

# **The Evil House**

**Katie Fleming**

**I**t was early Tuesday morning. Lara's clock read 5:18 AM. Today she was travelling to visit a great fifteen-story house in Asia. Legend claimed it was haunted. Lara could hardly wait.

After Lara got dressed in her khaki shorts and green shirt, she went downstairs to the kitchen. There she opened the freezer where she had locked Winston in yesterday for *fun*. He made her favourite meal, beans on toast, and a pot of tea. Afterwards, she locked Winston back in the freezer. She disliked how he always followed her around!

Back in her bedroom, she opened her secret closet and grabbed five boxes of shotgun shells, two large medi-packs, and her backpack. She never kept any guns in her room, except for two automatic pistols in a secret compartment in her bathtub. She went to the basement to collect her guns.

Lara lit a flare as she walked down the stairs. When she came to her huge aquarium with many tropical fish, she pulled an old box under the opening in the ceiling. She climbed up, did a running jump, then a swan dive, into the tank. She swam to the very bottom, and pulled a lever. All of a sudden, part of the bottom pulled away and Lara swam through a small opening. Lara had made this secret passageway after a whole gang of burglars had come to her house. After swimming about seven meters, a staircase emerged from the cool blue water. Lara climbed up, braced herself upon a small platform, and pushed a small switch.

Up she went! Once it got to a top speed of 63 km/h! Once Lara reached her destination, she jumped off the platform into a small room.

There was a small loveseat, closet, a fireplace, a TV which was hooked up to all the cameras in her house, and a large chest on the smooth red carpet that covered the

floor. A green towel was draped by the fireplace. Lara walked over to the fireplace, and raised her cold fingers to the orange blazing fire. She pulled the towel off, and dried herself. In the closet was a Sola wetsuit, and a pair of khakis pants. She put the pants on. Opening the chest, the sweet smell of gunpowder filled the room. Inside the chest lay four pistols, three shotguns, two harpoon guns, with three dozen harpoons, a laser gun, one hundred grenades, grenade launcher, grappling hook with a bungee cord attached to it, and an M16. Smiling to herself, Lara pocketed two pistols, two grenades, grenade launcher, a shotgun, and a grappling hook with a bungee cord attached to it. What a heavy load! Before leaving, Lara went over to the TV, selected what camera she wanted to look through, and sat down.

Poor Winston was sitting on the floor in the freezer shakily bringing up a cup of tea to his lips. Lara snickered. She had turned up the freezer to 5°C so he wouldn't freeze. Instead of going down the platform and swimming again, Lara took an alternate path. Underneath the loveseat was a secret button. Lara pushed it, and one of the walls slid open. Lara quickly ran inside before they shut. Waiting behind the wall was Lara's Norton Streetfighter Motorcycle, Lara's favourite form of transport. She hopped on, and sped down the long dark hallway. When Lara started to see a faint light ahead, she really cranked the throttle! Her brunette hair flew wildly behind her as she picked up speed. The light was becoming brighter now. Lara could see the gate outside her mansion. With a big *whoosh* Lara went flying through the air. At the end of the tunnel was a loaded springboard. As soon as she drove over it, the board thrust Lara into the air! Over the gates she flew, her knuckles were white from holding on. When she landed, nearby birds took off. She was on her way!

*Three hours later...*

A jet plane awaited Lara at an old cedar mill. She flew the rest of the way, and landed just a few minutes from the house. After the plane left, Lara rode her Norton Streetfighter Motorcycle towards the old house. She had to tilt her head up high so she could see the top of the house! Taking her pistols out, she walked closer towards the house. A broken picket fence surrounded the house. Boards were nailed over broken windows, and flaking paint was visible everywhere. Flapping loose shutters swayed in the wind.

Lara walked up the warped steps, carefully avoiding the tall weeds and thorns. Instead of knocking on the door, Lara took a step back, and threw herself directly at it. It opened very easily. Lara took a few steps into the house. Cobwebs, spiders, and dust thickly covered the floor and furniture. Then, without warning, the old door slammed shut. Lara knew it probably wouldn't open, but she tried anyway. Nope. That door was solid shut! Turing around, Lara had squinted to see better. It was pitch black inside, and a stale smell hung in the air. She wished she had brought a pack of flares.

