

Preteen Raider II: Re/Visioned - Reanimated

An Original Tomb Raider Tale by Hunter Wolfe

“Care to join us? Miss Croft?” impended the cross voice of Headmistress Digginson.

Jolting upright at the cafeteria table, a young Lara opened her eyes wide and stared into the black pits that were the corneas of her Miss Digginson’s dark, cold eyes. Lara smiled, and then pulled her light, brown hair back behind her ears, tilting her head, and attempting to look as angelic as she possibly could. It almost hurt, staring into the black pits, waiting for Miss Digginson to proceed with the impending lecture on falling asleep during lunch hour.

She didn’t respond, so Lara began instead, holding her smile out as she spoke. “Headmistress Digginson, do understand. I was up fairly late last night, as it was a lunar eclipse, you see. I’m very tired, and would like to save you the disciplinary action of reprimanding me for falling asleep during school hours. So without further ado, Miss Digginson, I humbly apologize for my childish manner, and I can assure you it shan’t happen again.”

“I don’t believe it will, Miss Croft. I was actually going to inform you about how the Dagger of Xiteran mysteriously vanished from the academy safe last night. I suppose I can reprimand you for falling asleep, *and* the breaking and entering, though,” she chirped.

“I’m sorry?” Lara asked, playing along. “The Dagger was stolen? How horrible! What are you doing wasting time around here when some child could be using it to sharpen a pencil or...even worse...using it purely for its educational value!”

“No games, Miss Croft. I know you did it! I also know that there’s a bump in my, well, *you* know...because of that one, suspiciously-placed tack!” she said, glaring. “Anyhow, if you do not return the dagger by this evening at the stroke of seven, then your Father will be notified immediately, and following the academy handbook, I’ll have to expel you.” Miss Digginson turned with the accuracy of a drill sergeant, and proceeded down the cafeteria aisle, leaving Lara to an empty lunch tray, aside from a bottle of water she had sitting unopened in the center. It had indeed been a full moon the night before, which created the perfect nighttime setting for her little...escapade.

Lara sat upright in her seat, and evaluated the suspicious looks her friends conveyed from across the table. They detested Miss Digginson as much as any student at Croft Academy, but they didn't have the advantage of having a wealthy, aristocratic father to get them out of trouble. Finally, one of them decided to break the unwieldy silence after assuring themselves, that the Headmistress was not paying attention to their table.

"Lara!" one of her friends said, shocked. "You didn't!" It seemed to be more of a question than an answer.

"Why ever would I have stolen the Dagger?" Lara retorted airily, taking a sip from her water bottle.

"Uh...perhaps because you stole it before?" explained her other friend.

"Girls, girls. What sudden hostility! Of course it was *me* who stole the Dagger, but what proof does Headmistress Digginson have? She can't prove that I have done a lick of anything, because you see, girls, the trick to *borrowing* something, as I did last night, is to make sure you don't leave any traces of yourself behind. And I can assure you, there's not a *single* thing that I've left behind." Lara was convinced that she hadn't made a single error during her "heist". Sure the night guard had seen her, but he couldn't prove it. And the note Lara had left on the Headmistress's desk was written in her left hand, opposite from the one that Miss Digginson could compare any of her school papers with. She was quite fiery with the idea that she'd bypassed all of Miss Digginson's "high-detail" security.

"Well, you just need to be careful, Lara. I wouldn't put anything past Headmistress Digginson. Do you happen to recall the last girl who got caught breaking into the academy to retrieve the assignment she'd left that day? She got caught, and expelled because her boots matched the ones that left a mark at the scene of the crime!"

"Yeah, Lara. Miss Digginson has the eyes of a hawk. You'll be lucky if she doesn't find anything."

The afternoon bell coursed throughout the marble and stone halls of Croft Academy signaling that the lunch hour had ended, and it was time to sit in on their afternoon classes. Although she sat in each class, and was able to keep her eyes open, despite the fact that she was extremely tired, her attention was not on the professor or his board. His talk of algebraic functions and their respective properties actually bored Lara to the point that she would *not* pay attention, and instead, daze off with thoughts of the battle for the Dagger of Xiteran. She thought it much more invigorating to think of the dagger, rather than listen to a professor with a dull, monotone voice lecture for an entire hour.

