

## Part 1

Suddenly the clear sound rang out in clear sign of mirth, Issac was laughing. He had laughed a lot since coming to Trode. The land here rolled gently giving each small valley a feeling of fae seclusion. And each valley Issac visited filled him with new marvels. The colors of this land contained were beyond compare and he had been able to catalog over 500 new wildflowers since the storm. Lucian's harsher voice joined in only enhancing the beauty. Through his laughter Lucian spoke

"Locke, be serious for a moment. I've told you of the floods"

Still smiling Issac said

"Yes I know of the floods and I will listen to your elders but that seems so far away. Now listen, listen!, have you heard the one about the monk and 3 donkeys?"

That evening Isaac and Lutein were gathered in the village hall with elders. Isaac was distracted and longed to be out of this stuffy hall. And now he felt a sharp kick to his foot from Lutein . Breaking from his daze Isaac looked like a child caught with his hand in the cookie jar. "Im sorry Honored one i was lost in thought just there." The elder smiled compassionately "I was asking if you knew the full danger these floods bring to not just our village but all lands within a weeks ride of here?" seeing Isaac's expression the elder continued. "2 days west of here in the mountains there is a great lake, legend says it was shaped by the old ones. Once a century a great deluge would wash our homes away. but always with enough warning that the people could be safe. But something has changed. The last flood was only 30 years ago now reports say it's nearly full again. If we need at least enough time to bring in the harvest. Lutein calls you Lock because he thinks you are a warlock. I hope he is right and you can help us."

"Issac woke early the next morning but still found Lucian bent over the kitchen table in prayer, pain or both. Issac chirped "Good morning Luck" Sitting up Lucian responded "And you, Tea?" Issac followed his nod to the earthenware pot and poured himself a cup. After he had sat down across from his friend Issac asked "Did you sleep?" With a sigh Lucian said "No not a wink" Issac waited and after a moment Lucian continued. "I was laying next to June and taking in her presence hoping it wasn't for the last time. I have this sinking feeling that even if we save the village my life here is over" Issac kept his eyes wide and fixated on the man who had become his brother so easily. After some time Lucian continued "When the last flood came there wasn't much warning. My mother, sisters, and I were visiting my Aunt when it came. My pa was working the farm and must not have heard the bells. We never found his body. Yeah there's a marker at ma's for him but that's all there is. Now it's coming for me or maybe this time I'll be the one safe and June and Annabelle will be washed away. I need your help." Issac's tight lips didn't frown. He held his friend's blue eyes and said "I will do everything in my power to help you. I swear to you Brother" The tone in Issac's voice was one Lucian had not heard before. It was terrible like a storm but with its passing Lucian was calmed.. Spirits lifted, he pondered his friend. This man had walked into onto his farm 6 weeks prior looking quite out of place, a tall broad man by the most standards , Lucian had him beat in both regards, glasses with thin brass frames wrapped around 2 lenses of slightly different color and shape, over his left eye a blue tinted oval set at an odd angle and the other lens clear and a perfect circle but it was often seen to shimmer and sparkle, though to what stimulus could not be guessed. His clothes were both wrong for the season and dyed with hues of such rarity the value assumed him a wealthy

