

Limetown Episode 3: Expectations

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Previously, at Limetown

- *MemJuice is all in scent, not taste. It's just water with that thar scent affected! –Con Steal*
- *There are only fifteen people alive, and even more dead that know about the true purpose of Limetown.
–Recurring Hood*
- *William Shakespeare? No one lives to five hundred! –Casey Jones*
Well if Limetown can make MemJuice, I'm sure they produce a whole bunch of other freaky chemicals, including one that expands your normal life expectancy. –Clarke Kamble
- *I'm Con Steal. –Con Steal*
You're Rob's dad! –Clarke Kamble
- *He passed through the locked door, which he opened with his key, and into the math room. Clarke went to the far end of the room, where no sunlight shone, and everything dark and dusty, and it was there, he climbed through a loose white board and into a secret storage room, that only few faculty knew about.
This was where he, Casey and occasionally Rob met for meetings.*

"Ah!" Casey Jones said. She woke up in the small dew of morning in his small, clay-constructed home right near the south Limetown beaches, right below the hollow, forged window in the front of their home. Casey lived her grandmother, because her parents had died early on, from a severe flu that struck some of Limetown. The last thing Casey remembered, she was on a beach someplace outside of Limetown, but it must've all been a dream. A terrible dream, that she will always remember.

Meanwhile, in a hut a little bit away from Casey's, on the beach itself, was a similarly structure house, that homed Clarke Kamble. Clarke lived with his guardian, Genghis, because Clarke's parents were from outside of Limetown, and when they passed away in a car accident, they asked in their will if Clarke be sent to their closest friend and colleague Genghis on Limetown. Clarke, unlike Casey though, remembered everything that had happened, but he also knew that she wouldn't remember a thing, and that was one of the things he'd have to keep from her, if he wanted her, Rob and Genghis to live. Clarke tried to start new, and forget about what had happened. He just woke up, and could pretend it was all a dream, but what had happened on the beach, she wouldn't remember, their fight with the Recurring Hood, she wouldn't remember, and their trip back to Limetown, even wasn't so clear to him. It's a new day, he thought, maybe we could go to a different part of the island, or find Rob. There was one thing for sure that made Clarke sure that what happened to them wasn't a dream: the not one, but two silver, shining keys in his pocket, that would no doubt unveil more secrets about their home island.

Casey, Clarke and Rob walked up the small stone path to their school building, an impressive size for what it was, especially being so current, with air conditioning, stable roofs and floors, and would really remind you of an up-to-date school. Clarke and Casey talked about what they think may have happened, informing Rob about

everything.

"So, how much of that do you think was real?" Casey asked.

"I don't know, how much happened in your dream?" Clarke asked. Rob had known about the escape plan, and was too having a blank slate in remembering what had gone wrong.

"Well, we were at Jadeville, and you set Rob's dad free, and we got on the boat."

"Yeah, that's how much I remember too," Clarke said. Of course he was lying though. Clarke remembered their conversation with a Hood on a Californian beach, and what they decided to do, the Hood's reaction, and then the MemJuice. MemJuice was a chemical, drug-like compound that, when consumed, would erase your short-term memory or everything that had happened to you for the past twenty five minutes or so. Clarke learned when he met Rob's dad, Con Steal, at North Jadeville that MemJuice had nothing to do with drinking the fluid, it had to do with the nasty smell, that was produced to erase your memory. North Jadeville was a prison facility island, somewhere north of Limetown, and many people, including children, are often sent there for breaking rules, trying to escape or not following the 'Program'.

Limetown was a complicated concept. No one really knew its origins, but it most probably had something to do with the missing years of William Shakespeare, in the late sixteenth century, some English colonists who wandered very far from home, and other strange concepts. Limetown was technically run by the Council of Hooded Hoods, but they appointed a mayor every six years to run the island. The Hoods never showed their faces to anyone, and if someone did happen to see them, that person would be MemJuice-ed. For food, the citizens would go to a mess hall, that was actually quite new (the two newest structures at Limetown were the school and the mess hall, which had been built by a group of people from the outside, and other than those, the quite amazing builders had made everything themselves). The food served was made of things from the outside, and shipments were retrieved every other week, at midnight, and also made from the exotic and safe fruit grown up in the island. Some jobs include body burying, food collecting, house building, government, educators (or teachers as we may call them), chefs, pottery makers and law-enforcers. The final Limetown system detail being

that money was not used. Everyone got their share, and there was no slavery. Everyone got food, a fourteen year education, and a job, even if one had to be made up.

