



# **Jake Ransom and the Howling Sphinx**

*James Rollins*

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## **Jake Ransom and the Howling Sphinx** James Rollins

Using his father's watch as a key, Jake intends to return to Calypsos. Instead he's thrust into a strange desert land where he's joined by his friends Marika, Pindor, and Bach'uuk and his sister, Kady. As they try to figure out what to do next, a surprise attack by the beautiful young Princess Nefertiti takes them all captive.

Soon even she is battling the Skull King's minions. For Jake has something the Skull King wants—a prize that will give its owner awesome power, including control of the fearsome Howling Sphinx. In a new pounding adventure, Jake races against time to outfight and outwit Kalverum Rex, knowing that if the Skull King wins, he'll be unstoppable.

Filled with unexpected danger, challenging puzzles, and dazzling action, this is a first-rate, fast-paced thriller—a read only James Rollins could have created!

## **Jake Ransom and the Howling Sphinx Details**

Date : Published (first published 2010)

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Author : James Rollins

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# From Reader Review Jake Ransom and the Howling Sphinx for online ebook

## Jaret says

This was an action-packed young adult adventure story that got the action starting immediately. The premise was truly intriguing and I enjoyed listening to it. However, I'm going to say something I don't say often: You really must read this series in order. There were a lot of references to events that happened in book one that this plot relies heavily on. However, even missing chunks of information (because I started with book 2, of course), I still enjoyed everything that happened and will definitely go back to book 1. This is definitely going on my recommendation list for my students. My boys, especially, will love it!

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## Lea says

Whew, what a ride!

When I first stated reading this, I hadn't read the first book, Jake Ransom and the Skull King's Shadow. I found it confusing, and kind of didn't want to even read it after that. But I'd won it on GoodReads (thanks!), so I felt responsible for finishing and reviewing it.

Well!!

I am so happy I stuck with this! (I bought the first book and read it, so this one made a LOT more sense after that!) This should seriously be made into a movie -- I'd watch it, for sure!

Jake Ransom and his older sister, Kady, are back, still searching through time for their mother and father, who have been missing for the past three years. In the last book, they were accidentally transported into the distant past, where they were able to experience different cultures and make new friends, all while helping to save the land of Calypsos from the Skull King.

This time around, they've deliberately gone back in time in order to continue their search for their parents.

On their last adventure, we met Mayans, Neanderthals, Vikings, and Romans. This time Jake and Kady (as well as their friends from Calypsos) are transported into an Egyptian land, meeting the haughty princess Nefertiti and battling an evil cult.

Here are some things I love about this series so far:

History! The author includes a lot of historical facts -- as well as some fun stuff that isn't meant to be taken as realistic. There's enough here, though, to interest kids who might want to do some research on their own. This would be a great jumping off point for homeschool kids, especially.

Books for boys! For girls, too -- obviously -- but it seems like it's difficult to find books to interest boys enough to get them (and KEEP them) reading. No problems here -- adventure abounds, with battles, intrigue, and heroics on every page.

Good family values! Yeah, I know how that sounds, but it really is true. Jake and his friends are GOOD. They do the right thing, helping even those who wouldn't help them. Jake has a real sense of responsibility, and he takes it very seriously. He's kind, strong, caring, and intelligent -- and he also kicks ass. I especially like the way he treats his sort-of kind-of love interest (a very sweet subplot that is a VERY minor part of the story -- no yucky kissing parts here), Marika. He is chivalrous and protective, but not OVER protective. Marika is no shrinking violet, either. She's faster than Jake, and just as smart and brave, and she's as dedicated to doing the right thing as he is.

Neanderthals! They are presented in an interesting way, as the wisest of the people Jake meets. While perhaps not scientifically accurate (but who knows?), they are proud, but unassuming, strong, but not forceful. They're almost . . . elemental? Another possible subject to encourage young readers to research.

Again, there is this strong devotion to family and friends in this book, as there was in the previous one. It's slightly old-fashioned, I guess, but very sweet -- and I wish this sort of devotion and loyalty was something presented more often in our society. (Preachy, preachy! Sorry!)

Another thing that I really like about this series is that there aren't any sneak attacks emotionally -- while there are characters who aren't who they initially seems to be, the people whom Jake trusts are true friends. I think this is wonderful for younger readers who might be unduly upset by a trusted friend's betrayal.

Really, the only complaint I have here is with the books' portrayal of Jake's sister, Kady. Although she is strong and smart, there is a certain shallowness to her. She cares a little too much about makeup and boys, which is probably the way boys see their older (and younger?) sisters. But still. I'm hoping Kady grows even more in future books. The other girls/women in the series, so far -- with notable exceptions -- are less superficial. And maybe that's the author's point? Maybe Kady is written as a product of the time she lives in, when we're all probably more superficial than people in previous times?

