

Run – and Don't Stop

Katie Fleming

Cool wind whirled, wildly blowing around. The air was damp, and small water droplets glistened on the unkept grass. Darkness slowly crept inward, as the sun set. The surrounding dark forest looked threatening, a place where too many things could be lurking in the shadows. The air was silent. A chilling feeling enveloped the atmosphere, one that was filled with loneliness, terror, and pain.

Lara gazed up at the large, old white building. Alice, Jeremy, and Mike stood side by side, their eyes darting around. Alice's thin pale face looked towards the forest. Her blue eyes showed signs of worry. Jeremy stood a few feet in front of everyone eager to get inside, as where Mike stood back, his eyes wide and alert. Fran, the tour guide, stood in front of the group studying each of them carefully.

Lara stood in front of Welterfenn's Insane Asylum in Ontario, Canada. The asylum was situated in the middle of nowhere, completely secluded and hidden. The asylum, a beautiful white building, towered three stories above the ground. It dated back to the late 1920's. There must have been at least fifty windows in the front of the building, each of which had steel bars securely fastened over them. Overgrown shrubs and weeds cluttered the vast yard. Despite its beauty, the asylum seemed to have problematic energy pulsating through its walls. It was not a happy place.

Today was the last day that asylum was open for tours since too many strange occurrences had been happening there. Fran handed each person a map of the asylum then proceeded towards the door. Once everyone was inside, she slammed the door shut and locked it. To keep things in? Or to keep things out? Lara wondered.

Lara's nose filled with a familiar odor. It didn't bother her though, for she could smell danger and it excited her. The air was chilly, full of death. Lara followed Fran and the others down several hallways.

Fran stopped in front of a small white door labeled STORAGE. She turned the old handle and stepped into the room. Once everyone had entered, the door closed behind them and they were instantly surrounded by darkness.

"Welterfenn's asylum was not a happy place. Patients who were sick, or who were mentally ill were brought here." Fran's voice echoed quietly in the room. Lara listened carefully.

"Dr. Welterfenn performed many operations on these people and most of them were experimental. He wasn't what some would call a sane man, because the experiments he performed worsened the patients condition severely. He wasn't out to actually help them, he experimented on them entirely for his own sick pleasure." Fran flicked a switch, and dim lights pierced the darkened room. A few utters of shock escaped the mouths of Alice and Mike. Surrounding them were large shelves that outlined the perimeter of the room. Gruesome organs and body parts were pickled in different sized glass bottles.

"He collected them," Fran whispered. She opened a door on the far side of the storage room, and motioned for everyone to follow. Lara was the last one out of the room. Before leaving she glanced at one bottle that caught her attention. Two eyeballs floated slowly around in a thick liquid. It looked like they had been sliced by an apple peeler. Parts of the eye flapped around slowly, bumping into one another. Lara turned the light off, then left the room.

The group traveled up a short flight of stairs to the second floor. All of the rooms had sliding doors which had bars and two locks.

“When patients first arrived to the asylum, they were brought here,” explained Fran, “they were left for days locked up, fed only on stale bread and were forced to share a glass of stagnant water. The nurses who were on duty would patrol the floor, making sure that no one was trying to escape. It would also get quite smelly in here, in the summer. None of the windows could open, so it was very hot. Most people got sick, and their inmates would have to breathe in the sickening smell of the wretched vomit.” Fran stopped talking and took a key ring from her pocket, unlocking one of the rooms. The group hesitantly followed her inwards.

Lara looked around the room. It was almost perfectly square, and claustrophobic. Stains covered the floor and scratches were etched into the walls.

“Can you imagine being locked in here?” Fran questioned. She brought the group up to the third level and briefly showed them a few rooms that contained paperwork and records from old patients. When they returned to the main level, Fran looked wearily around at Alice, Jeremy, Mike, and Lara.

“The worst of the tour is yet to come,” she said, “stick close.” The group followed Fran down the hallway to a wooden door. She took out her key ring, and fumbled with it to open the door. She was obviously quite nervous. Lara carefully followed her down a set of cold stone steps, into the darkness.

Click.

A beam of light turned on suddenly. Fran smiled up at the group.

“We've had some problems with the electrical wires down here lately.” When they reached the bottom, a sudden draft of icy air hit them hard. Lara felt Alice shudder beside her. The basement was like a maze. Short hallways branched off in different directions and never seemed to reconnect.

Lara strained her eyes to see where they were going. Fran brought them to a small room where a single table lay situated in the center. Everyone formed a circle around it and listened carefully to her voice.

“This was one of Dr. Welterfenn's favourite techniques of murder. Electrical shock.” Fran whipped off a white sheet that lay on the table and let it float slowly to the floor where it crumpled into a small pile. A pair of metal tongs lay underneath, which were connected by two long cords to a box on the wall.

