

## Joanna and Callie's Adventures in Ikaria

"Wake up, Joanna! We're almost there!"

Joanna opened her eyes and blinked in the bright sunshine. Beyond the boat's railing, there was sparkly, shimmery blue water as far as she could see. She felt a hand on her shoulder.

"Turn around, sweetie. It's Ikaria!"

Taking a deep breath, Joanna spun around. A vast island stretched out before her. This island had tall mountains and green trees, unlike the brown she had seen on other islands they had passed on the boat. She felt her eyes grow wide as she took everything in.

The boat honked its horn as they neared the dock. Restaurants lined the harbor and people were milling everyone. Joanna reached up and held onto Daddy's hand.

Crouching down beside her, Daddy pointed to the island. "This is Ikaria, Joanna. We've come a long way from Athens, but we're still in Greece. This is the place where our family is from. Ikaria is the island where my grandparents came from, and their parents, and their parents' parents. It's sort of like our home away from home, a very special place."

"Do they still live here?" Joanna asked.

Daddy turned and looked at Joanna with his chocolate-brown eyes. Joanna felt a lurch as the boat docked at the pier. "No, sweetie. They passed away a long time ago. But there are still people here who are family. Here, take Callie and let's go explore!"

Daddy handed Joanna the purple nylon leash attached to her dog, Callie. Callie's name was short for Calliope, the Greek goddess of poetry. Callie was a small black dog with brown paws. Joanna's favorite thing about Callie was that Callie's ears did two different things. Sometimes one was up and one was down. Sometimes one was sideways but not the other. This was Callie's first time in Greece, too.

"Come on, Callie! Let's go!" Joanna said as she pulled on the leash and walked down the ramp onto shore.

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Mommy, Daddy, and Joanna got into a little blue rental car and drove down a narrow, winding road. Joanna could look out one window and see the sparkling Aegean sea, or she could look out the other window and see the tall mountains. Soon, Mommy said, "We're here!"

They got out of the car in front of a small building with a sign that said "Thea's Inn." A tall woman with curly brown hair and a big smile came walking toward them. She gave Mommy and Daddy each a hug, then held her arms out to Joanna. "And you must be Joanna," she said. "I've heard so much about you! I'm Thea!"

Joanna gave her a hug since Mommy and Daddy had, and the woman seemed nice. Thea said Joanna's name differently than other people did. It sounded like Yo-Ahna. "That's how we say 'Joanna' in Greece," said Thea, seeing her confusion. "It's a beautiful name, the same name as your great-grandmother who lived here a long time ago. You have gorgeous, thick brown hair like she did. How old are you?"

Joanna smiled. She liked the way her name sounded in Greece. "I'm six! This is my dog, Calliope," she said. "Her name is Greek, too!"

Thea said, “Why, hello there, Calliope,” and reached down to pet her. In Greece, we call dogs *skylos*.” Joanna could tell that Callie liked Thea because she licked Thea’s hand.

Holding out a small wrapped object, Thea leaned in toward Joanna. “Here’s a little present for you,” she said.

Joanna accepted the gift with a smile. Her fingers made quick work of the wrapping paper. “It’s a book!” she exclaimed. Books were one of Joanna’s very favorite things.

“This is a special book,” said Thea. “It tells you how to say things in Greek, the language of your family and of this island. See if you can find the word for dog I just taught you.”

Joanna flipped through the pages until she saw the letters *d-o-g*. Next to the word *dog* was the word *skylos*, just like Thea had taught her. The book also showed her how to pronounce the word: skee-los. Joanna turned to the page with words that start with the letter *t* to find the Greek words for “thank you.” She turned to Thea.

“*Efcharisto*, Thea!” she said. Thea gave her a smile.

Thea showed them to their room. It was small, with two beds squished against a wall, a little bathroom, and a balcony that overlooked the sea. Joanna put some food and water in bowls for Callie and looked out at the sea. The sun was now beginning to set in shades of orange and pink over the water.

“Time for dinner, Joanna,” Mommy said. “Are you hungry?”