After academy hours, the final bell rang, and Lara, heart-beating, was one of the first students to make it out of the building. Miss Digginson couldn't have busted her for running through the halls because she had simply been too fast! A limo awaited her in the roundabout circle in the courtyard, and Winston, her friendly butler, held open her door. The young Lara Croft was driven home that evening with thoughts of ancient crypts and their respective artifacts, completely in unawares that Miss Digginson was willing to do the impossible...the illegal...to assure that Miss Croft wouldn't be making a return visit to *her* establishment.

Miss Henrietta Digginson, Headmistress of Croft Academy, peered through the dark curtains of her lavish office inside the academy veranda. She watched as Lara's limousine pulled out of the grounds and onto the long road that stretched across the English highlands. She could relax now, knowing that the little English brat was gone and well out of sight. But the problem still persisted in egging at the back of her miniscule brain. She had absolutely *no* evidence proving that Lara stole the Dagger of Xiteran. Even the note was in an unidentifiable scrawl! But although the evidence screamed, "Not Guilty!", Miss Digginson knew that Lara Croft was behind it. It had to be her! It couldn't have been anybody else!

And so the plan began to formulate. There was only one vice left after pouring through the note a million times, and checking the security cameras...which had been inconveniently turned off.

She would have to frame Lara Croft. It was the only way to remove that stain-of-a-girl from her precious academy.

Miss Digginson spent the night pouring through ancient texts, manuals, books, scripts, scrolls, and random paraphernalia that lined the bookcases in her dreary office. Every so often, she found it necessary to stand and open the glass doors to the veranda balcony which overlooked the entirety of the school grounds. Grasping the cold, stone railing, which was only slightly warmer, compared to her cold, stone heart, she gazed off into the distance. The resplendent moon shined down on the turrets of Croft Academy casting various shadows. Long shadows. Short shadows. Arching shadows. The moonlight radiated through a blanket of clouds which shrouded the night sky. A cold breeze wafted through the crisp, evening air. Breathing in through her aged nostrils, Miss Digginson would then return inside and continue working on her plan to rid Croft Academy of Lara, for good.

As dawn approached, Miss Digginson had done it. Ensuring that everything in her documented plan was full-proof, she changed clothes, putting on something a bit more fashionable, and descended the grand staircase to the front doors of the academy. She swung the great doors open, bright warm light flooding the main hall. She almost enjoyed basking in the morning sunlight, which cascaded around the marble floor in a glorious array. The stained glass windows on the walls poured colorful rays onto the large stone columns that lined the hall. She *almost* enjoyed them.

Lara walked in with her two friends, as they usually did, talking of the latest English fashions, and sharing what jewelry they were wearing that day. Lara's friend commented on a loose strand of hair about Lara's face, and she laughed in retaliation, commenting on how she fancied the occasional loose strand of hair.

"It adds a bit of variety, you see. I think that tomorrow I'll..." Lara began, before being interrupted by the devil-woman with cold, scraggly hands. Miss Digginson clasped her hand tight around Lara's shoulder, intentionally inflicting a "small" amount of pressure, and pulled her aside. Her friends stared in fright as Lara was torn away from them, scurrying to their lockers with thoughts of what Lara had done *this* time.

Miss Digginson stood next to the night guard who had seen Lara the night she *borrowed* the Dagger of Xiteran. “Lara Croft, I’ve caught you this time. You are being assigned detention for the entire day until your Father returns from his trip this afternoon,” said Miss Digginson in glee.

“On what terms, Miss Digginson? I’ve already told you that *this* young English girl hasn’t stolen any dagger. Do tell me what evidence has sprouted up!” Lara practically shouted the last line in an argumentative tone.

