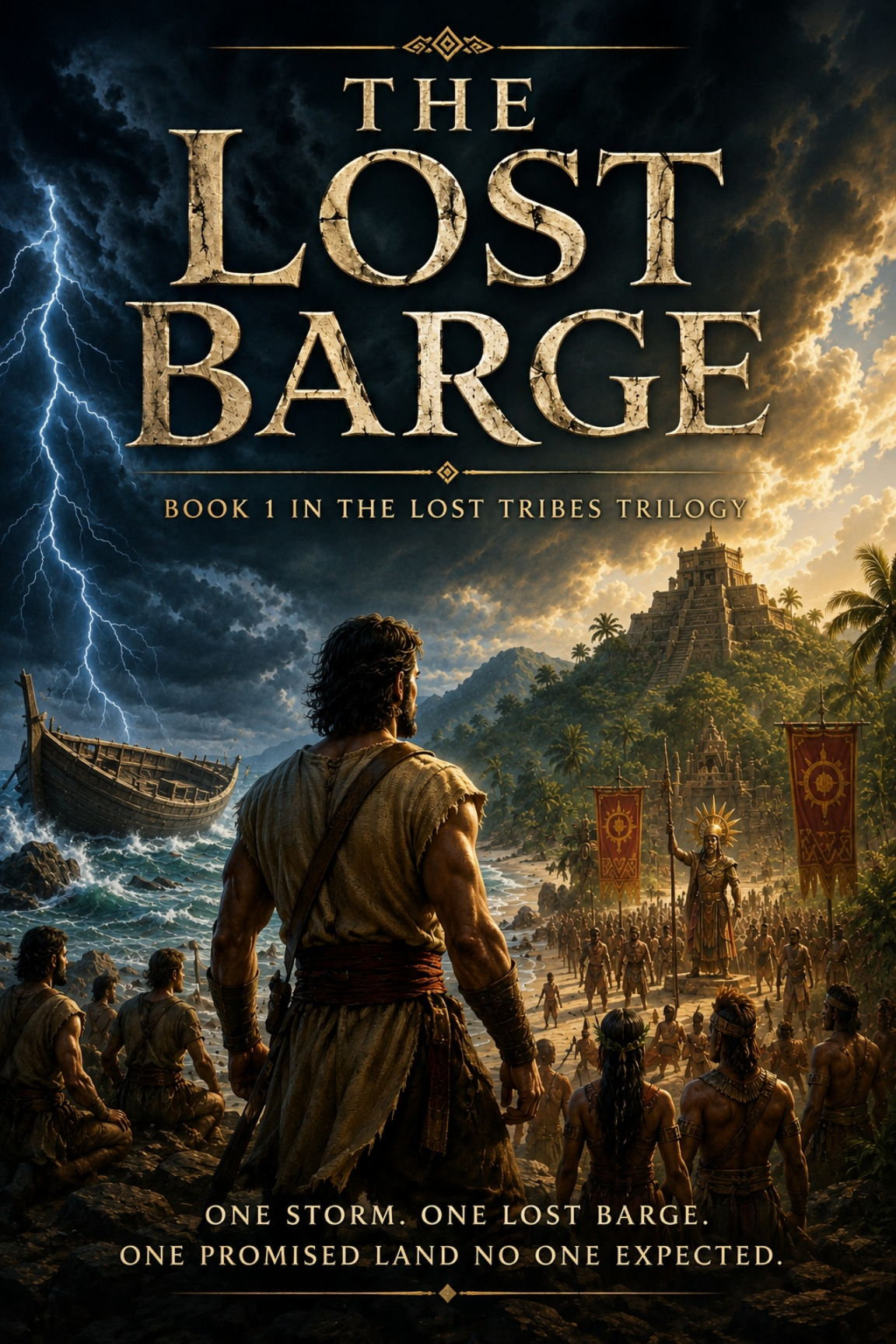


The background of the poster is a dramatic scene. In the foreground, a man with long dark hair and a beard, wearing a simple tunic and a red sash, stands with his back to the viewer, looking out over a landscape. To his left, a large wooden barge is being tossed by violent waves under a dark, stormy sky with a bright lightning bolt striking down. To his right, a path leads up a lush, hilly landscape towards a large, ancient stone temple or city built into the mountainside. A large statue of a deity with a sunburst halo stands on the path, surrounded by a crowd of people in tribal attire. Two large red banners with golden symbols are also visible. The overall tone is epic and adventurous.

THE LOST BARGE

BOOK 1 IN THE LOST TRIBES TRILOGY

ONE STORM. ONE LOST BARGE.
ONE PROMISED LAND NO ONE EXPECTED.

FREE READING SAMPLE

THE LOST BARGE

BOOK ONE OF THE LOST TRIBES TRILOGY



A violent storm tears one Jaredite barge away from the fleet
and casts its survivors onto a mysterious shore.

Captain Omer must protect his scattered people while Marael
awakens alone on an island whose civilization should not be there.

THIS SAMPLE INCLUDES CHAPTERS ONE AND TWO

One storm. One lost barge. One promised land no one expected.



