

Ancient Fanfiction: Sphinx/Dream Stela

By Celine Baumbach

The world ceased to exist beyond the horizon, a blank page just beyond the reach of my stylus. It tended to be like that in dreams — nothing existed beyond the sand I stood upon and the god before me. His body was made of stone, towering over me, but where in reality the statue stood still, Hor-em-akhet was moving. He blinked slowly, regarding me with curiosity.

I was frozen, afraid to move and unable to speak.

When Hor-em-akhet finally opened his mouth, sand poured out of it along with words. "Child. I have been waiting for you."

I sank to my knees, eyes still fixed on the god. "Father," I heard my own voice say, although I had not moved my mouth.

"I have been waiting for someone like you, Thutmose," the statue said again. "Help me and you will be rewarded. What you desire most will be yours." The god's voice was a deep rumble, shaking the sands around me and unsettling the ground. I lost my footing and as the earth around me heaved, it buried me. I tried to claw my way out, to shake off the sands that covered me, but every move I made only drew me further in.

"The sands upon which I lie are reaching out to me, consigning me to oblivion" Hor-em-akhet said as I struggled, "Free me and I will lead your kingdom into prosperity. When you sit upon your brother's throne, everything that the eye of Ra illuminates shall be yours, the food of the two lands will belong to you, and foreign lands will pay great tribute to Pharaoh Thutmose. History will remember your reign as glorious."

When he stopped speaking, the sands ceased rising, freeing me. I rose, the remaining sand cascading off me, off the god's lion body, off the plateau on which we were standing. It was an avalanche, disappearing in the bright abyss of the dream.

As I stood, the sun rose with me from behind the statue, and I raised a hand to shield my eyes. Immediately the temperature began to rise. I hadn't realized how cold it had been in my dream, but now the midday heat was back again, the air heavy with the lack of wind.

"Thutmose," Hor-em-akhet said again.

"Yes," I answered. "I promise."

And then I woke.

Context:

The origin of the Sphinx itself is unclear, but it had already existed long before the reign of Thutmose IV. According to a stela (a slab of stone with a relief on it) placed in front of the Sphinx, Thutmose was hunting when he grew tired and took a midday nap in the shadow of the Sphinx. In a dream the Sphinx, representing the sun god Hor-em-aketh, promised him he would become pharaoh and rule Egypt in the place of his older brother, if Thutmose cleaned off the sand that was starting to bury the Sphinx. Thutmose did that and erected the stela to commemorate the dream. He did become pharaoh, but whether the dream actually happened or if Thutmose had the stela fashioned to justify his usurpation of the throne is unclear.

Resources:

<https://www.ancient.eu/article/236/the-mystery-of-the-great-sphinx/>