



# Hunting the Pink Elephants of Mesapolonika

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*Inspired by:* Luc Martin, Mena Annibale, Nathalie Khoromansky,  
Colin Merrick, Ellen Murphy, Rick Sullivan and Carolyn Wong

*Dedication:* Max Crompton and Ethan Wang: may you  
always have the gift of magic in your lives, my Darlings...  
and my Grandfather, James Macdonald who gave me magic....

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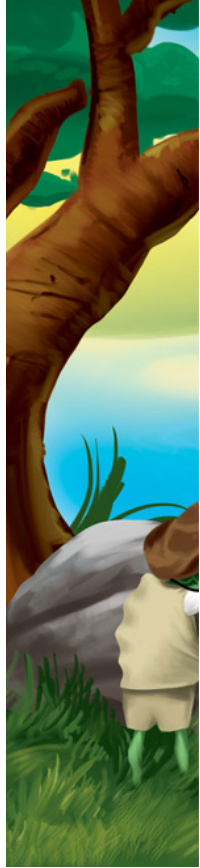




**V**ICKI CHATTERED TO HER new friend, Boris, without taking a breath, about her latest experience with their teacher, Doctor Fergerberger, as they wandered arm in arm along the polka dot road from their school to their homes.

She had gone to class that morning and Doctor Fergerberger had asked all of the students to speak to the class about a relative of whom they were very proud. Vicki had put up her hand and said she wanted to speak about her Grandfather, James Macdonald, who was currently living in Mesapolonika in deepest Africa on the banks of the Klulu River and she started to talk about his work with the pink elephants there, when Doctor Fergerberger's face got beet red and he yelled: "Sit down, Vicki!!! This is not about fantasy – it's about real family members in real situations!!!"...and before Vicki slumped back into her seat, he had moved on to someone else.

Vicki had fought back tears throughout the rest of the class and then straightened her shoulders, marched up to Doctor Fergerberger's desk and explained that her Grandfather, James Macdonald, actually **was** working with the pink elephants of Mesapolonika on the banks





of the Klulu River to try to prevent them from becoming extinct – at which point Doctor Fergerberger slammed his hand on his desk and told her again he had no interest in her fantasy. She stormed out of his office determined to bring in some photos for him to look at the next day.



As she explained to Boris, Vicki's Grandfather had been a big game hunter when he was a young man and had hunted everything from grizzlies to wild boar when he heard from one of his guides about a very dark part of Africa called Mesapolonika (seldom seen by human eyes) where the turquoise

Klulu River flowed between the emerald Ohlala trees with their sparkling diamond flowers – and the gentle, giant pink elephants with their golden tusks who lived on the river banks.

“James was so anxious to bring home the head of one of these elusive pink elephants he almost forgot to say goodbye to his own Mother before his expedition left town...but he did remember just in the nick of time and was kissing her gray hair when she looked up at him with her crystal clear, bright blue



eyes and asked: “When will you stop hunting for trophies, my darling? When all of the beautiful and rare animals in the world are gone? I wish you would think about the future for your children and their children if all they can ever see of some of these wonderful creatures is in video clips.”

James (who was not even married at that point in time) looked at his Mother stunned and left on his expedition without another word.”

As Vicki pointed out to Boris, this one question from her Great-Grandmother started the deep change in James Macdonald’s thoughts about hunting – and in fact started the change in his whole life.

By this point in the story they had arrived at the lollipop fence that outlined Boris’ front lawn but by then Boris just wanted to hear the end of Vicki’s story about her Grandfather, James Macdonald so they leaned on the lollipops while Vicki continued.





“James and his guide and their bearers then fought their way through deep tangled jungles for nine weeks until one day they emerged from the deep jungle into a land so beautiful that James was left breathless – and he knew at once that it was Mesapolonika. The beaches on the river banks were glistening white; the Klulu River was a deep turquoise colour but so clear you could see the chartreuse and violet fish swimming among the orange satin coral on the bottom. And then he gasped, because just ahead, reaching with her trunk to pick a sparkling diamond flower from the huge emerald Ohlala tree in front of him was the biggest cow elephant he had ever seen – and she was bright pink!!!!

She looked over and saw James and he, his guide and his bearers were all frozen as she slowly moved towards him - with her huge black eyes and gigantic velvet eyelashes never wavering in their gaze towards James. Finally some thought crept into James' brain that he might be in danger and he was about to lift his rifle when she reached him and gently caressed his face with her cashmere-soft trunk. And when James looked up into her eyes he saw her intelligence and knew that he could never hunt these amazing animals.

And just then, James heard a snuffling sound behind the huge pink cow and an even larger pink bull elephant moved up beside the cow – obviously her mate – and just looked at James quietly over his solid gold tusks. The bull and the cow linked trunks and almost purred at each other when from under their bellies popped a not-so-little pink calf raring to play and butting James in the stomach with his head.





And then, suddenly, one tear trickled down James' face as he realized what his Mother's question to him had meant – and he knew at that moment that he would spend the rest of his life protecting these marvelous pink creatures from anyone or anything that would hurt them."

