

HEAVENLY FALLOUT

RETROSPECTION

This story serves as a novelised retrospective override of the lore from my TRLE's codenamed "Heavenly Fallout" and "Special Ops". The story re-contextualizes the original tomb raider games, cutting events out and altering them in order to serve this timeline's purposes. It will take you from where the first game took place up to the most recent branch of the timeline from where Heavenly Warfare will continue off of in the next TRLE. I hope you enjoy reading the whole thing.

{{ Mementoires -> 2000 - 2004}}

In her life, all that Lara Croft deeply strove for was to uncover the mysteries and underlying secrets that her world carried. To explore, to venture and conquer the unknown and to reclaim the artefacts that the world forgot about. In spite of the ancient dangers she persisted, and in spite of the animalistic and natural dangers she persisted, and yet in the face of human persistence that tried to take that chance – that chance to discover yet another remnant of the lost world – that entire perseverance crumbled in an instant.

She struggled to pull the trigger. After acquiring the first piece of the Scion for Natla, the person who hired her, she was unable to pull the trigger to shoot someone she knew personally. In spite of her desire to uncover the secrets of the world, it was not enough to force her to accept the reality of killing Larson. She couldn't: she remembered their feud in Rome and how the three eventually explored the ancient Colosseum together, bonding despite their harsh introduction. They had a fake feud of sorts, sort of like Batman and Joker without Joker's evil in it all. All in all, it made sense that she couldn't end Larson's life, like when her mind flashes their moments together: exploring those sanctums in Greek ruins, chatting it up with Pierre and Larson while Larson completely devoured a milkshake... Memories she couldn't discard.

Neither could Larson, primarily because Lara had beaten the hell out of him, though mainly because he wasn't rushing for a gun to take her down. A conversation about the scion ensued, and Larson admitted he had no loyalty to Natla and mentioned her lack of actual trust in him, not having given him more than the barebone details on how to find the first fragment of the scion. Lara chose to help Larson out of the Peruvian caves to get him an easier way out before she ventured to Natla's HQ in search for answers on where the second scion fragment was. Upon discovering it was in Greece, Lara hurried over and intercepted Pierre while in the temple of Tihocan. She explained the situation at gunpoint, unfortunately, and, due to their past relations, he believed her, allowing her to take the scion fragment and giving her a PDA containing the coordinates to an Egyptian tomb that was said to have the last scion fragment. After going there

and acquiring it, facing a huge challenge from Natla's abominations, she was stripped of her weapons and the scion by Natla and her goons, but she managed to get away on her bike, stowing away on their boat and heading to Atlantis to take care of this once and for the final showdown.

After ensuring that Natla's core pedestal and the witch herself were dead, Lara ensured that the hives that the Atlantean beasts were coming out from were also destroyed completely. After ensuring that, she managed to take the boat and drive off right as the island exploded. The whole thing left her with a bitter aftertaste, though she noted to come back for the scion pieces, seeing as Natla was dead and no longer needed them. After resting for a few days and checking up on Pierre and Larson, she returned to the Egyptian Temple in order to explore some of its hidden passages after hearing that there was flooding in various temples. She took this moment in time to also grab the cat statue alongside a selfie next to the giant cat statue with her camera, mailing it to Pierre as a show-off. After that, she took the time in order to refine her skills to face greater threats that were going to inevitably come.

And so, over the course of the next 10 months, she ensured that her manor was given a proper assault course alongside an improvement to the inside of the manor, hoping her aunt wouldn't mind such renovations, though this made her long for such a connection with a family member again – she remembered how her aunt supported her dreams when her parents disowned her. With that, she made sure to make a statue of her aunt in front of her manor, as a tribute to the person who supported her time and time again. In that period of time, she also acquired the golden mask from within the depths of the Shangri-La of the Alaskan winters, having added a new record to the amount of living creatures she killed, yet coming out of it with a nice relic of the past to show off in her artefact room. Practice came with new skills as the year passed, but alas, it was time to begin a new adventure when she caught wind of the Dagger of Xian – a powerful Chinese artefact used in an ancient war, hidden away in the Great Wall of China, which Lara began to research with eagerness, and it didn't take long before she was taking a plane to China in order to find the Dagger of Xian.