“Foolish girl. I may not have gotten you for the theft of the dagger, but the Jeweled Tiara of Isis most definitely points back to you! And breaking into the academy to collect it...my, my... After this, no academy will want you, a delinquent! You accidentally left your locker opened last night when you broke into the academy and stole the tiara. And you know the locker I mean. The one with the lock picks that match the same ones broken inside the lock on the door to the academy undercroft. I’ve got you now, you conniving little brat!” she sped right through her accusation, having spent a large portion of the night rehearsing it in her head.

“I’ve done no such thing! How dare you accuse me of breaking into the school! And everyone around here knows that the Jeweled Tiara of Isis isn’t real,” Lara shot back, her face growing slightly red. Miss Digginson was trying to frame her!

“Aha! So you know *do* about the tiara! Even more evidence points to you, Miss Croft. Your Father will be here later this afternoon, so I suggest you come up with a reasonable alibi in detention, by then. Marion, take her to the detention room, and make sure she doesn’t come out until Lord Croft arrives,” said Miss Digginson, putting the final punch into her lecture.

“Yes, Headmistress Digginson. I will do my best to keep her in line. Come on, you...” said the night guard.

When they were out of earshot of Miss Digginson, Lara muttered, “Marion?” between a light, innocent chuckle.

“Hey...no laughing, now. My mother gave me that name! And...it may sound a bit on the girly side, but—”

“Just get me to the detention room...Marion.” Lara chuckled again. Then, an angered Marion gave Lara a little shove into the room, and slammed shut the door behind her. Lara, who’d fallen to the floor, picked herself up and brushed off her school uniform.

“That man needs more than *one* spot of tea,” Lara said to herself.

The detention room was actually a small room in the back of the library, where they kept most of the old books that had been outdated or unwanted. Old textbooks that had been replaced with newer editions sat in large stacks around a desk in the front of the room. Bookshelves with dusty, torn books lined the walls. One wall had a long, narrow window that spread from one corner to the next, but had faded blinds. A desk, with a rotten apple on it, sat in the front of the room, dictating the several rows of desks for “detentionees”.

“Ugh,” Lara grunted. “This is rubbish. There’s nothing even in this room I’d even *consider* reading. The books are either dusty or torn...what’s this?” Lara noticed a single book, sitting open on the front desk, right next to the apple which Lara swatted to the floor.

She paged through the one, un-dusty book meaning that somebody had been through it recently. It was about the Jeweled Tiara of Isis! *Miss Digginson is up to something*, Lara thought. *She obviously couldn’t have found any evidence relating me to the theft of the Dagger of Xiteran, so she set me up for breaking in to steal the Jeweled Tiara of Isis. It was an old artifact that had supposedly belonged to the Egyptian Goddess, Isis! She bestowed the one of many tiaras to a young maiden who wished for an inheritance to one day pass down to her daughter. When several attempts had been made to steal the jeweled tiara from the young maiden, she decided to hide the treasure away for her daughter to find one day. So she hopped aboard the first ship her eyes set upon, and ended up sailing across the sea to England. But the ride had resulted in her becoming deathly ill. She died a week after landing in England, and was*

buried by a friendly priest in the local undercroft which would, hundreds of years later, be bought by Lord Richard Croft, of Abbingdon. Although many tried to find the Jeweled Tiara of Isis, none were able to, and so Lord Croft, thinking the project a dead end, constructed Croft Academy atop the crypts to keep away the treasure hunters.

“But the tiara *can't* be real. If that priest had just put the tiara in her crypt, it would have been long gone hundreds of years ago. Anyways, it seems I'm going to get in trouble for stealing something that I didn't steal...unless...” Lara realized at this point that she'd begun speaking out loud. “If I could find the tiara, I could prove that I didn't steal it!” Lara exclaimed.

“Hey, you! No talking in there!” came Marion's voice through the door.

“Now to get rid of this big guy...” Lara murmured, putting one of her soft fingers on her chin.

