

A New World – a New Life

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The hot sun shone down from the clear blue sky. A warm breeze fluttered into the shore, with pelicans riding the air currents.

Lara lay on a beach towel in the soft white sand. She was on summer vacation in the Bahamas, and was loving every minute of soaking up the sun.

For the past few days, Lara had met several tourists on the beach, and had eaten supper with a few of them at a seafood restaurant. She had planned to stay two weeks, but Lara knew she was going to end up staying longer.

The constant sound of the ocean was quite relaxing, but Lara didn't want to lay around all day. She hopped up, and ran towards the water. After taking in a deep breath, Lara plunged down into the refreshing salty ocean.

Stroke after stroke through the water, fighting with the waves, Lara soon found herself out quite far. She dove down until she reached the bottom, and swam out farther. A large sea turtle swam by Lara, and a moment later half a dozen stingrays followed.

For another ten minutes, she would surface for air when needed, and then continue swimming. The water felt very relaxing, and Lara let her body float slowly to the surface. Bright coloured fish darted around. For a little while longer she let her body be pushed by the waves back towards the shore, then swam the rest of the way back in.

Shortly after 7:30pm, the sun hugged the horizon. Brilliant red streaks spilled over the water creating a beautiful atmosphere. A few pelicans flew in front of the sun, their shadows reflecting on the oceans glistening surface.

Lara stood at the waters edge with her toes snuggled into the sand, letting the warm ocean swim around her ankles. The entire beach was empty of bright coloured umbrellas, and happy playing children. Few stragglers were seen climbing over the sand

dunes, dragging their beach chairs behind them. Lara sucked in several deep breaths of the humid, salty air, that was now beginning to turn cool. Her long braid flapped softly in the wind and a few loose hairs brushed across her face. Lara closed her brown eyes, and stood silently lost in her own thoughts.

The sun finally lost its grip, and slid below the horizon. A bright, radiant coloured moon soon took its place high above in the empty, clear sky. Dark shadows crept slowly over Lara's face.

Suddenly, a rough large hand grabbed her shoulder.

Lara whirled around, facing an old woman who was hunched over, holding onto a long walking stick.

"Yes?" Lara asked. The woman glared at Lara with her old eyes, and sagging, wrinkly skin. She opened her mouth to speak, and old, rotten uneven teeth jutted out.

"Are you coming or not, you slow poke?"

Lara frowned, "Coming where?" she asked.

The old woman snarled at Lara, and then with her stick began to draw in the sand.

>aq+

Lara shook her head. "What does that mean?"

"Ah, heck with you. Come back in two more tides, it'll be your last chance. The *'s won't be happy with you, though." Lara watched as she turned and hobbled away until the darkness had fully enveloped her. She looked down at the strange lettering, thinking the woman was crazy...

Lara spent the next day relaxing on the beach, swimming with bottlenose dolphins, and drinking ice-cold fruit punch. Her mind kept wandering off, thinking about

the previous night. ...*Two more tides*... The morning's tide had already passed through, did this mean that she would be back tonight? Lara didn't waste anymore time. She hurried back to the beach house she was renting, and began to pack right away.

A few minutes later, Lara was ready. In her backpack, she had pistols, an extra grey tank top, a shotgun, paper, a pen, two dozen flares, and a mini flamethrower. She had changed out of her bathing suit into a pair of light khaki shorts, a dark blue tank top, and sunglasses that had night vision. Lara put her holsters in her backpack as well. She'd put those on later if needed. Lara swung her backpack on, then headed back down towards the beach.

The sun had just sunk below the skyline, and the backs of a pod of whales slid silently under the dark water. Lara waited patiently. Ten minutes passed. There was still no sign of the old woman. Lara shrugged her shoulders, and then turned to leave.

"Hey! Wait up! I can't walk that fast you know." Lara turned her head, and saw the woman hobbling towards her.

"Are you ready to go?" she asked.

Lara nodded. "I'm ready." The woman turned back around, and pointed towards a pier that wasn't that far away. They began walking along side the edge of the beach, in silence.

A few minutes later, Lara found herself overlooking the ocean from several feet above on the pier. A good sized motorboat rocked back and forth in the waves. The old woman turned around, and began to descend a wooden ladder that was nailed to the side. She got into the boat, then looked up at Lara, and motioned for her to come.

After they were both in the boat, Lara untied the rope that was holding them to the pier, and the woman started up the motor. They sped into the darkness of the night, and soon were out of sight...

The woman lit a match, and began to light several candles that were on the floor of the boat. They flickered softly in the wind, and cast eerie shadows on each other's faces. The wind howled softly as they continued over the dark water, alone, in the pitch black.

For half an hour they traveled over the water, the only sound was the motor, pattered softly. Lara dipped her hand into the warm water, and let her fingers run through it along side the boat.

The woman jerked her head up. "Don't do that! Are you crazy?!" Lara frowned. Perhaps there were too many sharks around and she didn't want her to get her hand bitten off? Lara removed her hand from the water, and shrugged her shoulders.

Five minutes later the woman turned the motor up to a higher speed.

"We're going to meet up with some tough weather soon. But, you already know that I'm sure?"

Lara nodded her head. A huge wave suddenly hit the front of their boat. Water sprayed overtop of them, and landed back into the water behind them. The water was alive, roaring all around them - powerful and strong. The candles on the floor of the boat had extinguished long ago. Mist splattered Lara's face after each wave crashed down. She braced herself and held tightly to both sides of the boat. The old woman gunned the throttle of the motor, and raced through the waves. Another large wave threatened them, but they plowed right through, getting soaked in the end.

A moment later the ocean seemed to grow tired of its game, and settled back down. The moon cast a dim white reflection on the surface of the water. The woman turned the motor down, and smiled at Lara with her old, rotten teeth.

“Well, at least the worst of it is over.”

Lara nodded, then wiped her wet hands on her soaked shorts. Unexpectedly, a fog like mist circled around them. It was a pale green colour, and felt very soft on the skin. Lara looked down at the candles that were unlit on the floor. They were starting to smoke! Within a split second a bright yellow flame held onto the wick, flickering wildly.

Lara was bewildered. What just happened?! The boat entered a clearing out of the fog. Lara looked around and saw that the green fog had encircled them. The flames started to die slowly, and then suddenly went out.

Lara looked up at the woman. “What was that?”

She shook her head, and glared at Lara. “Don’t play stupid with me girl, you hear? I had enough of that from you yesterday!” She reached into her ratted jacket pocket, and took out a small square box. Once it was opened, Lara peered over at it. It looked like some sort of a compass, and had little red lights bordered around it.

The woman fiddled with it for a moment, and then nodded her head with satisfaction.

“Have you gotten one of these yet?” she asked.

“No,” Lara replied. She reached into her other coat pocket and revealed another small box. She handed it to Lara.

“Just in case you ever get lost out of the >aq+, then you don’t have to panic.”

Lara nodded, then slipped it into her backpack. There was that word again. “>aq+”. What did it mean? Get lost? Where? What was this woman thinking about?