The Journey to China revealed that the door to access the Dagger of Xian required a special artifact called the seraph to open. After encountering one of Marco Bartoli's henchmen, Lara flew by helicopter to Venice to explore the beautiful city and search for the seraph's location. Unfortunately, she was kidnapped and taken to an offshore rig, where she met a monk from the Tibetan Monastery—the original source of the seraph. This experience led her to investigate the Maria Doria Copycat ship, where she recovered the seraph from the mafia. She then stole one of their planes and accidentally crashed it deep in the Tibetan tundra before making her way on foot to the Tibetan Monastery, which was under siege by Bartoli's men at the time. Sadly, she couldn't bring along the injured missing monk, so instead, she helped clear the monastery of all Bartoli's henchmen. She then explored the trap-filled temple beneath the monastery, using the seraph to unlock a gate similar to the one in China. After striking a large bongo drum, she opened a passage leading all the way back to China. She rested for a day or two, helped clean up the temple from the damage caused by the attackers, and then drove a jeep back to China to

confront Bartoli, who was transforming into a dragon. She quickly defeated him and saved the day. Back home, the remnants of Bartoli's men attacked her, but a shotgun was enough to take care of them. Finally, she was able to relax and take a shower after all the effort to obtain such a valuable artifact.

This adventure gave Lara a lot to reflect on. For one, she realized it was surprisingly easy to kill people if you didn't know them personally, which brought her some relief since everyone she had killed had tried to kill her first. She was glad to maintain that small sense of innocence—the preservation of innocent life. With that in mind, she upgraded her entire training course to include monkey bars, a shooting range, and a racetrack to improve her vehicle skills, which were decent enough to keep her alive. She also worked on her fitness and finally managed to sprint during her regular activities without getting exhausted, a result of years of practice preparing her for even more challenging adventures ahead. At this point, she decided to seek additional help. Using the internet, she ventured into the deep web to find someone with similar expertise who could assist her with information—a major challenge in her adventures. Sure, she could somewhat control a plane, but without a map she was lost in Tibet, and the matter of the fact was that the maps they had never helped, and that was one out of many occurrences that her singularity failed: she had flaws, and a one woman army can only go so far...

She was just bored of getting lost and having to waste so much energy with research. She wanted to unwind a bit more during her free time. While browsing, she came across a profile on a certain website offering services to research specific information and provide reliable data—with a full refund guaranteed if the customer wasn't satisfied. Intrigued, she clicked on the offer and contacted the anonymous poster. They started chatting extensively for what was supposed to be just a test transaction. It turned out the other person, who introduced himself as Tacitus Voytek, was also an archaeologist. He had explored several temples in ways that fascinated Lara, each detail sparking new curiosity. Over the course of two weeks, they became friends, exchanging information, discussing temples, and bonding over their shared frustrations with the numerous traps found in ruins.

Eventually, they met at the Angkor ruins to explore together. They immediately connected as allies, their genuine mutual interest making them effective partners in searching for a specific artifact—the iris, as Lara remembered. Although they couldn't find it on the altar, they discovered something concerning: no body of his, but a dropped backpack belonging to Von Croy, who Lara had to abandon during her teenage adventures because of his greed in trying to seize the iris. After some thought, they returned to England. Lara conducted research and learned that Von Croy had started his own company specializing in artifact excavation and preservation, similar to her work, but he was actually profiting from it, which didn't sit well with her—though she herself published books about her adventures, so she wasn't exactly innocent.

After requesting information about Von Croy Industries, Tacitus uncovered that the company was running an illegal operation supporting a cult called the Obsidian Dawn. This cult aimed to resurrect ancient dark lords and exploit powerful artifacts which took him several days of

persistent digging to confirm. A significant portion of the funds from legitimate businesses was also funneled to an organization known as the Syndicate, which was more rumor than a direct threat to the public but was said to have deep connections in all the regions where their Mafia operated—from police forces to politicians. They held a certain influence that people feared, indirectly threatening to collapse the already fragile system that many struggled to survive in. Tacitus said he would continue investigating an event they were planning called the Sabbath, intended to reshape the global political landscape by violently eliminating what they considered parasitic elements. This could potentially fragment governments worldwide, causing widespread suffering either temporarily or permanently. With that knowledge, Tacitus took it upon himself to research more about the Syndicate while Lara went after Von Croy, who has been heard roaming around Karnak searching for a particular artefact.