Lara studied the room. The windows were too small to fit through, and she was on the third floor of the academy. Someone would be sure to notice a body falling from the sky. There was only one door in the room, and she wasn't getting out of that one. She looked up. The ceiling was composed of small square tiles, removable, that she'd fit right through. Grinning, Lara began stacking a number of books atop the teacher's desk in the front of the room, and climbed atop it. She pushed through a tile in the ceiling, and then she pulled herself into the crawlspace above.

“At least those old books were good for *something*,” Lara confessed.

She began crawling carefully, quietly around the crawlspace, heading out of the library, and into the maintenance hall. The academy undercroft, the site for many a treasure hunter, was accessible by a door faceted into the far wall of the maintenance hall. She'd have to pass above the library and locker room until she was above the maintenance hall. Each movement was swift, yet carefully placed. She was putting each hand and foot on the tile frames which kept them in place. She assumed the tiles wouldn't support her weight, so she decided to be extra careful.

After crawling for a good five minutes, she imagined she was out of the library and above the locker room. Stopping for a quick break, Lara shifted her foot at a bad angle. She startled herself with the loud sound of her foot hitting the side of the crawlspace wall, and in reaction, lost her footing. A loud snap thrummed through her ears as she fell through the tile beneath her and into the women's locker room, letting out an unpleasant scream.

Other screams met hers as she dropped to the floor, next to a row of pink lockers. Picking herself up, Lara looked around at the crowd of girls staring at her in fear, awe, and a variety of other confused emotions. Briefly, Lara tried to imagine what it must be like to have a girl fall through the ceiling in front of you while you're changing.

Disregarding the thought, she said to the girls, "Hello, ladies. Lovely day for a gym class, right?" Nobody responded. "Well then...continue doing what you were doing, I'm just going to go...oh, what was that Miss Digginson? Did you call for me?" Lara pretended to shout towards the locker room exit as if the Headmistress had been calling her. "Cheers, girls!" Lara dodged out of the locker room which emptied into the gymnasium where several groups of girls were playing a variety of sports. Leaving the gym, she entered the entrance hall, when Miss Digginson came into site!

Lara darted behind a pillar, breathing heavily. She could hear the clack of Miss Digginson's footsteps resound nearby. Lara looked around for a quick escape. Several teachers conversed by the entrance to the hallways, and the offices were not good to enter. The janitor, who always had headphones in, Jim, was his name, cleaned nearby. He had with him a tall cart of cleaning supplies, and a bin in which he put his brooms and mops. Timing the run behind Miss Digginson, Lara sprinted softly behind her and slipped into the bin on the Jim's cart. Moments later, the mop Jim had been using was thrown into the barrel, and was being pushed towards the maintenance hallway!

Jim, the lovely employee, had abandoned the cart back in the hallway, which had the solid, metal door to the academy undercroft on its far side. As soon as Jim left the hall, Lara vaulted out of the bin of supplies and approached the undercroft door. A shiny, silver padlock was secured onto the lock beneath the door handle.

“Miss Digginson was afraid I’d stop in for a visit,” Lara noted as she pulled a hairpin from her uniform pocket. She stuck it in the padlock and jiggled it around. “The first falsity of Miss Digginson’s story? I don’t need a lock pick to open a lock,” Lara said proudly to herself. She might have been young, but she already knew how to work around locked doors.

The padlock clicked, and then fell to the ground with a clatter. Satisfied, Lara opened the old, wooden door and shuffled down dilapidated, wooden steps into the Academy undercroft. The transition from prestigious halls to a creaking, wooden staircase was very drastic, and Lara felt as if she’d entered an entirely new world. She was greeted by several friendly spiders and their stringy cobwebs, and the ground cracked beneath her from centuries of mold and decay.

Finally, she reached the bottom of the stairs, swatting the cobwebs away from her face. It was pitch black in the undercroft, and Lara knew she would have to find some lights. “If Father was working down here, he would have had some sort of power supply. A switch perhaps? Aha!” Lara found a circuit box on the wall. Praising some higher power, she fumbled around with the controls until bright lights flickered to life emanating a deep thrum. The sound echoed around the chamber, and then dissipated as the lights grew to their maximum brightness.

