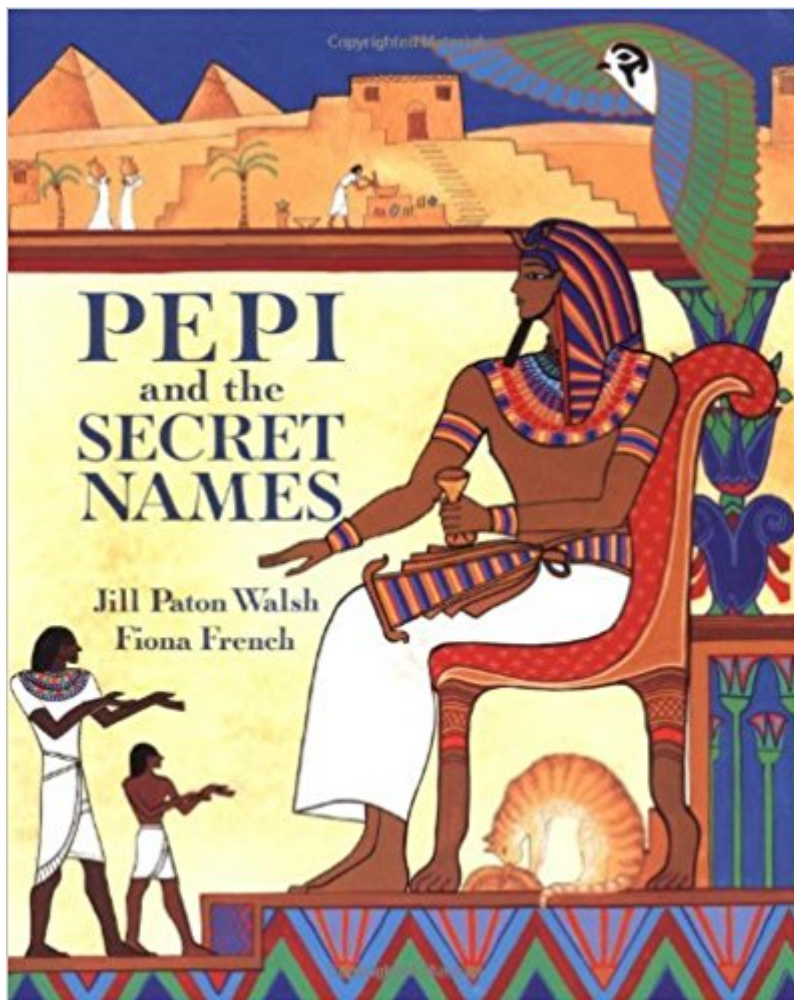


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Pepi And The Secret Names



Synopsis

Prince Dhutmose has commanded a splendid tomb to be built for his final journey to the Land of the Dead. Pepi's father is to decorate it, but how can he paint the unimaginable—the terrible gods: Horus the Hawk, Sebek the Crocodile, and Mertseger the Winged Cobra? Pepi decides to help him and, armed with his quick wits and a knowledge of secret names, the boy sets out into the wild to bring back real-life models for his father. In this magically illustrated story, young readers can solve the secret names for themselves, using a simple hieroglyphics key that brings them into the mysterious world of ancient Egypt.

Book Information

Age Range: 6 - 11 years

Paperback: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Pyramids, hieroglyphics, secret names, a lowly painter and an exacting pharaoh—the elements of this elegantly illustrated story are ripe with possibilities, but they never cohere. When Pepi's father descends into Prince Dhutmose's tomb to paint the animals that will accompany the prince to the Land of the Dead, Pepi bravely provides him with live models—a lion, hawk, crocodile and cobra—for he has guessed their secret names (the point of a secret name, however, is never explained). In the text, the names are presented in hieroglyphics, thus bringing the story to a temporary halt; a code in the back of the book, though not linguistically accurate, allows readers to write English words in hieroglyphics "just for fun." Nor are similarly elaborate details fully integrated into the narrative. Greenaway Medalist French (Anancy and Mr. Dry Bone) combines crisply stylized tomb paintings with child-pleasing caricatures of animals, but the page design sometimes seems frenetic-pale,