“I’m starving!” Joanna followed Mommy and Daddy out the door.

“Make sure the door is closed all the way,” Mommy said. “You know how Callie likes to run away if she gets out by herself.”

Joanna turned around and pulled the door closed tightly. She remembered just last month when Callie got out the door by mistake. She and Daddy had driven all over the neighborhood for hours to find her, worried sick. Eventually, Daddy had spotted Callie drinking from a puddle on the side of the road, and he used a peanut butter treat to get Callie to jump in the car. Joanna definitely didn’t want Callie to go missing again, especially in Greece!

She tugged on the knob one more time just to be safe, then scurried to catch up to Mommy and Daddy. Joanna got to try lots of new food for dinner, and Daddy helped her pronounce the new words. There was soft white bread with *tzatziki*, a sauce made from thick yogurt, cucumber, and dill. Joanna also tried *saganaki*, which was gooey fried cheese, and *spanakopita*, or spinach pie. She had eaten *spanakopita* before, but it tasted extra delicious in Greece. Thea said that was because the feta cheese was made with milk from the family’s goats!

Even with Callie curled up against her tummy, Joanna hardly slept that night because she was so excited about exploring Ikaria tomorrow. She listened to the waves of the Aegean settle over the rocks on the beach and could hear people laughing and playing music downstairs until it was very late.

Finally, Joanna drifted to sleep, and before she knew it, the sun was shining on her face and it was time to get up. She had her favorite treat for breakfast: yogurt with honey.

“Are you ready to go exploring with me?” Daddy asked. “Let’s take Callie for a walk and discover Ikaria together. We’ll walk up the road that way, the way we drove in, to the town of

Evdilos. Evdilos is the place where all of the ships come in. Would you like to take Callie to go see the ships?"

Joanna nodded. She was excited to go with her family to discover new and exciting things.

"We'll have to make sure to keep Callie on her leash the whole time so she doesn't run away and get lost. After we're done looking around Evdilos, we'll come back here to Thea's for lunch.

"Okay, Daddy," Joanna said. She was ready to get started! She dropped the Greek phrasebook Thea had given her into her backpack and put it on. Daddy handed her Callie's leash and they began walking. Callie trotted on the dirt next to the road so her paws didn't get too hot on the asphalt. Even though it was early morning, the sun was already bright in the sky and warming Joanna's skin. She was glad Mommy had reminded her to put on sunscreen before she left.

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Joanna, Callie, and Daddy had a great time in Evdilos. They stood on the pier and watched the big ships come in, dropping off new visitors and picking up people leaving. Joanna waved at the boat captain and he sounded the horn for her.

She held onto Callie's leash with a tight grip so Callie wouldn't get away. They walked past the restaurants with people sitting outside, sipping their iced coffee drinks called *frappes*. Soon, it was starting to get even hotter, and Joanna could tell that Callie was getting tired. They stopped in the shade of a tree outside a bustling cafe.

"I think it's about time to head back to Thea's," Daddy said. "I'm going to go into this cafe to get us a snack, and then we'll head back. You wait here with Callie. No exploring while I'm gone, and hold tight to Callie."

While Joanna waited under the tree, she looked around the town center of Evdilos. There were so many interesting things to see! She was a little sad that it was already time to go back to Thea's.

Joanna noticed a blue sign on the side of one of the buildings. It said "Therma" with an arrow to the left and "Nas" with an arrow to the right. Joanna knew that Nas was the town where Thea's was, and she remembered Mommy and Daddy telling her about Therma before they'd left home. Therma was a place with warm bubbly ocean water called hot springs. The hot springs were supposed to have healing powers for people who were sick or injured. It sounded like heaven to Joanna. She loved soaking in the hot tubs at home when they went to the pool.

Standing up, Joanna looked back at the cafe. No sign of Daddy yet. *I'll just go over to the sign and look down the road*, she thought. *Maybe Therma's right there. I'll be back at the tree in no time.*

Joanna walked up to the sign and peered down the road in the way the sign was pointing. Unfortunately, there was a sharp bend in the road that Joanna couldn't see around.