“The patient would be held down by three nurses. Dr. Welterfenn would clamp the electric tongs to the patients' body which would instantly shake the poor patient into horrible convulsions. The nurses strapped the patient down on the table, then Welterfenn would get to work. It was a horrible way to die, but Welterfenn didn't care in the least. It was a game to him. He would increase the voltage each time a patient was brought in. Welterfenn said he wanted to see how high he could make them jump.” Fran bent down and picked up the sheet. She tossed it over the table, and quickly motioned for the others to leave.

Fran flashed the beam of her flashlight across the next room. It was very small, and dark. It seemed to be darker than any other room they had been in. Lara's breath caught in her throat, she felt her stomach tighten. Everyone was quiet, the only sound

heard was their rapid breathing. A large black box lay on the floor at the back of the room, pushed up against the wall. Fran stood beside it and faced everyone.

“All of the patients were brought here. Each and every one of them,” Fran whispered. “Dr. Welterfenn had a theory about this box. The patient was forced inside, and the lid was closed shut. If they were insane to begin with, they would come out sane. But for those who were sane, they went through something... something terrible which drove them to insanity. It was Welterfenn's play box. Put something in, get something else out.” Fran shrugged her shoulders in sign it was all a bunch of hocus pocus.

Fran turned sideways to face the box, and very slowly lifted the heavy lid. She let it rest on the back of the wall, then looked at Alice.

“Would you like to take a look?”

Alice shook her head.

“Mike?”

“Uh...no thanks.”

Jeremy was clearly not interested because he was now staying close to the door. Lara stepped forwards and stood in front of the box.

“One courageous person,” Fran smiled. She handed Lara her flashlight, and stepped away from its beam.

Lara took the flashlight, and shone the light into the box. It was very dark. It was so black that her light was almost completely swallowed up. Lara peered over the edge and looked in.

“There’s nothing in here,” she said, “it’s just an empty box.”

Alice let out a sigh of relief and wiped her forehead with the back of her hand.

“Yes,” replied Fran, “but imagine being shut up in there, for who knows how long? And in this place? Not for me!” Lara handed the flashlight back to Fran, and carefully closed the lid. Everyone seemed very tense, and Lara could almost feel the fear exerting from the others.

The group quickly left the room, happy to be out of there. Fran took them down a few more hallways and entered into a very large room. She shone the light around and murmured a thanks when she found the light switch. She turned it on, and dim lights came to life overhead. They were standing in the surgical room where many forms of ‘treatment’ were once held. Old stretchers were lined up beside one another across the center of the room. Very large lights hung low overtop of them, and Lara noticed there were straps on the stretchers that were used as a restraining agent. Along the perimeter of the room were counters that held sinks, tubes, glass jars, old towels, many different instruments, and several books.

“Dr. Welterfenn had lots of fun here,” Fran exclaimed. “This is where he did most of his hands-on work. The insane patient would be strapped down to the stretcher, then the light would be turned on overtop. One of the nurses who was in the room with him would stand beside the stretcher with an aluminum basin. She would have a towel draped over her arm, and in the other hand, a small tray with Welterfenn’s tools. First, Dr. Welterfenn would relieve the patients of any ‘brain pressure’ by drilling several holes into their heads. He also believed that it would exorcise the demons that lay within them.

After the holes were drilled, Welterfenn would scrape any pieces of flesh off the drill into the basin. Another nurse would then bring over a small cage which was installed on the patient’s head. Afterwards they would force them into a straight jacket, and then

made them walk to the other side of the room where their legs were shackled to the walls. Dr. Welterfenn would then hose down the patients with water.” Fran looked around the group. “Scary stuff.”

Lara glanced at the lights above them. They were starting to flicker.

“Ok everyone, we had better head out!” Fran exclaimed. They left the room and Fran began to walk quickly down the hallways. She *really* wanted to get out of there! The others followed close behind.

BANG! CRASH! Doors were slamming shut, and things were being toppled over! Everyone ran as fast as they could go. Fran dropped her flashlight, the bulb exploding on the stone steps. The five of them ran the rest of the way up the stairs and began to sprint down the hallway.

Lara was close behind the others. What was happening in the basement?! She hurried along but suddenly stopped in front of the storage room door. Lara just wanted one more peek at those eyeballs...

The others frantically ran out of the front door of the asylum, barely taking the time to make sure they had successfully locked it. Everyone hopped into Fran’s van, and quickly sped away.

The asylum looked different now. It seemed to be awake – alive. It was pitch black outside and the tall grass shuddered in the wind. A bright crescent moon shone high above the asylum. Its reflection shone across Lara’s eyes, through one of the barred windows on the main floor.

Lara stood in front of a window, her eyes glazed over, lips slightly parted, arms hung at her sides. She stared at the window at words that had been etched into the glass, that had a thick line of blood smeared overtop.