After exploring Karnak and its tombs, she took a train to Alexandria to meet an old friend, Araya Kazuki, a Japanese archaeologist studying Egyptian artifacts from the temples around Alexandria. He told Lara about the catacombs and rumors of Cleopatra's palace nearby, suggesting that Von Croy aims to help the Syndicate awaken a demon to support their cause: Vohu Manah, a god associated with Judgment, who can influence the minds and hearts of the souls he encounters, effectively accelerating the arrival of the Sabbath. Upon a strange encounter with Von Croy in the lost library, she set off on Kazuki's motorbike—unable to ask for his permission since he had been captured—and rode to Cairo, which was under attack by demons due to shifting worldly affinities. Later, Lara discovered that Von Croy had tried to summon Vohu Manah immediately but botched the ritual, instead opening a portal to the Oblivion dimension that unleashed demons on the city's inhabitants. With Lara's help and the guards' sacrifices, the demons were driven back, allowing her to confront Von Croy directly.

The confrontation was quick and not overly violent—Lara reclaimed the amulet of Horus, then threw it into the abyss created by the portal, condemning Seth to remain imprisoned. She handed Von Croy over to the Egyptian army, who couldn't prosecute him until an anonymous leak from Tacitus revealed his crimes. Before leaving, Lara ensured no demons remained alive, encountering a pixie—the last surviving demon. In a calm form, the pixie shared information about the demons and how to handle them: they originated from a rift in time and space branching from another dimension, occasionally invading this and other worlds within this continuum, with no clear way to stop them. The pixie explained that Lara could negotiate and communicate with some demons in exchange for goods or alliances. Lara spared the pixie, who then used a spell to teleport away. Intrigued, Lara decided to ask Tacitus to investigate the demon situation while she returned home to prepare for Pierre's wedding in Venice, where she was invited as a bridesmaid.

Unbeknownst to her, the invitation letter had been tampered with by someone wanting to eliminate her before she became a threat.

{{ Mutogenesis Incident -> 20th November, 2004}}

Arriving at the Venetian square via a taxi to attend Pierre and Larson's wedding, she was met with an empty lot and no sign of a celebration, just an unsettling silence. At the same time, a strange red fog began to envelop the surrounding area, blocking out any light from the sky as the horizon itself turned a blood-red color. Noises and screams echoed all around Lara around this time as well, and within moments, the streets descended into chaos as a strange gas emitted from the sewers: people began choking on it and mutating into grotesque creatures that tore each other apart. It didn't take Lara long to realize that something terrible had happened. Even worse, she found a bloodstained letter on the ground—it was the original invitation to Larson's wedding, which was actually taking place in Vegas, not Venice. Realizing someone had deliberately tried to get her killed, Lara focused on escaping the place with her life.

After hours of searching and fighting for her life, she managed to fuel up a working helicopter and began to take off. Mutated creatures stared at her from windows and streets alike as she flew out of the square, accompanied by an injured SAS member who had been dispatched to deal with the situation a few hours earlier. The two made their way out of the gas-infested sector before being taken into custody by the CDC. The CDC checked them for signs of gas exposure and, finding none, treated them in their laboratory. Afterwards, Lara and the soldier gave their statements. As night fell, Lara learned that the SAS member had died from the severity of his injuries, amid hushed whispers questioning whether this was the work of the Syndicate.

The Syndicate found it logical to try to eliminate Lara after her involvement with Von Croy, but their actions must have been driven by more motives than just that. After she was released a few days later and given a way to return to England, Lara went to her manor to find Pierre and Larson—of all people. Having not seen Lara at the wedding, they had grown worried and tried calling her, but since her phone battery was dead, they were unsure if anything had happened. They had come to England to check on her. Lara lied about what had occurred to calm their nerves and apologized for causing them worry. With Pierre and Larson proceeding to their honeymoon as planned, Lara decided to call Tacitus to share the events that had transpired—after taking a shower and getting a night's rest, of course.

