

# A Letter to Lara Croft

written by Guest Contributor | September 29, 2017



Dear Lara,

First of all, you should know you were my first video game girlfriend. Princess Peach? Just a kindergarten crush. Samus Aran? She always frightened me a bit, like she might break my wrist if I tried to hold her hand. You, however, were the perfect marriage of sultry and strong, of feminine and tough, of calm and dangerous. A thorny English Rose. Sure, you were a tad weird looking in the beginning, but so was I. A lot of attractive people hit an awkward phase growing up.

Our first few years together, when we were “going steady,” were magical—both figuratively and literally. We raided many a tomb as we explored the caves of Peru, the Great Wall of China, a sunken ocean liner, and even Area 51. What I loved most about you back then was our shared love of the supernatural. You had no qualms about introducing me to all the centaurs, mummies, giant spiders, yeti, and mutants in your life. Hell, you even knew a T-rex!

In those days, Lara, you may not have been the most rational person I knew, but you weren’t afraid to be silly or strange. You were a dreamer.

I’m hesitant to say I was controlling you in those days, but let’s face it—I was. I apologize for all the times I hurt you, all the times I told you that a particular ledge was within reach or that you could definitely dash safely past those spinning blades. I might have mistreated you here and there, but you were frustrating in your own ways. Whatever came our way, though, we always seemed to make it work.

I’ll always cherish those years—our first adventures together. Nobody can take those away from us.

But as in every relationship, the honeymoon period eventually ends. I think you saw it coming before I did. You changed, started going through that “dark phase.” I don’t blame you. Not really. That was the current trend: being darker, grittier, edgier. You wanted more people to take notice of you and to take you seriously. I get it. That’s part of growing up.

In those days, we never completely broke up, though we never did spend more than a few days together—and those times were almost always around other friends. When we did carve out any alone time, I’d get distracted. There were

so many other people in my life by then, all vying for my attention: Solid Snake, Kratos, Master Chief, Commander Shepard... To be fair, you didn't seem invested in our expeditions either. We just didn't click like we used to. You were doing your own thing, I mine.

I did catch a glimpse of you several years ago at a Blockbuster. (Remember those?) I thought about approaching you, of scooping you up in my arms and reliving the good old days. Alas, I didn't. Instead I spent the weekend in Silent Hill or Liberty City, I think. I don't really remember. A few years ago, I heard from people who had spotted you online. They said that you were doing pretty well, that you were your old self again, but... I don't know... I just wasn't ready to see you again. Not yet. Our last few bitter times together were too fresh in my memory.

Then two years ago, all I heard was people saying how you had reinvented yourself. You were an all-new Lara Croft. I thought, "Good for her," and I meant it. Still... I wasn't ready to reacquaint myself with this all-new Lara. I was worried I wouldn't recognize you. That you wouldn't recognize me. That you'd laugh at the thirty-three year old trying to be a teenager again, like that guy at a party who wears a cap to cover his bald spot and a faded Smashing Pumpkins t-shirt that's a little too tight.

Then, last year, there you were in my living room. I couldn't send you away. I must say, age has treated you quite kindly. While I've gotten older, you look somehow younger. You're as powerful as ever, some would say more so, but now you're much more realistic, grounded, vulnerable... Yet, you're also even more of a super-powered badass. So I let you leap back into my life, guns ablazing.

That week last year with you was a whirlwind, Lara. But whirlwinds can leave a mess in their wake.

Don't get me wrong. It was thrilling. You made my pulse race more than our last few quests ever did. I'm sad to say, though, you don't challenge me like you used to. Is it because I have more experience under my belt from the dozens, if not hundreds, of other adventures I've been on since last we met? (I've traversed zombie-infested cities, faraway galaxies, and even Hell itself.) I don't think so.

Now you don't care to solve any puzzles that take more than a minute or two to figure out, and you're not interested in raiding more than a handful of tiny tombs. Your explorative hunger is gone; you're more concerned with simply darting from Point A to Point B. Yes, you traversed the island of Yamatai with flair, and much gunfire, but you seemed rushed in a way you never used to. You no longer want to stop and smell the sarcophagi. And while you and I always had our control issues, now you don't really need me anymore. You're leaping, crawling, parkouring, running, and gunning while I am basically just sitting there watching you. I barely do anything.

You haven't gotten any less serious either. Some might say you're grittier now than you ever were. I guess that's still the trend, like it was a decade ago. I don't know... I miss your silly streak. I do have to say you surprised

me. That whole week I was thinking you'd lost your love of the supernatural. As we crisscrossed that island, you seemed to generally ignore all the myths and monsters, which on an intellectual level I can somewhat respect, but it's like you're ashamed now of all those skeleton warriors in your closet. By the end of our trip, you came back around—although at that point all the paranormal stuff, while flashy, was “too little, too late,” as they say.

What I'm trying to get at, Lara, is that I sense you no longer care about me—the nerdy guy. More than once that week I noticed you glancing flirtingly at those *Call of Duty* and *Gears of War* jocks. I know we've both changed. That's life. We just don't seem to want the same things anymore. Can we ever be on the same wavelength again? Get back into our old groove? Or am I just casting pennies down an empty well?

I have the sinking feeling that we should both just admit what that week was: one last fling.

But part of me knows that's not true and never will be. When you feel that yearning to raid another tomb, you know where to find me.

Yours always,

Scott



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