PLAYTIME

Suddenly, Lara's mouth twisted into a hideous grin. She staggered up to the window, pressing her nose up to the glass. Very slowly she slid her tongue out of her mouth, and ran it across the words. Blood rushed onto her tongue and slid silently down the back of her throat. The words on the window shone brightly now, glistening from the wet saliva that was smeared over the glass.

Lara stepped away from the window and turned sharply around. She began to walk quickly out of the room, and was heading towards the basement door...

"There you are, you little runt!"

Lara looked up and saw a nurse in front of her.

"Not trying to escape are we?" she asked.

Lara slowly shook her head. The nurse grabbed her arm roughly and pulled her down the hallway. The asylum was lit up by bright lights, and nurses were all over the place, rushing about with towels or trays in their hands. Lara's eyes moved slowly around. Patients in stretchers and wheelchairs were being pushed down the endless hallways that were painted a bright white. Lara's focus kept blurring, and she felt lightheaded.

The nurse brought Lara into one room where she hadn't been during the tour. Lara was pushed onto an upright stretcher and strapped in. A patient beside Lara was fighting with two nurses. He was twitching and twisting, trying to break free of the restraints.

Lara felt like she didn't have any control of her body. It was like something, or *someone* was controlling her. All of a sudden, a man walked briskly into the room. He wore gloves on either hand, and held his arms in an upright position in front of him as he walked. Hanging from around his neck was a white facemask. He grinned at the patient beside Lara, and snapped both of his gloves to make a tighter fit. A nurse handed him a skinny, hollow piece of metal.

“Here you are Dr. Welterfenn,” she said.

Lara's eyes flashed quickly. *Welterfenn?!*

“MMM, no! No!” the patient wailed. He twitched frantically, but grew still when Dr. Welterfenn was suddenly right in front of him. A nurse hurried into the room with a tray and gave Welterfenn a black pen.

Very carefully, he moved toward the patient. He took the pen and drew two perfect small circles on either side of his forehead. The patient's eyes were wide with terror, he had broken into a shivering sweat. Dr. Welterfenn gave the pen back to the nurse, and placed the thin metal cylinder on the left side of the patient's forehead, covering the drawn circle. The nurse handed Welterfenn a drill with a very long pointed end in which he inserted into the top of the cylinder and pushed down until it hit the patient's head...

Zzz! Zzz! Zzt! Zzt! Zzz. The powerful drill dug its way into the patient's head ripping and tearing at his flesh. Small pieces of his scalp shot up through the metal, splattering Welterfenn's facemask. The patient's eyes had frozen in place.

Dr. Welterfenn turned the drill off and carefully removed it, taking great care to hold fast to the metal piece. All of a sudden, a bubble of blood popped from the hole in

the patient's head, followed by a big rush of blood. It shot up the metal piece and oozed out of its top, dripping onto the patient and Welterfenn's arm. He laughed crazily to himself, then looked at the nurse.

"Do the other side. I want to get started on this patient," he looked over at Lara and smiled. She tugged at the restraints but knew it was a hopeless action. Welterfenn removed the pen from the tray and walked over towards Lara. A nurse standing beside her held a bowl of water, where quickly washed off his gloves. He walked up to Lara, and began to draw two circles on her head.

Zzz! Zzz! Zzt! Zzt! Welterfenn fired up the drill, and began his work. The tip of the drill sharply pierced Lara's skin. She felt a burning sensation and soon blacked out...

"*UHHH!*" Lara wheezed loudly and gasped for a breath. Her heart was pounding and she was trying to get her bearings. Lara opened her eyes and lifted her head off the cold floor. She lay in the room she had been running through before she blacked out. Lara looked out through the window, and saw that Fran's van wasn't there.

"They've left without me," Lara murmured. She shrugged her shoulders then stood up wiping some dust off of herself. She looked around the room when suddenly her face fell into a frown. An image of Dr. Welterfenn flashed in her mind. Lara shuddered and shook her head to rid the awful image.

Had Lara been in the same room with him? Were there actually nurses and patients in the asylum? Was the asylum alive? Did she actually witness a murder by Welterfenn himself, and almost be killed *herself*?

Lara wanted to find out.

She proceeded to the door, and suddenly was pushed backwards into the room.

“Woah!” Lara yelled. She stumbled back, and whipped her head up to see who had pushed her.

The door was empty.

Lara raised an eyebrow and smiled. “You fight with your hands, I fight with my fists.”

Suddenly Lara heard faint sounds around her of muffled voices. They were laughing and giggling. Lara stood in the center of the room, eyes glazed over, hands hung at her sides. Lara’s ponytail was pulled out and her hair was blown around by icy air...

“Please! I won’t do it again! I won’t!”

“This has to be done, you were out of control!”

Lara opened her eyes, and looked at the new room she was in. She was in the basement again, strapped onto an upright stretcher. Lara watched as two nurses pinned a woman down to a hospital bed, and quickly strapped her in tightly. They left to get Dr. Welterfenn, Lara and the woman were alone. She looked at Lara with complete terror in her eyes.