*I know Daddy said no exploring*, she thought, *but I'm just going to go to the corner to look. Then I'll come right back.*

Suddenly, Joanna realized something. With a sickening feeling in her stomach, she looked down. Callie was gone! *I must have set the leash down underneath the tree!* she thought. Joanna sprinted back to the tree, but there was no Callie.

Tears began to well in Joanna's eyes when a small black flash rushed past Joanna. It was Callie! Joanna called out for her, but Callie kept running. She reached the road where Joanna had just been and began running even faster toward Therma.

Joanna dashed after her. "Come here, Callie!" she yelled as loudly as she could. "Callie, come!" Callie paused for a moment but then continued down the road until she was out of sight.

Joanna wanted to cry, but she knew she had to fix the problem. Mommy and Daddy had both told her not to explore by herself and to keep a tight hold on Callie. Maybe Joanna could find Callie and get back to the tree before Daddy even realized they were gone.

So Joanna took off at a run down the road after Callie.

By the time she arrived in Therma, Joanna was red-faced and sweaty, and Callie was nowhere to be seen. By now, Joanna knew Daddy was probably looking for her, but hopefully, she would find Callie quickly and make it back soon. Mommy and Daddy would be angry if she came back without Callie and Joanna had already gone off by herself, so she might as well keep looking. Joanna could feel the hot sun burning from the top of the sky and knew that it was already almost mid-day. She would have to find Callie quickly.

Joanna knew from her walk with Daddy that the ocean was to her left, so she headed down a road toward the water where she knew the hot springs would be. Hopefully, Callie had gone there. She walked down a steep paved hill until she saw the water. There were lots of people swimming and floating around. *This must be the hot springs*, she thought.

An old man was sitting on a bench down by the beach. He had wrinkled tan skin, thick white hair and moustache, and he was wearing a small black hat. *Maybe he has seen Callie*, she thought. Joanna tried to remember the Greek words her Daddy had taught her at home.

"Yassas," she said to the old man.

"Yassas," he said back. Yassas meant hello, so Joanna was doing well so far.

"Do you speak English?" she asked.

"*Ligo*," said the old man. "A little. Call me *Pappous*. That means grandfather."

"Okay, Pappous," Joanna said. "I am looking for my *skylos*, Calliope. She is a little black dog with brown paws and funny ears. I thought she might have come to the hot springs to feel better. Have you seen her?"

"Yes, child," the old man said. "I saw your dog just a few minutes ago. She came down by the water to get a drink, but she did not like the saltwater of the ocean. The ocean breeze did seem to make her feel cooler. Do you know why the hot springs make people feel better?"

"No," replied Joanna. "My Daddy just says so."

Pappous leaned over toward Joanna. "People on Ikaria have been coming to the hot springs of Therma for thousands of years to heal them of their illnesses. Scientists say it is from radiation, but the ancient Greeks believed the healing came from Asclipios, the god of medicine. Your little black dog came to the springs and felt better. Then she ran up the road that way."

Joanna looked toward where the man was pointing, up the road along the beach. It was not the way toward Thea's Place.

She said to Pappous, "I'm going to keep looking for my dog now. She has never been to Ikaria before and now she's lost. Plus, we have to get back to Mommy and Daddy. *Efcharisto*. Thank you."

"*Parakalo*," said the old man. "You're welcome. May you find Calliope swiftly." He touched his fingers to his hat as Joanna turned and headed up the road. It looked like she would be late for lunch, but if she could find Callie, hopefully Mommy and Daddy would understand.

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Joanna continued up the road, searching and calling for Callie. The road went up and up and up and Joanna was out of breath by the time she reached a village. She spotted a sign that read "*Christos Raches*," and there was still no sign of Callie. *Maybe someone here has seen her*, Joanna thought.

As she reached the center of town, Joanna saw several shops and restaurants, but the town was very quiet. There were hardly any people around, even though it was the middle of the day! This place felt very different from the bustling city of Evdilos she had visited this morning.

