



# Act V Scene S

Lara walked the little girl out to the clearing. It was where they had first met.

It was turning into winter now, and the prevailing winds sneaked their way into the gaps in Lara's clothing, wrapping her entire body up in the winter chill. Lara shivered. She wanted to say something about the weather, but, taking note of the situation, decided against it.

Trees, stripped of their garments, wallowed and wept in the breeze. The branches, naked and flimsy, were more exposed to the elements than they had ever been before. And the leaves underfoot offered little resistance to the stomping of their hiking boots, and the satisfying crunch of the autumn leaves was long gone. Mother Nature was in hibernation, and it was as if the whole world knew.

The girl pointed the tree out to Lara.

"This one," she uttered, economical with her words.

Lara nodded. She recognised the familiar kinks and knots of the tree roots, and the sturdy frame of the tree trunk. It was... a good tree. If ever there were one. Peaceful. Lumbering. Sturdy. Something that had marked the soil for thousands of years before her and would continue to do so for thousands of years after. A fitting bridge to the past.

Lara smiled warmly at the girl and motioned for her to approach the tree. The girl laid her wreath down and murmured a few final words. Then she glanced up to say a quick expression of thanks to the stoic medic that had worked tirelessly to bring her back from the brink.

But Lara was already gone.

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Lara landed heavily on the musty floor of the museum archive room. Not long after, Attila landed right on top of her.

"Ow!"

Attila laughed, partly out of schadenfreude, partly out of relief that it wasn't his ungrateful hip clattering onto the floor. Besides, it was good to see her again.

They picked themselves up and surveyed their surroundings. Not much had changed. Lara stooped over to pick up the Cube once more. It was nearly perfect. Nearly complete. All faces, gleaming in their former glory. Except one.

Lara turned the Cube over and inspected the faded baby blue stickers on the final face. She glanced at Attila, and he nodded.

She pushed down, hard, on the blue face, and they went away once more.



## Fall of Grace



← Left  
→ Right  
↑ Rotate  
↓ Drop

Next:



