

Book One

THE LOST POWER

BY AVANTI CENTRAE

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INTERNATIONAL AWARD-WINNING THRILLER AUTHOR

AVANTI CENTRAE

THE

LOST POWER

CIBA GENRE
GRAND PRIZE
WINNER

VANOPS

"DON'T MISS THIS RIVETING DEBUT!"

—JAMES ROLLINS, the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Crucible*

**DA VINCI CODE
MEETS TOMB RAIDER**

An aikido black belt. A Russian sniper. A dark family secret. And the ultimate race to find Alexander the Great's mysterious Egyptian weapon.

VANOPS BOOK 1:

THE LOST POWER

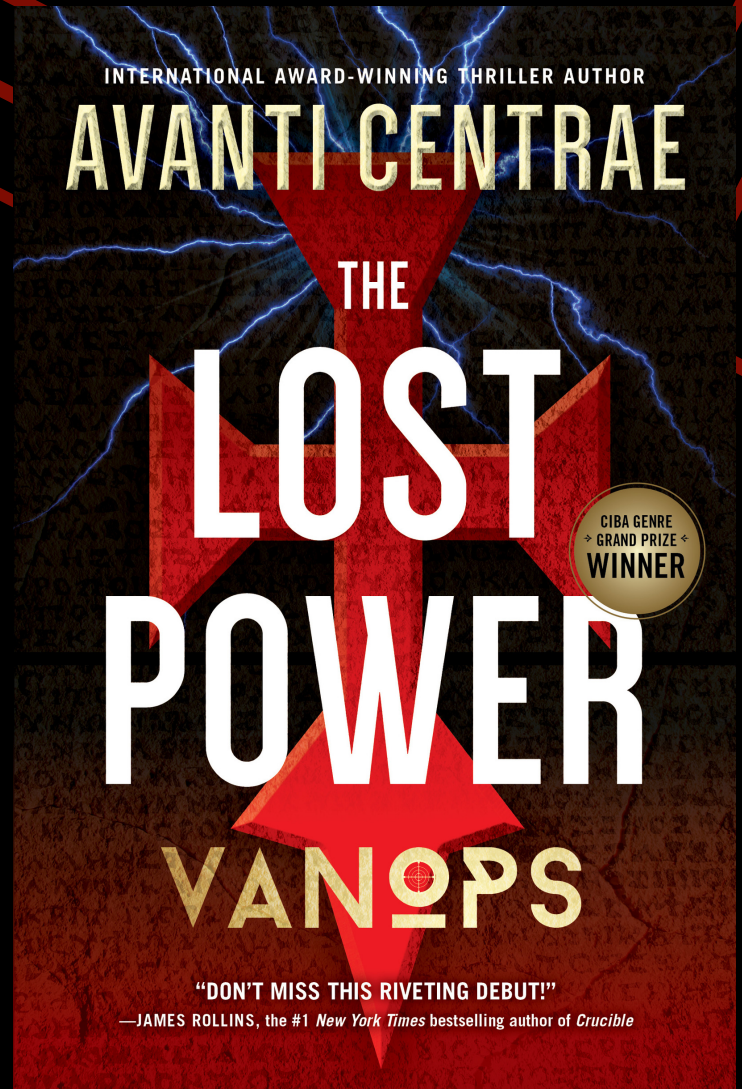
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"Here's a book that defines page-turner."

— James Rollins, #1 New York Times
bestselling author

*"Just a good ole' fashioned rip-roaring
adventure from start to finish. Enjoy the
ride."* Steve Berry, New York
Times bestselling author

*"A high-stakes, daring adventure charged
with suspense and mystery!"*

Ann Charles, USA TODAY Bestselling
Author of the Deadwood Mystery Series

**MULTIPLE AWARD-
WINNING THRILLER**

THE LOST POWER

Spain 1057: During a thunderous battle, the first King of Spain wrestles Alexander the Great's priceless Egyptian weapon from invaders, but finds it holds a terrifying and mysterious power.

A thousand years later, on a hushed Napa morning, gunshots break the morning's silence. Maddy Marshall, an app designer and Aikido instructor, and her twin brother Will, an engineer, quickly run toward the sound. Horrified, they find a sniper's bullet has struck home. With a dying breath, the twins are sent on a quest to recover Alexander's ancient weapon.

Joined by a VanOps covert agent, the Russian sniper's sights are now set on them. No place is safe, a wrong move means death, and even a simple phone call is off limits if they are to survive.

From a medieval Spanish castle, they follow a timeworn trail, starting at a secret warren under the streets of Jerusalem. But if the killer finds the weapon first, world peace will be forever shattered.

Can Maddy learn to wield the power of the dangerous weapon in time to stop the Russian scheme?



