

SYNOPSIS\_V2

by @tombraiderdark

# NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Centuries ago, in the darkest age of European history, dread alchemist PIETER VAN ECKHARDT once forged an alchemical conduit known as the BLOOD SIGN, intended as a tool to aid him in resurrecting a lineage of fallen angels known as the NEPHILIM.

In the year 2002, Eckhardt was on the cusp of resuscitating such a remnant, known as the SLEEPER, until his subjugation at the hands of the indomitable LARA CROFT and her companion - a LUX VERITATIS neonate by the name of KURTIS TRENT, who seemingly went missing in the hours leading up to Eckhardt's defeat.

Months later, following Lara's redemption in the eyes of the French authorities, she finds herself back on a familiar trail as more grisly murders – like the one that took her friend and mentor WERNER VON CROY away from her, and forced her on this sinister path to begin with - are being reported in the Bavarian Alps of Germany.

Suspecting that the CABAL may still be at large without their depraved master Eckhardt, Lara sets off to investigate, and to her surprise, the sentient CHIRUGAI – an heirloom of Kurtis' lineage, and the last Lara saw of him since his disappearance – responds to her conviction.

She ends up in the only place where she can imagine finding him, deep within the crypts of the bomb-ravaged SCHLOSS KRIEGLER on the German-Austrian border.

