

WBUR's
THE MIDNIGHT REBELLION
CHAPTER 10 - HIDE
By Dean Russell

[MUX]

NARRATOR: You're listening to *The Midnight Rebellion*.

Chapter 10, "Hide"

[MUX]

EXT. NEAR TIDELINE, CITY STREET - NIGHT

NICO (DISTANT): (yelling) Buggy?! Is that you?!

BUGGY: (low) Uh oh. Nico's coming over. Hurry, Joule. Hide!

[SFX: SIBLING NICO marches closer.]

NARRATOR: Buggy's face tightens as his sibling draws closer, and he shoos Joule toward the mountain of gross seaweed.

JOULE: (whisper) Fine! I'll hide.

[SFX: Joule gets into the seaweed.]

JOULE: Ugh. It feels like a whale's snot rag in here.

BUGGY: (whisper) Shh. And stop moving.

NARRATOR: Joule considers what her mom might have done. Dr. Green never backed down from a challenge, no matter how intimidating. But it's too late for Joule to change her mind. Through the vegetation, she spies a shadow moving on the moonlit sand.

[SFX: NICO approaching.]

BUGGY: Heyyy, sib. Caught some fish, I see. Very nice.

NICO: Save it, Buggy. You are dead.

NARRATOR: Actually, maybe Joule *did* make the right choice.

BUGGY: Nico, c'mon. I was just out for a little fresh air and got distracted.

NICO: First of all, the Sac doesn't have fresh air, that's why you have asthma. Second, you snuck out two days ago. TWO DAYS!

NARRATOR: Joule shifts slightly for a better look. A tall kid is standing over Buggy, their rage palpable. Nico whips a fishing spear around as if conducting an orchestra of pit fighters.

NICO: I promised Ma and Pa I'd protect you. Why do you have to make that so hard?

BUGGY: (uncomfortable) I know. You don't have to talk about them.

NICO: Apparently I do. This place is dangerous, Buggy. You treat the Sac like a fantasy land full of adventure. But if it was, they never would have died.

JOULE: [gasps] What?

JOULE: (to self) They're orphans?

NICO: Wait. Buggy, did you hear that?

JOULE: (to self) Uh-oh.

BUGGY: Hear what? I didn't hear anything.

NARRATOR: Nico crouches into fighting position, hands loose on the spear.

NICO: Gotcha. [starts running] (war cry) AHHHHHHHHH!!

NARRATOR: Nico charges. Joule bursts out into the open and runs. She steps hard on a jagged rock with her bare foot and trips. The spear flies inches overhead. Then someone is on her.

[SFX: NICO TACKLES JOULE]

NARRATOR: Her face grinds against the sandy road. Nico twists her arm back and pins her with practiced ease.

NICO: You a robber? Who you with? The mob? The pirates?

JOULE: (face on ground, can't talk) Nobody. Just me.

BUGGY (distant, running closer): Stop! Nico, get off her! She's not trying to rob us. I brought her here!

NICO: Well then why was she hiding?

JOULE: (face on ground, can't talk) Buggy told me to.

BUGGY: I thought you'd go berserk if you saw a stranger. And obviously I was *right*. You never trust anyone.

NICO: (sarcastic) Sure, if anything screams "trust me," it's hiding in bladderwrack like an eel.

BUGGY: She's not dangerous.

NARRATOR: Nico is silent for a long moment. Then, just as Joule is about to pass out, the pressure lifts from her back.

JOULE: [groans] Jeez.

NICO: Spare me, stranger girl. I didn't hurt you.

NARRATOR: Joule cuts the kid a look. Nico's standing, brushing sand from his hair, which is tied back in a bun. Their lips are bunched into a smug pout.

JOULE: You almost killed me with that spear.

NICO: If I wanted to hit you, you'd be hit.

BUGGY: Okay, let's not get off on the wrong foot here. Everyone take a deep breath. [breath] Joule, Nico. Nico, Joule. I met her yesterday around midnight when she lost her ... oh.

NARRATOR: Buggy grimaces. Joule can guess why. Nico doesn't seem the type to believe in time machines.

NICO: Lost her what? What'd you lose? And don't say it's a sack of coin. The last friend Buggy brought back tried that trick.

JOULE: No. I lost my ... my (bad liar) sssubmarine?

