

A Reader's Theater adaptation of Doreen Rappaport's *Lady Liberty: A Biography*

By Dixie Allen

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©*Lady Liberty: a Biography* by Doreen Rappaport, published by Candlewick Press.

Approximately 4 minutes.

Readers:

Narrator

Doreen Rappaport

Emma Lazarus

Edouard de LaBoulaye

Auguste Bartholdi

Marie Simon

Gustave Eiffel

Joseph Pulitzer

Narrator: This is taken from the pages of *Lady Liberty: a Biography* by Doreen Rappaport.

Emma Lazarus: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore."

Doreen Rappaport: One hundred twenty years ago, my grandfather fled his home in Latvia, thousands of miles away. He left his mother and father and brothers and sisters and uncles and cousins to come to a country where he knew no one. He came to build a better life. As the ferry nears the Statue of Liberty, I try to imagine his ocean journey and how he felt when he saw her for the first time.....I wonder if my grandfather ever thought about how she came to be.

Edouard de LaBoulaye: I am Edouard de LaBoulaye and a Professor of Law in France. The year is 1865. Soon America will be one hundred years old. I share my dream of a birthday gift. My friend Henri tells me Emperor Napoleon III will not allow it.

Auguste Bartholdi: I am Auguste Bartholdi and I am an artist. I make things with my hands. The year is 1875. My dream is Edouard's dream. I draw pictures of Liberty and build clay models of her. Napoleon III rules France no more. America shares our dream but not the money to build it. We will raise the money in France.

Marie Simon: I am Marie Simon and I am Bartholdi's assistant. He draws--I build. We measure and multiply and build it bigger. Then, we measure and multiply again, and we build some more. We build day in and day out, rapping and banging, as

the copper is pounded on the molds until the shapes are perfect. Now it is Eiffel's turn. He must make sure Liberty stands tall.

Gustave Eiffel: I am Gustave Eiffel and I am a structural engineer. The year is 1883 and Lady Liberty is the talk of Paris. To keep Liberty upright is a challenge. But we have a plan. She inspires me.

Narrator: Workers dig with their shovels. They mix and pour cement. Bedloe's Island is readying a foundation for the magnificent gift from France. But wait. There is still money needed to pay for this foundation.

Joseph Pulitzer: More than one hundred thousand French people—shopkeepers, artisans, farmers, and children—gave their hard-earned money to build Liberty. As publisher of New York's *World* in New York City, I, Joseph Pulitzer, feel we can count on the American citizens to come forward but am disgusted when they do not. I turn to the readers of my newspaper and the campaign works. Americans have given pennies, nickels, dimes, and dollars (and 2 pet roosters).

Emma Lazarus: "Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

Narrator: Liberty arrived in 214 crates. Slowly each copper sheet is hoisted up with heavy ropes. Fit and tug, tug and fit, try this sheet, try that one.

Joseph Pulitzer: Each day she grows more beautiful. I predict that those who once mocked her will soon love her and understand her power and significance.

Auguste Bartholdi: Liberty's face is hidden beneath the French tricolors. So much fanfare—tugboats in the harbor, soldiers marching, children and their families everywhere. And I wait.

Narrator: The crowds are everywhere. Bartholdi winds his way through the crowd to climb up to Liberty's crown. Surrounded by her beams and ribs, he mounts the 354 steps, remembering the hundreds of thousands of people—French and American—who helped to realize his dream.

Auguste Bartholdi: If only Laboulaye were alive to see her.

Narrator: Bartholdi waits for a signal. The boy waves his hand.

Auguste Bartholdi: At last, it is time. I loosen the cord holding the tricolors over Liberty's face.

Edouard de LaBoulaye: I dreamed of Lady Liberty

Auguste Bartholdi: I dreamed it too and designed a model for her.

Marie Simon: He designs, I build...and build...and build.

Gustave Eiffel: I help her to stand straight and tall.

Emma Lazarus: And I wrote the poem that would beckon immigrants and become known around the world.

Joseph Pulitzer: I helped to raise the money to give Lady Liberty a place to stand.

All: The dreams of our lives have been accomplished. And now Lady Liberty truly does lift her lamp beside the golden door.