“Did it hurt bad?” she asked quietly.

Lara opened her lips slowly, breaking a thin layer that held them together. She licked them and tasted blood.

“Did what hurt?” Lara replied. The woman nodded towards her right foot. Lara looked down and saw several small holes on the sole of her foot. Small amounts of puss had formed around them, and the holes were turning a blackish, blue colour. She shook her head and looked up at Welterfenn who had just walked in the door. He looked at Lara with his dark brown eyes and smiled.

“Feeling better? Now you can’t escape again.” The next few minutes Lara fell in and out of what was happening. She could feel herself and had control of her body, but also felt as if she was one step out of her body...on the outside watching.

She watched as Dr. Welterfenn snapped on his gloves and walked to the side of the patient’s bed.

“Which treatment would you like?” he asked the woman.

Tears streamed down her face, and she sniffed loudly.

“Taiyang, or hegu?”

No response.

“Hegu it is.” The nurse near Welterfenn nodded and then walked over to the woman. She turned her hand over so that her palm was facing upwards and handed Dr. Welterfenn two small needles that were attached to the wall. This treatment was known as the ‘Electric Ant.’ Welterfenn pierced the woman’s hand between her thumb and index finger. She cried out in pain, and started to yell.

The electrically controlled acupuncture needles were turned up to a higher current. The woman shrieked hysterically. When the process was over, Welterfenn and the nurses left the room.

“Are you ok?” Lara called to the patient. She sniffed loudly then raised her head to look at Lara.

“It wasn’t as bad as what you got,” she replied, “you don’t seem to be in any pain. Doesn’t it hurt?” she asked.

Lara shook her head.

“I don’t know how I got here anyway,” the woman said. “I’m certainly far from being insane...but when they’re through with me there’s no doubt in my mind that I will be!” Lara forced a smile, and told her what happened to her.

“You mean you’ve traveled back in time?” she asked.

“I’m not sure. Either that or I keep blacking out, and this is a dream,” Lara replied, thinking that it had happened before.

“Well...just in case it isn’t a dream, I think you had better make a plan.”

Lara nodded. “The thing is, I’ve blacked out twice now...and every time I come back here I’m always strapped down somewhere.”

“When you left here before, what was happening around you?”

“My head was about to be drilled into,” Lara answered. “I felt the beginning of it...but that was all.”

“What about when you were back in the asylum? How did you black out again?”

“I was walking towards the door when something pushed me back in. I looked to see who was there, but it was so dark, I couldn’t see anything. I remember my eyes glazing over and I turned very cold. When I opened my eyes I was back here.”

“Do you think Dr. Welterfenn is trying to kill you?”

Lara looked at the woman and sighed. “I have no idea.”

“But if he is, how are you going to stop him?”

“That I don’t know either. I don’t have any weapons with me.”

“Weapons? You don’t need them when you’ve got a whole asylum of killing machines!”

Lara laughed. "Fight fire with fire." The woman and her exchanged names, then two nurses took Lara away.

They rolled her down a few hallways into another room. Dr. Welterfenn was performing a surgical practice known as lobotomy. His gloves were smeared with the blood, he was sewing up the mans head where he had partially removed some of his frontal lobes.

The nurse who was standing beside Welterfenn was helping him soak up some of the blood with a towel. Her tray of instruments lay on a table behind her – directly in front of Lara. Very quietly she reached her arm out as far as she could from the stretcher, and grabbed a very sharp knife. After sliding it very carefully into the back pocket of her pants, Lara's eyes closed and soon had left the basement of the asylum once again.

When Lara opened her eyes, the moon was shining brightly into the room. She took off her boot and sock, and looked at the sole of her foot. There were faint circles that could have been from Welterfenn, but Lara wasn't one hundred percent sure.

She went to stand up and felt a sharp pain...Lara reached into the back pocket of her pants and took out the knife that she had taken.

"So it *is* real," Lara murmured quietly. She looked at the knife then placed it onto the floor. Lara began to plan out her attack very carefully in her head. Charlotte, the woman whom Lara had talked to, told her to fight Dr. Welterfenn with the machinery in the asylum. Since Lara hadn't seen all of the equipment, she wasn't sure which method would be the best.

Lara planned on escaping from any restraints she might wake up in, then find and kill Welterfenn. With the knife now securely held in her back pocket, Lara once again stood up, and again ice cold air whirled around her...

Blackness. Lara opened her eyes and squinted in the darkness. She lay on the floor of a room where other patients were fast asleep. Lara was still in the basement, though. She stood up and quietly moved around the room. When she found the door, Lara was not surprised to see that they were behind bars. This didn't stop her, though. Lara heard soft footsteps walking towards her. One nurse was on duty, who was patrolling the hallways. Lara's right hand slid silently into her back pocket, while the other grasped one of the bars.

The nurse was ten feet away.