*Oh well*, she thought to herself. Lara saw a staircase straight ahead. It seemed to go on forever. To her left, she saw a staircase leading downward into nothingness. To her right, several small doors stood shut. Who knew what lurked behind them? It was a hard decision, but Lara decided she should climb up the staircase before exploring anything else.

Once she got onto the large platform, she saw three doors labelled with numbers. They were labelled one through three. She decided she would start with the first one, and work her way up. With one pistol aimed at the door, Lara reached out with her left hand,

and turned the knob. The door was locked. Lara tried kicking it, however it was solid shut. She moved onto the second door. It opened quite easily. She stepped inside, and closed the door. A small room was laid out before her, with two couches that were as red as blood, and a blazing fire to her right. At the far wall, there was a big circular board with four chains. There was also a small closet by the fireplace.

Lowering her pistols, she slowly walked around the room. With each step, faint squeaks creaked upon the floor. Lara decided to investigate the couches first. She ran her hand along the couch. When she pulled her hand away, it was covered with fresh, red blood. Lara frowned as she wiped it off on her pants. She walked to the far wall and looked closer at the circular board. It was covered with small spikes. Turning around, Lara went over to the closet. No light was visible from under the door. Again she raised a pistol, and opened the door. Huge black widow spiders poured out into the room. There were millions! Without hesitation, Lara grabbed her loaded grenade launcher. She did a few quick back flips to get further away, and fired only once at the creatures. The blow from the gun sent Lara flying backwards onto the wall, just missing the spikes by inches.

Lara took a deep breath, and looked at the floor where the spiders had been. Dark red blood oozed from each creature. She decided that there was nothing else in the room that she needed to investigate, so she opened the door to leave. What Lara didn't see was the green glowing key, which lay at the bottom of the closet.

Once outside the room, Lara heard soft music that was coming from the third door. Lara once again raised a pistol and opened the door. Lara stepped inside and looked around. It was a bedroom. A huge cracked mirror hung from a wall. There were dusty dressers, one with a dead rose in a vase. Lara looked at the antique rusted brass bed in the

corner. Its faded yellow bedspread was spattered with dried out old blood. The bedspread suddenly moved.

Raising both of her pistols, Lara waited patiently for whatever it was to show itself. Then, the creature sprung at Lara, its huge claws ready to thrash her face. Lara was too quick though. She fired only one shot at the creature, and it was instantly deceased. It was an odd looking creature. It had yellow spotted toes, and a brown body. Its single eye was red, and was in the middle of its head. However, no blood emerged from its body.

“That's weird!” Lara exclaimed, her voice echoing off the walls. Lara left the room, and headed down the staircase. Soft moaning seemed to be following her, every step she took. At the bottom of the staircase, Lara was thinking about giving her grenade launcher a try on the front door and going back home. However, she wanted to find out if the legends were true about the house, and was still curious about the moaning. Lara shoved her guns back into her holsters. She decided she would go in the elevator next to see where it would lead...

Once inside the elevator, Lara was careful not to touch the razor sharp spikes that lined the walls. There was only one small button to push. It had a message on it. It read: *Unless you want these spikes to rip through your flesh and into your bones, then you better leave now...* “No!” Lara yelled. All of a sudden the words on the button changed...

*Then you must die*

Lara was starting to get worried. Then, the elevator started to rise. It was going at least 100km/h! The higher it got, the faster it went. On the button, the words changed again...

*Hehehe... You will die...*

Lara would *not* let this happen! Then, the elevator came to a complete stop. Lara was thrown to the other side of the elevator just missing the deadly spikes once again. The door opened, and huge black Shadow with fangs and red eyes appeared, blocking Lara's way out. He held a machete in his invisible hand.