NICO: Your submarine. Right. 'Cause that's perfectly normal.

NARRATOR: I should tell you, Joule is a bad liar. Usually Hart fibs enough for the both of them.

NICO: Well, anyway, I don't see how that's our problem. Bug, get in the canoe. I'll deal with you later. Stranger Girl, good luck with your "submarine."

BUGGY: But I promised her to help find it. She's alone, Nico.

NICO: Rule number one: Do not help strangers. The second you do, they take advantage of you. Did she even offer to pay you, Buggy?

JOULE: I could. I mean, I don't have any money. But I bet there's something inside the, uh, submarine that you could sell. (beat) Really, I'm not a bad person. I just need help.

NARRATOR: Nico studies her as if she is a puzzle they cannot solve. Then they shrug.

NICO: Nope.

BUGGY: C'mon! I was gonna take her to the Knower. That's near the market. And don't we have to go to the market?

JOULE: What's the Knower?

BUGGY: The Knower *knows* things. He's a genius. We can tell him what's going on and he'll know where to look.

NICO: He's a *hermit*, Buggy. No one's seen him in forever.

BUGGY: So he'd probably love the company. C'mon, Nico. You *always* say "no" for *no good reason*.

NARRATOR: Nico looks offended. Hurt, even. Then their eyes find the gold timepiece around Joule's neck.

NICO: Fine. But *only* if she gives up the pocket watch.

NARRATOR: Joule doesn't really want to give up her watch, but she has a feeling Nico knows that. They *want* Joule to say no. Because if she says "no," then it will make Joule look selfish – asking for help without payment – and then Nico gets to walk away.

JOULE: (rude) Fine. You can have the watch. After you help me.

NARRATOR: Nico halts. His brows furrow.

NICO: But–

BUGGY: Deal! So glad we could work it out. Right, sib?

NICO: Ugh! Just get in the canoe. Let's get this over with.

[MUX]

NARRATOR: We'll be right back ... after this.

[***MIDROLL***]

[MUX]

EXT. CANAL, BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

[SFX: Paddling on canal]

NARRATOR: Paddling a canoe under the cloudless sky is sweaty work. They wind through the many canals of the Sac, passing all manner of people, even a harpoon-toting pirate ...

PIRATE (DISTANT): [LAUGHS]

NICO: No one say anything. Keep paddling.

JOULE: That guy is scary.

PIRATE (DISTANT): (realizing something) ~~WAIT!~~ COME BACK HERE!

NARRATOR: The scenery is bleak, much of it, unrecognizable. That is, until ...

JOULE: (paddling) Hey. That's the library!

BUGGY: ~~Yep.~~ That's where the Knower lives.

NARRATOR: The Boston Public Library is a granite beauty. Arched windows line its stony facade. Two bronze statues guard the front door. And yet, its majesty has faded. Most of the windows are broken. Mold blooms from every crevice. Water surrounds it.

NICO: Hop out! And don't tip us.

INT. ENTRANCE, BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

NARRATOR: Joule had come often to the library with her mom. Now, water-stained pages litter the floor and the ceiling is one endless spider web. But the shelves? The shelves are still packed with books on every subject.

BUGGY: Mechanics! Hovercars! Pizza [PIZZ-ah]! What's PIZZ-ah?

JOULE: *Pizza [pronounced correctly]*. It's delicious.

NICO: How come I've never heard of it?

JOULE: Uh. It's a submarine thing?

[MUX TO INDICATE TIME PASSING]

NARRATOR: They edge their way down the passages, occasionally stopping so Buggy can grab more books. **[MUX/CLOCK TICK TO INDICATE TIME PASSING]** They sweep through rooms with torn paintings and rodent feces. But no Knower.

NICO: See. I told you. Total waste of my time – oh, wait, I'll take that gold watch now.

JOULE: No, we're not done. Buggy, you're sure this guy is here? Buggy? Are you reading?

BUGGY: Look, here, Joule. This book's called *The Time Machine!* That could be helpful, right?

JOULE: Uh.

NICO: And why would *The Time Machine* be helpful?

NARRATOR: Nico snatches the book and flips through, conspiracy in their eyes. Joule is starting to feel very awkward about her lie.

JOULE: Actually, Buggy. I think maybe we should–

VOICE (DISTANT): Put the books down! Do not make me repeat myself! Put them down and leave my library immediately!