"Yassus, koritsi," Joanna heard a voice behind her say. She turned to see a young woman with thick curly black hair sweeping the walk to a pottery studio. Joanna dug out her Greek phrase book from her backpack and approached the young woman. She thumbed through the book until she found the phrase she was looking for.

"Pou einai o skylos mou?" Joanna asked. "Where is my dog?"

The young woman knelt down. "I speak English," she said. "I went to college in America. You are looking for your *skylos*, you say? What does your dog look like?"

"She is a small black dog with brown paws," said Joanna. "Her ears go different directions, too."

"I saw a dog like that go through here just a few minutes ago. She looked like she was on a great adventure. I'm sure it was her because I laughed at her funny ears. She drank some water from the bowl outside that cafe and headed that way, down the hill." The young woman pointed down the road.

"Efcharisto," said Joanna. "I have a question, though. Why is the town so quiet?"

"Everyone is sleeping."

Joanna furrowed her brow. "But it's the middle of the day!"

Smiling, the woman said, "That's when people sleep in Christos Raches. As you probably noticed, our village is perched on top of a great hill. It is a perfect place to see the ocean all around the island. A long time ago, the residents of Christos Raches would stay up all night to keep guard for pirates. Then they would sleep during the day when there was less danger. Even though we do not fear pirates any more, many people in Christos Raches still follow the tradition of sleeping during the day and being awake at night."

"Woah! That's so cool!" Joanna said. "Sometimes I like to make believe I am a pirate, but maybe now I will pretend to be from Christos Raches, standing on guard against the pirates!" Joanna put her hand above her eyes and pretended to peer out over the ocean.

The young woman laughed. "You look like a *poly kala* pirate guard! Very good! Now, you'd better hurry up if you want to catch your dog. She looked like a fast runner!"

Joanna nodded and began jogging down the road after Callie. "Efcharisto!" she called back. "Watch out for pirates!"

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Joanna walked on and on, calling for Callie. She could tell that the sun had already begun its descent, which meant it was getting to be late afternoon. Mommy and Daddy would be worried, but she just had to find Callie! Hopefully Joanna would find her soon.

She could tell that she was approaching a town because houses began appearing alongside the road. Joanna stayed close to the road's edge in case a car came whizzing around a corner.

Finally, Joanna reached a sign that told her she was in a village called Xylosirtis. That name sounded familiar, but Joanna wasn't sure why. She continued into the village.

"Come here, Callie!" she called. Still nothing.

Maybe Callie had gone down to the water to get a drink. Joanna turned and jogged down an alley that descended steeply toward the sound of waves.

When she reached the beach, Joanna realized that there was something about this beach that was different from others she had seen. Instead of sand, the beach was made of rocks! As the waves came into shore, they shifted the rocks around, making a sound unlike any Joanna had ever heard. It sounded like beautiful music.

She knelt down and looked closely at the rocks. Some were orange, some were black, and some were white, and they all sparkled like glitter. When she ran her fingers over them, the rocks felt smooth. Joanna slipped a small black rock and a small white rock into her backpack and stood back up to continue her search for Callie, since there was no sign of her at the beach.

Joanna could see a brown building just up the hill with a white cross on the very top. *That must be a church, she thought. I'll see if someone there can help me.* She walked up the hill to the church but saw no signs of any people. Standing on her tiptoes, Joanna peered in through a window. She could see that the interior was filled with sparkly images of people from the Bible painted in golds, reds, and blues. There was a man dressed in black walking around inside the church, so Joanna went to the door, took out her phrase book, and knocked firmly.

The door creaked open. Behind it stood the man in black Joanna had seen through the window. "Yassus," the man said. He had a long black beard mixed with gray and a friendly smile.

"Yassus," Joanna replied. She flipped open her phrase book to find "My name is." Her eyes spotted it on the page. "*To onoma mou einai Ioanna*," she said. "I'm from America and I'm trying to find my dog. Can you help me please?"

"Come in, come in," said the man. "I am the priest of this church. Let's see what we can do to find your *skylos*."