“Now,” he spoke, his voice enraged with anger. “You will die. I warned you to go away. I sent spiders and creatures after you but you didn't leave, so you're going to breathe your last breath now.” Before Lara could grab her gun, he sliced the rope that held the elevator...it started to fall. Down, down, down. Lara had to think fast. Very fast! Since the elevator could only hold two people, Lara was able to wedge herself from the bottom of the elevator, half way up. She pressed her arms and legs as hard as she could against the wall trying to avoid the spikes. She closed her eyes, and waited for the nightmare to end.

Suddenly she had a better idea. Carefully getting down from the wall, Lara crouched on the floor and took her grenade launcher out. She pulled the trigger and the ceiling of the elevator came crumbling down upon her ducked head. Lara hoisted her grappling hook and swung it upward. It caught a hold of something on her first try. Lara tugged to secure it and climbed the attached bungee cord to a small ledge. She looked downwards, and watched the elevator plunge to the bottom of the shaft. A horrible sound of spikes ripping through the bottom of the elevator echoed loudly. Reaching almost to the top to where Lara stood. She breathed a sigh of relief.

“That was close!” Lara adjusted her holsters, and looked around for a possible exit from the elevator shaft, and noticed a small door beside her. The handle was not there, but Lara could get through it easily by giving it a good kick. After climbing

through the small hole that remained in the wall, Lara found herself outside one of the small doors that she saw earlier when she came into the house.

“Hmm...” Lara said, “I wonder where the other two doors lead to?” She turned to face the second door, and about to turn the knob, when a strong hand grabbed her from behind.

“Where do you think you're going?” The Shadow yelled.

“Oh great,” Lara said sarcastically, “it's *you* again,” she sighed.

“You might have been lucky once,” the Shadow warned, “but not this time. Don't you realize that you will never leave here? The moaning you keep hearing are people like yourself who wanted to find out the truth of the house. They are behind all of the walls. I buried them there, as well as casting a few spells. They will each die very slowly. And when they do, their faces will be imprinted on the outside of the walls. I can hardly wait to see yours on there.” He laughed an evil laugh. Then turning around, he disappeared into the air.

Lara sighed and raised her hand to wipe the sweat from her forehead. Then, out of nowhere, an axe sailed through the air and hit Lara's left hand dead on. Lara screamed as pain shot up her arm. Her hand shook violently, her eyes watered, and her vision blurred. She slowly looked down at her hand, amazed to see her hand as it always had been. No scratches, no blood, no axe.

“That's *so* weird,” Lara said to herself. She looked at her hand once more just to make sure, and sure enough nothing had changed. The pain was even gone.

“This house is making me go mad!” Lara exclaimed to herself. She tried the door handle, but it was locked so Lara tried the first door. It screeched open, its rusty nails

grinding together noisily. Lara squinted as she looked down, trying to peer through roots that were coming out of every wall. A revolting sickly smell of decaying rotting bones and flesh filled her nostrils. Lara proceeded down the staircase. Once she arrived at the bottom, a small torch lay mounted on the wall. She picked it up and looked around. All of the walls were old and crumbly. Roots grew in tangles from cracks in the walls and floor. Several skeletons lay scattered about. Lara walked around the small cellar taking in everything. Lara stepped carefully over the skeleton bones. Suddenly, she heard footsteps and strange whisperings. She spun around to see who was there accidentally kicking a skull which sent it flying across the room. It hit a wall, and cracked right in two!

“Oops!” Lara whispered. Then where the skull hit the wall, she thought she saw part of the wall move in, however she wasn't sure. Lara took a few steps closer to the wall. Sure enough, it *was* moving in! When the wall had moved inward about two feet, Lara went over with her torch, and looked inside. A small keyhole was visible, with a small hole in the wall beside it. It held an old scroll. Lara gently pulled it out, being careful not to rip the fragile paper. Lara read it aloud:

“Ye who finds this paper is doomed. An ancient curse has lived in this house for many years. The Shadow is evil. He will bury ye alive! Beware! I was one of his prisoners. The only way to stop this evil curse is to find the green key, put it in the keyhole, and the Shadow will burn. Good luck my friend, and beware the danger ahead of you.”