Lara kicked the bars lightly with her foot. The nurse came running over, directly in front of the door, lit a candle, and held it up in front of her. Staring at her in the eyes, Lara smiled. The nurse jumped back in surprise, but not fast enough. Lara swiftly thrust the knife into her throat.

The nurse began to gag, as she frantically reached up towards the gaping cut. Her eyes rolled to the back of her head, and she fell to the floor with a soft thud. Dark blood oozed from her throat. Lara wiped the blood off of the knife onto her shorts, then bent down, sticking her arm in between the bars to retrieve the keys.

Click.

Lara swung open the door and it squeaked quietly. She looked left and right, but saw no one in the darkness. Lara had to move now, and move fast. *Very* quickly and quietly, Lara

ran down the hallway, her feet barely making any noise but a few taps on the cold cement.

Which machine should she use to kill Welterfenn? She could drill holes into his head, but she wouldn't be able to strap him down by herself. As Lara was trying to figure everything out, she ran in and out of several rooms looking for the perfect weapon. Suddenly, a few voices could be heard coming down the hallway. Lara dodged quickly into the closest room and peered out, around the corner. Three figures were walking very quickly towards Lara. Each of them held a candle in their hands which lit up their faces. Welterfenn stood in the middle of two nurses. None of them looked happy. All of a sudden, Welterfenn put his arm out to stop them.

"Find her," he whispered through clenched teeth, "or you will be my next experiment." The nurses nodded then spread off into two different directions. Welterfenn sped forwards, and Lara dashed into the room. Unfortunately, it wasn't much of a room. It was very small, and the only thing that lay in the room was a huge circular pool that almost took up the full room. Lara could hear Welterfenn coming even closer now and saw the top of his dark shadow coming down the hallway.

Where is that wretched girl? thought Welterfenn. *When I find her, I am going to gut her out piece by piece.* Dr. Welterfenn turned into the room with the large pool, and looked around. No one was in there. He walked over to the pool, stuck his finger inside, then licked it. After taking one last look, Welterfenn dashed out of the room, and continued further down the hallway.

WOOSH! Lara surfaced and filled her lungs with as much air as she could. It was unfortunate that she was closest to this room when she had to escape, because Lara had

been submersed for a whole minute in a pool full of blood. Very carefully she got out of the pool and stood dripping for a moment. She wiped her face off with her hands and shook her head. How was she supposed to stay hidden until she found a way to kill Welterfenn? She had no problem running here and there hoping that the two wouldn't meet up, but Lara knew that by leaving a trail of blood behind her it wouldn't work so well.

Lara's eyes had accustomed to the dark. She could see on the back wall of the room, a few lab jackets that were hanging up. Lara took off her boots and socks then using the jackets wiped off as much blood from herself that she could. On her arms and legs, there were large stains from the blood, and her hair was wet and sticky. She squeezed her braid, and more blood splashed to the floor. She wiped her hands off, and then was ready to go.

Barefoot, Lara crept slowly down the main hallway, staying close to the wall. She had to be careful not to stain the walls with the blood that was still on her clothes.

BANG!

Lara spun around. A nurse was heading right for her! Before she could utter a sound to tell the others that she had found their prize turkey, Lara had already retrieved the knife from her back pocket and it now lay gouged into the nurse's head. She fell to the floor in a heap. Very quickly, Lara pulled the knife out of her head, then continued forward.

Thud, thud, thud.

Footsteps? Lara wasn't quite sure. She turned into a room, and found herself inside the main surgical lab.

Thud, thud.

Lara peered out of the door, when suddenly something very hard smashed down onto her head...

“...little sneak...”

“...two dead...”

“...got her now...”

Lara could hear muffled voices around her. She felt a piercing pain on the top of her head, that was throbbing away. Lara opened her eyes, and found herself looking directly into Welterfenn’s dark, cold eyes.

“Sleep well?” he asked.

Lara frowned, then rolled a ball of saliva onto the back of her tongue.

“Well, after I am through with you, I’m sure will!” he laughed.

Lara grinned slightly, then shook her head. She was strapped onto an upright stretcher, under a bright light that hung overhead.

“No?” Welterfenn questioned. “No one says no to me!” he roared.

Lara rolled her eyes, and shot the spitball from her tongue directly into his left eye. Welterfenn cried out, and began to wipe at his eyes. The nurse who had caught Lara handed him a towel, and glared at her.

A moment later, Dr. Welterfenn handed the nurse a pail that was filled right to the rim with blood.

“Give her a little bath. I’ll be right back.”

The nurse nodded and then waited for Welterfenn to leave. She turned her head, and Lara and her eyes met. The nurse flashed Lara an evil smile then walked over to her.

Lara closed her eyes as the warm, fresh blood spilled over her head. It ran down her body, instantly soaking her...

“Feel good?” the nurse asked.

Lara spat out in front of her and opened her mouth. “Lovely.”