The lights illuminated a long, stone, medieval corridor. Hollows in the wall contained rustic coffins, some intact, and some shattered, revealing the long, dead remains of aged corpses. The hall was nearly twenty feet high, where the lights were suspended from. “Lovely!” Lara shouted, her voice continuing down the hall in an echo.

She explored the hall, proceeding towards the arched corridor exit as her fingers traced the stone blocks set into the wall. The end of the hall emptied into a large, square chamber, filled with broken, wooden platforms and, more noticeably, a giant, circular, stone pillar that reached high to the ceiling.

“This must be the main burial chamber! It’s absolutely gorgeous! Wow, what a life it must be to hunt these places down for a living,” said Lara, gazing in wonderment

around the elaborate chamber. The circular stretched high to the top of the catacomb, and Lara knew that it was the only possible location of the maiden's coffin.

"Someone must have been trying to reach the top," Lara said, noticing that the wooden platforms were erected so as one could reach the top of the pillar. "Well, I might as well try, although many have done so before me. But who knows what I might find up there? And Miss Digginson will frame me, otherwise. It's worth a shot." Lara approached a low platform in the corner of a room, stepping over a skeleton that had rolled from a broken casket.

She traversed each platform, using years of acrobatic practice to jump from one to the next. She was immediately reminded of the lasers she faced when stealing the Dagger of Xiteran. "Much higher up, but not quite as deadly," she said.

As she climbed higher, she noted a giant statue carved into the face of the back wall, but its view had been covered by the pillar when Lara stood in the room's entrance. She took a moment to study its features, and after observing the female representation, and noting the tiara adorned atop her head, Lara came to the conclusion that it had been carved into the figure of the fair maiden.

"That must have been one friendly priest, to have carved her image into the wall of a crypt. But from what I know, people did crazy things in crypts those days. Whoa!" Lara shouted as the platform gave a threatening jolt. Taken off her guard, she lost her balance, but quickly regained it, and frantically, she jumped to the next, higher platform. The one behind her collapsed from years of pressure and decay to the cold, stone ground.

"Must move fast!" she decided in quick, hasty breaths. She vaulted the last few high platforms, which each gave way beneath her feet as she hurried to make it to the pillar. Finally, a jump. The gap was wide between her and the pillar ledge. The platform was snapping, and the wooden support beams shattered in loud cracks that echoed around the ancient tomb. "No turning back now!" Lara ran forward, jumped, and threw her arms out, catching many cobwebs, dust rising from the ground, and more

importantly, the ledge. She pulled herself up, able to see the last wooden platform crash to the ground.

“I take back my statement about the lasers,” she jested, pulling her hair back behind her head. She turned her attention to the coffin behind her, a white tomb built into top of the pillar. A lever was built next to it. Tracing her fingers along the surface of the white tomb, she made the tough decision of whether or not she wanted to open it, and defile an innocent woman’s resting place. The last thing she wanted was trouble from the *other* side.

She assured herself that she had come too far *not* to look inside, and in response, pushed the lid of the tomb off to the side, revealing not just another skeleton, but the a skeleton with skin, still on top. Her hair was still lush, long, and brown. Her eyes were closed. Lara was almost surprised that the Tiara of Isis wasn’t sitting atop her head. But a hand was missing to the corpse, laid to the side, four fingers curled, and one ossified pointer finger directing Lara’s attention out of the tomb, and towards the giant statue of the maiden. From her height, she was eye to eye with the face of the maiden, which was a good ten feet away, spaced by the drop off to the floor. Lara’s gaze met the stone tiara at the peak of the statue, which glinted faintly in the synthetic light that flowed around the chamber.

“That must be it! The priest hadn’t put the tiara in the tomb, but instead, on the head of the statue! Nobody would have ever guessed! But how to get it? This will be just *peachy*...I suppose another jump is called for. Let’s hope I don’t miss!” Lara exclaimed as she ran towards the edge of the platform, leaping across the gap, and grasping the left ear of the statue, which was about as big as her head.