The woman pressed a button on the compass, then put it back inside her pocket. She re-lit the candles, then looked up at Lara.

“Strange place sometimes, huh?”

Lara agreed.

“Yep, good thing it’s still a secret though. We would be destroyed if anyone found out anymore information about the Bermuda Triangle.”

“The Bermuda Triangle?!” Lara blurted out.

“Well yeah, where else? Shesh, sometimes you guys are a bit slow you know.”

“I think I’m worn out. I can’t even remember where we are,” Lara replied. The woman shook her head.

“We are in the exact center of the triangle. Remember now?”

“Oh, right. How could I forget?” Lara decided to play along with her. It couldn’t hurt.

“Beats me. Ah, here it comes!” She pointed down at the water. A huge submarine was rising to the surface. Part of the roof opened up, and she motioned for Lara to get in.

“Remember,” she said, “it’s 100 fathoms under, so make sure you *SPH* when you are about 5 fathoms down.”

Lara hopped into the sub, and the roof closed behind her. *SPH? Must be short term for something*, she thought. After the sub started to descend, Lara took a seat on the floor. The sides were all glass, which were great for viewing the ocean. There weren’t any controls though. The sub was being controlled from somewhere else. In the very

center of the floor, Lara could see a large cutout circle. It looked as if it could be moved out of place to get through. The sub was now one fathom under.

While Lara was waiting to get to her destination, she took out her paper and pen. She made three columns: Word, meaning, and guess. In the first row she wrote *>aq+*, and underneath that, *SPH*.

The old woman had told Lara the previous night that they were going to the *>aq+*. Since she wasn't there yet, she couldn't even ponder a guess. The sub was now five fathoms under.

Lara looked at the depth gauge on the wall. She was supposed to *SPH* now, but she didn't know what that meant either! Lara swallowed some saliva and felt little change in her ears. This submarine was incredible!

As she continued to descend, Lara saw spectacular things beyond the windows. Who would have thought that the center of the Bermuda Triangle would be so full of life? Lara saw three small angelfish chasing each other, and a white shark tailing close behind. Brilliant colours of seaweed lit up by the submarines bright lights, floated past the window, spun and twisted in the clear water. Enormous jellyfish floated by, their tentacles brushing past on the glass. The submarine continued to dive much faster than before. The depth gauge read 50 fathoms!

What was the Bermuda Triangle exactly anyway? Lara had researched it a few years ago, and discovered many fascinating stories.

The Bermuda Triangle, also known as the Devil's Triangle, is located inside imaginary lines connecting Florida, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico, which covers approximately 36 260 square kilometers of the Atlantic Ocean.

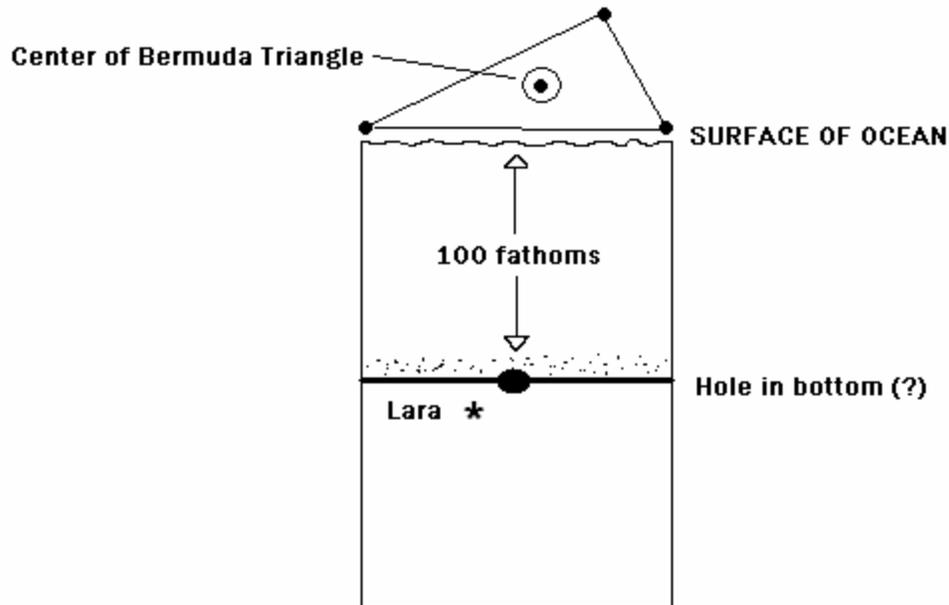
Over the years, hundreds of ships and planes have mysteriously vanished within the Triangle. Lawrence David Kusche, a researcher, has examined the most famous disappearances. In October of 1944, a ship called 'Rubicon' was discovered floating aimlessly off of Florida's coast. The only sign of life aboard was a dog, and the ship was in excellent condition. 'Cyclops', a ship with a crew of 309 men disappeared in March 1918. 'Nereus' mysteriously vanished in December 1941. What was strange though, was that in most cases:

1. No emergency signals were received
2. The weather conditions were generally good
3. There were no known mechanical problems
4. Nothing was logged or radioed to indicate the ship or plane was in any kind of trouble
5. Searches failed to turn up any debris or bodies.

Approximately ten minutes later, the sub came to a complete stop. Lara looked out a window at an enormous coral reef. It looked like there were thousands of tiny fish swimming in and out of the holes.

Beep, beep. Lara stood up as the circle in the middle of the floor was moved over to the left by several small mechanical parts. The bottom of the ocean lay revealed. All of a sudden, the floor of the sea tilted upwards and revealed an opening underneath. Lara climbed down, and the small circle went back into its place. Lara continued to climb down the small ladder until she reached a walkway about ten feet below.

She looked up at the spot she came through. The Atlantic Ocean lay above. She was under the ocean! Lara began to picture it in her head.



She could actually see the ocean above! It was like looking up through the bottom of an aquarium, but being able to see through the sand! It was similar to a one-way curtain. You defiantly could *not* see through the bottom of the ocean floor, but you could see through if you were underneath. It was simply fascinating!

Lara turned her attention away from the ‘ceiling’ and looked out at what was before her. The scene took her breath away, and she had to blink several times to prove to herself that it was actually there. Lara was looking at a whole new civilization, which was known as “The >aq+”, according to a large sign.

She gazed at the layout set before her. It reminded her of the High Security Compound she once visited in the Nevada Desert. Everything was grey. All of the

walkways, which branched out in every direction were constructed of grey metal that were punctured with medium sized holes. Thousands of small electrical lights were everywhere, on the floors, stairs, and walls. The majority of them were red, but there was an odd green one every so often. A large pool of green water was in the center of the segment. Mist danced on the surface creating an eerie look.

What surprised Lara the most, was that there were people everywhere! They all worked steadily, fiddling with wires, and equipment. They dressed alike in grey shirts and light coloured shorts, and wore similar boots to what Lara had packed. The place extended as far as Lara could see, and appeared to branch off in different sections.