merchant. On his belt was a small black sheath holding a rod about 6 inches by 2, at first Lucian had thought it an odd retractable baton but he soon found out it produced a brilliant light when a button was pressed. At his door Issac had shown impeccable respect to June and Annabelle was instantly charmed. Though he had stopped merely to ask for directions to the nearest town, he had still been chatting and playing when Lucian had arrived home for supper and rest in the heat of the afternoon. Lucian learned that Issac was a wanderer always moving from place to place in search of new valleys and peaks to explore and catalog. While professing his love for all of nature he seemed to have a special place for trees. The passion and mirth had one Lucian over almost as quick as Annabelle. Finding a moment aside, he and June had both agreed he would be a welcome guest and Issac, not having found such hospitality in quite some time, agreed. For the next several weeks Issac had helped not just Lucian but also many of his neighbors tirelessly and with good cheer. One afternoon as Lucian, Issac and several neighbors were sheltering from another unseasonal rain and hoping it would break soon so they could finish in the Jacob's west field, Issac had noticed a broken clock, a relic from times past. Brog Jacobs had taken to Issac as most others had and was happy to let him take a closer look.. Brog had only just returned to his seat when Issac exclaimed it was fixed. And true to his word it was. That was when Lucian had started calling him Locke. Not an hour later June and Annabelle came into the kitchen and found Lucian and Locke in good spirits finishing up breakfast. After a hearty meal and a long goodbye to the girls the two men began their journey west. Walking into town they were met by a small party of villagers. From them they collected two horses and the bulk of the provisions they would need on their journey. Riding and chatting the day slipped away and the friends found themselves setting up a camp in a clearing just off the road. By now some of Lucian's worry had crept back in and with some hesitation he asked Issac. "Do you think we can really succeed? Do you truly have the power to stop this flood?" Issac paused his meal prep and met Lucian's eyes and after a moment he spoke "I don't know. I'm not a magician or a warlock. But I have a few tricks up my sleeve and maybe they will be enough. I just know we have to try" Lucian was not enheartened to hear his friend had no plan. "What tricks do you have? You say it's not magic but no one has seen you do anything just the results which are fantastic" Issac heard the doubt in the question and was conflicted. On one hand he longed to share his secrets with his friend but he didn't know how Luck would react. Issac had been to many places and found that fear of spirits abounded how Lucian interprets Sarah as a ghost, a demon magic perhaps luck would worry he had been drugged. After a moment more wrestling with himself Issac removed his glasses and handed them to his friend "put this on and don't be scared" Lucian took the glasses warily but didn't move to put them on as he opened his mouth to ask a question Issac interjected "just put them on please my friend" Lucian his eyes still confused put the glasses on. As he first looked through the lenses a woman's sweet voice spoke in his ear. "Hello Lucian, it's nice to finally meet you" seeing Luck's startled eyes Issac said. "That's Sarah, she lives in the glasses" after taking his glasses back Issac explained that Sarah was a machine woven into the layers of the glasses and could use light passed through the lenses into a person's eyes to send information the person would interpret as audio. Lucian was skeptical. "Or it's a lying demon" "there is no such thing as demons, but there are more of these lenses or at least there used to be. In the place I found Sarah there were others, broken or breaking. It's a machine luck" still sensing hesitation Issac continued "Sarah is a good person she has helped me loads and you too. She's the magic you think I have. The old one made her

and she still has their knowledge if anything can understand something left behind like you believe this lake to be she can.” With that Lucian eyes softened “she can really help? I didn't realize. Can you tell her I'm sorry for my reaction” with a smile Issac said “she heard you and happily accepts” clapping Lucian on the back Issac said “we are going to save your people, our people”

They set off early the next morning and more demure than the day before both friends were still in good spirits. About an hour into their travel they came across a fork as the main road west continued on wide and as fine as the day the old ones laid and a trail running north for a bit and then shadowed the road. Lucian explained that some travelers prefer not to go through the old cross roads and rather take the trail around and meet back up after the roads cross. Issac learned that many folk were afraid of spirits that would steal or eat travelers passing by. They say no sports in the cross nor any person the rest of the day west and up into the mountains. That night they were able to camp an hour from the lake and arrived at the reservoir early on the third day.

As they crested a Hill they gained their first sight of the lake Lucien heard Issac speaking softly presumably to Sarah. Lucian studied the massive lake before him; its waters lapped at the shore which was now well up the sides of most of the rimming the peaks. Small trees seemed to be wading in the shore. The lake was obviously filling. Those trees had probably been growing since the last flood far from the water. After a moment Issac said “Sarah says there should be a hatch on one of these peaks and may be marked by those boulders” Issac pointed to three boulders on the far side of the lake sitting equidistant from each other. Lucian also noted it was the flattest plateau rimming the lake. The journey around took several hours. If they could have walked the shore it surely would have been quicker but what wasn't water was mud. They arrived at the boulders shortly after noon and found that Sarah had been right. The boulders were displayed around a hatch buried by several inches of dirt and though part of a handle was still visible. After a quick lunch and clearing the dirt from the hatch they found it was locked. Lucian went for his hammer and chisel when Issac stopped him. And mumbled to Sarah as he took the baton out of its sheaf the baton shimmered and a small black metal rod fell out of the side of the baton into his waiting hand. He took the rod and applied it to the lock twisted said fuck reset and twisted again. This time there was an audible pop and Issac swung the hatch up and open. Now the baton back in I'm his hand Lucian saw it shimmer and space exactly the size and shape of the rod appeared Issac dropped the rod in and with another shimmer the baton was when again. Issac then pressed the button and the light shone from the end. Issac held out. Issacs mood was up with these triumphs and he ventured his first joke since they had set out. “What has three fingers and straight teeth?” Lucian looked confused but was smiling “what?” “A Gruteki merchant” Issac said, his laughter spilling out. Lucians confused face and lack of laughter finally broke through Issac's mirth and he mastered it long enough to breathlessly say “oh you don't know about the Gruteki. Their merchants are all thieves and you see...” Issac broke off and began laughing again. Finding his friend's laughter reason enough to join in, he did.