“Would you like me to wipe off your eyes? I don’t think you will want to miss what Dr. Welterfenn is going to do to you!”

Lara smiled. “I would appreciate that.”

The nurse took a towel and began to wipe the blood from her eyes. Just when she was about done, Lara thrust her body forward as hard as she could, and bit sharply into her hand. The nurse screamed and tried to pull free. Lara sank her teeth further into her hand and locked her jaw. The nurse began to hit Lara with her free hand – hard. She let go and the nurse ran to a sink where she let cool water run over her hand.

Lara reached one hand into her back pocket and retrieved the knife. She held onto it tightly, and with one strong scrape, cut one of the restraints holding her arms. Within five seconds she was off the stretcher, and had killed the nurse. She didn’t like to waste any time.

When Welterfenn returned, Lara was sitting cross-legged on an examination table, holding onto her knife. He looked at Lara with a grin on his face after looking at the dead nurse. Welterfenn held on tightly to a handcuffed patient.

“Watch,” he said to Lara. Quickly Dr. Welterfenn forced the patient over to the wall with shackles. Once he had secured them, he turned to Lara.

“You could try to save him, but don’t bother. He wouldn’t live for another week anyway. His whole body is crawling with an infection that will kill him soon enough.”

Lara hesitated, but soon made up her mind to stay put when the patient rudely gave her a look of hatred. Welterfenn walked towards Lara.

“You may have seen some of my worst forms of torture, but I would like you to see one more,” he said.

“Go ahead.”

Welterfenn opened a drawer and pulled out a long machete. Lara’s muscles tensed, getting ready to jump if necessary. He walked over to the patient’s side.

“Familiar with evisceration?” he asked.

Lara shook her head.

Welterfenn lifted the patient’s shirt up to his shoulders. He looked over at Lara, and winked at her. She returned his look with a cold, hard stare.

Very quickly, he took the machete in both hands, and sliced it across the patient’s stomach. Instantly the wound opened up, and his insides began to fall to the ground. Blood poured from his stomach, and stringy pieces sloshed down his legs. Something small *plopped* out of his wound, and fell to the floor wobbling around. The patient hung from the shackles, lifeless. Lara looked down at the floor and saw all of his insides that had splashed onto the cold cement floor.

“Fascinating, isn’t it? Watching the life *spill* out of them,” he laughed. Lara had had enough of his game. She was growing bored with it even more by the second. Lara hopped off the table, and stood facing Welterfenn. It was time to show him who was boss.

Dr. Welterfenn stood casually, waiting for Lara to do something. Suddenly, she grabbed her knife, and thrust it toward him. His arm shot up, and he caught it tightly in his hand!

“Looks like we’ve got a rank amateur here,” he mocked.

Amateur?! Lara thought. Get ready to face your worst nightmare.

Outside lightning burst from the sky, crackling wildly, thunder booming. The words etched in the window flickered brightly against the sky. The asylum was ready to take on its next victim.

“Raah!” Welterfenn screamed at Lara as he plunged the knife towards her. In less than a split second, she sprinted forwards, jumped and did a reverse roll while turning around, and kicked her leg out into the back of his head. Lara landed on both feet, and watched as Welterfenn stumbled to the floor.

She raced forwards and bent down to retrieve the knife. Without warning, Welterfenn kicked a leg out and tripped her.

“Oof!” Lara grunted as she fell to the floor, scraping her chin. Welterfenn picked up the knife and hurled it as hard as he could toward Lara...

BOOM! A huge bolt of lightning flashed from the sky, shooting downward striking a large tree by the asylum. Instantly, flames burst from its limbs, and soon the tree was engulfed in a roaring fire.

It all had happened in slow motion. Lara had turned just in time to see the knife hurtling towards her. She forced her body to roll sideways, and the knife sharply pierced the cold floor. It vibrated for a moment before coming still.

Lara jumped to her feet and glared at Welterfenn. It was time to end this game.

“Close,” he whispered.

“Close only counts in horse shoes and hand grenades,” Lara finished.

“Give up,” he demanded.

“In your dreams.”

Welterfenn laughed then shook his head. “In yours.”

Lara frowned as his eyes suddenly fogged over, and an evil grin spread across his face. He started to hum, then began singing to the tune of Braham’s lullaby.

“I can see you, and you can see me.

Killing you with a knife is the key.

Run – don’t stop, go far, far away.

Death is the penalty if you stay.”

Dr. Welterfenn looked back at Lara. He lifted his right arm, and made a fist, which he pressed against his mouth. He sucked in a great amount of air, held his hand out under his lips, then blew out towards Lara...

The whole forest was a large holocaust. Thick, orange flames spread around faster, and faster. One branch snapped off, and fell to the ground, lighting the tall grass on fire.

A heaviness swept over Lara’s eyes, and they closed shut. Her head began to spin, and she soon lost all feeling of her body...