Long Description

Where is Alexander the Great's mysterious Egyptian weapon? The Russians are on the hunt. Only Maddy Marshall stands in their way.

On a hushed, fog-shrouded Napa morning, gunshots and the sound of breaking glass shatter the morning's silence. An app designer and assistant Aikido instructor, Maddy Marshall, the red-haired foster boy from her dojo, AJ, and her estranged twin brother, Will, quickly run toward the sound, where they discover a sniper's bullet has killed someone they love.

Before the pool of blood on the living room floor is dry, the twins determine that their only clear path is to follow a series of arcane clues, concealed by a royal ancestor. Marine Theodore "Bear" Thorenson, who has long had unrequited feelings for Maddy, joins the twins to keep them out of harm's way.

They soon learn the trail leads to a mysterious weapon so powerful that Alexander the Great used it to conquer the known world. Powerful in the past . . . dangerous in the present, for if the killer solves the mystery before the twins do, the weapon will be used to cripple the United States' electronic early warning defense systems—the country's eyes and ears will go completely dark—allowing the Russians to swoop in and prey on the vulnerable nation.

As they follow the signs, Maddy is disheartened when she finds out Bear is harboring a shadow alliance with a covert agency called VanOps. Worse, AJ is kidnapped and no ransom note is forthcoming.

Mere steps ahead of the deadly competition and trapped in escalating danger, the quest leads the twins on a tense, pulse-pounding adventure that races from a California winery to a medieval Spanish castle, from a lost warren under the streets of Jerusalem to a mountaintop monastery, and ultimately, into the heart of their family's darkest secrets.

Readers who love Dan Brown, James Rollins, Clive Cussler, or Steve Berry will devour the pages of this award-winning novel.




ABOUT THE AUTHOR


AVANTI CENTRAE

Avanti Centrae is the author of the international award-winning VanOps thriller series. An avid world-traveler, she's studied aikido, been a river raft guide, and thrives on adventure. She resides in Northern California with her family and German Shepherds. Her book, *The Lost Power*, took home a genre grand prize blue ribbon at CIBA 2017, and an Honorable Mention at the 2018 Hollywood Book Festival. Her work has been compared to that of James Rollins, Steve Berry, Dan Brown, and Preston/Child's Pendergast series.


CHARACTERS




Maddy Marshall: Computer app-designer Maddy Marshall is an intelligent, independent truth-seeker with special martial arts abilities. Suddenly, she's thrust into a dangerous world where her non-violent martial arts skills aren't enough to save herself or her country. To survive a series of arcane tribulations, she must look deep into the past, and her emerald eyes become dark with anger when the lives of those she loves are on the line. Can she see the truth and access her power in time to save Bear, Will, and AJ?




Will Argones: Tall, dark-haired Will Argones, Maddy's twin brother, is a skeptic who has made his living as a successful test engineer. Always on the lookout for danger, he can't keep his hands still—his fingers drum on his long legs or twirl his ever-ready-for-trouble flashlight. When his father and wife are murdered, he's forced out of his comfort zone and into a deadly, international game of cat and mouse. Seeking justice for the deaths of those he loved, will his worst fears come true?



Bear Thorenson: Broad-shouldered Theodore Thorenson, a bristly-haired marine, has always wanted to carry the world's troubles on his back by being a covert operative. He jumps at the chance to join VanOps, an ultra-black organization with the duty to stop extreme threats. Caught between his mission and his simmering desire for Maddy, will his shadow alliance force him to betray her trust?



AJ: Freckle-faced AJ, a foster boy at Maddy's dojo with satellite dishes for ears, is kidnapped by the Russian sniper who tore apart the fabric of Maddy's and Will's lives. Feigning sleep, AJ overhears a plot to destroy America's early warning defense system. Can he stay alive long enough to transmit a warning to Maddy?



Ivan Klimov: Ivan, is one of Russia's most accurate snipers. Graced and cursed with congenital analgesia, he's insensitive to pain. As a blood ritual, he marks his kills on his arms and legs to remind himself to be cautious. And careful. His patience makes him extremely dangerous. Will he hit the bull's eye?

Meet the Author

AVANTI CENTRAE

International award-winning author who blends intrigue, history, science, and mystery into non-stop thrillers

Avanti Centrae is the author of the international award-winning VanOps thriller series. As a modern Renaissance Woman, she's had a life-long fascination with a variety of subjects, including psychology, mysticism, world history, science, religions, and mythology.

Her passion for writing began at the age of four when she wrote her first book. After devouring all the tales in the neighborhood bookmobile, she didn't find any books with a strong female lead, and vowed to write one someday.