Tacitus got to work looking at the incident in Venice while Lara took her time researching the Syndicate and any potential hideouts they had, stumbling upon a site in Paris that was rumoured to be their secret hideout. With a location of potential interest and no news from Tacitus, she set out at dawn in order to catch the first plane to Paris.

{{ Pursuing The Theorem -> 11th December, 2004 }}

< *Following the events of Heavenly Fallout - Angel Of The Void...* >

Lara's driving was far from smooth while escaping the Syndicate's pursuit, but she managed to avoid crashing as two trucks tailed her stolen vehicle, weaving through the streets of Paris while she tried to escape alongside the PDA containing information about the Syndicate. Taking a risky turn, she caused the two trucks to collide in a narrow space. She drove a bit longer before

abandoning the vehicle and slipping into a deserted alley to call Tacitus. She explained the situation and shared some details from the PDA, including the Syndicate's hierarchy and their upcoming plans, but had to end the call abruptly when dawn broke and people started coming out of their homes.

After returning home by plane, Lara began decoding the PDA's contents with Tacitus and his partner, Moros, using various methods to decipher their somewhat secret language. After several weeks of work and facing unexpected attacks on the manor by Syndicate forces trying to retrieve the PDA, they gained a clearer understanding of how the Syndicate operated: alongside their plans for using and exploiting a recent demon invasion, they were also developing the MAII — Massive Artificial Intelligence Infrastructure — which would enable them to predict events and make their strategies nearly foolproof if completed. Realizing this had to be stopped to delay their progress toward the Sabbath, Tacitus left the decoding work to Moros and went to infiltrate the rig himself, while Lara stayed behind to keep watch in case the Syndicate sent more attackers.

{{ Of Our Own Accord -> 16th January, 2005 }}

As Tacitus, armed and equipped, infiltrated the rig base, he made sure to enter through the lowest level to maintain the element of surprise. Unfortunately, this was compromised when he encountered a guard having a private sobbing session, whom he reluctantly had to eliminate. Pressing on, he fought through anyone who stood in his way, searching for any clues about the Sabbath's requirements and information on the MAII. Instead of pointing information, he found a second PDA containing even more sensitive data. He then stole a rubber boat and planted C4 explosives throughout the rig's foundation to bring it down. As he escaped by boat, he detonated the explosives, destroying one of their major sea-based headquarters—a blow the Syndicate noticed and deeply resented, as it disrupted their communications in that region.

Upon returning to Lara's Manor, the Syndicate's attacks intensified rapidly. On the seventh day after his return, a massive assault left the manor in ruins, with some attackers using RPGs to breach the brick walls. During the chaos, they kidnapped Winston and severely injured Tacitus. With Winston's life at stake, the Syndicate demanded the return of both PDAs. With no other option, the pair agreed to hand them over to secure Winston's release. Surprisingly, Winston was returned unharmed and well cared for the next day, which complicated their feelings toward the Syndicate: while they showed signs of loyalty should they halt their attempts to stop the Sabbath by not harming Winston at all, their plans threatened many innocent lives. Torn, they began seeking alternative ways to stop the Syndicate, realizing that further infiltration was too risky given the heightened security following Tacitus's attack.

Meanwhile, the Syndicate escalated their efforts by involving law enforcement. Initially, this meant increased patrols around the Manor while it was being repaired, and the probing questioning of Tacitus and Lara, but it soon escalated to visits and random calls to fire and police departments, including false reports accusing Lara of torture. This attracted media attention,

and aware that a distorted narrative could make them vulnerable, they decided to lay low and split up. Tacitus used his connections to erase most of his online data, while Lara sold the manor to Pierre and Larson at a very low price on a friendly note. She briefed them privately on the situation, instructed them not to contact her for the time being, and entrusted Winston to their care to keep him safe, which he didn't want to accept at all, though was forced by Lara to do whether he liked it or not.

