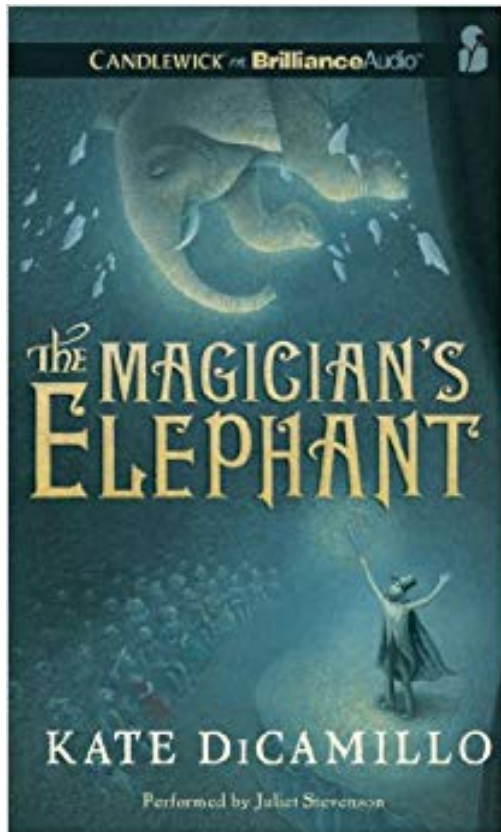


The Magician's Elephant by Juliet Stevenson, Kate DiCamillo



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When a fortuneteller's tent appears in the market square of the city of Baltese, orphan Peter Augustus Duchene knows the questions that he needs to ask: Does his sister still live? And if so, how can he find her?

The fortuneteller's mysterious answer (An elephant! An elephant will lead him there!) sets off a chain of events so remarkable, so impossible, that Peter can hardly dare to believe it.

But it is—all of it—true.



Reviews of the **The Magician's Elephant** by Juliet

Stevenson, Kate DiCamillo

Brightfury

Unlike *The Tale of Despereaux* or *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *The Magician's Elephant* fails to engulf you in that wonderful world that DiCamillo tends to suck you into. It also lacks the pacing that these other books have. It is amazingly written and the pace of the writing reflects the darkness of the setting and gloominess of the characters. I don't know who I felt more sorry for, the elephant or Peter and his sister. Overall the book is a good read.

If you are a teacher interested in using this for guided reading, I used the book with my high level readers in fourth grade. They did require some guidance in understanding the complexities and depth of the writing, but with guidance and good questioning the kids really enjoy the book.

Gir

If you went to a bookstore and the author and artist were present and signed the book, you'd have an autographed book.

If you buy the "Special Signed Edition," you get the same thing: the trade first edition with signatures. (The adhesive bar code on the back covers up that of the trade edition.)

For the extra cost (\$50 retail), you'd think the publisher would have added a limitation sheet with the signatures, at a minimum, or perhaps a slipcase to protect the book, or a different binding: but no, this is simply the regular edition plus the signatures of both Kate DiCamillo and Yoko Tanana, with a rubber-stamped elephant drawing.

As a long-time publisher myself that has issued limited, signed editions--bound in leather, traycased, numbered and signed--I am frankly surprised that there's no text in the advertising copy to make this important distinction clear.

So let me be clear: You are getting an autographed trade edition. Nothing more, nothing less.

Beyond that, there is ABSOLUTELY NOTHING "Special" about this edition. Nada. Zilch. Nothing.

The trade edition retails for \$16.99 (Amazon sells it for \$9.93).

The question you must ask yourself: Is the difference in price worth it for two autographs? Only YOU can answer THAT question.

Dorinarius

Review by a 9 year-old kid who loves K. DiCamillo's books:

"She lives!" - that's what Peter said when the fortuneteller had told him that his sister was not dead and that an elephant would lead him to her. This powerful belief led Peter through a spell-bounding journey where the impossible becomes possible.

A Magician conjures an elephant, which comes crashing through the ceiling of the Opera House. In an imaginary town where there were no elephants. This event was somehow connected to Adele, Peter's sister.

The author develops each character in this story showing all their emotions and imperfections. I think this author is very well in tune with people's emotions and she knows so well how to translate feelings into words. Also she describes imaginary places with such detail and emotion that it feels that you are there. The reader connects with the characters because they have dimension and depth.

I really enjoyed this book most of all because of characters seem real. It is so well written that I felt like reading more of Kate DiCamillo's books. And I did. And I loved them." (from the kids books review blog IsabelasBookNook.com)

Blackbeard

Kate DiCamillo is by far one of my favorite children's authors. A preview of this book is in the end of *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, and it had us hooked. (We've read *Edward Tulane* several times -- a GREAT read). The best part about all of her books is that there is a deep meaning to all of them, and they deal with tough issues like loss and the complications of family love/bonds, but when there are things like elephants magically appearing, it keeps the kids greatly interested. This book tells the tale from many different view points. I'm not sure the exact reading level, but I imagine this would be hard for an 8-9 year old to read on their own. However, it is such a great story that I recommend reading it out loud as a family anyway.

Samuhn

The Magician's Elephant - Kate Dicamillo

illustrated by Yoko Tanaka

4 stars

The story begins in the fictional, central European town of Baltese , "At the end of the century before the last". It is clear that there has been a war. There is a pervasive atmosphere of sorrow, want and hopelessness in the setting. Enter the orphan, Peter Augustus Duchene, a fortune teller, a magician "of failing reputation" , and an elephant.What follows is a mysterious, magical story in which hope and faith eventually triumph. The black and white illustrations are subtly evocative, and add much to the magical atmosphere of the story.

I was enchanted with this story. Had I read it as a child, this would have been a five star book for me. However, I was not a typical reader. I think *The Magician's Elephant* would have limited appeal for the ordinary 8 to 12 year-old. It would find favor with the bright readers who have an early appreciation of good literature. With careful guidance, it might stimulate some good discussion as a read-a-loud.

Levion

This is one of those books that has prose that reads like poetry (and so it benefits from being read aloud), but it's not got much action, nor cheer, nor warmth, and the beautiful language only partly redeems this intriguing but ultimately unsatisfying story. It was evident quite early on what the resolution would be, but it was rather a dreary walk to get there. One would think that a story about a magician conjuring an elephant that falls through the roof of an opera house would be quite exciting, and the reviews have certainly sung high praise, but it's more like an NPR host reading the text of a 1960s French noir film -- characters exhibit eccentric behavior and utter irrational things that are meant to be profound, and the repetitive language wears thin. As an adult I quickly became bored; the children I read it to wanted to know the ending, but found the material tedious, and agreed with the three-star rating.

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