Limetown enforced strict, but moderate, rules they call 'the Program'. This 'Program' includes that you cannot try and plan to escape, you cannot visit the Resting Place of Hooded Hoods or Hood's Ruin (an eroded limestone compound in the center of Limetown where important peoples' bodies are buried, and other documents are kept, it was eroded by the Limetown Oasis, a large lake at Limetown's center that links all the island's rivers together), or the forest unless authorization is granted by the mayor.

Back to the chronicles of our heroes.

Clarke had been lying to Casey about what he remembered, because he avoided smelling the MemJuice. Clarke wanted to keep her safe, and needed to think of an excuse, of how they were on Jadeville, how they made to the other end of Limetown and how they escaped from both. Clarke didn't want to point out the parts about what happened on the beach, and while thinking about all this, he came up with an excuse in a jiffy.

"So, maybe we escaped Jadeville, and decided to head back to Limetown, and then had accidentally smelt some MemJuice, and forgot why we came back. Or maybe we escaped, and shipwrecked, and then the supplies boat found us, and brought us back in, erasing our memories so we couldn't get in trouble?" he suggested.

"Yeah, I suppose any of those could be true," Casey said, "but do you know what I find strange? That we learned in school, that anytime memory leaves someone, it needs to go somewhere."

"You know, my dad, before he was arrested," Rob said, "used to tell me this story about some buildings near the east river, about a mile east of Hood's Ruin. One of them supposedly is where the missing memories go to."

"Well that's perfect!" Clarke said. "We just need to go back to the storage room and plan it out."

"Wait," Casey said. "Before we get caught again, and then get thrown in Jadeville permanently, I want to check something out, in the school building. Before we left last time, I went into the library to return some books, because I figured we'd be gone forever, and I looked at that huge wall right near the library door, and I knocked on it. It was hollow."

"So what are you suggesting?" Clarke asked. "That there's a, a passageway through the school?"

"Well it makes sense," Rob said. "How do you suppose the teachers get to other places in the school, and on the island so quickly?"

"You think that there's a bunch of passageways leading all across the island?" Clarke said.

"Only one way to find out," Casey said.

The trio stood before the wall in front of the library.

"So, what do we do now?" Casey asked.

"Let's push," Rob said. Rob and Clarke stood on opposite ends of the wall and pushed inwards with all their might. Finally, Clarke felt something behind him move. A small rectangular shape pushed in towards the back of the wall, to reveal dark, almost black and white hallways, circling down, around, and to other doorways.

"Okay, I think we just found our next Limetown secret," Rob said. "Do you think these passageways go all the

way across the island?"

"There's only one way to find out," Casey said. "Rob, why don't you go down that stairway to the lower levels of the school, see if there's anything, and Clarke and I will follow this hall all the way to the end, and see if it comes out another place on the island."

"Okay, and we'll meet back here in say an hour," Clarke said. "Let's get going."

Rob went down the stairwell all the way to the bottom floor, where things got very dark, and he could barely see. There were several dimly lit lamps, lighting up the ends of each hall, and the small light of his PDA Smart Phone, which everyone on Limetown above the age of twelve is provided. Being thirteen almost fourteen, like his friends, they each had a PDA. Rob followed the hallways, taking various twists and turns around corners, dodging several strangely placed ladders, leading up to various rooms. Rob did notice one small entranceway, about big enough for someone to crawl into. He went into it, and saw an air vent, that peeked into a strangely familiar room: the old storage room. Rob opened the air vent that had only been secured on one side, like someone had built it for a person to sneak in through, and crawled into the locked math room. He launched up and over to one of the white boards, that the three had loosened when they found the room, and pushed the bottom up, to unveil a storage room that had been long since forgotten about by the school faculty, and where the trio had met to plan their escape. Rob saw a chip in the wall near him: a perfect square. He held the top part of the square, which jettied out, and lurched it forward, seeing another squared out passageway just big enough for them to crawl in. Rob followed the passages down the short hallway, and noticed the passageway got brighter, as he followed it down.