Lara looked up. Fear began to creep into her eyes. Her hands started to tremble, causing her to drop the scroll. She bent down to pick it up, and as she did so, a bony hand

grabbed hers. Lara pulled back and screamed. She grabbed her pistols, and aimed at the small skeleton that stood before her.

“Wait!” The skeleton shouted. “Please don't hurt me!” Lara lowered her guns slightly. Who was he? Why was a skeleton talking? So many questions flashed through Lara's mind.

“Who are you?” She asked, studying him closely.

“My name is Campobello. I am fourteen years old. In school there were always rumours about this house. Everyone said it was haunted. They also said that a Shadow lived here who tortured people to death. I wanted to find out for myself. So, one night I crept away from my house. I came in here, and got lost. It was so dark I couldn't see a thing. I was so scared. Then, I heard moaning. It got louder and louder. This big black Shadow came and threw me down here. I was all alone. Then, that very night, he threw spears at me until I died from the torment. I remember my blood spraying onto the walls. My cries were not heard. It was horrible! And, when he was spearing me, an evil...pure evil smile came across his face. He told me that he wanted to rip my head off my neck, and would hang it outside the house for everyone to see. I was just so scared.” He started to sob quietly, but no tears came from his eye sockets.

“Listen,” Lara explained, “there are a few things I'm not getting. You're dead, however you can talk? You can walk, so why don't you leave?” The boy hesitated before speaking.

“Well, I am truly dead, however just before I died, the Shadow put a spell on me so my soul would not die, only my body would. I haven't left because I can't leave. Not

until the Shadow is dead, and I have a feeling that won't be happening for a long time.”

He turned his head away, and waited for Lara to reply.

“Did you make that trap with the key and scroll?” asked Lara.

“Yes.” Campobello answered.

“Well, how do you know that you have to find a green key to destroy the Shadow?” she asked.

“Often when the Shadow is down here, he talks to himself he says things like how no one will ever find the key. Originally he made the trap. I don't know why he would do such a thing, but he did. He put the keyhole behind the wall and sealed it up so no one would find it. But I found it by accident when I was trying to dig my way out. I had to write something about how to stop him, so I took another prisoner's bones, crushed them up, and mixed them with parts of the wall. I used my blood to write with. But, he has too much power. I know that the curse will never be broken. Every time he kills someone, he gains more power.”

“Well, I'm going to find that key, Campobello, even if it kills me,” Lara explained. The boy shook his head.

“You cannot go alone. I want to go with you. It would be better to work together. Besides, it could take years to find the key. There are so many secret passageways. And, who knows...it could be buried between the walls.”

Lara sighed. “Well, if we ever want to get out of here, and stop the curse, we better get started.”

“Ok, let's go!” Campobello replied.

Walking back up the old stairs Lara felt a sudden chill. Too bad she didn't have her nice warm bomber jacket on! It was pretty weird having a skeleton walking up the stairs behind her. Could she trust him? After all, he could be leading her to the Shadow! Oh well, she thought. She always had her grenade launcher!

After reaching the top of the stairs, Campobello pointed towards a door that just appeared.

“Maybe we should have a look,” he suggested.

“Ok. But, first of all I want you to carry around a pistol.” Lara handed a pistol to him, and his bony fingers grasped it.

They could hear loud clanking of cutlery as they approached the door. When the boy opened the door, they were amazed to see the room was brightly lit. It appeared to be a dining room. A huge chandelier hung over the table. Lara walked over to the table, and ran her fingers over the smooth surface. Nothing seemed evil or obscure in this room, so Lara turned around to face Campobello.

“Well,” Lara started to say. “I don't see anything here. Maybe we should go back out?”

“No!” Campobello shouted. “What about over there?” He pointed with his bony finger to a stack of boxes in the far corner. “Let's move those,” he suggested.

“All right,” Lara answered, “but you stand guard, just in case.” Lara walked quickly towards the boxes, and moved them out of the way. A small passageway was revealed. It was not lit, so Lara had to squint to see inside.