CHAPTER ONE

BARGEWRECK

And it came to pass that they did travel in the wilderness, and did build barges, in which they did cross many waters, being directed continually by the hand of the Lord.

Ether 2:6

ABOUT 2,000 B.C.

An urgent voice cried into the darkness. “Unstop the hole!”

A red-faced man dashed toward the center of the barge, his hands groping the ceiling for the stopper’s handle. The barge bucked sideways and he crashed to the floor. Passengers screamed in terror as they lost their footing. The glowing stones which hung from a tether swung about recklessly, casting ever-changing shadows around the barge.

The barge leveled out, and the muscular man renewed his attempt for the plug. His fingers closed around the handle, and his muscles tensed.

“Kish, stop!”

Kish turned, but did not remove his hand from the handle. “Why? Do you want to suffocate? So much for your inspired leadership, Omer!”

Omer tensed. “Do you not feel the storm? If we unstop it, we’ll drown!”

Kish shook his head, “I’ll just open it a bit. I don’t mind getting a little wet.”

“Kish! Jared put me in charge, or has this storm rattled your brain?”

Kish lowered his hand. “This mess is your brother’s fault. How many days have we been aimlessly flopping around? 200? 300? We could use some actual leadership.”

Omer stepped towards Kish. “Listen to what you are saying, Kish. My brothers are men of God. You know what Mahonri saw—why those stones glow so brightly.”

Kish wrinkled his face and steadied himself as the barge rocked precariously. “Maybe they will start saying such nice things about me once I save their lives.” He reached up again to pull out the stopper, when the barge pitched violently upwards. It continued climbing, sending everything sliding backwards. The movement slowed and then stopped, and the barge hung still for a breathless moment.

Without warning, the barge flew forward, gaining speed until it seemed it could not possibly go any faster. Omer fell forward and grasped blindly for anything to break his fall. His hands found the tether that held the glowing stones in place. It snapped sending Omer and a stone spiraling out of control. He fell on top of the stone and the entire barge went black.

A tremendous cracking filled the air as an unseen barrier finally stopped the barge’s progress. Timbers splintered and water poured into the barge through every crack. The stopper

broke off with Kish still gripping the handle. Omer rose and found himself battling the rising water. He raised the glowing stone from underneath him and immediately wished that he hadn't.

The barge lay in ruins, and the waves whisked off people, animals and provisions in all directions. His faithful words, just moments before seemed naïve. He could feel his faith evaporating before the enormity of the disaster.

"It can't end like this!" he cried above the churning waves. "Why would we be led so far just to die?" Only the stinging rain and wind answered and he wondered if the Promised Land they were seeking was in fact the one on the other side of death.

Faith and fear struggled within him, wrestling for what might be his final moments. He found himself wondering whether his older brother was the only one entitled to miracles. It conjured vivid memories of another day and another disaster. This was exactly how it felt when the great tower fell. But, he reminded himself, the Lord saved them on that day. He had to cling to that hope.

He tied the precious glowing stone around his waist and plunged himself into the water to help the others. His wife, Cybil, had been at the back of the barge, feeding their young son, not yet even two years old. He caught a glimpse of bright yellow amidst the turmoil. She had been wearing a bright yellow dress.

Without a second thought, he flung himself towards the color, his arms beating back the water in a fierce staccato rhythm. The color drifted farther away and his hopes drifted with it.

Omer doubled his pace, his muscles screaming as the color drew tantalizingly closer until he seized hold of the plank to which the color was attached. He reached out with burning muscles, screaming his wife's name to the wind.

And found only a torn scrap of cloth.

It was the same bright yellow that had made his wife's dress. Deseret cloth they had called it, because of its resemblance to honey. The cloth still showed the seam from when it had been a part of a larger garment.

Completely spent, Omer collapsed onto the plank and grasped it as hard as he could. In this great storm, the water that dripped from his eyes scarcely made a difference.

He thought he might drown in grief before he had the chance to drown in the waves. In that moment, however, a different feeling washed over him. His entire body flooded with a profound sense of peace, unlike any he had ever experienced before, and a phrase, barely the suggestion of words entered his mind.

"Peace, be still."

The voice resonated throughout his body and filled him with light. It was just as his brother had described how he had felt after returning with the glowing stones.

Omer closed his eyes and surrendered to the peace that enveloped him, knowing that despite the chaos around him, he was being steered in the right direction.

CHAPTER TWO

FLOWER MAIDEN

For once, Marael was grateful that she had spent so much of her fifteen years of life working hard in the fields. Her arms were lean and toned and her legs firm and strong from the constant toil in the heat of the day. She had often bemoaned the fact that she spent so much time outside, instead of learning from her father's vast store of knowledge. It was much harder to complain when that knowledge was saving her life.

Clutching the piece of driftwood with all of her might, she paddled with her legs, fighting the roiling currents. Ahead of her loomed the huge bulk of a land mass on which she kept her eyes fixed. Though it wasn't far, the rolling waves often destroyed her hard-fought progress, throwing her back over and over.

She didn't see anyone else tossing about in waves, but she tried to drown that thought out. Her uncle Omer was also a strong swimmer, and his wife Cybil had been the one who had taught her to swim. They would be fine.

