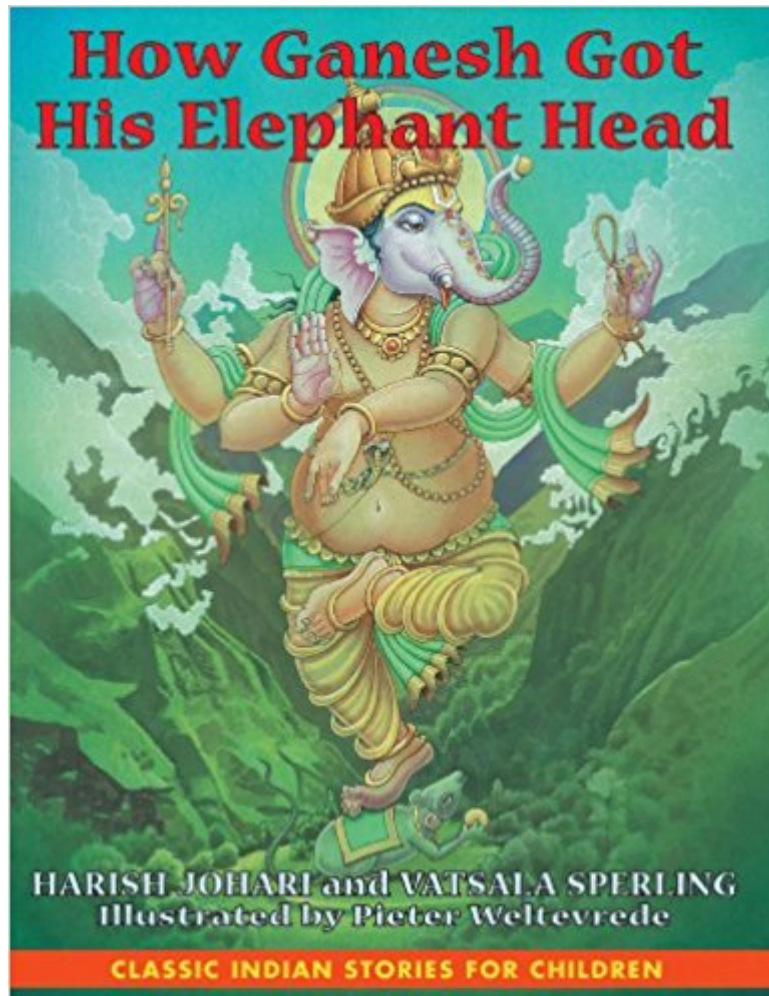




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How Ganesh Got His Elephant Head



Synopsis

The magical story of how Ganesh, the son of Shiva and Parvati, was brought back to life with the head of an elephant. The story of one of the most beloved characters in Indian lore, made accessible for Western children. Illustrated throughout with paintings from the classic Indian tradition. Any Indian child can tell you how the beloved god Ganesh got his elephant's head--now American children can know as well. For centuries Indian children have grown up hearing Ganesh's story--how his mother, Parvati (an incarnation of the great mother goddess), created a small boy from sandalwood soap and commanded that he guard the palace against all intruders while she took her bath. How her husband, Shiva (the fearsome god of destruction), didn't take kindly to being barred from his own home. How Shiva beheaded the boy during the cosmic war that followed, but then, when he realized that the balance of the entire universe was at stake, brought the boy back to life by grafting an elephant's head onto his body and made him the people's intercessor against the powers of destruction. Ganesh's timeless story teaches children about the steadfast power of dedication to duty, the awe-inspiring power of a mother's love for her child, and the gentle power of compassion, which holds the world together. Accompanied by rich, color illustrations prepared according to the traditional Hindu canon, *How Ganesh Got His Elephant Head* will transport children to a magical world filled with ancient wisdom.