She still not had been detected.

Lara bent down, and quickly changed into her grey tank top and boots. She was ready...

“Wee!”

“Hey! Wait up!”

“Slow down!”

When Lara arrived at the bottom of the stairs, several small children sped past her in small odd looking motorized vehicles. They were strange looking cars that had only one wheel centered directly underneath them. The children held tightly to the handlebars that were similar to those on a bicycle. On the right handlebar, Lara noticed two small buttons that controlled the speed of the car. The child sat in a cross-legged position on a round seat. They were not strapped in! Lara watched as they zoomed down the long hallway laughing while they played a game of tag.

After wandering around for ten minutes, Lara found herself in front of the circular pool of green hazy water. She looked down at her reflection, and frowned. Her head was upside down! She crooked her head on an odd angle. “*Weird*,” she thought.

“Hey, you!” a voice called. Lara turned around, and faced a boy about nine years of age.

“I haven’t seen you here before. Are you new?” he asked.

“Yes,” Lara replied, “an old woman brought me here. I’m not sure what I’m supposed to do though.”

The boy nodded. “Ah yes, what an old thing she is, isn’t she? Well, ok. I’ll show you around, and then you can get settled in. You don’t look too bad after your trip. How are you feeling?”

“Just fine.”

“Good, we’ll get you powered up later then. Follow me.”

The boy took Lara into the first room on the right. It wasn’t very large, and only one person was working inside. Several screens hung from the ceiling, and small green dots jumped all over them. The next room was very large. Several chairs were lined up against each wall. Four people were scattered in the room on the chairs.

Twenty minutes later, the boy had shown Lara over one hundred different rooms. He told her that there were thousands more! It was very easy to get lost in the place because hallways split off of every hallway, in all directions.

“This is the end of your tour,” the boy told Lara. “You’ll have to look at the rest yourself. I’ve got to go now.”

“What now?” Lara asked.

“I’ll take you to one of the *’s and then you will be instructed what to do.”

“Thank you for your help...”

“...>- - IV” he replied.

Lara nodded her head, confused. The boy pointed towards a large door, then walked away. She knocked, then proceeded inwards.

“...and this woman brought me here,” Lara finished explaining to three people who were seated around a large desk.

“And you have no idea why you’re here?” one man asked.

Lara shook her head.

“Do you remember *anything*?” another asked.

“Nothing!”

The third man stood up and walked over to Lara. “There have been a few like you. We knew this would happen. Well, we’ll have to put you back through school again. You will re-learn our language, and our history. Once you have graduated, we will help determine which job you will get here, at the >aq+.”

Lara nodded. She was great at playing these games! The first man stood up and opened the door for Lara. He took her down three different hallways that she hadn’t been down before, and proceeded into a large room that was filled with chairs and desks.

“The best of luck for you...oh shoot, I don’t suppose you remember your name, do you?” he asked.

“No, it must have been lost,” Lara replied, hoping that was the right answer.

“Lost? I guess you’re right. The teacher will name you then. Bye for now.”

Lara waved goodbye, and then walked into the classroom.

“Hello there!” the teacher called. “Are you a new student here?”

“Yes,” Lara responded.

The teacher was on some sort of a mechanical vehicle. She stood on a square, and it moved about when she swung her arm in her desired direction.

“Ok, we’ll get you a seat.” She rode to the back of the classroom and pointed to an empty desk. Lara followed, and sat down. While she was waiting for the teacher to start the class, Lara glanced around the room. There was one medium sized window at one side of the room, opposite to where Lara entered. You could see the ocean where a few fish were swimming around. As the rest of the place, everything was made out of metal. Lara looked down at the floor, which had several small holes in it, like on the stairs.

“Alright, let’s begin.” the teacher said. “We have a new member to our class. I will write her name on the board.”

>-VI

Lara looked around at the children. They seemed just as confused as she was!

“Don’t panic! We are all going to learn how to read, and write in our special language, and even how to speak it! Now, I want all of you to get out your paper and writing tool. Copy everything down that I write on the board.”

Lara reached into her backpack and withdrew her pen and paper. Everyone waited patiently as their teacher took out an eye patch from her desk. She swung her arm towards a white board, and put the patch on her right eye.

“Are you all ready?” she asked.

Everyone nodded their heads.

“What’s that funny patch you’re wearing?” a boy asked, who sat in front of Lara.
The teacher turned around.

“This is *my* writing tool.” She turned back around, standing about four feet from the board.

Zip! Zip, zip! Zzzzip!

Small red laser beams shot from her eye! Lara watched in amazement as she began to write with the laser on the board. She copied everything down on a fresh page in her notebook.

Symbol	Pronunciation	Symbol	Meaning
<	muh	+	home, building
>	luh	*	important person
-	e	sph	sigh
--	i	waqe	walk
\ /	x	^asph-	place
—	flh		
~	ore		

“Now, using your new chart,” the teacher said, “I want you,” she pointed to Lara, “to say your name. Remember, this is what it looks like,” she pointed to the board.

>-VI

Lara looked at her chart carefully. “Luh...e?”

“Yes! Your name is Luhe 6. Now, I want everyone to try to make out words using your charts. Write the word and the symbols down in your notebooks.”

Lara glanced back at her chart. Flh...Ore.

_~ = Floor

- \ - ++ = Exit

Sph^asph = Ship

Wa> = Wall

This language wasn't so bad after all! The teacher walked by Lara's desk and looked down at her notebook.

"Very good >-VI! You are a fast learner."

"Thanks," Lara replied. Her teacher continued to ride around the classroom looking at how everyone was doing. Lara raised her hand.

"Yes?"

"How are we supposed to write other words, like fish? There are no f's in the chart."

"They don't have to be exact. Here, let me show you." She took Lara's pen and wrote on her paper.

Fish = Flh - - sph

Flh → F

- - → I

Sph → sish

"If you underline a letter, you pronounce that letter. F-i-sish."

Lara nodded her head. "I get it!" She turned back to the first page in her book.

$>ab+$

"What does this mean?"

"Break it up into parts, it makes it easier."

"Alright. Luh-ab."

"And what does the positive sign mean?"

"A building or structure."

"Right!"

"Luh-ab...lab?"

"Yes! Great job!"

"We're in a lab?" Lara asked.

"Now, don't get too far ahead of me! Our history lesson is next!" she winked at Lara, then flung her arm towards the next student.

A few things were more clear now for Lara. She understood their simple language, and knew how to read it as well. They were in what was called a Lab, doing what Lara was still unsure of. Their technology was far more advanced, and their lifestyle was quite different from the 'real world.' Lara hoped to learn more about this fascinating place during the history lesson.

"...Can you believe that? We have been in existence for over one thousand years!" the teacher explained to the students. A few murmurs of surprise echoed through the classroom.

"Is that all?" Lara asked. "Humans have been around for centuries!"

"That's true, but look at how more advanced we are than them."

“Than *them*? I’m confused.”