Hopefully.

Suddenly, she felt herself drop as the water level dipped in front of a huge oncoming wave. Clutching the driftwood even tighter, she rode the wave, letting it fling her in the right direction. At the end of the wave, however, the winds changed, pitching her sideways and plunging her deep into the surf. She lost her grip on the driftwood and lost all sense of direction.

Her heart filled with despair as water filled her lungs. Sometimes, just being a good swimmer was not enough.

Some time later, Marael coughed and felt water mingled with sand expelled from her throat. From somewhere above, a bird called and she glanced up to see a great golden bird circling right above her.

"Go away, you stupid bird! I'm not dead and I won't be any time soon!"

The bird circled once more and then took off into the distance. Marael wasn't sure if it had somehow understood, or had grown bored with her.

She tried to stand, but fell again as a bout of dizziness enveloped her. She coughed, tasted blood and then felt her forehead and found it caked with dried blood and sand. Examining her body, she found a collection of cuts and bruises around her damp clothing. Nothing felt broken, though, and none of the wounds seemed too serious.

The sand under her was finer and lighter than all she had ever seen. The beach sloped gently upwards and gave way to a dense forest, filled with trees with huge, emerald leaves swaying in the gentle, warm breeze.

Now that the sun had parted the clouds, she found the entire environment pleasant, the opposite of the nightmare from the night before.

“Have I passed into the spirit world?” she wondered aloud. “It certainly is nice enough.”

As she looked around, she did not see anyone in white robes, or hear any heavenly music. In fact, the beach was littered with ugly clumps of seaweed and detritus washed up from the night before. She dismissed the thought. The spirit world was either a paradise or a prison. This place seemed to have elements of both.

Her wonder turned into concern as she scanned the beach and found it deserted. Was she the only one who had made it to shore? She had to be sure.

She managed to stand without feeling too dizzy. She nearly fell again as she saw the last thing she had expected to see: three white stone spires jutting out of the forest. They gleamed in the morning sun, especially the tips of the spires, which appeared to have been fashioned out of gold.

Though dwarfed by the mountain behind them, the spires rose about even the tallest surrounding trees. She had heard of such things in distant lands from her father who had visited such places as a merchant. Was it possible that they had already reached the Promised Land? If so, why was someone already here?

One thing was certain: she would not last long without food and shelter, and the spires seemed the best chance of both. She had no idea whether the inhabitants there would be friendly or not and so she resolved to approach the area cautiously, sticking to the outskirts of whatever settlement they might have and hide herself in the trees and bushes.

The sun climbed steadily and she was relieved to reach the shade of the trees. All around her, sounds of life filled the air, mostly the chattering of insects and the calling of unfamiliar birds. A stiff breeze ruffled the trees and cooled her skin.

Taking one last glance at the beach, she plunged into the forest, making her way towards the spires. She found that the fresh air and exotic smells invigorated her spirits after having been cramped up in the dim, stuffy barge for so long. Her uncle had never let her unstop the hole by herself, though sometimes she had felt as though she were being constantly smothered by a blanket.

Feeling better than she had in weeks despite her wounds, she hummed a lighthearted tune, the melody blending with those from the creatures around her. After an hour of walking, she stopped to rest next to a fruit-bearing tree, whose bright orange fruits provided a welcome release of her hunger.

She sat down under a thick tree and was about to drift off when she heard a faint rustling from the jungle.

Her eyelids shot up, and she scanned the jungle in all directions. She took a step in the direction of the sound but did not see or hear anything else out of the ordinary. Feeling her stomach churn, she located a fallen branch and snatched it up. Perhaps it was lunchtime for creatures whose preference did not include sticky, orange fruit.

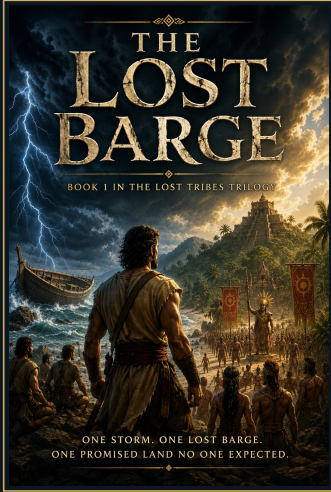
Fully awake, she decided to continue towards her destination. She quickened her pace, clutching her makeshift weapon in one hand. Another sound, louder this time, like the call of an

exotic beast sounded from behind her, but she did not look back. Her long legs ate up the distance as she batted away low-hanging vines with her branch.

She burst out into a clearing and found herself facing a cliff face of red rock. She dashed first in one direction and then in the other and found that retreat had been blocked off by a high wooden fence with sharp pickets lining the top. She felt a cry welling up in her that burst out when a figure dropped from the trees. The young man gave a broad grin and addressed Marael in a strange, but intelligible accent. "Hello, flower maiden. My name is Amun, and I am glad to have caught you."

READY TO CONTINUE THE JOURNEY?

The Story Has Only Begun



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THE LOST TRIBES TRILOGY

The Lost Barge is Book One. Book Two is currently in revision.

Official sequel cover art will be added when announced.

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