Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

opening extract from

The Little Ships:
A Story of the Heroic Rescue at Dunkirk

written by

Louise Borden &
Michael Foreman

published by

Frances Lincoln Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author / Illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Foreword

In the summer of 1940 I had the honour to command His Majesty's Motor Torpedo Boat (MTB) 102. I was a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, aged twenty-one. In late May and early June of that year, the disaster and miracle of Dunkirk occurred. MTB 102 was part of it, making some seven trips from Dover in southeast England to Dunkirk, forty-five miles away in France. During the evacuation, MTB 102 was used largely as a despatch vessel. On the last night she carried the Admiral Afloat and controlled bringing off the French rearguard. She was the third-last warship to leave Dunkirk on June 4th.

Every five years, the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships (the surviving remnants of the intrepid band of assorted boats and yachts that contributed so much to the miracle of Dunkirk) makes a pilgrimage back to Dunkirk. MTB 102 has taken part in this in 1980, 1985, 1990, and 1995, and I have been invited to go in her, with the special honour of bringing "my ship" into harbour.

In 1995 I was surprised and delighted to find that we had Louise Borden with us, making the trip to get the authentic feeling of what it was like, for the benefit of the moving story she has written about the Dunkirk Escape. While details of her story are invented, it could have happened, and things like it actually did happen. It is a story very much in the spirit of that memorable summer of 1940.

Christopher Dreyer

But now their talk was about
the trouble at Dunkirk,
just across the Channel,
only fifty miles away.
British soldiers were trapped there, they said.
Thousands and thousands.
And so were the French.
The Germans and their tanks would capture them.
Families would lose all those men who were
uncles and brothers
and fathers and sons.
Every boat on the English coast
was needed to go and help.
The owners
were to report for orders,
and for maps, and charts.

My brother, John, was a British soldier,
fighting in France.
Maybe he was in this trouble too.
Maybe he was trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk
and was waiting for a navy ship,
or a fishing boat like the *Lucy*,
to bring him home.



Fishermen on the beach
said I was my father's daughter.

I could set an anchor
and coil a rope
and nudge speed into the *Lucy*'s old engine
better than some of the village men
who were signing up to go to Dunkirk.
Like Mr. Lewis, who worked at the post office,
Mr. Cribben, the locksmith,
and Mr. Marsh, who had taught geometry to John.

So I pulled on a wool cap of my father's
that smelled of herring,
and a patched pair of John's outgrown trousers.
Only my father knew it
was me.