The teacher shook her head. “You poor thing, you really *did* loose quite a chunk from your memory. >-VI, we aren’t humans. We are *robots*.”

Lara gasped. Robots?!

“I know this may be a shock for you. This is because you have been exposed to a different world for too long after the <\/.”

“Mux?”

The teacher nodded. “Twenty five billion sph’s ago, a terrible thing occurred here. Major >ab+ quakes destroyed $\frac{3}{4}$ of our civilization! Millions of robots were thrown into the ocean and swept away. Since robots cannot survive in the water for very long, most of them exploded. The ones that got caught in strong currents were the fortunate ones. They were washed up onto the land, and within a few hours were able to function again.

“Because of the water in their systems, their memories were erased. Only a small number actually had part of their memory left. The robots who survived the quake here quickly began to restore everything. Extra precautions were taken to guarantee that we would not be harmed again, if any more quakes should ever arise.

“One robot, the most famous bot in all of our history, had his whole memory still functioning after he washed ashore. He was developing a rubber seal for the >ab+ and accidentally spilled some of it on his arm, where a small section was open to the air. The substance made its way along his wires to his memory box. It completely wrapped itself around it, and prevented the water from getting to his memory.

“Since he was highly intelligent, he was able to use parts of his body to create what we use today, our highly powerful compasses. He was able to communicate with us,

saying that there were still bots who were alive. We immediately began to design a way to get our bots back, the hole in the ocean floor, in the exact center of the Bermuda Triangle.

“Now, a human found out about us, and he made her swear to secrecy, which she did. Her job was to look for bots to help get them back to us. For many generations, her family has been helping us recover lost robots.”

Lara raised her hand. “But how did she know if they were bots? How could she tell the difference?”

“That I’m not entirely sure of. Ever since she started helping us, hundreds of robots have come home. And, the famous bot whose name is still a secret is with us today. He is getting to the point where he will no longer be able to function for much longer. We’re like humans. We don’t live forever. But, we live for many generations of what humans live for.”

The classroom was silent.

“Fascinating, isn’t it?” the teacher said.

Lara raised her hand, and the teacher smiled.

“I’m pleased to see that you are showing quite an interest >-VI.”

“I have another question. What do all the robots do here?”

“That, you may never know. When you graduate you will be placed in a job that is most suitable for you. Those who are the fortunate ones, which are very few, will be able to see, and do what our prime job is here. I don’t know what it is, because I was chosen to be a teacher. Therefore, I cannot tell you anymore.”

A small boy behind Lara raised his hand. “Does this mean then, if we don’t get that job, we’re not *really* helping all of us?”

“Certainly not! Each job is extremely important here. Every robot contributes to the >ab+ in one-way or another.” the teacher replied. “Any more questions? No? Ok then, onto the final exam!”

“FINAL EXAM?!” a girl screeched. “This is our first day!”

“Well what did you expect? Twenty years of school?” the teacher laughed, then told everyone to quiet down. “The exam will indicate whether or not you pass or fail. It is done orally so I expect only to hear one voice at a time.”

She motioned for the first bot to stand up.

“What symbol indicates an important spot, or person?”

“Umm...the star?”

“Correct. Next...write Lab in proper vocabulary.”

The next robot scratched his head. “I-I-I can’t remember!” he wailed.

“Please stay standing.” The teacher asked everyone one question, telling those who answered correctly to stay standing, and those who answered wrong, to sit down.

Finally, it was Lara’s turn.

“How many sph’s ago was the >ab+ quake?”

“Twenty five billion years ago.”

“Yes! Alright everyone, those of you who answered correctly, please follow me.”

Twenty sph’s later...

Lara, along with her fellow classmates who had graduated, quickly followed close behind their teacher down several long hallways. Many other robots walked by them, and

Lara wondered what might happen if they discovered she wasn't one of them? Lara might have to swear to secrecy, or maybe they'd disembody her? Perhaps they wouldn't care? All that Lara knew was that she had to keep playing along, even though she was an intruder to their secret world.

“Here we are!” the teacher called out. “Each of you will go through this metal door one at a time. When you hear the door unlock you may enter. Good luck all of you, I hope you get jobs that you will enjoy doing for the >ab+!”

With that said, she turned around, swung her arm in front of her, and sped down the hallway on her vehicle. The door unlocked, and the first person entered.

Two sph's later...

Lara waited patiently for her turn. She wondered what kind of job she would be given? Hopefully she didn't have to pass some sort of examination, then her cover would defiantly be blown! Lara's heartbeat increased slightly as the person in front of her entered through the large door. She was next! Lara was quite pleased with herself. She had successfully gotten into the Lab, and had already graduated from school! Lara assumed that all of the jobs trained you before you began, since they didn't learn about them at all in school.

Click. Lara looked up. It was her turn. She reached out, and pulled open the large door.

“What is your name?” a robot asked.

“>-VI”, Lara replied.

“Follow me.”

The robot took Lara to the center of the medium sized room to where a large grey sheet hung from the low ceiling, to about a foot off the ground. In front of the curtain was a

small pool filled with greenish coloured water, just as in where Lara came through the ocean floor. Mist jumped slowly on its surface.

“Please stand behind the curtain,” he asked. Lara did so, then awaited further instructions.

“Now,” he said, “just in case you are wondering if this is going to hurt, the answer is no. Your wires might be a little strained for a moment or so, but that is normal. Please remain still until this procedure is finished. Are you ready?”

“Yes,” Lara replied thinking, *what the heck is he going to do to me?!*

The robot took a small device out of his pocket, entered in a forty-digit password, then pushed a green button. He watched as the green mist began to jump faster and higher on the water.

Lara could not see through the curtain. All she could see were tiny green specs. They rose as high as Lara stood, jumping on and off the curtain.

The robot pressed another button on his gadget and a report started to print out from a small slot located on the front. He seemed quite impressed. Finally the green specs went back down. Lara didn't even feel a slight change in her body, and was glad for it.

“You're all done!” the robot yelled. Lara stepped out from behind the curtain, and walked over to where he stood.

“Your results are amazing >-VI! I am sure you will be able to help the >ab+ greatly. Please take your results with you, and go through the far door on your right.”

Lara thanked him, then headed toward her next destination...

After another quick scan in the next room, Lara was told to wait momentarily while her results were being examined. A moment later, three different robots, whom were all females came to greet Lara.

“Hello there. My name is _\, and this is >~ and ~- -. We have great news for you, >-VI,” the first bot said. “Your results from both scans were incredible! You are definitely the perfect bot to help us.”

“For what job?” Lara asked.

“I assume that your teacher told you about the special job, that is secretive to but a few bots?”

Lara nodded.

“Well,” Lore the second bot said, “that’s the job you’ll be getting! You will be working with us three, along with two others.”

“What will I be doing?” Lara questioned.

“That,” Lori, the third bot answered, “you will have to wait and see.”

Fifteen sph’s later...

The three robots brought Lara to the area where the hole in the ‘ceiling’ was. They all stood beside the green pool of water. Flux, the first bot turned to Lara.