The black sky was lit up by the bright orange flames. Along the perimeter of the asylum, fire crackled loudly, and began to reach eagerly for the building...

About five minutes later, Lara wearily opened her eyes. She tried to move, but found herself in an enclosed space. It was completely dark, and Lara didn't have a clue where she was – that is, until she bumped her head on the ceiling.

“The black box,” Lara grunted. “Not exactly the best place to be,” she laughed. Lara felt along the inside of the box, and pushed with all her strength on the lid. It wouldn't budge, so she shifted to the side to get into a better position in which she could use her legs to help. Something scratched Lara's leg when she moved. She felt along the bottom with her hands and soon grasped a ring which was anchored into the bottom. She pulled up hard, and a grin slowly crept over her face.

BOOM! A large tree fell to the ground. Flames jumped from it, and grabbed a hold of one of the windows on the asylum's main floor. The fire spread around the base and began to climb upwards, eagerly hurrying to catch up...

Lara climbed slowly down the narrow staircase from the inside of the black box. When she arrived at the bottom, Lara found herself at one end of a short hallway. Straight ahead, a closed door seemed to welcome her with its glowing edges from a light coming from within the room. Lara hurried towards the door and opened it without hesitation.

The glass from the large window *burst* into the empty room. Several jagged pieces lay on the floor among thousands of shards of glass. All of the pieces reflected the roaring fire, illuminating the room in a brilliant orange. The fire climbed through the window, where it immediately began to stretch itself out onto the walls.

As soon as Lara had entered through the door, her eyes quickly darted around the large room. It reminded Lara of a warehouse because there were two more levels above her, and one below. Stone steps connected to each level, which were very narrow, and

had no handrail to hold onto while ascending or descending. Lara could see several shelves lined in rows, set up like a library, which held various boxes and jars that were filled with different organs. This didn't surprise her.

Lara walked to the center and looked down through a very large hole in the floor. The entire bottom was filled with blood, approximately one hundred feet below where Lara was standing. Stone steps emerged from the large pool, up to the first level, stained with splashes of blood.

Sconces were mounted on every wall, each holding a single candle that softly flickered. Lara proceeded to the staircase leading to the second landing. When she had arrived at the next level, Lara's attention was immediately drawn to the center of the floor. Several candles were lit on the floor, circling a chalk drawing. Lara moved closer to get a better look. The Devils Triangle glowed dimly from the candles, reflecting in Lara's eyes.

"I'm glad you could make it to the ceremony," said a deep voice from above Lara. She looked up, and saw Dr. Welterfenn peering over the third level.

"Ceremony?" she questioned.

Welterfenn grinned, and adjusted his white lab coat. His dark eyes caught the light from a nearby candle. Very slowly he motioned for her to come up.

Lara squinted her eyes while studying him very carefully. A moment later she proceeded up the stone steps to where Welterfenn awaited her. He reached his hand out for Lara to take, but pulled it back when she raised her eyebrows. Welterfenn stepped to the side so Lara could have a look around.

She stepped forward, and her bare feet sloshed through a puddle of blood. The entire floor was covered in organs and guts. Lara looked up and saw several bodies along the walls, that were hanging beside one another – lifeless. All of them had been eviscerated, except one.

Winston, Lara’s faithful butler, hung from shackles on the wall. His gaze was focused on the floor, his tray lying under his feet. Lara turned to Welterfenn.

“What do you want?” she demanded.

“You see Lara,” he began, “before you get upset, let me explain. With the Devils Triangle I am able to look into the future. I’ve seen you travel the world, seeking treasure. If you join me, I can give you treasure. Being able to conduct experiments on people is the real prize.”

Lara looked shocked. “You want me to lower myself to your level?” she laughed, then shook her head.

Welterfenn’s face fell into a frown. “I’ve given you plenty of chances, and you throw them all away?”

Lara smirked. “Rather toss them aside, I say.”

“Fine,” Welterfenn barked, “then lets finish this right now. I can’t wait to slice your head open to see your lovely brain. I’m going to mount it on the wall in my lab.”

Lara shook her head. “No, you have it wrong again. *I’ll* be the one slicing *your* head open. It’s such a shame there won’t be anything for the taking.” She smiled and placed her hands on her hips.

Welterfenn scowled then brought his fist up to his mouth. Just as before, he sucked in a great amount of air. However, this time he tilted his head up and blew

upwards. A mist-like fog formed above them and began to quickly expand throughout the room. Lara looked over the railing and saw a dagger frozen in the air. Welterfenn jumped straight up, and came down very slowly.

“Try it Lara,” he said.

“I don’t need practice.” Lara quickly ran forwards through the slosh and jumped forwards, flying over the banister. She grabbed the dagger with one hand, and somersaulted in the air. Welterfenn jumped over the banister and flew towards Lara holding his own dagger in hand. Lara grabbed onto a pair of shackles on the wall and swung towards the banister on the second level.