I highly recommend this book (and the series) for boys AND girls -- probably in the tween range -- as well as for any adults who like a bit of adventure. I could honestly see this as a successor to Harry Potter -- although this is in no way like that series, other than in the characterizations of the hero and his friends.

And please -- bring on the Jake Ransom movies!!

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## **Kate Harding says**

What to say, what to say. It's no secret I'm a huge fan of both James Rollins and YA literature and this book marries those two things, so it should be a winner. In some aspects it certainly is. I love the ways Rollins takes actual parts of history and science and weaves them into a story with his own theories and creations. This book is the second in a series and I love the basic plot of the tale - Jake and his sister Kady get sucked into an ancient lost part of Pangea, their parents are missing (are they there too??) and they have a big bad evil to fight with some friends they made in the first book, who live on Pangea. What I didn't like about this book was that it constantly felt like Rollins was trying to keep an YA length while cramming as much into the story as possible, clearly aiming to set up for another book in the series. I LOVED the addition of the lost queen Nefertiti, but I really can't stand the way Kady is written. I get she is supposed to be the superficial cheerleader high school girl, but I like to believe that most girls would step up and get their priorities straight when sucked into an ancient time/alternate universe and faced with all sorts of horrible frights. Maybe not, but at least she wouldn't complain about her cell phone.

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## **Randy says**

James Rollins is building an interesting world in this young adult series. Even an old "young adult" like myself loves this stuff.

Jake and Tandy Ransom are the children of two archaeologists who disappeared three years before, presumed murdered by bandits while on a dig. The two kids always hoped differently and learn they were probably right.

They get drawn back in time through a Mayan pyramid to the super continent of Pangea and a valley called Calypsos where they find lost tribes of humans. Mayans, Romans, Neanderthal. Brought there by some ancient Atlantean technology, Jake and Tandy make new friends there: Marika, a Mayan girl, Pindor, a Roman boy, and Bach'uuk, a Neanderthal their same age.

They have a ferocious battle with the Skull King(all this from the first book), save the day, find evidence their parents have been in this land(his father's pocket watch),and get matching arm bands from the Neanderthal elders, and return to their own time.

This time, at an Egyptian exhibit in New York, they are again pulled back to Pangea, this time in a desert environment. They learn their three friends are with them, the matching arm bands being the reason.

They are captured by a beautiful young girl, the Princess Nefertiti, whose hunting party saves them from a pack of Velociraptors, then imprisoning them. Soon they are embroiled in palace machinations and learn the Skull King is operating here also, wanting something they have, probably the watch, and face an uphill battle to survive, find their parents, and get home.

Rollins even drops a hint where the next book will go.

A lot of fun. I'm a fan of Rollin's adult thrillers and this one isn't much below them.

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## **Cindy says**

I loved it. It was fast moving and got me hooked right from the beginning. I liked all the twists and turns that kept me wondering right up until the end. And I loved the wisling...my vote is for Hissler. It was nice seeing characters from the previous book, like meeting old friends. I'm looking forward to the next trip to Pangaea. As usual, I don't want to spoil it for others so I'm keeping this short. I will be recommending this to all of the people I know who love adventures.

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## **Marla says**

3.5 again, but more because it didn't advance much of the back story of the mystery of his parents disappearance or much about Jake.

Likes:

- \* Jake's friends were pulled along with him, and loved Pindor's embarrassing appearance
- \* Egyptian flying boats
- \* Pindor's crush on Nefertiti
- \* time stones
- \* prophesy/messages
- \* Kree and his eye tattoo was a great villain with Heka aiding him
- \* the dinosaurs, the sand sharks and harpies were cool monsters
- \* prisoners in the dungeon were a pleasant surprise
- \* Jake's new pet

Dislikes:

- \* uncertain about the mirror and the encounter at the end, I didn't understand what it meant and it left me feeling off balance
- \* this book did not explain any of the unanswered questions from the first book and instead brought up more questions, esp about stones and Bledsworth Corp.
- \* did not have a moral like the first book, beware of cults?
- \* Jake just reacted a lot more in this book instead of thinking first
- \* missed Jake's McGyverisms that I enjoyed in the first book
- \* spent more time traveling and fighting than developing characters

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## **Jonathan Tran says**

Jake Ransom is a suspenseful book that has twists and betrayal at every turn. This is a riproaring adventure, especially for those who have read the previous book, "Jake Ransom and the Skull King's Shadow". There is heartbreak, humor, and adventure in every page of this book. I couldn't put the book down and read it whenever I had the chance. James Rollins, the author, keeps you on your toes so you can't predict what will happen next in this amazing book. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone, though I think it would be better if they read Jake Ransom and the Skull King's Shadow first.