[SFX: Books drop.]

BUGGY: *Squid suckers.*

NARRATOR: Suddenly, Joule sees a pair of eyes through the crack of a double door. The eyes vanish.

[SFX: DOOR – BOOM!]

JOULE: He's at the end of the hallway! In that room.

NARRATOR: As fast as they can go, they peel down the passage, leaping over broken sofas and fallen paintings from days long past. They reach the double doors, the entrance ...

[SFX: DOUBLE DOORS]

INT. GRAND HALL - CONT'D

NARRATOR: ... to a grand hall.

BUGGY/NICO/JOULE: Whoa. / Wow. / Amazing.

NARRATOR: The room itself is very large with arched ceilings and walls lined with texts. And yet, it is also cramped. Mountains of documents cover the floor and, for a moment, it seems they might never find the owner of the voice. But then Joule sees a man at a desk, hiding behind an oversized cookbook.

[SFX: PAGE TURN]

NICO: *Cellophane Strudels and Garbage-Can Noodles: Cooking in the Apocalypse.* That's specific.

KNOWER: Ahem. Knowledge is found in the unexpected.

BUGGY: Is it any good?

KNOWER: No.

JOULE: So you're the Knower?

KNOWER: I ... am ... *reading!* Go away!

JOULE: We won't bother you for long. I just have a question.

KNOWER: Here is my answer: No.

BUGGY: But she hasn't asked it yet.

KNOWER: NO!

[SFX: SLAM!]

NICO: (enjoying) Tides, I take it back, this is so worth is. I like this guy.

NARRATOR: The Knower tosses his book in a heap of other books like *Succotash for Sucky Times* and *Pus or Preserves?: Identifying Edible Ooze*.

KNOWER: Och. I've read nearly every book in this place. Why did I save gastronomy for last? It's torture. Do I look like I eat?

NARRATOR: He looks like the human embodiment of a sheet of paper. His frame, thin as a page. Crinkly skin. Small black eyes, like periods. He sports a robe resembling a moth-eaten book binding.

BUGGY: Why are you trying to read every book in the library?

KNOWER: No. Not trying. I *am* reading every book – so I can know everything. And it would go more swiftly if you left me alone.

JOULE: I just have a question. Something I'm looking for. What's the point of knowing things if you don't share them with others?

KNOWER: I spent my life *sharing* facts. No one listened. A billion scholars, the world's information available in a nanosecond, and not a single person who cared. You have no idea what it was like long ago. So to your question, I say again: No, no, no.

NARRATOR: Joule shares a look with Buggy.

JOULE: What if I told you I know *exactly* what it was like back then? Actually, my mom complained about the same thing all the time. She was a climate scientist.

KNOWER: Ha! Scientists have been extinct for decades. You're not old enough to know one, let alone be her child.

JOULE: You may be underestimating my age. I'm 112 years old.

NICO: What?

KNOWER: What?

NARRATOR: The Knower glances up from a newly selected cookbook, titled simply: *Sand*. He blinks. He steps closer. He blinks again. And then his face changes. His brows rise. His jaw slackens.

KNOWER: No. (disbelief) What did you say your name was? ... No. Don't tell me. I know you. Wait here!

NARRATOR: With a sudden boyish excitement, the old man disappears into his dunes of documents. Nico frowns.

NICO: Did I miss something?

JOULE: Right. I probably should have said something sooner ...

KNOWER: Here we are. *The Boston Globe*, front page.

BUGGY: Joule, look! That's a picture of you.

JOULE: Whoa. It's big.

NICO: Lemme see that.

KNOWER: Careful, kid! That is a century old.

NICO: What are you talking about? Let's see. "Two weeks ago, on a stormy Sunday night in East Boston, the daughter of a physicist entered her mother's lab and never came out." What is this?

JOULE: Well, what I was about to say, Nico, is that I'm not looking for a submarine. I'm looking for a time machine. I'm kind of from the past. And I lost the machine – my only way back.

NICO: [awkward laugh] This is a prank. Right?

KNOWER: It is a prophecy. The explosion that left no damage. A girl who vanished. People speculated. Now I know it is true.

NICO: No.

KNOWER: Yes!

BUGGY: Nico, I saw the machine with my own eyes. There was a huge blast of light. Then it fell into a tidal canal up in Eastie.

