

SYNOPSIS – TWO PAGER

Lara has changed since Egypt, become darker, harder, less tolerant. Her tomb raiding days are over. And she is on the run, framed for murdering **Von Croy** in Paris.

Von Croy was asked by a sinister client named **Eckhardt** to track down one of five 14th century artworks, the **Obscura Paintings**. Now Von Croy has been murdered and Lara is in the frame as a suspect.

Lara gets dragged into the dark parallel world of a serial killer – the **Monstrum** and the even darker world of blood, betrayal and vengeance spanning hundreds of years. She becomes the target of faceless forces wielding dangerous powers she can only begin to guess at. To clear her name she must uncover the shroud of mystery surrounding the sinister client Eckhardt and the five Obscura Paintings. There is also a link between Eckhardt and the Monstrum that needs checking out.

The trail left by Von Croy leads Lara deep into the Paris underworld. Even here fear of the Monstrum has terrorised gangs used to murderous violence. No one, it seems, is immune.

Piecing together clues from Von Croy's recent past Lara eventually arrives at **the Louvre** where she encounters a kindred spirit in **Kurtis Trent**, a hardened adventurer like herself also on the trail of the paintings for reasons of his own.

When the trail takes her to the **Strahov Complex** in Prague it becomes clear that massive cover-ups have obscured all of Eckhardt's Monstrum activities. He is protected by a shadowy group called **The Cabal**. This alliance of five powerful individuals provides extensive financial backup and shielding for Eckhardt in exchange for the promise of longevity. Eckhardt already seems to possess a freakish immortality and may well be the **Black Alchemist** mentioned in texts from as far back as the 1400's.

Eckhardt's ambitions are devious and long ranging not to say megalomaniac. He plans to re-establish an ancient race called the **Nephilim** by a series of breeding programmes. This race are believed to have certain powers which he wants to make use of for his own purposes.

Inside the **Strahov Complex** he has an inert but living Nephilim as captive. From this 'sample' he has been trying to extract 'living essences' [DNA]. By gathering together the five Obscura Paintings and releasing something concealed within them he will boost his arcane powers and be able to unlock all Nephilim secrets. Using his own unique hybrid of alchemy and hi-tech science to control the revitalised race Eckhardt will be unstoppable.

At the **Strahov** Lara runs into grotesque breeding experiments hidden away in the subterranean levels below the Cabal's stronghold. She also teams up with **Kurtis Trent** who is hell bent on destroying Eckhardt for murdering his father.

Kurtis' father was the last of an Order called the **Lux Veritatis** who were dedicated to keeping Eckhardt locked away. Unfortunately the Black Alchemist escaped in 1945

when his prison stronghold was mistakenly bombed by Allied forces diverted by the Cabal. Since then Eckhardt has carried out a vicious decades long war of extermination against the Lux Veritatis and Kurtis' father was the last remaining Adept of the Order.

Completely undaunted by Eckhardt's terrifying powers, Kurtis is seeking the last of three Lux Veritatis objects of power – the **Periapt Shards**. These are a legacy of the ancient and mysterious **Nephilim** race. When all three Shards are reunited they can be used to destroy Eckhardt or at the very least imprison him.

After much mutual wariness Lara and Kurtis work together to fight their way through the Strahov Complex. They must find the **Vault of Trophies** where the last of the Obscura Paintings is hidden.

They must also defeat the various grotesque members of the Cabal to combat Eckhardt's apocalyptic insanity. Lara and Kurtis each fight in their own way. Lara has her natural ingenuity and skills. Kurtis is an experienced warrior with limited occult abilities. And they are both fired by a form of vengeance.

Along the way Lara learns about Alchemic principles used by Eckhardt and the varying abilities and weaknesses of the Cabal members. There is Luther Rouzic the sinister Illusionist. Grant Muller is head of biological mutations. Kristina Boaz, an arcane vivisectionist, becomes something terrifying and monstrous. Marten Gunderson heads the Cabal security arm. And last is the quietly sinister Joachim Karel, no less deadly for keeping to the background as others battle it out.

In the end Lara faces off against the now powerfully restored Black Alchemist. Though she and Kurtis pull off some impressive team work to stop him reviving the Nephilim it is finally up to Lara to destroy the Abomination and find a way to invert his frightening powers against himself.

Lara has had to defeat beings who can distort reality, change their own appearances and twist the laws of nature and physics. She has learned the hard way not to trust any environment she finds herself in or the appearance of anyone she encounters. And there are further revelations about the true power behind the maniac vision of Hell on Earth.

When the Strahov is ripped apart by staggering alchemic forces Lara is left alone amidst the wreckage. Kurtis has perished whilst fighting one of the Cabal grotesques. But the danger may not be entirely vanquished. There are clues that the true evil behind all she has destroyed may be undead. The shadow of Prague may yet be able to breathe it's poison into the lives of mortals.