



James Rollins

Jake Ransom and the Skull King's Shadow
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Over the years, I've always included a note at the end of my thrillers, where I address what's true and what's not in my novels—so I thought I'd do the same here.

But before I get started, a bit about myself. Though I earned my degree in veterinary medicine, I've always been an armchair archaeologist. I've loved all things buried and lost to time. In fact, I maintain a Cabinet of Curiosities at home, where I display all manner of the weird and strange—from giant fossilized specimens to tiny, pinned insects. And gracing the top of the cabinet is a massive 100,000-year-old mammoth tusk from China. So as you might guess, the young adventurer Jake Ransom is close to my heart—and for Jake, I saved my wildest and best adventure of all. The series is chocked full of the fantastic, but it's also grounded in reality. Each novel centers on a different lost culture from Earth's past. First up are the ancient Maya. Throughout the book appear various Mayan glyphs, the symbolic writing of these Mesoamerican people. The glyphs in the book are real, and each plays an important role in the adventure. Likewise, details of the Mayan culture—from the clothing they wear to their astounding skill at astronomy—are all factual and integral to the story. Additionally, there are several fun facts for kids, too . . . like how the ancient Maya invented chocolate and chewing gum. Lastly, for this series I've also created my own cryptic language, snatches of which appear in this novel. The alphabet breaks down to English equivalents, so for the more industrious readers, they can translate these bits of language to reveal secret messages. So that's just a hint of the truth behind the fantastic world of Jake Ransom. I hope you grab a backpack and come join me—the adventure is just beginning! -James Rollins