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## **Kaylee says**

There were some niggly bits in the first book, but they were all things I could ignore, so they didn't affect my enjoyment of the adventure story. Book two here, on the other hand, had a lot more annoying bits that I couldn't ignore.

First thing I noticed, the author uses random Egyptian words for names of characters and places, to give the story an "Ancient Egyptian" flavor. Naming things with random words is nonsensical, but I wouldn't have minded this; I neither expect nor require historical authenticity from a middle-grade Indiana Jones-type adventure story, so that's fine. But then we are introduced to an evil sect called "The Blood of Ka". Jake explains that ka is the Egyptian word for soul or spirit. So that would translate as...The Blood of Soul/Spirit? That makes no sense. Finally, all the way at the end of the book, Rollins belatedly mentions that they are supposed to be followers of a god named Ka. There is no such being in real-world mythology, and there's no indication in the book that it's the name of a god in this fantasy world, so there was no way to know this. It

wasn't a mystery for the characters to reveal, he just forgot to tell us, apparently. If he had clued us in sooner that he had made up a god named Ka, then the cult's name would have made a lot more sense. That's a very sloppy oversight.

Just a little rant... (view spoiler)

The evil sect's symbol is the hieroglyph for "ka" above a skull. Couple niggles here: 1. A skull symbol is woefully out of place next to an Egyptian hieroglyph. I get that Rollins wanted something sinister, but the incongruous skull is so cheesy that I'm gonna sprain my eyes from all the rolling. But that seems to be his style, to focus on outer appearances and neglect the substance of the thing. Honestly, if the sect has a reputation for being evil, then a sinister emblem isn't even necessary; they could have a fluffy kitten as their symbol and nonetheless people would shudder, knowing what they stand for. A skull is such a cop-out. 2. The glyph for ka is two arms raised upwards. Calling it "the hieroglyph that looks like horns" is painfully stupid coming from Jake, who is supposed to be an expert on this stuff. If the author had just made that mistake himself, I would have let it go (it's kind of a niche interest, so I don't expect the average person to know this), but since Rollins insists that *Jake* knows his hieroglyphs...well, then *Jake* should bloody well know basic things like this.

And then they get to the inner city, and the palace is a giant pyramid. \*sigh\* I know pyramids are the quintessential "Egyptian thing" but I really don't think that that particular piece of architecture is suitable for a *palace*, even in a cheesy fantasy world. It is really completely impractical as a residential or administrative building.

I did like the ending. Unlike the first book, this one did not pull a cliffhanger. It did have an open-ended ending, in that Jake and Kady still haven't found their parents, and at the end they make a pledge to keep searching. So the story gets all its loose ends tied up, but there is more to come. That's a nice setup for a continuation; unfortunately, it appears that the author has abandoned this series. Being a middle-grade series where the main characters aren't allowed to die, I think it's safe to assume they would have eventually reached a happy ending, but the two initial books are all we're gonna get. Kind of disappointing, but at least this book had a satisfactory ending, so I am okay with stopping here.

Oh, one thing I \*loved\* was that Djer decides to raise his cousin so he can grow up with a good role model. You don't see many characters in Djer's situation taking on a responsibility like that. I thought that was a very smart choice, and it had the potential to come back as an interesting sub-plot later on.

I rate juvenile books according to how much I think I would have liked them at that age, so this gets bumped up from 2 to 3 stars. At that age, I would not have noticed all of the things that bug me now, but there is still a fair amount that would have annoyed me even then.

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## A.R. Voss says

Just as the first book of the series, this was a great adventure to enjoy. Although it is intended for younger readers, it is still enjoyable for any reader. As I mentioned on my review on the preceding book, *Jake Ransom*, and the *Skull King's shadow*, I do enjoy reading a lighthearted PG rated books once in awhile, for both purposes of writing and also it is refreshing to read a book that is focused mostly on the entertainment aspects of the story telling, rather than just the shock value. I definitely recommend this book, and not only for young readers.

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## **Kailey (BooksforMKs) says**

Jake and his sister Kady are thrown into another mythical world of the past, this time with a lost tribe from Egypt. Jake's old friends are pulled into the desert with him, and they must fight to survive in the strange land. Once the young Princess Nefertiti takes them as captive slaves to the capital city, the dangerous plans of the Skull King become apparent, and even the Princess will turn to Jake for help in fighting against that ancient evil. Surrounded by mystical beasts and magical stones, Jake and his friends are in the thick of another wild adventure!

I LOVE the action in this story! The plot takes a million twists and turns, the puzzles and mysteries keep me guessing, and I can barely stop reading because every scene flows into more action. The world building is fantastically imaginative! So many little creatures, and strange landscapes, and burning magical objects that do weird things! I was fascinated by all the beautiful and horrifying aspects of this new world.