“Come on.” Lara said to Campobello, who had taken a seat on the floor. They both proceeded down the long narrow passageway. Up ahead Lara could see a faint light.

At the end of the passageway, they ended up in what looked like the Shadow's bedroom. Lara moved aside so Campobello could get into the room as well. He seemed terrified once he entered. It looked like his eyes were ready to pop out of his sockets, thought Lara...but then remembered that his eyes *were* actually out! She moved around the room slowly, looking at everything very carefully for details. A small wooden table with a switchblade stood beside her.

Thick, red, fresh blood was splattered on the end of the knife. On the far wall, a huge screen stood before them. Lara watched in horror as a man slashed a girl's stomach with a knife. The girl screamed in agony as the man slashed again. Campobello shot the screen. Sparks flew everywhere, and the glass shattered spraying Lara's face. She dove for safety bringing Campobello with her. They landed in a big heap on the floor. Lara stood up. Glass fell to the floor from her hair, and body. Where the screen had once been, now an old crumbly wall took its place. Lara turned around to face Campobello.

“Why'd you do that?” she asked.

“I'm very sorry. I just couldn't stand to see that poor girl being murdered!” He looked away.

“Well,” Lara began, intending on changing the subject. “Let's explore this room some more.”

“All right,” he answered. Lara continued around the room. She thought she heard a faint movement of gears starting up. It might be a spike trap, thought Lara.

“Campobello. There's a spike trap in this room, and it's already been activated!”

“Oh no...what are we supposed to do?” he asked, his voice full of worry.

“First we have to find out where it is,” Lara exclaimed. She tilted her head upwards, and saw huge deadly spikes descending towards them. Lara scanned the room for a quick exit, however the only visible one was back through the tunnel that they came from. Then, without warning, Lara grabbed Campobello's bony arm, and shoved him into the passageway.

“Woah!” he shouted, quite shocked. Lara sprinted towards the tunnel, and did a reverse roll just before the spikes punctured her body. Lara and Campobello watched as the fatal spikes descended, ripping through the floor. One hit the small table dead on. The switchblade was tossed onto the floor, inches away from Lara. As quickly as possible, she dived towards the knife and picked it up. Campobello grabbed her foot and pulled her back inside the tunnel. Lara thanked him and shoved the knife into her gun belt.

“What's that for?” Campobello asked.

“Thought we might need it!” Lara replied. She peered into the room again. The spikes had now stopped. There was enough room in between each spike to crawl through, thought Lara. She hesitated, but then decided that she would try to crawl around the deadly spikes.

“Where are you going?” Campobello asked.

“I'm going to see if there is another way out of this room. There has to be! How else would the Shadow get through?” Lara questioned.

“The Shadow doesn't need doors, he can pass through walls. However, I guess you never know!” he answered. Lara very carefully made her way around the spikes. Campobello followed close behind. Then, accidentally Campobello lost his balance on his knees, and tumbled towards Lara, knocking her forward into a wall.

“Woah!” She shouted, as she the hit the wall. Where Lara hit the wall, it started to move inwards.

“Boy, this sure happens a lot!” She exclaimed with a grin on her face. She turned her head around and smiled at Campobello.

“Hey, thanks,” she told him.

“No problem!” he answered sheepishly.

“I’m going to see where this goes.” Lara explained.

“I’m right behind you!” he answered. Lara and Campobello climbed through the small tunnel. It was fairly dark, and a soft moaning was heard all around. After awhile, Lara couldn't hear Campobello anymore behind her, so she called to him.

“Campobello? Where are you?” It took him a few seconds to reply.

“I’m right here! I just got wornout there for a few seconds. I’m all right. Keep going!” As Lara and Campobello crawled further ahead, the green light grew brighter and brighter. At the end of the long tunnel, they found themselves departing from the door downstairs that had been locked.

“This house is amazing! You never know where you'll end up!” Lara exclaimed. They looked around the room. Now, where the front door had once stood, a solid brick wall took its place. It was so strong and thick that no grenade launcher could blast through it.