She scrambled to secure her footing, and then climbed up a step higher, putting her foot on the rise of the maiden’s cheek, and reaching up to the tiara, which lay disguised atop the stone head. Years of dust had gathered on it, making it almost impossible to see from a distance, but Lara was able to grab it, the Jeweled Tiara of Isis in all of its glory, and take a backwards jump back to the high, circular pillar, her face

beaming with the excitement of her glorious discovery. She could hear the press now, and her father's voice, praising her on doing what many an archaeologist could not.

Landing on the pillar again, she relished in her pride while pulling the lever down. The pillar sprung to life, and then began to descend towards the ground level. As it descended, Lara examined the emeralds encrusted into the base of the tiara, and the ruby faceted into its front, right next to a string of sapphires that glimmered in the light.

The pillar stopped right at the bottom, and Lara was shocked as Miss Henrietta Digginson and Marion the Bodyguard appeared in front of her.

"BOO!" shrieked Marion.

Lara, frightened, dropped the tiara into the coffin. It was frightening, his scare, but the look of accomplishment on Miss Digginson's face was even worse.

"Surprised, Miss Croft?" came Miss Digginson's critical voice.

"You!" replied Lara, still in shock.

"Of course, me! Who else? Consider yourself permanently expelled from Croft Academy." She chuckled, her wrinkled face morphing into an attempted smile.

"This was your plan all along, wasn't it? You told me that my Father was coming, even though he wasn't, so I would break into the undercroft, and you would have something to bust me for. In the end, you *did* frame me! It wasn't a very original plan, but I must credit you for the thought put into it," Lara joked, chuckling herself. "You must've spent the entire evening making preparations, you fiend, Miss Digginson."

They were not staring at her any longer. A bright flash behind Lara caused all three to jump in terror. Lara twisted around to see the maiden standing in her coffin in black robes lined in pure, glimmering gold. It was the maiden, back from the dead! *And she was wearing Isis's tiara!*

"What's going on?" shouted Marion, his puffy moustache going berserk on his upper lip.

“Mortals with questions...how original,” said the Maiden. “This tiara is from Isis, the god queen, bestowed upon my humbled self. It carries the power of reanimation to its holder.”

“Reanimation?” questioned Miss Digginson; her black eyes were alight in puzzlement.

“The ability to bring someone back to life, Miss Digginson. As headmistress of a school built atop an ancient crypt, you could have done better research,” answered Lara cockily.

“Very good mortal child! I am Dejeserit Digginson, wielder of the Jeweled Tiara of Isis, and you are in my favor. Perhaps your intellect will aid me in returning to the surface. I’ve been inside this crypt for far too many centuries.”

“Hold on. Did you see say Digginson?” asked the Headmistress.

“Yes I did? Do you oppose my last name?” raised Dejeserit’s voice.

“Why...why no! Of course not, your um...grace,” she stammered. “It’s just that my name is also Digginson. My family has been around this country for centuries, tracing back several hundred years. We are a very famous family, the Digginson’s.”

“You must be joking. This is your ancestor?” asked Lara throwing a finger at Dejeserit.

“I know of no other Digginson’s,” retorted the Headmistress cockily.

“The apple obviously doesn’t fall far from the tree,” muttered Lara. Miss Digginson glared at Lara, and Dejeserit turned to face the exit of the rustic chamber.

“Well, it is time to surface and spread my reign across the kingdoms of which you call, England. Shall you be my escort—” began the maiden.

“What did you say?” Lara interjected.

“Well it has been thousands of years since the great kings and queens of Egypt. I will raise an empire that bests all the others. You three shall be my accompaniments. How does that sound?” she asked Lara, gracefully pointing to the surface with a swift motion of her robed arm.

“For your information, there haven’t been any monarchies like that since your day in age. We can’t allow you to *leave* this place, if your intentions aren’t good.” Lara already saw that she was turning on Dejeserit’s bad side.

“What did you say, you foolish girl?” hissed Dejeserit, her eyes turning solid black and a mysterious wind forming around the chamber, blowing her robes in multiple directions.

