

# Stories from the past

## by ACR

WHAT'S AN ADVENTURER SUPPOSED TO BE DOING WHEN BOOTS AND BACKPACK ARE LEFT HUNG IN THE CLOSET? IN OUR DEAR LARA CROFT'S CASE JUST KEEPING ON WITH HER ADVENTURES, BUT THROUGH HER BOOKS OF INCALCULABLE CONTENT AND WHOSE LIBRARY IS BURSTING WITH THEM.

IT WAS A FEW DAYS AGO THAT SHE FOUND, INSIDE A SECRET ROOM UNDER THE MAIN STAIRCASE, A DIARY THAT BELONGED TO HER MOTHER, AMELIA. HOW DID IT END UP THERE? WHO KNOWS... CROFT MANOR HAS BEEN ALWAYS STUFFED WITH SECRETS AND SUSPRISES EACH TIME MORE ASTONISHING.

WINTER WAS HERE AND IT WAS SNOWING THOROUGHLY IN THE COUNTY AND YET, THE WHOLE AREA SURROUNDING CROFT MANOR WAS EMBELLISHED WITH LIGHTS AND GARLANDS, WITH MISTLETOES AND CANDLES, CREATING A COLOURED CONTRAST TOWARDS THE WHITE SNOW. LARA WAS SITTING IN HER EXQUISITELY DECORATED OFFICE AND SHE STARTED TO READ PASSIONATELY. THE CRACKLING OF THE SMALL CHIMNEY FIRE, THE HOWLING OF THE ICY WIND, THE SMELL OF WINSTON'S CINNAMON AND LEMON BISCUITS AND THE SUBTLE SCENT OF GINGER COMING FROM HER TEA..., THE PERFECT MOMENT IN A PERFECT DAY. CHRISTMAS EVE, THE BEST OF ALL DAYS TO REMEMBER STORIES FULL OF LOVE AND HAPPINESS.

SO, SHE BEGAN READING ON THE FIRST PAGE WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY...

"... So peaceful, so soothing... to write at dawn near the seashore beautiful memories. The age makes me feel this way. Or pehaps it's about nostalgia and having my dear daughter far from me. The lacking of loved ones and so many great and lovely past moments that make me remember my childhood. So happy I was, I enjoyed a little bit of everything with my parents and my brothers... All was perfect.

My adolescence was different: I was a little shy and was found immersed in a world of poetry and verses (in which my love, Richard, was an inseparable part of it). That, nevertheless, made me feel free and live experiences through powerful and wise words expressed inside this diary.



But what I loved most, both during my childhood and my adolescence, was the arrival of Christmas, with me being waiting for this beloved and moving time of the year, with desire. My father, who was a true artist, built a big nativity scene with opulence in detail. I remember that he bought me my first turntable, but he surprisingly used it to make the shepherds and the rest of the figures spin on it and give life to the amazing scenery. My brothers and I just spent our time looking at it absorbed. Blessed memories.

At night, we were going out to see the colourful Christmas lights and the shops full of toys and dreams. I'll never forget those wonderful days with family.

I got married very early with my dear Richard, but even though, I still remember that time and I miss it.

I still love Christmas nowadays, although I live it differently. My daughter, Lara, is everything for me, knowing she's happy will make me happy too. Sometimes I used to tell her my stories and some other times she told me hers. When she was a child, I was there with her the whole time, sharing her dreams, her tenderness... a life of worries and emotions, her most innocent feelings that I treasured deep in my heart.

That was my life back then and despite the difficulties, which were there present, I wasn't running of sheer wills to live with my loved ones, specially when Christmas arrived. Because, as a mother and wife, I felt tremendously happy and grateful."

**ONCE LARA FINISHED READING HER MOTHER'S FIRST MEMORY, SHE FELT COMFORTED, CLOSED THE DEAR BOOK WITH AFFECTION AND HEAD TO THE ATTIC IN CROFT MANOR WITH A WELL-DEFINED GOAL: TO FIND HER MOTHER'S TURNTABLE. THE ROOM WAS ENORMOUS BUT DARK AS THE DARKEST DEEP NIGHT EVER. NOTHING A FLARE COULD FIX, SHE THOUGHT.**

**THE MOST INEXPERIENCED OF THE ADVENTURERS WOULD RUN AROUND LIKE A HEADLESS CHICKEN THROUGH THE ROOM, LOOKING CRAZILY FOR THE DESIRED OBJECT. BUT LARA IS AN EXPERT ON THE SUBJECT, IT WAS ENOUGH FOR HER TO EXPLORE THE PLACE THROUGH THE**



EMERALD FLASHES THE FLARE EMITTED, STANDING STILL AT THE ATTIC DOOR FRAME. LIGHTS AND SHADOWS, BUT NEVER EXASPERATINGLY ONES.

AND THEN, CLOSE TO THE WINDOW, SHE MADE OUT A PILE OF WOODEN BOXES COVERED WITH A TAPESTRY EMBROIDERED BY HER MOTHER. LARA RECOGNIZED IT IMMEDIATELY, AS IT CARRIED AMELIA'S UNMISTAKABLE SIGNATURE: GLORIOUS COLOURS, RICH AND DETAILED MOTIFS AND ABOVE ALL, A WARM AND SOFT TOUCH THAT REMINDED HER PAST PLEASURED TIMES IN THE COLD AFTERNOONS OF OLD.

WHEN MOVED AWAY THE TAPESTRY, A DUST CLOUD MADE LARA SNEEZE; BUT THERE IT WAS, INSIDE A BOX IN WHICH IT COULD BE READ 'AMELIA' ON ITS LID. SHE REMOVED THE PIECES OF PAPER AND CORK THAT WERE WRAPPING AND STABILIZING THE OBJECT. HAPPINESS OVERWHELMED LARA AS SHE CARRIED AMELIA'S TURNTABLE TO HER CHEST, HUGGING IT TENDERLY; IT STILL SMELLED OF ORANGE BLOSSOM, A DELICATED PERFUME THAT HER MOTHER USED TO WEAR IN SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS LIKE CHRISTMAS, OF GORGEOUS DANCES AND DELICIOUS FEASTS. FOR HER, IT WAS LIKE GOING BACK TO THOSE JOYFUL DAYS WITH HER MOTHER AND RETRIEVING ANOTHER SMALL FORGOTTEN PIECE OF HER PAST.

ALMOST MIDNIGHT AND BEING WINSTON PREPARING SOME HOT CHOCOLATE IN THE KITCHEN, HE HEARD AN UNEXPECTED TUNE AND HE FOLLOWED IT AFTERWARDS, WITH THE SUGARY DRINK ON HIS FAMOUS TRAY, STRAIGHT TO THE LIVING ROOM. HE SAW THERE LARA SITTING NEXT TO THE BIG FIREPLACE, REUNITING WITH EXCITEMENT WITH HER MOTHER'S MOST BELOVED SONG. WINSTON WAS TOUCHED AND HE JOINED THIS SUCH SPECIAL MOMENT.

A CHRISTMASSY NIGHT TO REMEMBER FOR SURE.