“Well,” Campobello asked, “where do we go now? The exit is no longer available, and there's nowhere else to go!”

“That's not what I think!” Lara answered. Campobello noticed a small twinkle in her eye.

“What?!” he asked...his eye sockets growing larger. Lara pointed to the right of her where a new green door stood. A grin spread quickly on her face. She looked very excited.

“Let's do it!” he shouted. They dashed towards the door, Campobello had his pistol out and aimed straight ahead. Lara got out her shotgun, and did the same. Then, with a brisk side roll into the door, they were able to get inside. When they entered, a soft smell of burning incense travelled through the air. Small black candles lined all of the walls. In the centre of the room was an elevated platform with a faint beam of light shining down onto it. Lara moved towards the platform slowly. She noticed a small child hanging by a noose. A thin line of blood trickled down his neck. His eyes were still open, and the horrible look on his face was awful. He probably had only been dead for a few minutes, unfortunately it was too late to save him. A strong hand grabbed Lara's shoulder.

“So, you decided to come to see my ceremony?” the Shadow asked. “You came just in time to see you're friend Campobello die.” Then the Shadow snickered quietly to himself.

“No!” Lara shouted at him. “Campobello has been with me the whole time! There's no way you were ready to kill him! At least not in *here* anyway.” Lara looked back to see Campobello silently chuckling to himself.

“What's so funny?” Lara demanded.

“Hehe, haha! You don't get it yet, do you?” he asked.

“No. I don't. Tell me what' s going on here.” she asked in confusion.

“Well, to start off, I am *not* Campobello. I'm the Shadow's helper. Campobello was taken away, or should I say kidnapped when you were in the tunnel. It was so easy!” He started to laugh again.

“What?!” Lara growled. “Then where is he?”

“Oh Lara, take a look at where the sun shines.” The boy said. Lara turned around to face the platform. There, hung by a noose was Campobello. His head hung down, his body lifeless. Lara could almost feel a small tear forming in her eye. How could she have known anyway?

“YOU EVIL MONSTER!” she screamed at the Shadow. Lara went to grab her pistol, but it wasn't there. Neither was her grenade launcher, or the shotgun that was in her hand earlier. Where did they go?

“Looking for something?” the Shadow asked. He held all of her weapons.

“Hey!” Lara shouted. She wasn't pleased at all. Her lucky charms were now gone. She felt powerless. How else could she defend herself? Then, the boy thrust himself at Lara. Of course, Lara was too swift. She did a nice sideways jump, then a reverse roll. Then, she remembered the switchblade that was in her gun belt. She pulled it out, and jabbed it into his gut, then pulled up hard, with a twist. She snickered to herself with an evil grin on her face.

“Nooooo!” the Shadow screamed. “He was my helper for five thousand years! He can't die now!” Lara looked over at the Shadow. He glared back, then all of a sudden, he vanished.

“Ah, he'll be back!” Lara slowly walked over towards Campobello. His eye sockets started to glow. They turned as green as Lara's shirt, then as blue as the sky. However, Lara watched with caution.

“Lara,” he gasped.

“Oh my gosh! I thought you were...dead!”

“I know. Well, partly I am. However, in a few minutes I will completely die.” He sighed. “I saw the green key when I was taken away from you. It's in the closet with the couches, you didn't see it before.” He paused, then took in a shaky breath. “Here.” He held out a finger that looked like it was very old. “This will protect you. Twice only. Jab it into the Shadow's right eye, then the next time his left eye. But remember, it only works twice.” Then, he started to choke. Thick black smoke filled the room. He was dead. Lara bowed her head.

“Thank you Campobello. And don't worry, I'll never forget you.” She took the finger that was held in his left hand, and noticed her pistol she had given him, in his right hand.

“No, I won't take it,” she said aloud. Then, the gun dropped to the ground, Campobello was dead.

