

Excerpt from a review posted on *Evi Tsitiridou Blog*, 05/07/2016

With all the artistry of a master of words, and led by Rosa, her fragile yet fiercely charismatic main character, our beloved Maria Papayanni weaves a story as real as a fairy tale and fairy-tale-like as real life. There's nothing amiss in this book. Everyone and everything –people, animals, concepts, words– have their place, their passion, and their purpose.

Rosa's father, Ares, is a parent, a fisherman, and a poet. He is the one who, by simply uttering a few words, has the power to overturn life's harsh, dark side into light and tender-heartedness. And this he does not only for his daughter, but for every creature that crosses his path; even the stray cats he feeds and names after poets from all over the world; even Carlito, the wandering nightingale, which he takes in and fosters without depriving it of its liberty. Carlito is free to choose between the makeshift cage that is the basement on number 3 Myron Street, which was named "Cat Kingdom" at Rosa's request, and the woods or wherever else. Sensing that Ares is a deeply sentimental person, it stays by his side to keep him and Rosa company with its warbling and warm-heartedness.

[...]

In this kaleidoscopic Wonderland [...] Rosa will go headlong into the adventure of growing up, in the most unconventional of ways. Step by step she will even overcome her movement handicap and discover all that is seen and unseen. All that is and all that pretends to be. All who are brave enough to face their reflections in the mirror and all who have forever banished mirrors from their sight. A conglomeration of one-of-a-kind neighbours: Irene the corner-shop lady with her "Little Eden" corner shop; Hashim, the young friend from Pakistan and his family; Anna, the lovely pianist who having been evicted now lives in her car and secretly cultivates tomatoes on the hill; sensitive Louisa who never again danced Flamenco and directs a small Theatre/café where she shelters aspiring young actors and musicians; Athena, her new friend and her brother Costi from Syria; sad Ms Elisenta with her black, Cyclops of a cat, Gabito; and so many more, fantastic and unique, real and imaginary, will lead Rosa to unfathomable adventures, ones which every child will relate to.

And when, like Alice, Rosa jumps into the matchbox she herself drew on her bedroom wall using chalk, the miracles will come crashing down. A second world, the Underwater Society, will emerge and demand her attention. A flabbergasted Rosa will utter the magic words "words hang on trees" and be let into the dark lair where a conference is taking place between Babel, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Don Quixote, and all who have declared war against the "Languageslayers", and who create dens for endangered languages, for communication, which keeps on deteriorating, for stories which are being forgotten and for fading dreams.

Rosa will begin to go back and forth between two societies: that of Myron street where she leads a "normal" life with her father, and that which exists within a matchbox– the Underwater Society. As a member of both she needs to fight for what she believes in and whom she loves respectively. Both will bestow upon her friends and allies, but also foes. In both she will be forced to look herself in the eye and wear shoes with wings. In both she will fight to save and be saved. In both she will win and lose. In both she will be part of adventures she will never

have enough time to ever fully comprehend and retell. Because in both it will be “worth it to live for a dream, even if it hurts sometimes”. In both she will be in the company of words and magic...

Maria Papayanni invites you to delve into the true and timeless meaning of Humanity; into the true and timeless meaning of Poetry; into the true and timeless meaning of Language– of every rare and unique language through which people communicate Love, History, and Identity.

<http://www.evitsitiridou.me/2016/07/05/%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%8D%CF%84%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CE%BC%CE%B5-%CF%86%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%AC/>

“Shoes with Wings”