“And so my Grandfather has been in Mesapolonika ever since which is where he met my Grandmother because she had come hunting the pink elephants with her camera – and after they were married that’s where my Mother was also born.”

As Vicki finally paused, Boris’ Mother called him for dinner and he said to Vicki: “I want to hear more tomorrow!!! Good night, Vicki!!!”

Vicki hugged him and then went humming up the polka dot road to her house where her Mother was also watching for her to come home to dinner.







“Mummy, I’ll be down for dinner shortly – I just want to call Grandpa James on Skype...I won’t be a moment!!!” and Vicki skipped up the stairs to her room to chat with her Grandpa and Grandma on her laptop.

Her Grandma was the first to answer Vicki’s call and yelled out the door to her Grandpa who was meeting with the Mesapolonikan Minister of Conservation on their lanai about funding to hire more security to protect the pink elephants on the preserve from poachers.

Vicki was introduced to the Mesapolonikan Minister of Conservation, Mr. Mtobe, and all four of them had a discussion about her situation with Doctor Fergerberger...and after firming up a plan, Vicki wished them all a great day (it was morning in Mesapolonika) and went humming down to dinner with her huge boisterous family.

For the next few days, Vicki was strangely quiet, and not even Boris could coax her into telling him what was going on – and her Mother gave asking up even before Boris did! Vicki was VERY good at keeping a secret and no amount of pestering by anyone would get her to tell what that secret might be.

Then on the Friday, about mid-morning, Doctor Fergerberger made an announcement to the class: “Harrumph. This is most unusual but our principal, Mrs. Crackers, has called a full school assembly today in the auditorium. Something about fund-raising for conservation...so just leave your books at the 10:00 o’clock bell and go to the auditorium. That’s all.”

At the 10:00 o'clock bell, Boris and Vicki made their way through the hundreds of children and teachers in the halls to the auditorium, and unlike normal assemblies, where Vicki would drag Boris to the very last row of seats, she dragged him right up to the very front of the rows of seats – right in the middle – where they both plunked down.

Vicki watched quivering as Mrs. Crackers walked up to the microphone and all of the department heads, including Doctor Fergerberger filed onto the stage and took their seats...and she looked again and again at the three empty seats at the end of the stage as Boris' head kept swiveling to the stage and back to his friend because he just KNEW something was up.

Finally Mrs. Crackers began to speak in her soft, full voice: “Teachers, guests and children, our school has been chosen to be the very first stop on a North American fundraising tour conducted by the Mesapolonikan government to raise monies to protect the seriously endangered pink elephants of Mesapolonika.” At which point, Doctor Fergerberger’s mouth dropped open and his eyes were bulging out of his head.



Mrs. Crackers went on to explain that Mesapolonika was a small, peaceful African state beside Tanzania and only recently had been added to world maps. But even though they were a small state in deepest Africa, they had become known by scientists and conservationists around the world for their advanced education programmes and their state animal, the pink elephant. Then, Mrs. Crackers introduced their three guests: Mr. Mtobe, the Mesapolonikan Minister of Conservation, Sir James Macdonald, world renowned conservationist who had devoted the last forty years to preserving and protecting the pink elephants and Dame Harvinder Macdonald, Sir James' wife, who had devoted the last forty years to photographing these magnificent creatures on the banks of the turquoise Klulu River as they grazed on the emerald Ohlala trees with their sparkling diamond flowers.



Mrs. Crackers explained again that Mesapolonika needed the help of Canada, the US and the UK to raise funds to protect the pink elephants and this tour was to educate people and get the fund raising rolling.

And just as Mrs. Crackers finished speaking she turned to the curtains on the back of the stage, nodded to someone and the curtains opened to reveal a huge pink cow elephant and her not-so-little pink calf, both with huge black eyes and gigantic velvet eyelashes, who both looked at the students and then walked over to stroke Doctor Fergerberger's head with their cashmere-soft trunks...at which point Doctor Fergerberger fainted dead away.



After Mrs. Crackers got Doctor Fergerberger to wake up, and Mr. Mtobe and Sir James and Dame Harvinder all explained about the history of the pink elephants, and how few were left in the world and how with more funding they could protect the pink elephant habitat so the elephants could flourish again, all of the children were allowed to quietly come up and pet the beautiful creatures and touch their cashmere-soft skin. And as they left the auditorium, each child was given a copy of one of Dame Harvinder's most famous photographs of the pink elephants of Mesapolonika as a keepsake.







So in the weeks and months that followed, after Doctor Fergerberger apologized to Vicki for not believing her, Vicki and Boris, and Doctor Fergerberger and Mrs. Crackers and all of the teachers and students at their school raised \$100,000 for the Mesapolonikan Pink Elephant Preserve and then they went on to challenge of the schools in their district, and their school district challenged another until Canadian school children raised \$20,000,000 for the pink elephants – all because Vicki knew the truth about the pink elephant, was not afraid to speak the truth even when others doubted her – and made things happen!!!



**The end.**



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