday.  
It's found a friend.  
I want to fish them out!"

p.32-33

Her father hired a sampan  
And took his daughter to fish them out.  
As he held up the two paper boats.  
He smiled and said:  
"A red one and a white one,  
They look lovely, just like good friends."

p.34-35

The little girl held  
The white boat in one hand,  
And the red boat in the other hand,  
And with a big smile she said  
"My white paper boat is so clever,  
It found a friend,  
I want to take them both  
To see the sea!"

p.36-37

The next day, the ship set out to sea!  
People came to the harbour to say goodbye.  
People on board took out a handkerchief  
And waved it about in the breeze.  
People on the quayside raised their hands  
And waved  
To the people on the ship.

p.38-39

The little girl's father took her  
To stand at the front of the boat.  
She held a paper boat in each hand,  
And touching them together, said:  
"Take a good look,  
The ship is about to head out to sea!"

p.40-41

The ship sailed beyond the white breakwater  
And past the white lighthouse.  
And out to sea!

p.42-43

The sea was so big!  
The sea was so wide!  
There was so much water,  
Too much to drink!

Far in the distance was a line  
Below the line was the sea  
Above the line was the sky!

p.44-45

The red paper boat said:  
“I came from the mountains,  
And now I can see the sea!”

The white paper boat said:  
“I came from the city,  
And now I can see the sea too!  
We’re so lucky!  
We are two little paper boats  
That have seen the sea!”