

# Tomb Raider fan fiction author goes from website to big screen

CHERYL BRINK

Some fans may call their idols a passion or even an obsession, but for Katie Fleming, Lara Croft and Tomb Raider is a lifestyle.

The 21-year-old has written 11 stories based on the Tomb Raider games, has a website with over 50,000 hits, and was recently featured in the 10th anniversary game.

The resident first started playing the popular games when she was 13, and began her writing based on Lara Croft a few years ago. She entered one of her stories into a contest by Core Design — the British game creators — and it won, and was later published in a comic book. She kept writing, and has put all her stories on her website: [www.tombraider.net/katie](http://www.tombraider.net/katie), which also has a section of screen-shots from the games.

The producer of GameTap, the company who produced the documentary to accompany the game, e-mailed Fleming about being featured in the film, and she had to answer a few questions to determine her eligibility.

Fleming said they did the shooting at her house in Glen Cairn in December; part of it was a formal interview, and part of it was shots of her writing and with her Tomb Raider memorabilia.

"It was very exciting," she said, though she added the wait until the documentary was released in June was difficult.

"It was nerve-wracking to watch it the first time," she said, but was pleased with the final result.

Fleming is included in the "Lara Lovers" section of the documentary, along with three other hardcore Tomb Raider fans, who were from Europe. "I was the North American rep," she said with a laugh. Ricardo Sanchez, vice-president of content and creative director for GameTap, said the company flew all over the world to film for the documentary.

They got a list of fans to choose from to feature in the film, and Sanchez said Fleming was on they definitely wanted to include.

"She was one of the most compelling fans out there," he said. "Katie is very creative, smart, and very dedicated."

Sanchez said there wasn't

a formal process for choosing who to have participate, but they wanted the most hardcore fans in different parts of the globe who were doing the most interesting things with their obsession.

He said GameTap put the documentary together in four months, but that it wasn't too difficult because they had so much great content to work with, which included the interview with Fleming.

## WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

Though Fleming enjoys writing her stories and working on the website, she is currently pursuing advertising at

"I have no idea," she said when asked about her plans for a career.

She has fun writing, but has only ever typed out stories about Tomb Raider.

"I've never taken any creative writing courses," she admitted.

Fleming also took the two year interactive multimedia course at Algonquin, which she said helped her with upgrading her website. In fact, Fleming said all of her school projects were Tomb Raider-related, including a short film that starred herself as Croft.

Though there are no definite plans made for the future, Fleming said whatever she does will be media related. And she will also continue working on Tomb Raider stories.

"I never thought I would write this many (stories). I have no idea how many I'll do," she said.

Fleming explained that once she has a new idea, she spends a month or two doing research and planning the structure of the story before getting to the writing.

All of her stories are posted on her site, and she has organized some contests with autographed copies as prizes.

She has an e-mail subscription service through the site, to keep fans updated on stories and news. Fleming said there are around 200 people on that list.

It's because of her own fans that Fleming is now pursuing publication of her stories through other companies, instead of hoping Core Design will pick up more of her ideas.



Katie Fleming's bedroom is scattered with Tomb Raider memorabilia, some that she received from GameTap or Core Design because of her involvement with the game. Here she poses with her newest additions, a large figure of Lara Croft and a copy of the documentary she is featured in.



A screenshot from the 10th anniversary game documentary shows Katie Fleming typing at her computer on another of her Tomb Raider stories.

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That company has also been an encouragement, and Fleming said the game developers complimented her by saying her portrayal of Lara Croft is very similar to theirs.

Fleming has already received several rejection letters from publishing houses, but the young author said she understands that fan fiction doesn't always fit into the genres of big companies.

Although the rejections aren't fun to deal with, Fleming said most of the

letters are personal, with advice and other contact suggestions, so she will continue the pursuit.

"The more noes mean I'm closer to my yes," she said.

Though Fleming is focused on publication of her stories on her own, she said working with the Tomb Raider creators is always something she would like to do.

"It'd be nice if something else came along," said Fleming, adding that most of her Tomb Raider activities have been pleasant surprises. She said she never realized she would enjoy

writing so much, and the documentary, including her name in the film credits, was a huge bonus.

"You don't think this will happen when you're just a fan," she said.

Fleming said she owes her success to several people, including a marketing director with the game developing company who got her involved in the documentary in the first place; another fan with a Tomb Raider info site, Stellalune, who is hosting Katie's popular website on her server; and her own fans.

"I wouldn't do it without them," she said.