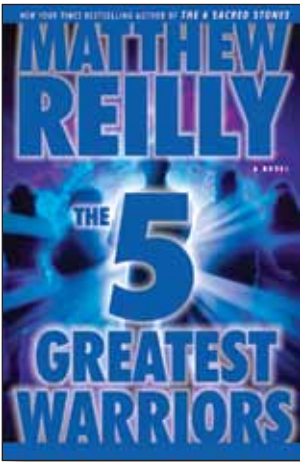


# From *The 5 Greatest Warriors* by Matthew Reilly

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

*THE 5 GREATEST WARRIORS* is the third part of the story begun with *Seven Deadly Wonders* and continued in *The Six Sacred Stones*.



In *Seven Deadly Wonders*, an intrepid international team led by CAPTAIN JACK WEST JR. found the fabled Capstone of the Great Pyramid at Giza among the (widely scattered) remains of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

After rescuing and raising a young girl named LILY—who along with her brother, ALEXANDER, was the latest in a long line of gifted Oracles from Siwa in Egypt—Jack managed to set the Capstone in place on the summit of the Great Pyramid before the occurrence of a rare solar event known as the Tartarus Rotation.

Jack’s multinational team was made up of soldiers from several of the world’s smaller nations. It included: ZOE KISSANE, from Ireland; Sergeant Zahir al Anzar al Abbas from the United Arab Emirates, who was renamed by Lily POOH BEAR; Lieutenant Benjamin Cohen from Israel, now known as STRETCH; a crazy pilot from

New Zealand named SKY MONSTER; and a rogue American submariner named J. J. Wickham, a.k.a. the SEA RANGER.

Providing the team with research and expert knowledge was Jack’s longtime mentor and friend, Professor Max T. Epper, call sign WIZARD, and two young Scottish grad students, the redheaded twins, LACHLAN and JULIUS ADAMSON (call sign: the Cowboys).

As it happened, the Tartarus Rotation was actually the precursor to a far larger celestial event, the return of a “Dark Star”—the opposite of our Sun, its dark twin. Known as a zero-point field, this Dark Star is a moving body of negative energy that will destroy all life on Earth when it returns to the edge of our solar system.

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In *The Six Sacred Stones*, it was discovered that this Dark Star was indeed returning to the outer reaches of our solar system. It was further discovered that a device built by a mysterious ancient civilization and known as THE MACHINE exists on our planet and, if rebuilt, it will repel the negative energy of the Dark Star and save the world.

Rebuilding the Machine, however, meant first finding six magnificent underground “temple-shrines” scattered around the Earth, each built in the shape of an inverted bronze pyramid and known as a VERTEX.

At each Vertex, a long lost PILLAR—a dazzling rectangular diamond the size of a brick—must be set in place: the First Pillar at the First Vertex, the Second at the Second Vertex, and so on. The locations of the six lost Pillars was another mystery that had to be solved.

It was this mission, the mission to rebuild the Machine, that was begun in *The Six Sacred Stones*.

During that quest, it was discovered that other parties were also seeking to rebuild the Machine: a powerful triple alliance of the Caldwell Group from America, China, and Saudi Arabia.

The American side of this alliance was led by Jack's father, JACK WEST SR. (known as WOLF), the Chinese by COLONEL MAO GONGLI and the Saudis by a Saudi spy named VULTURE who had worked for a time with Jack's team, only to betray them. Aiding Vulture was SCIMITAR, Pooh Bear's older brother, who joined Vulture in his betrayal of the team.

Through the influence of the shadowy Caldwell Group—a military-industrial organization that had once held sway over the American president—Wolf still commanded a special forces branch of the US military, the Commander-in-Chief's In Extremis Force, or THE CIEF, which he used as his own private army.

Jack and his father had long been estranged, and at one point in the adventure, in a mysterious mine in Ethiopia, Wolf ruthlessly tried to kill Jack but failed.

A further group aiding Wolf was a coalition of three European royal houses, those of Britain, Denmark, and Russia. They were represented by the beautiful IOLANTHE COMPTON-JONES of the British Royal Family.

Finally, a sinister brotherhood of Japanese nationals, humiliated by Japan's defeat in World War II, entered the fray, only with a different agenda: they did not want to see the Machine rebuilt at all. Led by Wizard's onetime colleague, TANK TANAKA, this Blood Brotherhood wanted to see the world destroyed by the Dark Star, to avenge their defeat in World War II. To achieve this end, among other things, they managed to infiltrate Wolf's team with one of their own men, a Japanese-American Marine code-named SWITCHBLADE.

After many adventures, Jack ultimately managed to plant the First and Second Pillars at the First and Second Vertices (at Abu Simbel and Cape Town respectively), but not without loss, for *The Six Sacred Stones* ended with the team in desperate straits.

One of their number, Stretch, having been captured by Wolf, was taken back to Israel to face his angry former masters at the Mossad. Pooh Bear was last seen heading off to rescue his friend.

Zoe, Wizard, and Lily—having survived a terrifying ordeal at the hands of the Neetha tribe in the jungles of the Congo—dashed to southern Africa in Jack's plane, the Halicarnassus, to help Jack at the Second Vertex.

They brought with them DIANE CASSIDY, an American archaeologist whom they had rescued from the Neetha. Unfortunately, before they could help Jack, they were forced to flee southern Africa in the Halicarnassus, with enemy fighters on their tail.

One unexpected witness to Jack's astonishing success at the Second Vertex was Lily's best friend, twelve-year-old ALBY CALVIN, who had been brought there by Wolf as his captive. After Jack had laid the Pillar, Wolf left young Alby to die in the dark cavern containing the Second Vertex.

As for Jack himself, after laying the Second Pillar—and foiling Switchblade's plan—he was last seen falling into the fathomless abyss beneath the Second Vertex alongside the furious Switchblade.

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The fates of Jack, Stretch, Pooh Bear, Lily, and their team, and the search for the final four Vertices and the laying of the last four Pillars are the subject of this book, *The 5 Greatest Warriors* . . .