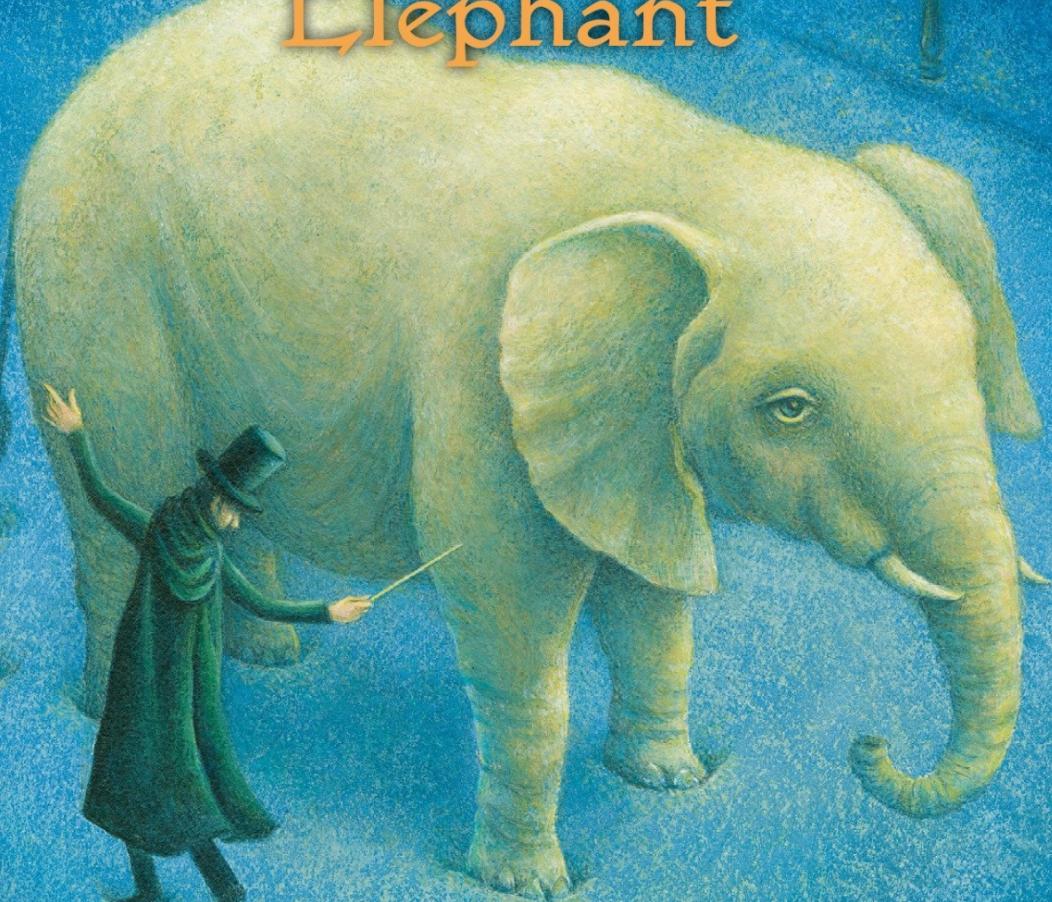


2022 martedì giugno 28 - mardi - juni 28 → 30

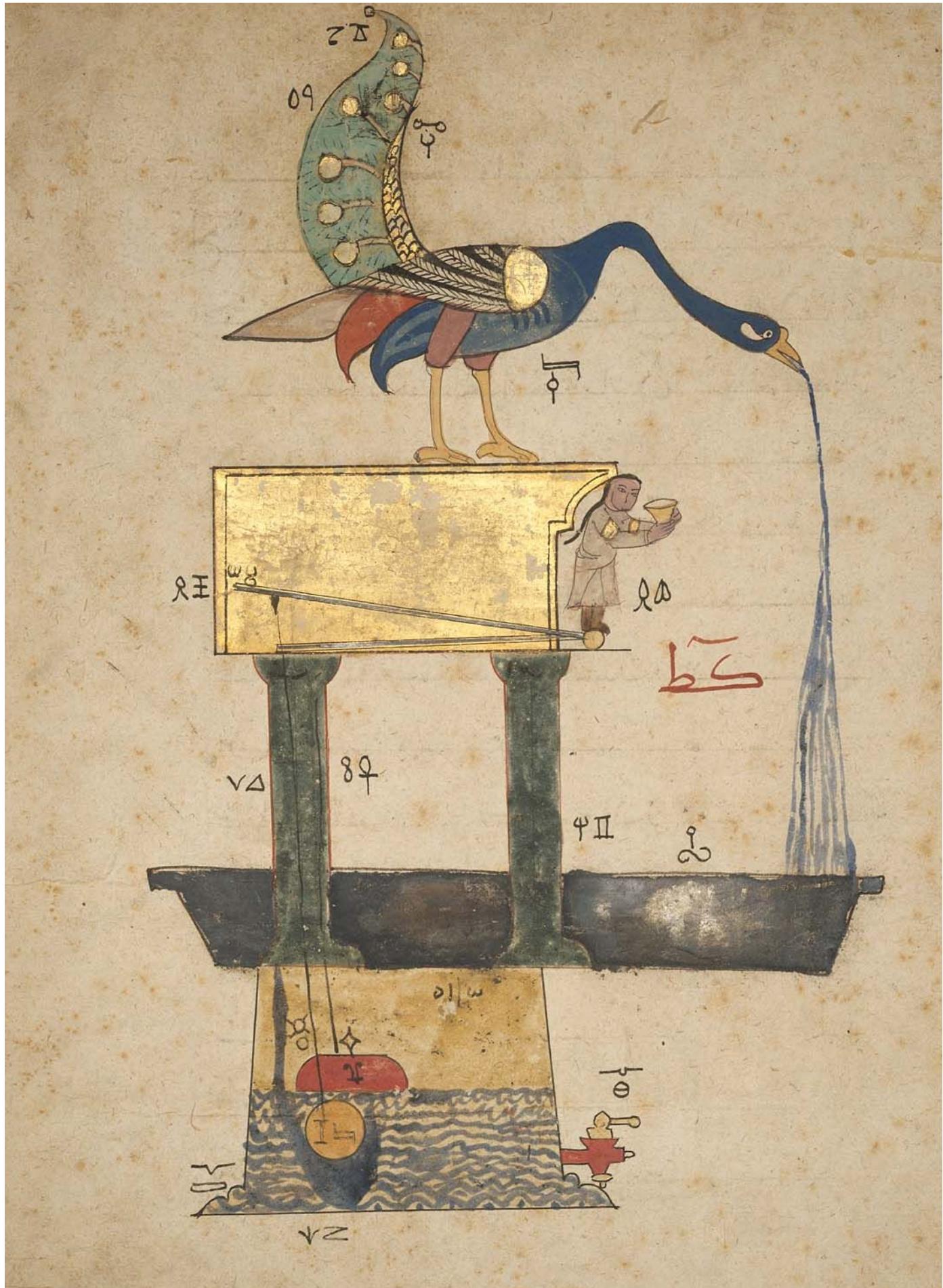
Kate DiCamillo

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR  
**KATE DiCAMILLO**

The Magician's  
Elephant



ILLUSTRATED BY YOKO TANAKA



- **PETER** dreamed.

• **VILNA LUTZ** was ahead of him in a field,  
and he, **PETER**, was running to catch up.

• “Hurry!” shouted **VILNA LUTZ**.  
• “You must run like a soldier.”

- The field was a field of wheat,  
and as **PETER** ran, the wheat grew taller and taller,  
and soon it was so tall that **VILNA LUTZ** disappeared entirely  
from view and **PETER** could only hear his voice shouting,

• “Hurry, hurry!  
• Run like a man; run like a soldier!”

- “It is no good,” said **PETER**.

• “No good at all. I have lost him. I will never catch him, and it  
is pointless to run.”