She picked up the gun, and placed it snug into her holster. Lara backed out of the room, took one last look at her friend, and then returned to the front entranceway. She glanced at the staircase and sprinted up the stairs. When she looked at the three doors, she couldn't remember which one the couches were in, so she tried the third door. When Lara opened the door, she saw the bed, and everything as before. Quickly, she backed out of the room, and opened the first door. All of the black widows were still dead on the floor. Lara walked over to the closet, and saw the green key on the floor. Quickly she picked it up, and ran out of the room. Lara sprinted down the staircase and headed for the door to the cellar. Lara flung open the door, and ran down the warped steps. When she got to the

very bottom she looked at where the keyhole had once been, and saw that it was completely full of fresh cement.

“Oh no!” Lara said. Since she did not have her grenade launcher, she would have to use her pistol. She drew the gun, did a backward flip, and fired at least ten times. Finally, Lara was able to see the keyhole. As fast as she could, Lara pulled out the key, and then a switchblade came out of nowhere. It sliced towards Lara's head. Lara ducked just in time before the blade severed her head. The knife went back into the wall. Then, two more knives came out of nowhere. Lara ducked once again to avoid being hurt. Every time the knives hit the wall more knives shot out. Pretty soon there were ten knives heading straight for her head! There was no way Lara could dodge them this time. She began to sweat. Then, just as the first blade was about to get her, a strong voice yelled “STOP!”

Instantly, the knives froze in mid-air. Lara sighed. She looked around the room to see who had yelled, and saw the Shadow floating in the far corner.

“So Lara,” he said. “Just trying to kill me? By putting that key in that keyhole, you will not destroy me!” He floated towards her, his machete aimed at her. Lara grabbed the finger that Campobello gave her, and jabbed it at him, aiming for his right eye. She got him! He screamed in pain, and started to cough thick, black smoke. It stopped him for only a second though, before he stood up, and glared at Lara.

“Oh yeah?” Lara screamed. “We'll just see about that!” She flung herself at the wall, and jammed the key into the key slot. Nothing happened.

“Nooo!” Lara screamed. She fell to the floor. There was nothing she could do now. Then, Lara's nostrils were filled with a sour odour, of burning flesh. She looked up,

and saw the Shadow burning. One of his eyes was hanging from a bulging vein. His cries were very loud. Then, in an instant, he was gone.

Had she beaten the curse? Lara ran up the stairs as fast as she could go. The front door! It was back! Lara sprinted to the door, and then stopped. She heard singing. It was all around her. Lara took a breath. It smelled like lilacs, and roses. She smiled, as she looked around, her eyes squinting from the new light. People were coming out of all the walls. Some struggled, while others easily pushed their way out. They were all singing in unison. They floated towards Lara. They all had smiles on their faces. They all laughed, and cried in happiness. Lara continued to smile as well. She stepped closer to them. Then, one person floated in front of all the others and spoke.

“Lara. You have beaten the Shadow's curse! We all thank thee for doing so! We were all the Shadow's prisoners. Buried deep inside the walls for hundreds of years. Now we are free! Thank you ever so much. Now, we can live in happiness forever!”

Lara didn't know what to say. She just continued to stare with amazement! A small little girl floated forwards next. In her hand she held a spectacular ring. It glowed blue, purple, gold, and silver! It had diamonds and rubies attached to it. The ring was wonderful! The child spoke softly. “Since you set us free, Lara, we want you to have this gift. It was the Shadow's ring. We hope you like it.” She held it out for Lara to take it.

“Thank you!” Lara exclaimed. “I'm glad you're all right now!” Then, at once, all of the people including Campobello, who was singing his heart out, floated towards the door whispering and shouting their thanks to Lara once again. She was delighted! All of her guns were now back, and she had two treasures to add to her collection: the finger and the Shadow's ring. Lara smiled again, then walked towards the door and opened it.

Once outside, Lara took one last look at the house. Then ran over to her Norton Streetfighter motorcycle, hopped on, and sped away...

*The Next Day...*

It was an early Wednesday morning. Lara's clock read 5:18 AM. Today she was going to Mexico where an Aztec pyramid had just risen from the ground...

*The Evil House*

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