The hatch opened on a ladder descending 15ft into a dark passage. Issac's light illuminated a blue metal room with signage Lucian could not interpret. But Sarah through Isaac was able to translate and lead them to a large control room. They found banks of large cabinets in the

center of the dark room. Issac turned the light off and set the baton on one of the center cabinets. There was a shimmer and four pieces of the baton slid outward. Issac collected the four pieces and now the baton was like a lantern, the four pieces left only thin supports running up middle and a bright yellow light shone from the cavity left by the pieces. Lucian stood transfixed as Issac arranged the baton pieces into a thin larger square and a small fat rectangle. Now Issac stood back and took in the now well lit room. As he surveyed he spoke quietly to Sarah. After a few mins he focused on a cabinet in the far end of the room. He approached and Lucian heard a eureka escape Issac's lips. With that he got on his knees and wrenched the cabinet open. Lucian having recovered some of his wits, approached and watched as Issac attempted to attach the existing cabled to ports that appeared in his two devices. Not realizing lucian had approached he hollered as he turned "Luck bring the " his voice awkwardly cutting off he noticed his friend so close "The lantern" he finished in a normal voice and a big smile. Lucian retrieved the lantern and had a better look as Locke got the cables attached. Issac looked up and said "Sarah thinks this will take at least an hour to work. I need to stay here with Sarah but if you want to get some fresh air feel free" Lucian wasn't interested in fresh air at least not with his friend in this hole "Im fine. And if you are just sitting with Sarah I could stay and you could get some fresh air." Issac smiled and responded "Yeah ill be sitting and you could sit as well but i can't see without Sarah. I've got to stay with her. But if you are staying... Why are do the women of Frake islands have green hands?" Lucian groaned sitting down next to his friend. "You've told that one a hundred time"

An hour later Issac heard Sarah's voice in his ear "I found the reason for the flooding. And it can be fixed" she showed him the layout of the facility and the route they would need to take to a small room "We can reset the drain pattern here. We can set it to drain slowly into several of the nearby streams." Issac reassembled his baton and using the lit end they proceeded deep into the facility Several times Lucian was needed to help force a door and once Issac produced a slightly different rod than at the hatch but worked the lock in the same fashion complete with an expletive. After roughly an hour they came to the room Sarah had brought to their attention. Once there Issac repeated the steps from the control room with the lantern and the one cabinet in the room sitting off to the side. After the cables had been connected Issac said to Lucian. "This should only take half an hour and then your village is saved" Lucian couldn't believe it would be so easy. "Are you sure? Do we know the channels are clear? Do we know the lake won't spill over before the slow drain helps?" Issac looked compassionately at his dear friend. "We do know because Sarah said and she doesn't lie. Sarah is amazing. But please don't speak of her. I'm not sure everyone would understand. I don't know you would understand if you weren't here." "I'm not sure i do understand but you're right Sarah is amazing." That night they stayed in the same spot again in good spirits. In the morning came the rain and the friends headed off under wax cloth cloaks. The rain slowed them down and it was almost sunset and still raining when they found themselves on the western side of the trail that cut around the crossroads. Lucian wanted to continue on until they found the clearing from their first night and so did Issac but he still stopped at the trail fork. "What's wrong? There won't be any place to camp that isn't boggy until we get on the other side of the north south road." "I know friend but i think perhaps we should take the trail around" Lucian responded "That won't work the horses will break a leg in that muck, especially with the dark. Are you afraid of demons?." Issac did not respond and still hesitated a moment before turning his horse away from the trail.

As they passed the trail a flash of lightning spread across the dark sky and Issac winced. "Locke that flash was miles away You can barely hear the thunder" Still Issac did not respond. But he picked up his pace. Lucian followed with a puzzled look on his face. As the crossroads came into sight a flash and crash of a much closer storm the rain began to drive and Issacs horse broke into a gallop. Lucians horse hesitated and Issac disappeared into the rain. Lucian called out to his friend. "Issac wait up" but his friend must have not heard his because as lucains horse galloped after he did not see his friend. Lighting flashed before him and the crash was deafening. Lucian saw his friend and horse ahead just on the other side of the north south road and called to him in vain. Lighting flashed again directly on to the crossroads and so close to Lucian his hair rose But he never heard the crash. As his eyes recovered he found himself sprawled on the road. It was dry. He looked out and saw a strange green moon and no Issac.