{{ Just Like Old Times -> 25th February, 2005 }}

Needing to vanish, Lara chose to join the Tomb Raider Contingent, which offered a program similar to Witness Protection in exchange for her services—acting like a mercenary in order to retrieve artifacts from ancient temples and tombs for the Contingent's purposes. Despite her inner conflict about helping people commercialize the ancient world and its relics, she accepted and began training to conduct proper expeditions. Her life shifted from casual tomb exploration to intense preparations aimed at analyzing and understanding the ancient world in great detail, from reading Latin and other lost languages, to proper maintenance of fragile grounds. Although this fulfilled her dream in some way, it didn't bring her true happiness since it always led with most artefacts going into museums or onto selling bids. Still, exploring tombs remained a pleasure in spite of the aftermaths, and she found personal comfort that the ancient remnants of this world couldn't fill in her Teddy Bloxpin, a gift she had gotten from Winston after suffering recurring nightmares from what she witnessed in Venice on that damned day.

Months passed as her training grew more advanced, and time seemed to drift without clear purpose. Her allies couldn't contact her due to the need to stay “under the radar,” and from her internet research, she learned that the Syndicate was gaining strength, with their MAII and Sabbath projects nearing completion. Around this time, tensions between the Obsidian Dawn cultists and the Russian army escalated near the Pripyat region, which had become a hotspot for demonic invasions due to the secondary explosion at Chernobyl, which prompted a group of Obsidian Dawn members to open a fragile portal to the warp, which connected timelines in a way it shouldn't. This area also held powerful artifacts and alliances the cult sought to claim. From her nighttime research, Lara discovered that the Obsidian Dawn appeared somewhat allied with the Syndicate, though it was clear they wouldn't support the Sabbath when that would come. The fact that these two opposing groups were both growing stronger made her increasingly uneasy as the conflict intensified and more innocent lives were lost.

She was given an opportunity to assist the troops by traveling to a temple in Sudan to retrieve an elder scroll. This scroll would help fight against the Obsidian Dawn, buying the Contingent and Russian troops time to regroup and send reinforcements. Preparing for the Sudan expedition held little excitement for Lara, filled only with the monotonous routine she had come to resent. With no friends to talk to, the days felt repetitive, so returning to Africa—even if only briefly—was a welcome escape from people, and for just a while...

She could lie to herself that this was just another expedition of hers.

{{ Contingency -> 23rd July, 2005}}

< *Following the events of Special Ops - Operation Desert Temple...* >

The sandy and barren dunes of the desert flew under the chopper in a tranquil manner. Lara's gaze flew over the scenery without any actual points to focus on, merely that Commander Whitaker was congratulating the team for a job well done. To Lara, the whole ordeal felt heavy as she clutched Teddy Bloxpin, a sense of comfort in knowing that her entire joy of being in the Contingent came from exploring tombs and temples. While she hung out with the soldiers from the assault side of the contingent, it was more to pass time than to bond with them in a meaningful way. Her mind wandered to her companions – Tacitus, Cairov, Winston, and Henry. She could only hope they were all right, having lost communication with them a while ago now. Her thoughts consumed her sense of time, and soon enough the chopper began to descend down into the Contingent's base in North Kordofan.

As she debriefed and began to work on the scroll, she felt a ping of pain knowing that the knowledge within the scroll will one day be given to the wrong person, yet ultimately it was out of her control where this info would wander. Disregarding that in favour of avoiding anxiety when she was tired, she spent two hours translating the scroll for HQ before submitting her report and going back to her quarters for the night. To reward herself for a job well done, she prepared herself a store-bought cheesecake with ice cream and some tea, reading a novel about SCPs that caught her attention for a while longer than she'd initially judged by the cover of the book.

When it was time for bed, Lara undid her hair, took a quick shower, and cleaned her room a little before settling into her bed. In spite of her tiredness, she looked at her phone, holding out on a phone that a text would pop up from anyone, something she started doing right after joining the Contingent. Feeling a painful ache in her heart after minutes of waiting, she went to sleep.

Then, in the depths of the night, while Lara was asleep, her phone's screen lit up with a single message from an unknown number:

be careful luv. :)
- TCW

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...Continued in Heavenly Warfare: One Shot, One Kill

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I sincerely hope you enjoyed reading the retrospective and that you have gained some level of interest in the plotline. I've put a lot of thought into how the logistics should fit in order to create an interesting read for the reader.

Enjoy the rest of the AK Calendar, and stay frosty, yeh?

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