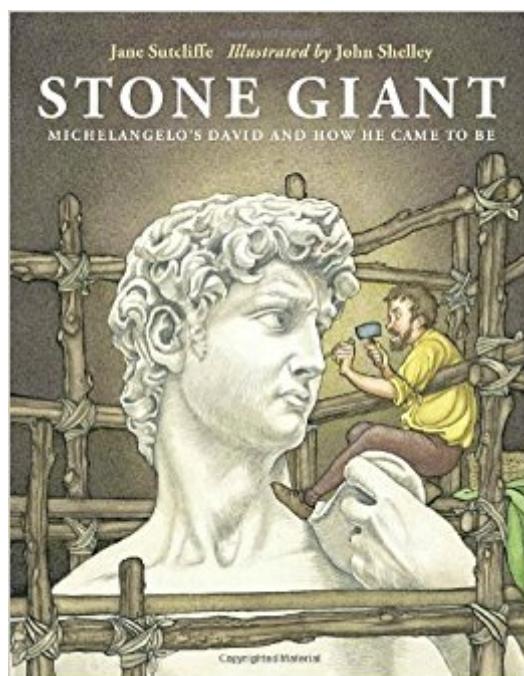


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# Stone Giant: Michelangelo's David And How He Came To Be



## Synopsis

No one wanted the "giant." The hulking block of marble lay in the work yard, rained on, hacked at, and abandoned—until a young Michelangelo saw his David in it. This is the story of how a neglected, discarded stone became a masterpiece for all time. It is also a story about art—about an artist's vision and process, and about the ways in which we humans see ourselves reflected in art.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

Gr 3-5 •A Renaissance icon and one of the most towering (in more ways than one) of Western civilization's artworks gets a humorous but respectful, down-to-earth, and easy-to-understand treatment. Readers learn that the city fathers always intended to have a statue of David carved, as a symbol of the small but powerful city, but that their plan wasn't so simple. Many earlier attempts had come to naught, with even Leonardo da Vinci passing on the idea. Fortunately for Florence—and posterity—Michelangelo was persuaded to return from Rome and began his painstaking sculpting, bringing forth his giant almost three years later, in 1504. This well-written, lively account is graced with excellent illustrations, rendered in pen-and-ink and painted with watercolors, that truly convey a Renaissance Italian flavor; there's even an image of Michelangelo's

sketches for the statue with a poem he wrote about it. Readers should note that David's frontal nudity is discreetly concealed for the most part, but there is one scene in which the piece is shown from the front, completely uncovered, and another illustration depicts the statue's bare backside. A helpful author's note and bibliography conclude the book, though the note fails to reveal that David is now housed in the Accademia Gallery in Florence, and the bibliography includes mostly outdated resources and none that seem geared to young readers. Highly recommended for all public and school libraries and especially recommended for units on the Italian Renaissance and in art classes in the middle to upper-elementary grades. •Carol Goldman, Queens Library, NY

For 40 years, a large block of marble sat undisturbed in a work yard in Florence, Italy. The long-held plan was to have a sculpture of David overlooking the cathedral, and so, encouraged by friends, young Michelangelo returned to his hometown to tackle the project. Building a wooden hut around the stone for privacy, he set to work, first sketching David on the stone and then chiseling bit by bit. For three years he chiseled, until finally the 18-foot statue was finished. Sutcliffe's fascinating story of Michelangelo's David is appropriate for younger readers, and Shelley's detailed pen-and-ink illustrations will be appreciated even by older readers. (Before you ask, yes, the sculpture is depicted in all its nude glory.) In a style reminiscent of Peter Sís or Tomie de Paola, Sutcliffe and Shelley often expand the text by having a full-page drawing with a storyboard strip along the top, while other times they use circular illustrations with borders. Art teachers especially would do well to seek this out. Grades 2-4. --J. B. Petty

Michelangelo's David is such a well-known masterpiece that I always thought it was his idea from the first chip of marble. Not so! Sutcliffe sets just the right tone to engage readers in the fascinating tale of this stone "troublemaker" that stumped numerous artists for nearly forty years before Michelangelo saw his David in the massive block. Shelley's detailed, colorful illustrations are a masterpiece themselves, each demanding a closer look. An inspiring book for the artist in everyone.

Great book for kids. Tells of Michelangelo's project "The David". Perfect book to introduce "The David"

Michaelangelo's David comes to glorious life in this marvelous picture book page-turner. Kids will gather with the people of Florence to discover just what Michaelangelo did with that old,

weather-worn marble block, the stone giant.

Beautiful artwork and a good story for children in a high-quality hardcover edition. Ours are now inspired to see the real David on an upcoming trip to Florence!

My kids love this one. Great illustrations.

Very good for kids

It's tough to get interested in art history, but *Stone Giant* drew me in and kept me turning the pages. I had never known the history of the stone that David was carved from and I loved the description of Michelangelo's work as he chipped away the stone that entombed the figure inside: "Every night he went home floured with the dust of not-David. He combed bits of not-David from his beard." This book takes a collection of dry facts and turns them into an intriguing and entertaining tale. The illustrations bring a classical style to the colorful and kid friendly narrative. I recommend it for any parent with a child who would rather skim a graphic novel than attempt a book on history. *Stone Giant* makes learning fun.

Artistic masterpieces all have interesting back stories . This fascinating and well illustrated book tells the story behind the creation of Michelangelo's David. Frankly, I didn't know this story and found it as interesting as any young reader would. After becoming familiar with the struggle to create this large statue and then move it to where it could be enjoyed by the citizens of Florence, Italy, I am now even more entranced by this marvelous work of art. This is the way to introduce children to art. When they are young tell them the stories behind the works themselves and the artists. Then expose the youngster to the actual art itself. After reading this book I rather think the child will want to see what the statue looks like. Book provided by publisher.

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