But first, she explored Europe, New Zealand, Canada, and Central America. For several summers she worked as a raft guide, saving passengers from the rapids of the American River. One midnight, she and fellow raft guides dared a moonlit run. The river ran high, a boat flipped, and they nearly ended up in a rapid aptly named Satan's Cesspool! To fund her addiction for other adventures, and fast BMW's, she spent years as a Silicon Valley IT Executive. Now her attention is on writing award-winning thrillers.

Avanti resides in Northern California. Besides reading and writing, she enjoys her family, her German shepherd and little black dog, hiking, biking, and doing anything outdoors in the local Sierra Nevada mountain range. Her favorite smell is the scent of adventure, either in real life, or in the pages of a well-worn tome.



Interview Questions

What was your inspiration for a female lead?

I visited the bookmobile a lot as a child and remember thinking there weren't a lot of female lead characters in the stacks of stories that I'd bring home. My stories feature a team of protagonists in their early thirties, with agent Bear Thorenson, a VanOps covert agent, and Will, Maddy's twin brother and a knife-wielding engineer, both getting plenty of "screen time". But Maddy Marshall is the star of the VanOps series. My inspiration for her, an intelligent, independent truth-seeker with special martial arts abilities, was an amalgam of qualities from strong women that I've known personally and professionally. I thought it would be interesting to write about a non-violent aikido practitioner and app designer as she gets pulled into a vicious covert world where nothing is as it seems.

You were a white-water river raft guide? Were any scenes in the book based on your experience doing that?

Yes, in my twenties, when I needed a break from working as a desk jockey, I spent a few summers guiding tours on the American River between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe. Ask me about the midnight moonlight run we took one hot summer night and almost didn't survive! There's a scene in *The Lost Power* where one of our heroes ends up in a rushing river, headed downstream toward an immense waterfall.

What influence does your background as an IT executive have on your writing?

As an executive, to run a high-functioning team, I had to learn a lot about people. What motivates them. What scares them. Additionally, after twenty years in the IT industry, I gained an advanced level of expertise about technology, where it's going, and it's potential risks. Every book's characters are more rich, and true to life, based on what I've learned about psychology. Additionally, some books will have a focus on nefarious tech capabilities, such as book two in the VanOps series, currently titled *The Moses Map*.

What were some of the different cultural experiences you witnessed while traveling and how did you incorporate them into the book?

Much of my time traveling thus far has been to western European countries, but my favorite experiences were in eastern European countries or Central America, places that are culturally quite different than the States. Upon our arrival in Yugoslavia in the late eighties, we were met by black-robed women who begged us to rent their master bedrooms. Their inflation was so steep we had to exchange money daily and much of the food listed on restaurant menus wasn't available. In the streets, they roasted goats on spits. I want my readers to have an immersive experience while not getting bogged down with too much description. That's tricky, and the way I approach it is by focusing on the differentiating details, such as in *The Lost Power* when we're in Bagan, Myanmar, and the locals chew betel nut leaf. It stains their lips and teeth dark red. That's a visual detail that many readers haven't seen before.

How did you choose which global locations to add to the story?

The locations had to be visually stunning, interesting historically, and serve the plot. For instance, Vilnius, Lithuania. I didn't intend to set part of the book there, but when I began to research locations, I realized it was perfect. One of the clues that Maddy, Will, and agent Thorenson obtain is: "Find the Center of the Pagan Empire." Red-tiled Vilnius, with its history as one of the last European areas to be Christianized, became an integral part of their adventure.



AROUND THE WORLD

Mere steps ahead of the deadly competition and trapped in escalating danger, the quest leads the twins on a tense, pulse-pounding adventure that races from a foggy California winery to a medieval Spanish castle, from a lost warren under the streets of Jerusalem to a mountaintop monastery, and ultimately, into the heart of their family's darkest secrets.

AWARD-WINNING VANOPS SERIES:

Book #1 The Lost Power

Release Date: November 9th, 2019

An aikido black belt. A Russian sniper. A dark family secret. And the ultimate race to find Alexander the Great's mysterious Egyptian weapon.

Book #2 - The Moses Map

Under Submission

A mysterious star chart from the time of Moses. Coded hieroglyphs. A garrote-wielding assassin. If black belt Maddy Marshall and the VanOps team can't unlock the chart's secrets, a U.S. invasion is inevitable.

Book #3 Adam's Assassins

In Process

Global assassinations. Massive chaos. A deadly, medieval cult. Can covert VanOps agents stop the string of killings in time to save the beloved president-elect and avert an American massacre?

The Lost Power. Will be traditionally published by Black Opal Books, November 9th, 2019. At just over 380 pages, it's an award-winning international thriller. Print ISBN: 9781644371596. Will be available in hardcover, eBook, Audio, and paperback

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