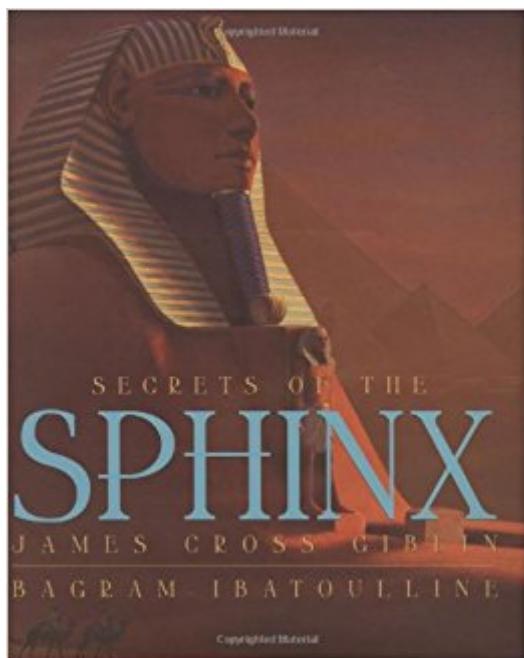


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# Secrets Of The Sphinx (Orbis Pictus Honor For Outstanding Nonfiction For Children (Awards))



## **Synopsis**

James Cross Giblin, this year's winner of the Sibert Medal, has written a stunning exploration of one of history's most mysterious structures. The Great Sphinx is one of the largest sculptures in the world. Six stories high and a city block wide, it has stood guard over the pyramids of Egypt's Giza Plateau for 4,500 years. Who built the Sphinx and why? And how did primitive sculptors manage to carve such a towering monument? In search of answers, James Cross Giblin takes readers back to a time before written history and traces the trail of clues left behind by the ancient Egyptians. As he explores various theories, Giblin seamlessly incorporates fascinating information on the pyramids, the Rosetta Stone, Atlantis, and more.

## **Book Information**

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

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## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 4-7  
For thousands of years the Sphinx at Giza has gazed east toward the Nile River. Today, within hundreds of yards from its base, buses unload tourists at the edge of Cairo's urban sprawl. Giblin recounts the history of this monolithic symbol of power and the problems of erosion, air pollution, and tourism that face it today. He provides background on the location, hieroglyphic writing, Egyptian religion, and the flourishing of Fourth Dynasty (considered responsible for the creation of the Sphinx). He weaves ancient legends about the monument with commentary from a first-century visitor (Pliny) and modern-day controversies. Giblin also covers the recent

discovery of a workers' settlement at the Giza Plateau and what this tells us about the builders of the monuments. However, his recounting of the story of the destruction of Atlantis and its relationship to the Edgar Cayce Foundation's continued efforts to find a "records chamber" under the statue is a lengthy and confusing digression. Sand-toned paintings reveal the Sphinx in its ancient and modern grandeur and provide readers with an idea of the work performed by laborers at Giza. A simple, attractive map highlights important sites. While many books on ancient Egypt mention the Sphinx, this is the only title devoted exclusively to the topic for this audience. Pairing Secrets with Zahi Hawass's Curse of the Pharaohs (National Geographic, 2004) will provide readers with additional context and bring them up-to-date on archaeological work in the region. —Daryl Grabarek, School Library Journal Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 7-12. The facts are amazing: the Great Sphinx of Egypt is nearly 4,500 years old; it is as long as a city block and as tall as a six-story building. Just as thrilling are the unsolved secrets. Who built the Sphinx and the three huge pyramids it appears to guard? Is the Sphinx a portrait of a particular pharaoh? In his signature plain style, the award-winning nonfiction author presents a wealth of scholarship, including perspectives on ancient Egypt's rich history and culture, the Rosetta Stone, and urgent contemporary issues of restoration and preservation. Giblin spends too much time on crank theories about the Sphinx not being the work of the ancient Egyptians, but he vividly conveys the drama of recent discoveries, especially archaeological excavations that reveal startling new information about how the Sphinx was built and about the skilled men--and women--who labored to create it. The handsome book design helps make the complex text accessible. The picture-book-size layout is spacious, and the photorealistic gouache and watercolor illustrations are beautiful, including paintings of the desert, close-ups of the sculptured face, details of hieroglyphics, and portraits of famous figures through history. Giblin discusses how he used each of his sources in the combined "Source Notes and Bibliography," and many readers will want to follow his trail. Hazel RochmanCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This book was purchased to replace the previous Sphinx book.

Bought this book for my 7 yr old son for Christmas and he loves it. It is very educational and he loves reading it over and over. No disappointment with this book at all.

Awesome book! Needed it for a class and it came promptly and in great packaging. The illustrations are beautiful and the information is great for students in the upper grades or anyone who is interested in Ancient Egyptian civilization. I would definitely order from this seller again!

We are big fans of Bagram Ibatoulline. He did "The Serpent Came to Gloucester" with M. T. Anderson, and he makes this book something extraordinary. This is a longer text. It covers modern Cairo, and takes you back to prehistoric Cairo. It discusses the rise of hieroglyphic writing in Egypt, talks about the older pyramids and burial rituals, then shows you how the gigantic Sphinx and pyramids were built. It puts a new perspective on how the work got done, and on who did the work, based on excavations of the worker burials and villages being done in Egypt. There are great illustrations of the Sphinx being painted, and a wonderful mural showing some of the technology used in construction. Then the book gives you Thutmose, who slept in the shadow of the Sphinx and dreamed the voice that changed Egyptian worship. Talks about con artists who pretended there was treasure buried beneath the Sphinx; talks about the translation of the Rosetta Stone; Talks about the legend of Atlantis; talks about preservation of the Sphinx in modern times; and does not shy away from mentioning the damage that was done to the Sphinx by Muslim crusaders incensed that the common people were worshiping it. Simply excellent, informative text. Now, look carefully at the images in this book. Those aren't photographs. Those are Bagram Ibatoulline's genius illustrations. Great notes section/bibliography. Two-page index. This book is COMPLETE.

The Secrets of the Sphinx covers a lot of ground regarding the Great Sphinx. It takes you through the physical attributes of the Sphinx followed by the history of the Sphinx and also some of the history of how it was built and by whom. You will learn about how the Sphinx was rediscovered after hundreds of years. The Rosetta Stone is explained in good detail as well as the legend of Atlantis. The text flows smoothly through to the present and what the future may hold for the Sphinx. The illustrations go well with the story and are high quality type artwork.

This is a really well written book about Ancient Egypt that drew me right in. It covers everything you can think of regarding the Sphinx. The Muslims who tried to deter the Egyptians from continuing the worship the Sphinx and the labor involved in making it. A really, wonderful book. Read it!

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