Joanna stepped into the church. The air was cool and still, and something about the church made Joanna want to be quiet with her voice. It felt like a special place.

The priest motioned for Joanna to sit down next to him in a wooden pew. "You said your name is Joanna," he said. "I know of a Joanna who lived in this village a long time ago. You have her same deep brown eyes."

"That must be my *Yia-yia*'s mother!" said Joanna. "She was from this island."

The priest smiled. "Let me tell you a little about your family. Your great-grandparents, Christ and Joanna, got married in this very church we are sitting in right now."

Joanna's mouth dropped open and she looked around the church with new appreciation. She had seen photographs of her great-grandparents in their wedding clothes, and she tried to picture them in this space.

The priest continued. "Joanna and Christ moved to America where they raised their family,, but their parents stayed here. During World War II, the Nazis cut off Ikaria from the rest of the world. Ikarians could not get food from other places like they used to, and at that time, most of the soil was unsuitable for farming. To make matters worse, the Nazis banned all fishing around the island. The Ikarians did what they could, but sadly, many died of starvation. Joanna and Christ's parents were among those who passed away."

Looking down at her shoes, Joanna let the priest's words soak in. She had so many questions. Why would the Nazis let people starve? Why had her ancestors not gone to America with their children? Most of all, the story made her sad.

"This is a sad story for anyone to hear, especially a young girl like you," said the priest, almost like he could hear Joanna's thoughts. "But it's important to know about your family's past. Joanna and Christ's parents loved Ikaria so much that they never left, even when times were hard. This island was a part of your family and it will always be a part of you."

Joanna looked up at the priest and nodded. He wiped a tear from her cheek.

"Thank you for telling me about my family," said Joanna. "I will never forget it. I'd better go now and keep looking for Callie. My mommy and daddy must be really worried."

The priest rose and shook Joanna's hand. "Follow the road along the sea," he said. "When you reach the next village, you will see a tall, green structure made of metal out by the way. Go there, and I think you may find what you are looking for. It was very nice to meet you, Joanna."

Joanna thanked the priest and continued on her way.

The wind whipped Joanna's curly brown hair around her face as she walked the road along the sea. Soon, she could see a tall green structure out on a pier by the water. *That must be what the priest was talking about*, she thought. *The statue of Icarus.*

Joanna stepped out onto the pier and pushed through the wind toward the statue. Her stomach was growling; it must be almost dinnertime. She really needed to get back to Thea's to find Mommy and Daddy. As Joanna neared the statue, she saw an old woman in a black dress with a black scarf tied around her head sitting on a bench. There was a flurry of movement near the woman's feet, and a small black animal ran toward Joanna. It was Callie!

"Callie! Oh, Callie, I'm so happy you're here!" Joanna cried. She knelt down and Callie ran into her arms. Callie put her two front paws on Joanna's shoulders and Joanna hugged her close. She nuzzled her nose into Callie's neck while Callie licked Joanna's cheek.

Finally, Joanna grabbed on tightly to Callie's leash and stood up to thank the old *yia-yia*.

"*Efcharisto, yia-yia*," said Joanna. "Thank you so much for finding my dog!"

The *yia-yia* patted her hand on the bench next to her. "Come, child. Before you leave, let me tell you a story."

The sun was beginning to go down over the mountains behind them and Joanna knew she had to leave soon. However, she felt she owed it to the *yia-yia* who had found Callie to listen to her story. Joanna sat down on the bench.

Pointing up toward the top of the green statue, the *yia-yia* asked, "What do you see?"

Joanna squinted up into the sky. The statue was not something she would call beautiful. It was made of metal with jagged edges and several holes. At the very top of the statue, Joanna could make out a few shapes.

"I see an upside-down person," she told the *yia-yia*, "and wings."

"Yes," the *yia-yia* said. "That person with the wings is Icarus. Do you know the story of Icarus, Joanna?"

Joanna shook her head. Mommy and Daddy had told her lots of stories about Greece, but it was hard to keep them all straight. She couldn't remember which one was the story of Icarus.