pastel designs oddly mingling with brightly colored Egyptian motifs. While the writer and the illustrator each demonstrate individual strengths, text and pictures do little to enhance each other. Ages 6-up. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 2-5?Pepi's father is an artist who has been commissioned by Egyptian Prince Dhutmose to decorate his royal tomb. To help the man accurately portray creatures like the Lions of the Horizon and Horus the Hawk, Pepi befriends the real-life animals, guesses their secret names, and convinces them to pose for his father. When all the work is completed, Prince Dhutmose is well pleased with the artwork, with Pepi's talent at name-guessing, and with the chance inclusion of the prince's well-loved cat in the many tomb paintings. Based on imagination and fact, this oversized book with its brilliant illustrations in lapis, sand, and crocodile tones will make a good addition to units on ancient Egypt. Kids might also get a kick out of deciphering the hieroglyphics using the key at the back of the book.?Cathryn A. Camper, Minneapolis Public LibraryCopyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If your students like codes and word puzzles, they will love this book. As Pepi interacts with the guardian spirits of Ancient Egypt, he must learn their secret names to protect himself and help his father. The story is unremarkable, but exposes students to some of the pantheon of Egyptian gods in a creative way and the challenge of solving the hieroglyphic riddles made the story more interesting. The artwork, however, was the real star of the book. Incredibly detailed illustrations in the style of Egyptian tomb paintings were a delight and were worth the 5-star rating in and of themselves. All together, a good read and well worth the time.

Ordered this for my Egypt-obsessed six year old. The story is lovely and the illustrations are beautiful. We enjoyed it.

I bought this book because it was widely recommended in Christian homeschool curricula. I was initially disappointed in the book when we read it the first time, but I have changed my opinion as I have explored the genre further... finding a good conservative book on Ancient Egypt is not easy!First the Pro's: The book is beautifully done. The illustrations are marvelous and appealing even to preschoolers. My little kids loved looking at the lion, hawk, crocodile, and cobra which come to speak to Pepi. They also related to the idea of a boy trying to help his father paint these

creatures, and thought it was fun every time the creatures showed up for real in the father's temple. They also enjoyed the hieroglyphics and the idea of each animal having a secret name. And of course the running subplot of the tabby cat showing up. It was a good story and the author put a lot of time into telling it. There was nothing objectionable in the account either--no inaccuracies, inappropriate language, or liberal kooky things thrown in there. There wasn't even a lot about the Egyptian gods and polytheism, which is sometimes confusing for the youngest ages. It's just a good story. So I appreciate that. Also, there is a great hieroglyphics chart on the back page. My second and third graders had a lot of fun using it to write each other messages because the glyphs were big and more well-formed than in some of the charts they'd come across before.

Now the Con's: The main problem is that the book is a good length but not formatted as well as it could be for younger kids. When I first read the book myself, I thought there was no way my younger kids would make it through all the text on each page. They didn't. And the storytelling itself was too far above their level (preschool, kindergarten, first grade). I had to dumb down sentences and skip some things in order for them to keep up with the story. They loved the story, but the text was more suitable for my third grader. Indeed, some curricula recommend this book for 3rd grade and up, but by then they have missed an apt audience in the littlest kids who would enjoy this most!

Secondly, the story is just SLIGHTLY scary. I mean, it is demystified as it goes on, and as you read it again and again, but my littlest ones were slightly intimidated the first time through with the creatures who threaten to hurt Pepi, his father, and the Prince if things don't go their way. I'm not sure they understood the context. If your children are sensitive or if this is their very first introduction to Egyptian literature (as it was for mine), it might help them to understand that these stories can be kind of strong. And that some of the Egyptian gods were represented by these animals--which is unusual for the Judeo-Christian mind. We did a small animal unit after reading this, to get the kids used to the idea of Egyptian animals showing up in the literature--but maybe I should have done this beforehand.

Lastly--and this is just a small thing--there is nothing very educational about the book itself. It doesn't explain the premise of secret names, hieroglyphics, or anything about Egyptian culture. It doesn't even have a moral. After viewing many other Egyptian stories out there, this definitely rose to the top of the list. I was glad we got it but mainly because of the junk it did NOT include rather than anything proactive it did include. I am not bashing the book in any way--it is a nice Egyptian fairy tale--I'm just not exactly sure why it's a staple in some homeschooling curricula.

This book has great pictures and is very informative in an easy to read format. I am very Christian but in no way were we offended in the way it discussed the gods of Egypt. They believed in gods

and they are taught as part of history.

When I first opened this book, I thought, "No way the kids are going to sit and listen to all this text," but was I ever wrong! The language is pure storytelling magic -- they were spellbound. Oh, and they learned something about ancient Egypt, their gods, burials, and hieroglyphics. But the one detail that makes this book irresistible is Lady Miaou, the cat, eating roast duck. My kids will read it just for the tabby cat. :)

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