I'm a little disappointed that there isn't much character development in this book. We had a lot of it in the first book, developing friendships, establishing characters' personalities and strengths. Not as much of that in this one. Characters feel a little static. They are still good characters, and they DO have their moments of good dialogue, but they haven't changed or grown much since the last book.

I wish the rest of the series was written already!

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## **AlenGarou says**

Secondo e ultimo (?) appuntamento con le avventure di Jack Ransom. Almeno per ora. Sia mai che all'autore non venga lo schizzo di continuare la serie. Comunque, nonostante le lacune del primo volume a causa di tutto l'ambaradan di roba che Rollins ci aveva buttato dentro, devo dire che questa lettura è stata inaspettatamente piacevole.

La storia è più lineare, c'è molta più azione e nuovi misteri si aggiungono al mazzo.

Oltretutto la vicenda sarà interamente ambientata in un Antico Egitto alternativo (ricordiamoci che l'universo parallelo è in realtà Pangea). Cosa si vuole di più?

Ah, sì. Navi volanti, squali della sabbia, una setta sanguinaria che tenta di controllare la famiglia reale... I VELOCIRAPTOR! Insomma, ha tutti gli elementi giusti... per un fantasy XD

Purtroppo si scoprirà molto poco riguardo ad Atlantide e alla creazione di Pangea, ma per lo meno la storia compirà diversi passi avanti. Primo tra tutti, Jack riuscirà a sconfiggere nuovamente il Re Teschio e le sue armate. Certo, è solo una vittoria temporanea, che tuttavia porterà la pace in entrambi i villaggi. Secondo, scopriremo nuove informazioni riguardo i genitori di Jack e Kady. Non sono morti, ma dispersi nel tempo. Auguri a trovarli!

Rivedremo i vecchi personaggi che hanno aiutato Jack nello scorso romanzo, con la new entry di Nefertiti, che si dimostra una vera tosta. Anche se all'inizio... beh, è una principessa egiziana dopotutto, se non ha lei un ego spropositato...

Ammetto che devo ancora abituarmi al fatto che sia una lettura destinata a un pubblico giovane. E, purtroppo, questo fatto si fa sentire nel corso della storia. Ciononostante non è male come serie e spero

vivamente in un continuo. No, sul serio...

Voglio una risposta per almeno la metà delle 385235934349 domande che ho in testa .-.

Alla prossima!

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### **Andrew says**

So this is the second of the Jake Ransom stories (am not sure if there will be more as it certainly lends itself to a whole series) and to be honest it pretty much follows in the same vein as the first book.

Both Jake and his sister are plunged in to another strange and mysterious land where they are pitted against the Skull King. However this time the plot is able to develop a lot quicker since so much had been set up in the first book and took minimal introducing this time around (there is always that trade off of assuming too much of the reader or boring them while repeating everything that was presented in previous books) - for me this time around it was the right balance.

So what can you say about this book without giving away spoilers. Now that is the challenge - it is easier if you are familiar with the previous book as basically its more of the same. Jake winds up in a fantastic situation and almost instantly finds himself between a way home and the plans of the Skull King - pretty standard fair really however its now it is achieved which I think is where the entertainment comes from.

The writing style of James Rollins has always been open and easy to follow - and considering the target age ground of this book - you can very quickly gets deep in to the story and the action without realising it.

So for a grippingly good fantasy story this is a great example and one I will happily return to - I just wonder if we will see any more instalments, I hope so.

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### **Suby says**

Fantasy in novels is okay. But a book should not appear to be children's book because of all the childish fantasies that grown ups would find hard to digest.

Ancient Egypt had lots of secrets - Agreed. But to say that pyramids are as old as the Raptors is stretching it a bit too far. Then to add the magic of Atlantis to the equation makes it further far fetched.

But its okay. Jake Ransom, the hero, is in his early teens. At that age he could be excused to imagine anything he wants.

The book is better than the harry potter books I have managed to complete.

This book too appears to be the 2nd in a series. I must find the first and read it too.

Readable.

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### **Evelyn says**

Anyone who considered me erudite has now been proven wrong. Action-adventure children's books - gotta love them. You've got all the stock characters - relatable everyboy main character Jake, annoying older sister

Kady, comic relief Pindor, love interest Marika, et al. But they do manage to move outside of being mere placards, not enough so that they're very deep characters, but enough to lend the story some substance. Nefertiti was somewhat annoying, but she shaped up in the end. I'm looking forward to other books in this series.

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### **Alexander Draganov says**

Excellent second novel in the "Jake Ransom" series. The young hero travels again to mysterious land, this time to find an Egyptian tribe lost in a prehistoric desert. Rollins uses his skills of a thriller author to create a complex and mysterious plot, which thrills the reader. Jake is a very likeable young hero and Kalverum becomes more and more terrifying as a villain. Highly recommended for fans of adventurous YA novels.

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