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Customer Reviews

Grade 4-6-Ganesh, a Hindu god who is "loved as much as he is worshipped," is the subject of this traditional tale from India. The authors trace his creation from the hands of the goddess Parvati to his ultimate status as a brave and wise god, and explain how he came to have the body of a boy and the head of an elephant. Unfortunately, the stilted, formal language and an overly moralistic tone detract from what is an otherwise intriguing story. Lush, detailed watercolor illustrations, done in a traditional Indian style, do much to advance the plot. Added features such as a "Cast of Characters" of Indian gods and goddesses and a reproducible line drawing of Ganesh are welcome additions; wordy, overly long passages, including an extended introduction; a note to parents and teachers; and a step-by-step explanation of how the illustrations were made, are not. Sue Morgan, Tom Kitayama Elementary School, Union City, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gr. 1-4. This book brings together the story of how the beloved Hindu god Ganesh got his elephant head and one of the most well-known tales from his childhood, his contest with his brother to circle the universe. Told in an exciting and interesting voice, this story mostly holds true to the original legend; minor inconsistencies in the text do not detract much from the authenticity of the tale. The illustrations, done in a traditional nine-step Indian process, are beautiful and authentic. They bring to life the various multiheaded, multilimbed Hindu gods and goddesses and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the book. Public and school libraries can boost their scant collections of Hindu mythology with this fascinating look into that world. Linda Perkins Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Not only is this book beautifully illustrated, but the story is nicely told. I bought it for my 6 year old daughters and they love reading it over and over again. I would estimate that this is for grade 1 reading level or above. Overall the general quality of this series (storytelling and illustrations) is quite high. I have purchased several in the series and would like to collect them all - makes for a nice collection for Hindu kids raised in the west and is generally good all around for those who just want to learn about the Hindu religion.

I am not a student of Hindu Mythology but was recently moved to learn about the archetype of

Divine Unconditional Love and Compassion embodied in the Hindu goddess Paravati. Thankfully, a friend recommended this children's book about the elephant-headed Hindu god, Ganesh, as an introduction to Paravati, who is his mother. The book is a beautifully illustrated story of feminine unconditional love, compassion and strength. When Paravati speaks, her god-consort Shiva hastens to enact her will! Hence, Ganesh gets his elephant head. This book is a fine example of excellent children's literature which is fit for adult readers as well as young ones.

I grew up reading Amar Chitra Katha comics that tell Hindu (and other) religious stories and Indian Folk Tales in a very straightforward (sometimes slightly graphic way). I still have a large collection I'll pass on to my kids, and their telling of Ganesa is my favorite. Compared to those, this is a slightly less appealing though still decent telling of the Ganesa story. It takes some creative license (it leaves out some of the "color" to how Ganesa received the elephant's head, for example) that results in a story that is a bit too toned down/altered for my tastes, but it's still good.

Beautifully illustrated, wonderful story told in an interesting style for children (and adults). Highly recommend for anyone interested in Hindu culture.

My daughter who is four loves this book. I was a little surprised that she liked it so much, since it is a little advanced for her. The only reason that I do not give it five stars is that the story has been altered slightly to be more palatable to today's kids. For instance, the Gods ask permission from an elephant mother before taking her son's head and putting it on Ganesh's body. This was not in the original story, and since we are talking about a religious text, this is the equivalent of telling children that Jesus drank grape juice instead of wine. Still a great book, but the story has been slightly sugar coated.

Lots of reviews say their 4 year old like the book, but it is LONG for a 4 yr old. I would have preferred a more abridged version for a kid this young. I would think this is better for a 6-7 year old.

My son loves the book How Ganesh Got his Elephant Head! I have read it to him and his friends at least a hundred times! Although the author's choice of vocabulary is complicated for a five year old, my son has learned many new words and their meaning. He says, "I like the pictures and learning about each of the Gods is fun. My favorite part is matching each God with his or her vehicle. How come Ganesh does not squish the mouse his rides?"

Kids ages 6-9 who are sampling multicultural folklore will relish *How Ganesh Got His Elephant Head*, a wonderful collection of classic Indian stories. Pieter Weltevrede's bright full-page color drawings enhances these Indian classic folk tales, which should be part of any serious picturebook multicultural collection.

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