The *yia-yia* continued. "Icarus's father, Daedalus, made Icarus a pair of wings. Icarus loved the wings and the feeling of flying. The excitement of adventure coursed through him when he felt the wind in his hair and looked down to see the world below. But the wings came with a warning. Daedalus told Icarus, 'Enjoy your wings, but don't get too close to the sun. The heat from the sun will melt the wax that holds your wings together and you will fall.'

"Icarus remembered his father's warning and continued his love of flying. But as time wore on, Icarus started to get bored. He was tired of flying to the same old places at the same old height. There was so much more sky above him! Surely he could go just a little higher and still be okay.

"So Icarus flew higher. The feeling was spectacular! He could see so much more of the earth below him than he had before. *My father was afraid of nothing!* thought Icarus. Soon, however, Icarus felt something drip onto his arm. He looked down. It was wax from his wings! Droplets of wax spilled down from Icarus's wings and it wasn't long before there was nothing holding his wings together. Icarus fell down, down, down. He flailed his arms but nothing slowed him down.

"Icarus fell into the sea, just out here." The *yia-yia* pointed out into the ocean. "That's why we call this the Icarian Sea, and that's why this island is called Ikaria."

Joanna sat quietly for a moment and thought about the story of Icarus. She looked up at the statue and out at the sea. Finally, she spoke.

"I guess I was kind of like Icarus," she said. "Daddy told me to not go on adventures by myself, but I did anyway. I didn't listen, just like Icarus didn't listen to his Daddy." Joanna's eyes dropped down to her shoes.

The *yia-yia* put her arm around Joanna. "You've learned an important lesson," she said. "Unlike Icarus, though, you have another chance. You have Callie again, and you can go be with your *mitera kai pateras*. Go now. Hold tightly to Calliope's leash, and remember the story of Icarus. Adventures make life exciting, but listen to the advice of others and stay within the boundaries of safety and reason. *Antio*, Joanna. Good-bye."

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The sun was melting over the horizon as Joanna ran with Callie back to Thea's. With the last bit of light in the sky, Joanna finally saw the sign for Thea's Inn. She was so exhausted yet relieved to have made it with Callie. She wanted to cry. When she saw her mommy and daddy, Joanna ran into their arms and burst into tears.



“Oh, Joanna, my baby! You’re okay!” Mommy hugged Joanna tightly. Joanna looked up at Mommy. Mommy’s face was red and splotchy like she had been crying.

Daddy held onto Joanna tightly too. “We were so worried about you!” he said. “What happened? Where were you? Are you hurt?”

“No, I’m not hurt,” Joanna said. “I didn’t listen to you, just like Icarus didn’t listen to his daddy. I went to go look at a sign while you were in the cafe, and Callie got away. I searched and searched for her and lots of nice people helped me find her. I’m so sorry I didn’t listen to you!”

Daddy said, “I’m glad you learned your lesson, but how do you know about Icarus? We haven’t talked about that story yet. Follow me. I want to show you something.”

Joanna gave Callie’s leash to Mommy and took Daddy’s hand. They walked along the side of Thea’s Inn until they could see the water. Daddy pointed down toward the beach.

“Look down there,” he said.

The sky was getting dark, but Joanna could see something that looked like a giant square made out of rocks down by the water. “Is that it?” she asked.

“Yes,” said Daddy. “Those rocks used to form a temple for the goddess Artemis. The Greeks say Artemis is a fierce warrior and a protector of little girls. Perhaps Artemis was keeping you safe.”

Joanna looked down at the rocks. She had learned so many things throughout her day--Evdilos and the great ships, Therma and the hot springs, Christos Raches and the people who stay up all night, Xylosirtis and the story of her ancestors, the statue of Icarus and the story behind it, and now the temple of Artemis, her protector. It was a day she would never forget.

“Now, let’s go back inside,” said Daddy. “Mommy and I are so glad you’re safe. Let’s hear of your adventures before bedtime. I think we’ll stick together as a family from now on!”

Joanna slipped her hand into Daddy’s and smiled.