Rob saw small metallic lines on the sides of the passageways, and realized immediately that they were heating and air conditioning ducts. Rob looked through the shuttered duct windows to see the school mess hall, with the

tables they typically ate at, stacked up into a few piles. Rob wondered if Casey and Clarke had found anything. He knew that these passageways traveled throughout the school know, from one part to another, but were they really so big that they could travel to the other side of the island, or even to the Hood's lair?

Only time could tell.

Clarke and Casey departed from Rob down the long hallway, running into the endless darkness.

"So," Clarke said, panting as they ran, "are you excited for graduating at the end of this year?"

"Not really," Casey said, as they continued running down the hallway, that seemed like it lasted forever. "Have you ever seen the high school here?"

"No, but why's that matter?" Clarke asked. "We'll hopefully be out of here by this time next year with our memories back, and all of these questions we keep having to ask, won't even matter."

"I guess you're right, but where do the middle school kids even go after graduation? There's not even a high school anywhere near here. These teachers set expectations for us that need to be met, but why all the secrecy? It's like Limetown is one big mystery that needs to be solved, by someone."

"Well, I guess we've found one answer," Clarke said. Clarke had sprinted to the end of the hall, and stood before a door.

"This is it!" he said. "This is step one to getting our memories back and finding out the mysteries of this place."

"Why will it even matter?" Casey asked. "It's not like these secrets will affect anyone else."

"If the Hoods are doing some kind of experiment on us with the MemJuice, this labyrinth, everything, then we should know. For the better good. Now, let's bust open this door, and find out."

Clarke kicked the door with all his might, but he had no luck. Casey tried to kick it with all of *her might, but there was still nothing.*

"On three, together," Casey said. "One... Two... Three!!!" The two both kicked the door open, and the light of the sun shown through the dark passageways. The duo were definitely no where near the south beaches, or anywhere close to Limetown's civilization. There were trees with orange leaves showing the autumn feel had come to Limetown, and the familiar rush of water coming from nearby. Just closely enough, they could see a mass of stone, and a pond containing smoothly cut, non-rippling water produced from a small close-by waterfall.

"Hood's Ruin!" Clarke said. "wow, it feels like we were just here yesterday!"

"Idiot!" Casey said laughing, "we probably just were here yesterday!"

The two saw a set of old rusted stairs leading up from the end of what they now call the 'Labyrinth', and climbed up into the forest. The duo saw a large 'X' marked on the dirt in front of them.

"What's this?" Casey asked. "Treasure? Maybe some answers?"

"Let's find out," Clarke said. Clarke dug his hands barely a foot into the ground and felt something, or two things rather. Clarke pushed some of the dirt away from the ground and saw what used to be a neon blue, three-ring binder. Next to it was a strangely familiar (to Clarke at least), silver pocket-watch. Clarke pulled them both

up to the ground, and placed them down.

"What's it say on the binder?" Casey asked.

*Clarke pushed some dirt away, and saw it read in free-hand writing: **COUNCIL OF HOODED HOODS: 1994***

"A binder of the Hoods from the 90s?" Casey said. "It looks empty!" Clarke was looking at the inside of the binder while she was saying this.

"Not completely empty," he said grimly. Inside the binder, whole punched, and big enough to fill one plastic sheet protector, which it was in, was a black and white, twentieth century picture. Just a simple picture, but, oh, so much more.

"It's a picture of the Hoods from eighteen years ago?" Casey guessed. She pointed her finger at the picture, and counted out twelve heads, but Clarke picked up something she didn't. He saw a shaggy, short-haired character standing in the back, wearing one of the only smiles Clarke had ever seen him wear.

"Recognize someone?" Clarke said to her. He pointed directly at the shaggy man with the grin.

"No, why do you?" she asked. This man was much younger then, so Clarke could understand why she didn't recognize him. Casey examined the picture one more time, and gasped, giving Clarke a look. She knew who it was immediately.

"It's Rob's dad. He's a Hood!" Clarke said. "Con Steal was, is and always will be a Hooded Hood."

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