

# ABOUT RICK RIORDAN

**Rick Riordan is a writer who lives in Texas in America.** Before starting to write he worked as a teacher, and got the idea for his Percy Jackson series of books from talking to his pupils and children about Greek mythology. The Percy Jackson books have since become some of the most popular titles for children in the last few years, and are now being adapted for a series of films. Rick now concentrates on his writing full-time. Here's a little more about this great author and how he came to research and write *The Kane Chronicles*.

## **When did you start writing?**

I wrote a lot of short stories when I was young, but I was never serious about writing at university. I focused most of my creative energy on music, and was lead singer in a folk rock band, if you can believe it. After college I became a teacher, and was quite happy with the idea of doing that for the rest of my life. But I read a lot of mystery books in my spare time, and eventually decided, on a lark, that I would try writing a private eye novel. I wrote grown-up mystery novels for about seven years before I started the Percy Jackson series for young readers.

## **What appealed to you about switching from Greek mythology in the Percy Jackson books to Egyptian mythology in *The Kane Chronicles*?**

Egyptian mythology is a constant source of fascination for kids and adults. Mummies, pyramids, curses, hieroglyphics – there is just so much great material. The gods of Egypt are quite complex, and I liked the challenge of modernising a mythology that is not as well known or understood as the Greek, but every bit as colourful.

## **How do the Egyptian gods compare to the Greek ones? And who would win a battle between them?**

The Egyptian gods were harder to pin down, as they were always changing form and combining attributes with one another. They were very powerful, but Egyptians believed you could actually battle gods or threaten them to grant your wishes if you were powerful enough at magic. I think the Greek gods would be confident of victory, but the Egyptian gods would be quite sneaky and might just pull off an upset.

## **Who is your favourite Egyptian god and why?**

I like Bast, the goddess of cats, probably because I'm a cat lover. She was a popular protective goddess, and Egyptians wore her amulets during the unlucky Demon Days at the end of the year. I can appreciate the way Egyptians revered cats. They are fascinating creatures, and they know it!

## **How did you research Egyptian mythology and magic?**

I did a great deal of reading and visited several museums, including the British Museum in London, the Metropolitan Museum in Manhattan and the Brooklyn Museum.

## **Have you ever been to Egypt? If not, do you plan to?**

I haven't been to Egypt, but then again I had never been to Greece when I wrote the Percy Jackson books. I don't think you have to visit those countries to appreciate their stories and the impact they've had on modern civilization, but of course it helps! I'd love to visit Egypt one day.



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## Can you tell us about *The Kane Chronicles*' heroes, Carter and Sadie Kane?

Carter is 14, and has traveled the world with his father, an Egyptologist, for six years since his mother died. He has never known a regular school or a regular home, but has lived out of a suitcase. He reads a lot, and is very knowledgeable about Egypt, but he doesn't really know much about being a normal kid. Sadie was raised in London by her maternal grandparents, and sees Carter and her father only twice a year. She has been raised as a normal British schoolgirl, but envies Carter's travels. The two siblings hardly know each other, and have little in common, but they are thrown together and must find out how to work together.

## What is it about myths that attracts and intrigues you?

Myth is timeless, ancient, and surprisingly relevant. I love taking characters that are very old and making them seem like best friends to modern young readers. We can laugh at the gods or get angry at their jealous, selfish ways, but ultimately we understand them, because they are very human.

## How hard or easy is it for you to make ancient myths real and relevant for young readers today?

It's actually easy for me, which I suppose is why I keep doing it, and why I love my job so much. Writing down the stories and polishing them up is a challenge, but coming up with ways to modernize the characters and events is easy. I suppose that proves how timely the myths still are.

## What tips would you give for becoming a successful writer?

Read a lot! This is where you'll get your inspiration – the fuel for your writer's engine. Write a little bit every day – writing is like a sport, and the more you practice, the better you get. And don't get discouraged! Rejection is part of writing, but if you stick with it, you will succeed.

## What are your hobbies?

Guitar, reading, online games and travel.

## What's your favourite book?

*The Lord of the Rings* trilogy by J R R Tolkien.

## And your favourite film?

Young Frankenstein.

## If you hadn't been an author, what would you have been?

A teacher! I taught in schools for many years, and loved it. If writing didn't keep me so busy, I would definitely be back in the classroom.