“You each keep calling me foolish, when you yourselves have forgotten about that thing behind you,” commented Lara casually, trying to persuade the maiden to turn away.

“What are you talking about? What thing?” interrogated Dejeserit.

She turned momentarily, and Lara reached for the tiara atop her lush, brown hair, but sudden footsteps caused Dejeserit to snap around again. Marion was trying to escape the chamber, running as fast as his little feet could carry him.

“Traitors! All of you! Die where you stand!” screamed Dejeserit. The wind grew hard now, and clouds of dust formed around them. Dejeserit shot a bolt of green out towards Marion who fled for the undercroft hallway. It caught in square in the back. He howled in anguish, and collapsed to the ground, paralyzed. His moustache stopped blowing around.

The next bolt was directed at Lara, who had already bolted away, behind the pillar. The bolt of green crashed into the central pillar, and stone ejected from the side of the structure, creating a major explosion of shards.

Miss Digginson appeared behind her. The headmistress. Not the ancient deity trying to murder them all. “What do...do...we d...do?” stuttered Miss Digginson, who hid

behind Lara as if she were some protective shield. Dejeserit was momentarily disoriented from the dust clouds.

“I have a plan. I want you to flee for the exit, and when you do, I’ll sneak up behind her, and I’ll snag the tiara.”

“Why would I allow *myself* to be put in harm’s way, when you were the one to drop the tiara in the first place?” retorted Miss Digginson.

“I wouldn’t have dropped it, if you wouldn’t have scared me.”

“I wouldn’t have scared you if you hadn’t stolen the dagger!”

“Touché,” finished Lara.

A blast of green sent more shards flying around. “Now...” whispered Miss Digginson, so soft, Lara wasn’t even sure she had said it. But she crept around the corner to Dejeserit.

“Come here little grand-daughter!” taunted Dejeserit. “Aha, there you are!” Miss Digginson ran as fast as she could in her skirt and high heels. The bolt of green caught her straight on the back sending her soaring an extra five feet. She collapsed on top of Marion.

Lara took that moment to sneak up behind Dejeserit and rip the tiara from her scalp. Green, malevolent rays shot from Dejeserit Digginson’s eyes that beamed through the air, crashing into coffins, stone blocks, and several sleeping skeletons. She screamed a shrill call through the air which split the wind, vanishing at the defeat of its creator. Dejeserit fell to the ground, the Jeweled Tiara of Isis now removed, and this time, instead of keeping her skin, she completely vanished in a wisp of smoke and ash that carried lingered the room with the last bit of diminishing wind.

“Done,” stated Lara.

Miss Digginson and Marion both scrambled off of each other, Marion cursing himself for always having people land on top of him, and Lara approached to two.

“Now Miss Digginson, I do hope *you* learned something at school today. First, never, ever try to frame a student for something they did not do, or trick them into doing so. Number two; never apply for headmistress of a school built atop a crypt if you cannot handle what lies underneath. And finally, I bring you to your third lesson, which is never, ever, *ever* reanimate one of *your* ancestors. It just causes problems,” listed Lara waving a finger in Miss Digginson’s awestruck face. Miss Digginson took no initiative to criticize.

“I suppose I can let...let this all slip. If you promise me you will not tell your Father about any of it. I’d hate for him to hear about this little...excursion.”

Lara thought for a moment, swinging the tiara around her hand, and then said, “Deal.”

As they left the undercroft of Croft Academy, Miss Digginson picked up the padlock to the undercroft door as Marion continued on his way, hoping that he would soon wake up to find it had all been a dream, and she said to Lara, as the lock clicked into place, “I don’t understand you, Miss Croft. After all this, and you are willing to keep the amazing discovery of a jeweled tiara secret for the sake of being punished, when you could become *famous* for the find; and yet you have decided to keep this to yourself?”

“I’m a concise girl, Miss Digginson. I like to get to the punch. Explaining things would take *much* too long, so I don’t actually mind keeping this between us. Yet I still get the tiara. Oh...rubbish. *What can I say, I like pretty things.*”