



## Synopsis

Acclaimed author and illustrator, Jessie Hartland, beautifully presents this informative and fascinating history of the Hatshepsut sphinx: from its carving in ancient Egypt to its arrival in the hallowed halls of New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art. This is essential reading for junior Egyptologists!

## Book Information

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Lexile Measure: AD1120L (What's this?)

Series: How the . . . Got to the Museum

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## Customer Reviews

One of the most frequent requests I get from parents in my library is a desire for books on "community workers". Which is to say, their children have been given an assignment in school on writing about the people who work in their neighborhood, and so we are charged with coming up with books about sanitation workers, doctors, bus drivers, etc. This being New York City, I always kind of wish that I'd get a request for a community worker a little out of the ordinary. How about a request for a book on a conservator? Or a museum registrar? Why do docents always end up with the short end of the stick? Of course, even if I did get a request for one of these, I'd actually have to produce a book that says what such museum folks actually do. Still, that's no problem since the publication of "How the Sphinx Got to the Museum". Basically author/illustrator Jessie Hartland came up with a radical notion. Why not combine a book that explains the jobs people do with a real

life mystery (how a busted sphinx was returned to its full splendor for display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art) and then present it in a cumulative tale format? Why that's so crazy it just might work. And work it does in a story that satisfies a child's need for story while also working in some pretty cool details about why museums are full of statues from other countries far far away. A group of kids visit The Metropolitan Museum of Art and are told a strange fact. Before their eyes sits a sphinx created for the Pharaoh Hatshepsut. The kicker? That same statue was destroyed a mere twenty years after its creation on orders from Hatshepsut's successor and stepson. So how on earth has it come to reside fully intact in a museum in America? To answer that you have to begin at the beginning.

If you're lucky enough to walk up the stairs and into the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, you may have been able to see one of Hatshepsut's sphinxes. Hatshepsut was a pharaoh who ruled in ancient Egypt. There were many pharaohs and perhaps the most famous or memorable was King Tutankhamen, but Hatshepsut was undoubtedly the most unusual. Hatshepsut was a woman and that just wasn't supposed to happen in Egypt, but it did. There were "many monuments and pieces of art [that] were created in her honor." As with most pharaohs there were many different kinds of memorial objects that were created to be placed in their tombs or in front of their temples. Hatshepsut had artisans carve several stone sphinxes to stand "guard in front of her temple." She supervised her architect, Senenmut, who created her temple. Plans were drawn up to make statues, "including a set of six sphinxes." The granite was mined at a quarry in Aswan and with great difficulty this "HUGE block of granite" made its way down the Nile on a boat. Pharaoh Hatshepsut's dream began to take shape and her magnificent temple was soon guarded by the six sphinxes. Later, after she died, her stepson, Thutmose III, had "all of the beautiful artwork, including the sphinxes," destroyed and buried in a pit. Who found these pieces? How were they put back together again and just how did that sphinx get to the Met? This is a fascinating glimpse at an unusual Egyptian pharaoh and how one of her sphinxes made it to the Met. Most people have never heard of Hatshepsut, but she is just starting to become known to the younger set and this is one of the more interesting portraits of her.

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