



# Act I Scene 1

A spurt of red mist permeated the confined space, like blood in a pond of serenity. Caught off-guard, Attila momentarily averted his gaze and ducked his head to avoid the brunt of the assault.

“—solved.”

And while her words echoed around the cluttered chamber, reverberating from one cracked brick to the next, Lara, who had been standing right there just moments ago, was gone.

Attila rubbed his eyes in confusion.

“What the?”

He spun around, remaining vigilant of any unseen threats. He took a step in each direction, peering above and below and everywhere in between.

Observing nothing out of the ordinary, Attila returned to ground zero, and, dropping his cane, kneeled to examine the seemingly innocuous Cube once more. He gingerly lowered his head to the floor, right ear to the ground, as if looking for some tangible essence of Lara’s form inside of the Cube’s mysterious inner workings.

There was none.

Attila, now dumbfounded, frustrated, and keen to dismiss the tenets of rigour and reason that had come to his aid on instinct, moved to reach for the Cube.

“Hm,” he pondered aloud, “it must have been something that she s—”

And just like that, he too vanished into the aether.

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“Attila.”

“Attila!”

Attila stirred.

“Attila! Are you all right?”

A familiar voice. A familiar tone, even. The gears that churned away at the back of Attila’s mind locked into place, and, in an instant, he registered the voice to be that of Lara.

“Lara?” mumbled Attila groggily, his voice seemingly incapable of keeping pace with the raging torrent of thoughts and questions and ideas that had burst forth from the deepest chasms of his brain.



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“Yes. Hi. Hello.”

She seemed flustered, but Attila put it down to her youthful energy.

“How long was I out for? Where are we? What’s going on?”

Lara shot a furtive glance at the empty space behind Attila before re-engaging with the conversation.

“As much as I would like to give you the low-down...”

As if on cue, a distant howl emanated from the darkness.

“... I’m afraid we have ourselves a situation here.”

Attila paused, taking the time to immerse himself in his surroundings.

Darkness. Murky and menacing. Save for the slivers of moonlight that made their way down to him and illuminated his surroundings. Attila sniffled. He did not know whether it was out of fear or an intense sense of distrust for this place. In all probability, both.

Something was in the air. It was all too mouldy and earthy and piney and, quite frankly, unlike anything that he had smelled before. It left an unnerving taste in his mouth.

Attila gulped.

“And I don’t suppose you have a plan?”

Lara pondered the question. It was a valid question, and she pursed her lips trying to propose an equally valid answer.

A worryingly loud warning growl disrupted her brainstorm. In an anxious haste, her eyes followed the well-trodden path into the unknown.

“Okay, this might be a bit left field, but why don’t we just, y’know, run away?”

Attila coughed, and, as if to punctuate some point, leaned harder on his cane.

“Oh.”

“And any idea that doesn’t involve me being left behind?” Attila remarked, sardonically. For a man burdened physically by his age, his was surprisingly agile in his replies.

“Well—”

Lara never got the chance to finish her thought, as a two-hundred-kilogram beast of dense muscle, sinew, and bone came barrelling down the path towards the pair.

Fur matted with blood and stitched chaotically between pieces of what looked like human flesh. Sweat and blood and God-knows-what dripped down its hunched figure. And red. Red eyes,



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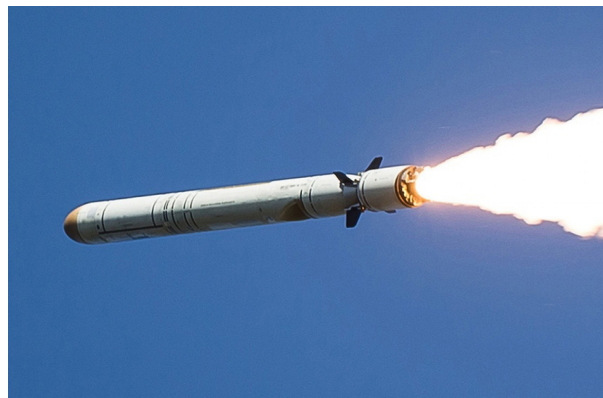
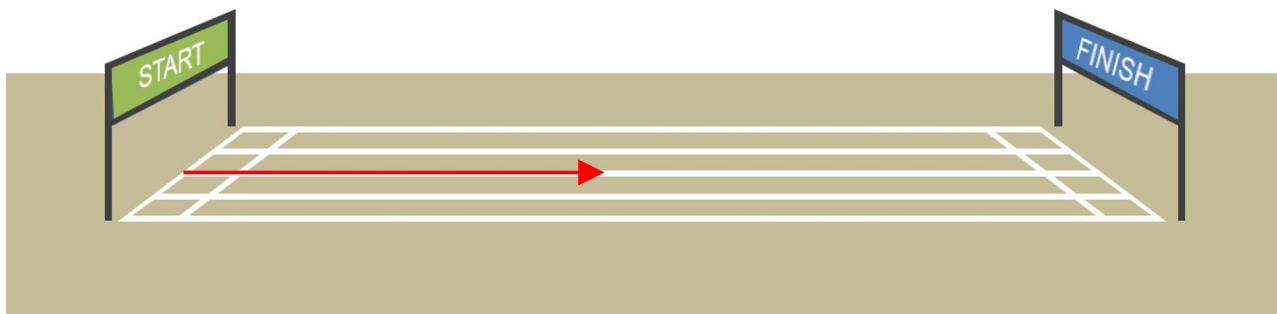
gleaming and crazed and bloodthirsty, constantly in search of prey. It truly was a terror to behold.

And as the beast drew nearer, Lara could just make out a diagonal gash down its torso, from shoulder to hip, bleeding profusely and impeding its moment.

Seeing the frail old man standing behind her, Lara sighed and, accepting her moral duty, braced for impact.



## Story of a Corsair



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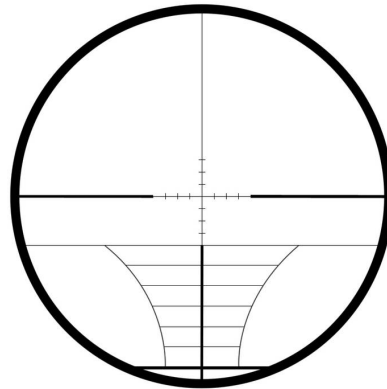




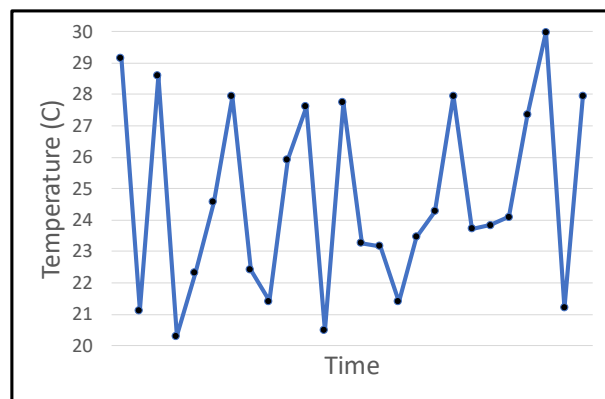
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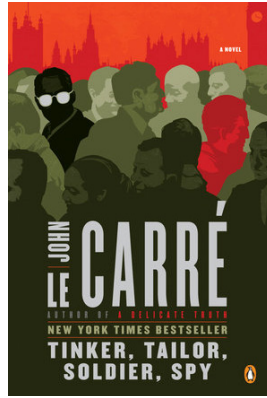
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# Act I Scene 1



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