“We work down there.” She pointed to the pool. “Each of us has a special vehicle that we use to get up and down through there, since it is too dangerous for us to swim.”

“I get one too?” Lara asked excitedly. She nodded, and held a small grey, metal box out for Lara. The other robots took out theirs as well.

“What’s this?” Lara asked.

“Your vehicle,” replied Flux. Lara frowned, and looked down at the tiny box. “I know, it looks weird. Watch.” Flux placed the box upright on the water. She pressed a red button on top, and instantly it opened up, and began to unfold all of its tiny complicated parts. Within seconds it was large enough for a person, or in this case, a robot, to squeeze into. Flux waved, and then climbed into the vehicle. The top closed, and then began to sink under the surface of the water.

Lara watched as Lore and Ori did the same. Now, Lara was alone. She smiled, because she was excited that she got the best job possible, and because she just received her own water vehicle that could fit in her pocket! Lara pressed the red button on the box when it was floating on the surface. It finished changing a moment later, and she hopped in.

As her vehicle descended, Lara noticed that there was a tiny hand control to steer her through a tunnel that twisted and turned constantly. A bright light shone on the front of the vehicle, helping to guide Lara through the dark green water.

Approximately ten Sph’s later, which was equivalent to five minutes, Lara reached her destination. When she climbed out of the vehicle, it immediately folded up, and Lara placed it in her backpack. She looked forward, and saw a closed door. There was no handle, but Lara noticed a small video camera above it. Beside the door to the right was a small screen. Flux was looking at Lara.

“How was the ride?” she asked.

“Fine,” Lara replied.

“Good! Alright, I’m going to show you how to get in. You’ll be on your own for coming down here, so listen carefully! Do you have a compass?”

Lara nodded, and retrieved it from her backpack.

“Excellent. Open it up. When you’ve done that, say your name, then press the green button. A map will be created on the screen and it will show you where you are. You will see a depth gauge at the top right of the screen, which will show you how far under the surface of the ocean you are. Press the small button that is half red, half green, when you come across any door that is locked. The compass will send a signal to the doors security system, and will grant you access. Got it?”

“I think so,” Lara replied.

“I’ll show you the other functions of the compass later. See you inside.”

Lara waved goodbye then opened her compass by pressing a small button on the lid. The top part of swung up, and the screen light came on.

“>-VI,” Lara said, then pushed the green button. Almost instantly, a map was created and displayed on the screen. Lara looked at it, re-tracing her steps with her eyes from where she had come from. The depth gauge read 122 fathoms. From the map, Lara could see exactly where she was, as a red star flashed to show her location. Lara also noticed the door she was standing in front of, had a green ‘x’ on top of it, obviously marking which doors had security systems.

After pushing the button that was half red, half green, the door unlocked and Lara quickly walked through. Another closed door was directly in front of her. According to the compass, it also had a security system.

“Before you continue any further,” she said, “it is required that you have an eye scan, so our system knows it’s really you. Each robot’s eyes are completely different from everyone else’s. Because we have thousands of tiny parts to our eyes, they are

almost impossible to re-create. If someone happens to steal your compass, they could fake your voice to gain access. However, the eye scan has never failed before. It could probably even detect whether or not you're a robot!" Lore laughed.

Lara forced a laugh as well.

"Ok >-VI, one more thing. When you get through this door, you will have to find me. I want you to use your compass to do this. Here's what to do: push the small red button. It's a part of the decorative boarder, but the smallest. Next, say the name of the robot and they will appear on your map in blue, with their name printed beside it. If the bot is not within range of what your screen shows, press the red button below the one you just pushed. A dotted blue line will create the most direct route to where the bot is. Or, if you want to see what bots are near you, press the button above the small one, and they will appear on the screen. Good luck!"

"Wow," Lara thought, "*this compass is amazing!*" Lore left the screen, and Lara was now unsupervised. She was worried about the eye scan. She pushed the double coloured button, and a small mechanical arm descended from the ceiling. It held what looked to be a pair of binoculars that shone a red beam from each eyepiece.

Lara hesitated, then walked up to the scanner. The red beam flashed over her eyes, then stopped.

"Access denied. You do not appear to be a robot. Please try again. If failed once more, alarm will sound," a recorded robot voice said.

Lara scowled. This was it, her adventure was over. She would be discovered, her cover was blown. Lara sighed, then placed her hands on her hips. There *had* to be a way

to get past the security. Lore told Lara that the robot eye was made up of several small parts.

Suddenly, Lara smiled. She had an idea, and it had better work! She reached into her backpack and withdrew her sunglasses. She pushed the small button and her night vision turned on. Lara walked to the eye scanner, and crossed her fingers as the red light flashed across the glasses.

“Access granted. Welcome >-VI.”

“Yes!” Lara cheered. It worked! She put her glasses back in her backpack, then went through the door.

Lara found herself in a hallway. Her choices were to head left, right, or straight ahead. She pushed the smallest red button on her compass and said Lore’s name. Instantly, a blue star with Lore’s name printed beside it started to flash on the screen. She wasn’t that far away. Lara used the map to help her locate the room Lore was in. Just for interest sake, she pushed the button above the small red one, and four more stars appeared near Lore’s. One name was unfamiliar to Lara. *>sp^h*

“Luh...sish,” Lara pronounced. She knocked on the door, which did not have any security, then entered.

“Good job, you made it!” Lore exclaimed. The robot that Lara had not met before stepped forward. “>-VI,” Lore said, “this is...”

“...Luhsish,” Lara interrupted.

“Right! I guess you have the hang of that compass,” Lore smiled.

Lara nodded. “Ok, get me working!”

15 Sph's later...

The four robots finished giving Lara a tour of their workplace. In the main room, there were six desks, with a large screen at the front of the room. It showed live footage of the sky. On the adjacent wall to its right, there was an enormous white board, the kind that was in the classroom Lara had been in earlier.

There was a picture of a large table, divided into several columns, on the board.

Lara studied it carefully.

Name	Type	No. Men	Date	Location	Finished
Cyclops	Navy ship	309	March 1918	Barbados, West Indies	Yes
Flight 19	Plane	14	Dec 5, 1945	Fort Lauderdale, Florida	Yes
Revenoc	Sailboat	4	Jan 1958	Key West	Yes
Sno' Boy	Fishing boat	40	July 1963	Kingston, Jamaica	Yes
Flight 28	Plane	12	Sept 7, 1990	Fort Lauderdale, Florida	Yes
Dragonhead	Ship	47	Oct 1994	Barbados	Yes
Sun Viper	Plane	10	1999	Bermuda	Yes
Flight 13	Plane	15	2001	Key West	Yes
Sydney	Sailboat	3	Aug 4, 2002	Kingston, Jamaica	In Future
Sky Swan	Plane	16	Aug 5, 2002	Everglades, Florida	In Future

Dragonfly	Navy Ship	327	Aug 6, 2002	Bridgetown, Barbados	In Future
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Lara recognized a few of the names. This was a chart of some of the most famous disappearances of the Bermuda Triangle! Lara was shocked! What did the robots have to do with them?

What Lara did not know, was that the robots had EVERYTHING to do with the thousands of mysterious vanishings...

Lara was tapped on her shoulder. Ori stood beside her. "Are you ready to get started?" she asked. Lara said she was, then followed her out of the room and down the hallway she first entered. "Did your teacher tell you about the most famous robot?"

"Yes," Lara replied.

"Well, if you work where we work, then you are fortunate enough to meet him! The other three robots have met him, and I have too. I will take you to where you can go to meet him. Luhsish already told him you were coming. No other bots have ever met him, so this is quite an opportunity! After you talk momentarily, I will help you pick out a home. I'm sure you're exhausted!"

Lara nodded her head, and then patted her stomach. "Tired and hungry!"

Two Sph's later...

Lara stood in front of a normal looking door. Ori left her a moment ago. She told Lara to be prepared to go through a lot of security, and that she'd be back in about twenty sph's, which was approximately ten minutes.

She opened the door, and stepped inside. The next door required an eye scan, the following, her compass, and finally at the last door, was a doorbell. She pushed it, and then waited patiently.

">-VI?" a man's voice asked.

"Yes."

The door opened, and Lara went inside. A robot stood in front of her, holding onto a walking apparatus.

">-VI, my name is ~\/. I am very happy that we have a new member to our group. I heard you lost a severe portion of your memory."

Lara nodded.

"I'm sure you are eager to get started working and to learn what we do here, but I'm afraid we don't have time right now. I am very tired, and need to power up. Tomorrow I'll get you started, I look forward to working with you." Lara said goodbye to Orx, then met up with Ori.

"How do you feel?" she asked Lara.

"Honored," she replied, "to have met the most famous bot!"

Ori smiled and nodded her head. "Yes, we are very lucky. Come on now, let's go find you a home!"

Sixty Sph's later...

"So, you understand how to use this?" Ori asked Lara.

"Yes, thank you for showing me."

Ori said goodbye, then left. Lara had found a nice home that was about a ten minute walk to the pool. She planned to get one of those neat little vehicles that she saw the children

riding on earlier. Lara's home was located off of one of the main hallways. The robots 'homes' were the size of an average bedroom. Inside was a single bed, a small window looking out at the ocean, a washroom, a sphier, refrigerator, and a dresser that contained all light coloured shorts, and grey t-shirts.

Ori explained almost everything to Lara about her home because 'Lara couldn't remember.' First of all, robots do not marry, or have children, or fall in love. Therefore, they live alone, and have a single bed. Lucky for Lara the robots were human size, so she could fit in the bed.

Robots go to the bathroom, but not for the same reasons that humans do. However, their bodies do create waste. Ori told Lara that the 'sphier' was where she could power up. Each bot runs on a power supply. The sphier has a long tube that comes out the top of the cylinder. The bot puts the tube into a hole in their right side, and then fill themselves up. When they go to the bathroom, they are actually releasing un-used power. The power that is left over in them at the end of the day must be released from their bodies, because it becomes toxic to them.

Lara did not see any food in the fridge. Instead, there were several small boxes that contained a small, rectangular solid of some sort. She opened one up, and gave it a quick lick. It tasted like fresh peaches! Lara popped the rest of it into her mouth, and chewed it. It was fantastic!

She overturned the box and noticed some writing on the bottom. These solids were used for scrubbing the floor and walls of your home! They were made from a variety of animals that Lara had never heard of, as well as a variety of plants found in the ocean. They were full of protein and were great for getting the dirt off the floor,

according to the label. Lara shrugged her shoulders. Food was food! She opened another box and ate its contents. This time it tasted like strawberries.

After being up for over twenty four hours, Lara was quite exhausted. Her stomach was satisfied with the meal, but she was craving a drink. Lara squirted a few mouthfuls of water into her mouth from her water gun. It was a good thing that it had an enormous pack to put on your back, and several bottles on the gun. She had filled it up at the beach house before she left, so the water was still good. Lara removed the pack that goes on your back and placed it in the fridge, she preferred cool water. Lara hopped into her bed, and was soon fast asleep.

The next morning Lara woke up feeling great. She had lots of energy, and was eager to start her job. She changed into a fresh pair of shorts and a t-shirt from the dresser. She put on her backpack and made sure her sunglasses were inside. With one last glance at her room, Lara set off to work.

On her way to the pool, Lara noticed that quite a few robots had their compasses hanging around their necks from a chain. She stopped one of them and asked where she could get one.

“Two doors ahead on your right,” he answered. Lara thanked him, then opened the door. There was one robot in the small room who gave Lara a chain.

About thirty sph’s later Lara was back in the room where Orx, the famous bot worked. He smiled when she entered the room.

“Good morning >-VI,” he said. Lara said hello and then took a seat beside him. “I’m going to tell you everything now. Please listen carefully.”

Lara nodded, then clasped her hands in her lap.

“At first when the >ab+ was made, we weren’t focusing on anything important, besides creating all the necessities to live. After the quakes, and I washed up on the beach, things changed drastically. When I awoke, there were several other robots lying around me. Most of them were in serious condition, others were ok. The one’s who were able to function wandered off into the towns and cities. I knew we had to get help immediately, so I began to search for anyone who still had half a brain in their heads. Unfortunately, I asked a human.

“It was a big mistake on my part, because I thought maybe, just maybe we could trust the m. I was very wrong.

“There was a small group of adults who were about four sph’s away. I asked them for help and told them our situation. They had weapons. They killed all of the bots in sight. We were helpless! Luckily for me I was able to hide, and was unharmed.

“Using different parts from my body I created the compass, and later developed it further. I was able to communicate with the bots in the >ab+, and urged them to get started on making a way for me, and other robots to get back.

“For a very long time we were in despair. It took us awhile to get up on our feet again, but we did it. This is why the Bermuda Triangle came to exist. This was when I declared that we would destroy the whole human race! I was terrified that the adults would tell others about our existence, and we couldn’t risk them finding out. Also, I wanted my revenge for the bots they took from us.

“When robots first came into existence, we were located where we are today. ROBOTS made the triangle! To destroy the human race, we wanted to do it from the safety of our world.

“I developed a formula, green haze that could alter time. I sent a mechanical bird into the sky and poured the haze throughout the triangle, mostly in the exact center.

“When ships or planes traveled through the triangle, the green haze would alter their equipment, setting everything back sixty sph’s. This confused their instruments, compasses, and radios. When they were in the exact center, the haze would be so powerful, that their planes or ships would plunge into the ocean, into an underwater compartment that is accessible only from the >ab+. The compartment is under a lot of pressure, so it forces all of the water back out of it when we have captured another vehicle.

“Everyone who was aboard would drown. We kept records on the planes and ships who have passed into the triangle, and those who will be, in the future. Humans still don’t know why these ‘mysterious vanishings’ have happened, and they will never know.