Welterfenn soon replaced Lara’s spot on the wall. He waited until Lara was standing on the banister before throwing the knife.

Lara’s feet slipped slightly. She caught her balance, and watched as Welterfenn’s knife sped towards her. She jumped upwards and caught the rungs on the banister on the top level with her free hand. She pulled herself up, and kicked upwards doing a perfect back flip onto the top of the railing. Lara looked down at Welterfenn’s angry face. The knife had pierced one of the shelves. He looked up at her and frowned.

“AMATEUR!” Lara mocked. She obviously knew how to push his right buttons. He pushed off the wall, and jumped upward towards Lara...

The entire first floor of the asylum was a roaring fire. All of the walls were engulfed in flames, except for the spots where portraits of Dr. Welterfenn hung. The fire raced its way upstairs...

Lara jumped off the railing into a swan dive. Welterfenn grabbed for her, but she had gotten to him first. She kicked out, hitting him squarely in the stomach. Quickly

twisting in the air, she plunged her knife deep into the back of his neck. The tip of the blade shot right through to the very front. From the momentum of Lara's kick, he went flying right onto the second level where his body landed in a heap in the center of the Devils Triangle.

Lara began to fall. There was nothing to grab onto, either. Just before she landed, she squished her face up and closed her eyes. Lara plunged directly into the pool of blood. Immediately, she kicked up and climbed out onto the stone steps. As Lara stood dripping she wiped her face off with the back of her hand. She rung her hair out and then ran up the rest of the stairs until she reached Winston.

"Darn it! These are too strong," Lara grunted as she tried to pull at the restraints. "Hold on, I'll go get a knife." Lara ran back down to the second level where Welterfenn lay. She bent down, he opened his eyes and looked at her. Lara quickly went for the knife.

"No! Wait Lara!" he gasped.

Lara stopped at looked at him. "Yes?"

"There's something I must tell you," he said, "this isn't really happening. You are really in the asylum upstairs where you originally blacked out. Winston isn't actually here, either. It's all really a hallucination. You know I'll live on forever! You may think you have destroyed me, but I have just merely slipped silently by you."

Lara rolled her eyes, then with one swift pull, yanked the knife out of his throat...

PLAY TIME.

"Not trying to escape are we?"

"Please! I won't do it again!"

“Did it hurt bad?”

“Taiyang, or hegu?”

“Find her, or you will be my next experiment.”

“...little sneak...”

“...got her now...”

“No one says no to me!”

“Fascinating, isn’t it? Watching the life spill out of them...”

“...killing you with a knife is the key...”

“...the black box...”

“...put something in, get something else out...”

Lara’s head spun around and around. Flashbacks from the night kept streaming through her mind. Eventually she blacked out...

When Lara awoke, she lay on top of a pile of glass. She sat up and bits of the shattered pieces fell to the floor. Lara sat in the room where she had first blacked out. The entire room was engulfed with fire. She looked at the window. It was the closest exit. Anyone in her position would have jumped right on out. Anyone sane for that matter! Of course, Lara wasn’t in that category. She hopped up, and ran to the basement stairs, noticing along the way her boots were back on her feet.

She didn’t have to worry about the darkness of the asylum. The entire basement was on fire, which was good for Lara because she needed to see what she was doing. Lara ran to the room which contained the black box. She swung the lid open, grabbed the ring and pulled up hard...

When Lara arrived at the second level, a pile of ashes lay in the Devils Triangle. She emptied out a jar and scooped the ashes into it. She then ran to the third level to get Winston. However, he wasn't there.

“At least some of the hallucinations weren't real,” Lara muttered. She sprinted back down to the first level where she climbed out of the black box. She closed the lid and set the jar on top of it. The fire began to crawl into the room – she had to move fast, but first Lara wanted to make sure she was back to normal.

Lara had discovered that when Fran let her look into the box, Lara had gone through a transformation. Each time she went into the box Lara changed back and forth between sanity. All of the events had happened in the asylum – Lara was just in a different mindset at times.

It was time to destroy Welterfenn once and for all. She lifted the lid, and poured his ashes into the box.

POOF!

His ashes instantly vanished. The insides of the box started to glow a brilliant gold colour. Lara looked in, and grinned. Resting on the bottom of the box were two gold tongs, similar to the real ones that were used for electrical shock. Lying beside them in a jar were two golden eyes that floated around in the water.

Lara retrieved her treasure, then proceeded quickly out of the basement. On her way out, she passed the room with the shattered window. A piece of glass on the floor with writing on it caught her attention. She picked it up and laughed.

AMATEUR.

She threw it at the wall where it smashed into a million pieces, and ran out of the front door.

Outside, a helicopter awaited Lara. She hopped into the pilot's seat and smiled at her partner.

"Where to?" she asked.

Kurtis Trent nodded with a glint in his eye. "You know," he grinned, holding up two outfits which read "Tsumeb: Private Personnel".

Run – and Don't Stop

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