- He sat down and looked up at the blue sky.
- Around him, the wheat continued to grow, forming a golden  
wall, sealing him in, protecting him.
- *It is almost like being buried*, he thought.
- *I will stay here forever, for all time.*
- *No one will ever find me.*

- “Yes,” he said, “I will stay here.”

• And it was then that he noticed that there was a door in the  
wall of wheat.

- **PETER** stood and went to the wooden door and knocked on it,  
and the door swung open.

- “Hello?” called **PETER**.

• No one answered him.

- “Hello?” he called again.

• And when there was still no answer, he pushed the door  
open farther and stepped over the threshold and entered  
the apartment he had once shared with his mother and  
father.

- Someone was crying.

• He went into the bedroom, and there on the bed, wrapped in  
a blanket, alone and wailing, was a baby.

- “Whose baby is this?” **PETER** said.

- “Please, whose baby is this?”

• The baby continued to cry, and the sound of it was  
heartbreaking to him, so he bent and picked her up.

- “Oh,” he said. “Shhh. There, there.”

• He held the baby and rocked her back and forth.

- After a time,

• she stopped crying and fell asleep.

- **PETER** could not get over how small she was, how easy it was to  
hold her, how comfortably she fit in his arms.

• The door to the apartment stood open, and he could hear the  
music of the wind moving through the grain.

- He looked out the window and saw the evening sun hanging  
golden over the field.

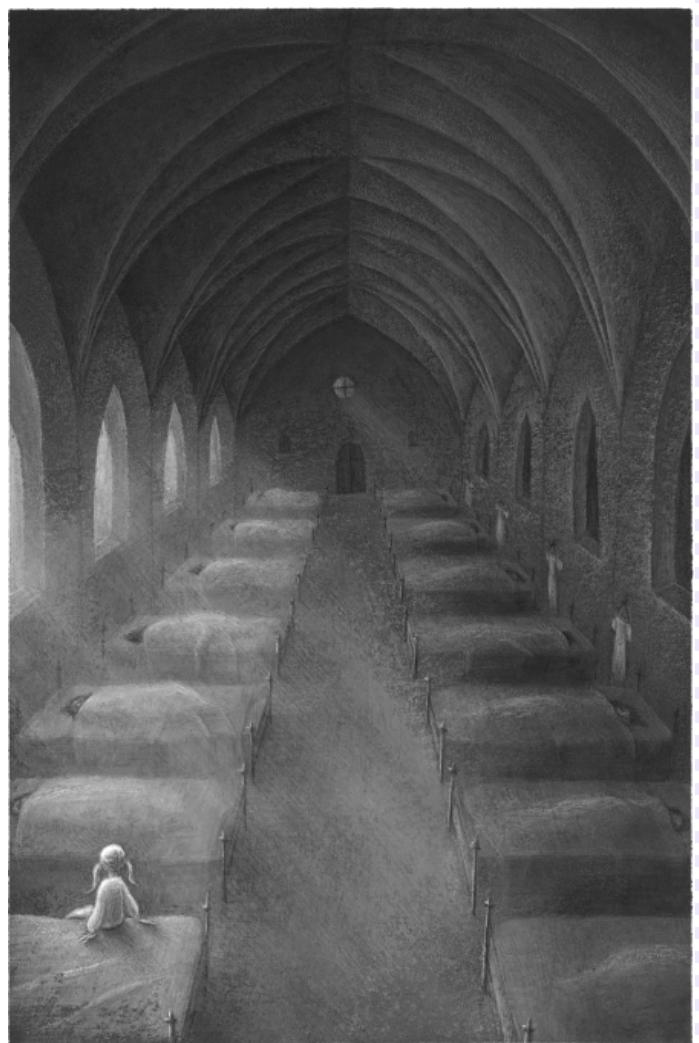
• For as far as his eye could see, there was nothing but light.

• And he knew, suddenly and absolutely, that the baby he  
held in his arms was his sister, **ADELE**.