“You see, only you, and the other four bots know about my plan to destroy the humans. I know it’s going to take forever to get rid of them this way, so I am developing green haze that will grow when exposed to air. When it is completed I will send the bird out again, and let the haze loose. Then, the humans will be destroyed within a few days! As you probably saw on our large table, there are still three more ‘vanishings’ to come. One in about five sph’s, and another tomorrow. The last one is September 7, where 327 men will die! What do you think >-VI?”

Lara was shocked! “I think it’s a great idea. I am with you one hundred percent,” she lied.

Orx grinned. “Excellent.”

About two minutes later, a loud alarm went off. It shrieked loudly, forcing Lara to cover her ears.

“WHAT’S HAPPENING?” she shouted.

“SYDNEY JUST DIED!” he cheered. A minute later the alarm was shut off, and Lara’s ears were left buzzing for quite awhile.

Orx called Lore using an intercom system, and told her to update the chart.

“>-VI, would you please come with me? I want to show you something,” Orx asked, with a grin on his face...

Lara ducked under a low beam, and continued to follow Orx. They were under his office, in a huge room. Lara found herself looking at a small sailboat.

“Your job,” Orx explained, “is to remove the dead bodies and put them in that large dumpster. >sp_h will tend to them later. Then, go through the boat and look for anything of value. When you’re finished, press that large red button on the wall and _\ will move it away. Ok?”

“Yes.”

“Good. See you later!” Orx left and Lara was now alone. She didn’t want to help him at all! In fact, she was already planning her attack...

Lara climbed onto the sailboat and opened the small cabin door. Three bodies lay on the ground, presumably a mother, father, and son. Quickly she pulled them out one at a time and into the large grey dumpster. Then, she got started on the search.

About half an hour later, she had searched the whole boat. There was nothing of value, but Lara found their logbook, and sat down to read it. She flipped to their last entry. It was from earlier today.

August 4, 2002:

It has been smooth sailing so far! The weather has been lovely, it only stormed once. We still have plenty of food, and our boat is in excellent condition. We started sailing from Kingston, Jamaica, and don't have a destination in mind.

About five minutes ago, our boat entered a green hazy area. At first we thought it was fog, but now we're not sure. My husband says that our compass is going haywire! We're not sure where we are, since our instruments aren't working properly! We can hardly see where we are going because of the haze. I sent a distress signal out five minutes ago, but no one has answered. My husband is having trouble steering the boat, and we are beginning to head into some rough waters. I don't think we are going to make it...

That's all that was written. Lara closed the book, and placed it back on the table where she had found it. At that moment, she decided to leave work early so she could plan her attacks. Lara pushed the red button, and left.

One hundred twenty sph's later, Lara had most of her plan worked out. She jotted her ideas down in her notebook, and drew up several different scenarios. In the middle of the night, Lara quickly walked back to the pool. She drank the remaining water in one of the bottles from her water gun, (she still had one bottle in the fridge) and then filled up all the bottles with the green water. She quickly sped back to her home, and locked the door behind her.

Everything that was needed for her attack lay on her bed. Lara placed her flamethrower in the bottom of her backpack. After changing into her own khaki shorts she strapped her holsters to her legs. Lara took out a clean t-shirt from the dresser, and ripped the sleeves from it, then put it on. Her night vision sunglasses rested atop of her head, and the compass dangled from her neck. She strapped her water gun pack overtop of her backpack, and attached the tube to the water gun. After Lara put her pistols into her holsters, she was ready to go. She would come back later for the rest of her things.

When Lara reached the pool, she took out the small box that contained her vehicle. She hopped in, then proceeded down the twisting tunnel...

As soon as she got through the security and into the main hallway, Lara put her sunglasses on, and turned on the night vision. At the end of the hallway she could see a light coming from the main workroom. She wasn't sure if anyone was around, so she lifted the compass and opened it. Lara had an excellent memory, and had no problem activating the map, and the function to show everyone in her area. The map showed Orx in his office, unmoving. In the main workroom, Lore and Flux were moving about. Lara would kill them first.

She crept quietly along the right side of the wall, and took out her right pistol, and held the water gun in her left. With a swift start up, Lara ran right for the room.

BANG! BANG! Lara fired a few shots at each robot. She hit Lore in the chest, and Flux in her right leg.

“What are you doing?!” Flux wailed.

“Just killing a few bots who are trying to destroy my world,” Lara answered. Both robots looked at Lara, stunned. She smiled at them, then put her pistol away. Suddenly,

Flux shot forward towards Lara! She quickly jumped over her, and squirted her back with water. Flux screamed, and charged again.

Lara back flipped onto a desk, and squirted her repeatedly with the water gun. She didn't seem too affected by it, so Lara grabbed her pistol again.

BANG! BANG, BANG! Flux fell to the ground. Lara turned to Lore.

“Why?” Lore whispered.

“You kill my people.” *BANG!* Lore fell to the ground as well. However, neither robot was dead. Lara bent down beside Flux and inserted the piston of her water gun into her hole in her side. She pulled the trigger, and a thin line of water was shot into the robot. Flux screamed bloody murder! Her body started to shake and soon began smoking. Lara did the same to Lore, and again screams filled the room.

She wasted no time getting to Orx's office. She rang the doorbell three times. It unlocked, and Lara quickly moved in. Orx sat at his desk, a pen in hand.

“My goodness, >-VI! What on earth are you dressed like that for?!”

Lara started at him, her arms hanging at her sides, slightly bent over her holsters. She held both pistols in her hands, her water gun sticking out of her backpack.

“You don't seem too pleased. What's wrong?” he asked.

Lara opened her compass and saw that Ore and Luhsish were approaching the main workroom. She had to destroy them before they had a chance to escape.

“I'll be back,” Lara said. As she ran back down the hallway, she put her pistols away, and took her water gun out again. She crept silently along the wall.

Suddenly, all of the lights shut off! Lara was instantly surrounded by darkness. She looked at her compass, and saw that Ore and Luhsish were in the main room. They had found the bodies.

Lara quickly turned on the night vision, and backtracked to where another hallway connected with the main one. She hid behind the corner and waited. Ori told Lara that after awhile, the power was toxic to the robots. It was too bad she didn't have any on hand. But, she did have a water gun with frozen pellets of water and green haze. After some time once the haze is mixed with water, it will form into hard pellets.

She looked at her compass. The two robots were leaving the room. Lara lay down on the floor, her head peering out around the corner. She looked like someone in the army who was waiting to attack whoever came into sight.

According to her compass, Luhsish was the closest. He was about twenty feet away, and was picking up pace.

Lara's eyes peered through her sunglasses. She could see a white figure, which was Luhsish. Ori wasn't far behind. Lara aimed the gun at Luhsish. She waited. Her hand didn't shake. As soon as he was ten feet away, Lara shot about five pellets into each of his eyes. He screamed, his hands instantly reaching for his eyes. Ori stopped. She looked around, afraid. She continued to walk forward, very slowly.