JOULE: Please, Mr. Knower, that's why we're here. I was separated from the machine. We have no idea how to find it.

KNOWER: That is very ill-favored news. But let me think. (beat) The tides. Yes. The tide rule this city. To know where to look, you must follow them. (beat) If the tide was rising when you arrived, your machine will be inland. At Black Marsh. (beat) And if the tide was falling, it will have gone out into the harbor. You may find it near Bright Seawall.

JOULE: But I don't know what the tide was doing.

BUGGY: Neither do I.

KNOWER: That, you must figure out yourselves. Or guess. I find guessing isn't always the worst thing.

NICO: Hold on, whatever is happening here, we're not going to either of those places. They're crawling with tins. Stranger Girl, you keep your pocket-watch for all I care. I'm out.

KNOWER: I would not be so sure. Bright sees all.

JOULE: Wait, what? What does Bright have to do with this?

KNOWER: Everything. The reason I know about you is that ages ago, a man with bright blue eyes came to my library searching for information on a vanishing girl. He gave me a false name, but I knew he was with the Bright Corporation. I am ashamed to say that I did help him, for I was still trying to share what I knew then. And then I discovered his true purpose. Time travel.

JOULE: So you're saying Bright wants the machine?

KNOWER: The machine *and* its time-traveler. I have no doubt the tins have been waiting for you for years. Its eyes are all over the Sac. They will know you are here ... and who has helped you.

NICO: We have nothing to do with this.

KNOWER: As far as Bright is concerned, you are two tide rats who now know too much. You are no safer than the girl.

NICO: What? We just met. Are you serious?

KNOWER: Like it or not, there is one way out now. Together.

JOULE: You mean take them back too? Back in time?

BUGGY: You don't have to ask me twice. I'm really interested in this pizza thing.

JOULE: And Nico? I know you think we're all crazy right now. But if even a sliver of you believes me ... I've seen enough of this place to know you don't want to be here any more than I do.

NICO: I-I ... I don't know ...

[SFX: DISTANT ALARM BELLS, DUCK BOATS]

NARRATOR: Joule tenses. The noise screams from outside, at the front of the library. She glances questioningly at Buggy.

BUGGY: It's a warning. It means tins in the area.

KNOWER: As I predicted, they know. Very well. Escape out the back. Follow the alley to Mud Market. It's crowded, you'll be harder to find. Then go get back your machine.

JOULE: Nico ... are you okay?

NICO: I ... yeah. Yeah.

NARRATOR: Joule nods at the Knower.

KNOWER: I'm sorry for earlier. It's been a while since I had reason to believe. Thank you. And remember: follow the tides.

[MUX]

NARRATOR: Where should they go to find the machine? If you think the tide was coming in, choose Chapter 6, "Make for the Marsh." If it was going out, select Chapter 11, "Seek the Seawall."

Chapter 6, "Make for the Marsh."

Chapter 11, "Seek the Seawall."

This is *The Midnight Rebellion*.

Choose wisely.

[CODA]

NARRATOR/JOULE: Hey, It's Joule. In this chapter, I hide because I think keeping quiet will make things easier. Sometimes it does. Lots of times, staying quiet lets problems grow bigger.

It's easy to say nothing about the planet heating up. But every big fix starts with one voice deciding to speak. Talk to your friends and online communities about climate change, make signs for your school, make art, write plays. Shout it from windows and mountaintops. Your voice matters.

Keep listening for more tips and more grouchy men. Up next: Chapter 6, "Make for the Marsh" or Chapter 11, "Seek the Seawall."

[CREDITS]

NARRATOR: *The Midnight Rebellion* is a production of WBUR in Boston. It was created by Ben Brock Johnson and Dean Russell.

The series was written and produced by Dean Russell.

Directing by Emily Jankowski and Dean Russell.

Mix and sound design for this episode by Emily Jankowski.

Supporting mix and sound by Mumble Media.

This episode is starring:

Basma Ayatte as Joule,

Jett Dinh as Buggy,

K. Zedric Acruz as Nico,

Ian Russell as The Knower,

and Erik Ransom as the narrator.

Additional performances by Jay Preston.

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Executive producer: Ben Brock Johnson.

Funding provided in part by the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations.

See the full list of cast and crew at
wbur.org/themidnightrebellion.