- When he woke from this dream, **PETER** sat up straight and looked around the dark room and said,
- "But that is how it was.
- She did cry. I remember.**
- I held her.
- And she cried. So she could not, after all, have been born dead and without ever drawing breath, as **VILNA LUTZ** has said time and time again.
- She cried. You must live to cry."**

- He lay back down and imagined the weight of his sister in his arms.
  - Yes, he thought. *She cried. I held her.*
  - I told my mother that I would watch out for her always.*
  - That is how it happened.*
  - I know it to be true.*
- He closed his eyes,
  - and again he saw the door from his dream and felt what it was like to be inside that apartment and to hold his sister and look out at the field of light.
- The dream was too beautiful to doubt.
- The fortuneteller had not lied.
- And if she had not lied about his sister,
  - then perhaps she had told the truth about the elephant, too.
- "The elephant," said **PETER**.
- He spoke the word aloud to the ever-present dark, to the snoring **VILNA LUTZ**, to the whole of the sleeping and indifferent city of **BALTESE**.
- "The elephant is what matters. She is with the countess.
- I must find some way to see her.
- I will ask **LEO MATIENNE**.
- He is an officer of the law, and he will know what to do. Surely there is some way to get inside, to get to the countess and then to the elephant so that it can all be undone, so that it can at last be put right,
- because **ADELE** does live. **She lives."**

- Less than five blocks from the **APARTMENTS POLONAISE** stood a grim, dark building that bore the somewhat improbable name of the **ORPHANAGE OF THE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL LIGHT**,
- and on the top floor of that building was an austere dormitory outfitted with a series of small iron beds lined up side by side, one right after the other like metal soldiers.
- In each of these beds slept an orphan,
- and the last of the beds in the drafty, overlarge dormitory was occupied by a small girl named **ADELE**,
- who, soon after the incident at the **opera house**, began to dream of the magician's elephant.



- In **ADELE**'s dreams,
  - the elephant came and knocked at the door of the orphanage. **Sister MARIE**
  - (the **Sister of the Door**,
    - the nun who admitted unwanted children to the orphanage
    - and the only person ever allowed to open and close the front door of the **ORPHANAGE OF THE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL LIGHT**)
    - was, of course, the one who answered the elephant's knock.
  - "Good of the evening to you," said the elephant, inclining her head toward **Sister MARIE**.
  - "I have come for the collection of the little person that you are calling by the name **ADELE**."

• "Pardon?" said **Sister MARIE**.

- "**ADELE**," said the elephant. "I have come for the collection of her. She is belonging elsewhere besides."
  - "You must speak up," said **Sister MARIE**.
    - "I am old, and I do not hear well."
- "It is the one you are calling **ADELE**."
  - said the elephant in a slightly louder voice.
- "I am coming for to keep her and for taking her to where she is, after all, belonged."

• "I am truly sorry,"

said **Sister MARIE**, and her face did look sad.

• "I cannot understand a word you are saying.

• **Perhaps it is because you are an elephant?**

• Could that be it?

**Could that be the cause of the hindrance in our communications?**

- Understand, I have nothing against elephants.
- You, yourself, are an exceptionally elegant elephant and obviously well mannered; there is no doubt.
- But the fact remains that I can make no sense of your words, and so I must bid you good night."
- And with this, **Sister MARIE** closed the door.

- From a window in the dorm room, **ADELE** watched the elephant walk away.

**"Madam Elephant!"**

she shouted, banging on the window.

"Here I am. Here! I am **ADELE**. I am the one you are looking for."

- But the elephant continued to walk away from her.
- She went down the street and became smaller and then smaller still, until, in the peculiar and frustrating **sleight** of hand that often occurs in dreams,
- the elephant was transformed into a mouse that then scurried into the gutter and disappeared entirely from **ADELE**'s view.

• And then, it began to snow.

- The cobblestones of the streets and the tiles of the roofs became coated in white.
- It snowed and snowed until everything disappeared.
- The world itself soon seemed to cease to exist, erased, bit by bit, by the white of the falling snow.
- In the end, there was nothing and no one in the world except for **ADELE**.
- who stood alone at the window of her dream, waiting.