Lara will have to go far beyond, however, in order to stop THE DARK RENAISSANCE…

# NARRATIVE OUTLINE *(inventory items in bold, enemies in italic)*

* THE FIRST FMV begins with a flashback to Lara’s near-death experience in Egypt, which then coalesces into a surreal vision of Putai speaking to Lara and giving her the **AMULET** - after which, we find Lara waking up in the Schönbrunn Palace gardens, in Vienna. She came to visit Werner’s grave at the Wiener Zentralfriedhof, last night, but stopped in the Schönbrunn Palace gardens on her way back, where she fell asleep on a bench inside the hedge maze. When she comes to, Lara is rather disoriented - seeming almost distressed in the dark, until she checks her back pocket for the **AMULET**. Satisfied knowing it’s still there, Lara then gets to her feet, squares her shoulders and quickly leaves. Fade out OR cut to gameplay.
* Subject to feasibility, there could be a TUTORIAL LEVEL in the vein of “Parisian Backstreets” here, set inside and around the Palmenhaus Schönbrunn greenhouse. Mechanically, this would serve as a linear environment to get the player used to Lara’s repertoire of (old) new moves, while setting up the narrative through exposition from Lara, in-between her explaining how to maneuver her, classic-style. She would make reference to visiting Werner’s grave - or we just could show this via newspaper headline in the preceding introductory FMV, as previously suggested. Either way...
* THE SECOND FMV shows Lara returning to her hotel, Der Alte Schwede, early in the morning. Still tense from her dream, she decides to have a shower, and turns on the TV for company. A news reporter is shown talking about recent murders - similar in brutality to the Monstrum killings - that have occurred in the Bavarian Alps, close to the German-Austrian border. This catches Lara’s attention, and she listens to the report closely, turning up the volume before she gets in the shower. We get to see the report for ourselves while Lara is gone - over the hum of the shower, the news reporter explains the circumstances of these murders, as well as their aforementioned familiarity. When Lara comes out of the bathroom for a clean change of clothes, her eyes have narrowed - we follow her gaze over to the **CHIRUGAI**, which has slipped out of her backpack on the bed, and is vibrating with restless energy, as if it were appealing to her interest in these new murders. Fade out.
* THE THIRD FMV begins with an establishing shot of a small clearing, the overcast sky yawning grey above it. We are now in Germany, near the so-called MOUNTAIN OF THE MARTYR deep in the Bavarian Alps. Lara appears from the side, bursting through some thick undergrowth in her usual raiding gear. She’s at the crest of a forested hill among many rivers and valleys, and is now catching her breath after a long climb up the side of a dirt road, where she purposefully left her rental car in a ditch. Looking over the horizon, she sees the romanesque spires of Schloss Kriegler in the distance - her ultimate goal - and sets off in a light jog across the clearing, as rain begins to fall. Cut to gameplay.
* Essentially, this level will be about about getting from point A to point B. Whether or not there was a preceding tutorial level, MOUNTAIN OF THE MARTYR will begin with a platforming gauntlet as Lara crosses the first of a couple of rushing rivers (among other natural obstacles like, crumbling cliff sides with deep fissures, flooded maze-like caves, etc.) that stand between her and Schloss Kriegler. After this segment, the level opens up, and Lara finds ruins dotted about the landscape, reached via further platforming, as well as meet some of the *LOCAL WILDLIFE* on her way - these first few encounters would serve as a reintroduction to combat. Each ruin will, in turn, feature a light puzzle element, getting the player used to common gameplay mechanics like timed runs (ex. lowering a bridge via pulley, using a pushable for leverage), item collection (ex. finding a **RUSTY KEY** for a locked gate, to pass through a ruin rather than around it) and manipulating the environment (ex. finding and lighting a **TORCH**, to burn down a wooden obstacle), which will become part of the gameplay loop thereafter, much like platforming was demonstrated in isolation at first and is now part of the level naturally. Each ruin also has a switch (or a series of switches, i.e. “Palace Midas” in TR1) which seemingly does nothing when it’s pulled.
* In THE FOURTH FMV, Lara encounters her first human adversary as she gets ever closer to Schloss Kriegler itself - a tall, bald man (*LUTHER* *ROUZIC*, unbeknownst to Lara) still tending to one of the many abandoned fortifications littering its vicinity. She interrogates the man at gunpoint, who seems to recognise Lara by reputation, making reference to the Cabal - and even Eckhardt himself. Lara attempts to execute him as soon as it becomes clear that he won’t cooperate - but he disappears in a thick cloud of black smoke as she pulls the trigger. In his wake, a pack of *LUPINE APPARITIONS*, seemingly made of the same black smoke, burst out of the surrounding woods. Lara gets out her other pistol and prepares to fight. Cut to gameplay.
* This encounter will take place in the final ruin Lara visits. After she defeats the unknown man’s illusions, she discovers that this particular ruin, for its proximity to the castle itself, is being used as a sort of guardhouse. Inside, she finds empty cages (no doubt explaining the presence of certain animals throughout the level, see NARRATIVE ISSUES below) as well as a “guide” (perhaps a riddle) to which order the switches, that she has been discovering, need to be thrown in, in order to open up the path to the cavernous sewer system underneath Schloss Kriegler - some tunnels of which run concurrent to THE PIT, which is how Lara will enter the castle and theoretically begin her ascent upwards. Using the document she finds, then, Lara backtracks to each previous ruin and throws each of its switches in the proper sequence, in order to gain access there. On her way to and fro, however, the paths she has to take are a bit different from how she got there, and the unknown man is still interfering from the shadows, even warping parts of the environment to hinder Lara’s progress, though she manages to get inside the castle anyway.
* The brickwork at the mouth of the sewer opening quickly gives way to smooth stone as Lara enters THE PIT through its bottom level - crawling through winding caves at an upward slant, until she comes out at an alcove in the side of a vast cavern. In the distance, she can see a central tower, with bridges connecting it to a number of structures (watchtowers) set into each of the cavern’s sides. Deciding to find a way into the one closest to her, she continues through the series of tunnels, realising that she’s inside some kind of vent, as a rotten stench begins wafting from ahead of her. When she comes out of it, Lara finds herself at the bottom of a vertical tunnel - being used as a mass grave, with noxious gases spewing from fissures in the rock walls, and bodies at various stages of decomposition piled everywhere. She races to climb out of there before she chokes, finding the footholds she needs to get up to the top of the vertical tunnel, where cracks in its ceiling reveal a chamber above. Climbing out, Lara finds herself now in a prison cell at the lowest level of the western watchtower. Her goal at this stage is to reach the eastern watchtower -

# NARRATIVE ISSUES

* Germany barely has any wild predators - which animals would make up the *LOCAL WILDLIFE* that Lara encounters in the MOUNTAIN OF THE MARTYR level? Wolves are said to have migrated from Poland in the late 90s, but we would then have to place Schloss Kriegler near the Czech-German border, as opposed to the German-Austrian border, for realism. Depending on if we’d like to go forward with the Schönbrunn Palace TUTORIAL LEVEL, it might feel less natural to relocate the castle there - eastern Bavaria, rather than the Bavarian Alps - but then again, is realism really an issue at all, if we can just say “the Cabal did it?”

# AUTHOR COMMENTS