Lara aimed for her eyes, emptying more pellets from the gun. Ori fell to the floor, screaming in pain. Lara walked over to each robot and fired a few shots in their sides, to make sure they would never operate again. Now, there was only one bot left. She turned the corner, and headed to his office.

“Welcome back >-VI,” Orx said. Lara stared at him for a moment.

“They’re dead.”

“Who?”

“_√, >~, ~--, and >sph,” she replied. Orx’s eyes grew wide.

“How? What? Who-?”

“Me.”

“Why?!”

“They were killing people.”

“As they were supposed to be doing!” he answered back.

“They were killing humans, like me.”

“Orx’s mouth dropped open. “You’re a human?”

Lara nodded.

“Do you know what that means?” he asked.

“No.”

“I’m going to have to kill you.”

Lara laughed. “If only I had a flare for every time I heard that, then the world would no longer need a sun.”

Orx snarled at her. “Well, isn’t that too bad you won’t hear it again?”

She grinned. Lara loved an opponent with such high esteem. It was just too bad she had to wreck that.

“You smile in the face of death. Who do you think you are?” he asked in a snobbish tone.

“Lara Croft. Lara Croft the tomb raider, crusader, survivor, daredevil, the most feared champion, and the #1 robot destroyer.”

Orx laughed. “But you’re a girl.”

“With extraordinary skill and talent,” she finished.

“Alright then, *Lara Croft*. Let’s get this over with.” He yelled in fury as he bolted towards Lara. *BANG! B-B-BANG!* Lara fired several shots at him before forward jumping overtop of him, and doing a mid-air flip, landing perfectly on the floor behind him.

BANG! BANG!

“Argh!” he yelled. Orx turned around and faced Lara. As fast as lightning, a small section on the front of his body opened, and a small tube was partly ejected. *Puh, puh, puh*. Tiny amounts of green haze fired at Lara.

She quickly back flipped twice, then side rolled to the left. She sprinted forwards, jumped, and kicked Orx in the stomach. The tube was bent, and now faced the ground. He was *not* happy.

Lara grabbed her water gun, and began to pump the pellets at him. Orx dodged most of them, taking few hits. *BANG! BANG!* Lara was being shot at! She jumped up, flipped around, ducked low to the ground, and dodged the deadly bullets. As Lara was doing this, she was making her way over to Orx.

BANG! Lara dropped to the ground, missing the shot by miles. She kicked out quickly with her left leg, and tripped him. Orx fell to the ground with a *CRASH!* Without a moment of hesitation, Lara grabbed a pistol, and shot the lights out in the room. She welcomed the darkness, and so did her glasses. Orx got back to his feet.

“Well, isn’t this fun,” he said in a hoarse voice, “manhunt.”

“*Bothunt*,” Lara corrected him. Orx whirled around facing in the direction of Lara. She moved swiftly around the room.

BANG!

BANG, BANG!

BANG!

“Argh!”

BANG!

“Oof!”

Crunch.

“Oh no,” Lara said in a sarcastic tone, “did I just break your arm? I was hoping for your leg. Oh well, that can be fixed easily enough.” She grabbed his right leg, twisted it, then pulled it back until it touched his upper back.

“AHH!” Orx screamed in extreme pain. His wails filled the small room, echoing off the walls.

“What was that?” Lara asked. “Oh, you want your *other* leg done too, so it doesn’t feel left out? How selfish of me.”

CRACK!

“Oww! AHHH!”

“Aw yes, that did feel good on me too. Glad we could share this experience together. Give me your compass. *Now.*”

Orx was in excruciating pain. His good arm fumbled and shakily handed it to Lara. She grabbed it, opened it up, and nodding with satisfaction, placed it in her backpack.

As fast as Lara could go, she dragged Orx out of the room, and back into the small room where the exit back into the lab was. She took out his vehicle along with hers.

After they were ready to go, Lara tied them together with some rope that she kept in her backpack. She pushed Orx into his vehicle, and shut the top.

Before leaving, Lara had some more work to do. She took out her mini flamethrower and began to make outlines of every door. The metal began to melt from the scorching fire. A moment later the door was sealed off and no one could ever get back in. Lara ran back to her awaiting vehicle, then headed back to the lab...

"...That's why he *must* be destroyed. A few humans whose behavior was inappropriate represents the whole human race? I think not. I have destroyed the other members, and I am going to destroy the most 'famous bot' as well." Lara had organized all the bots into the main hallway where the green pool was situated. She was speaking in front of thousands of robots. Lara had explained everything to them. They were not impressed, especially since it had been going on for hundreds of years behind their backs. They were embarrassed too because they had no idea that this had been going on. To Lara's reassurance, they had no problem with her being a human, and were grateful for her help.

All of the robots were silent as Lara put her vehicle in her pocket, and held Orx upside down over the pool.

"Enjoy your swim," she whispered. Lara let him go, and he plunged down into the green haze, and then the water. His screams were swallowed up from the sounds of his body being destroyed by the water. Lara took her pistol and fired one shot into the top of his head before she lost sight of him. His glue was not bullet proof.

With help from the other bots, a circular sheet of metal was placed overtop of the pool. Lara used her flamethrower to seal it, then looked at the robots. An enormous sound

of applause surrounded her. Lara grinned, then made her way through the crowd to her home. She packed her shotgun, and emptied the boxes from her fridge.

“If you want >-VI,” >\IV, Lux, the nine year old robot whom Lara met when she first came to the lab, said, “I can get you a huge boxful of those.”

Lara smiled. “That would be great.” She finished packing and then swung her bag over her back. Lux handed Lara a small box.

“Just push the button on the top. It will unfold. I packed as many as I could stuff in there!”

Lara thanked him, and then headed back out into the hallway. “There’s just one more thing I have to do,” Lara said aloud. She took out Orx’s compass, opened it up, and pushed the only button inside.

“What is that for?” a Bot asked.

“His mechanical bird just sprayed the haze with water. It’s going to rain pellets soon. No one will be harmed again!”

“Wait!” the same Bot called out. “Are you leaving?”

Lara nodded. “My adventure is over now...I have to go find another!”

“No, stay just another day?”

Lara looked around. Everyone was nodding their heads. “Ok!”

August 7, 2002

After one more days stay, Lara was taken on several tours of the lab. She had a wonderful time, and was sorry she had to go. She was thrilled when they gave her a vehicle like the kids had! It didn’t fold up like most things, but that was just fine. When Lara was directly under the ladder to get into the sub, a robot called her name.

She looked down. "Please call me Lara!" They threw up a small box, and she caught it. Inside was an eye patch with the lasers that you could write with! It even had a multi-function option! She beamed, and then waved goodbye.

Lara smiled to herself as her plane flew into the Bermuda Triangle. She opened up her compass and when they were directly above the exact center, Lara looked down through her window, and started to laugh.

Different coloured beams shone brightly, dancing through the water. She waved from her window. Lara couldn't see them, but she knew they could see her. Lara knew they would never forget her, never forget Lara Croft, >-VI, the most famous name in robot history.

A New World – a new Life
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