

WBUR's  
**THE MIDNIGHT REBELLION**  
**CHAPTER 5 - STAND UP**  
By Dean Russell

[MUX]

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

Chapter 5, "Stand Up"

[MUX]

**EXT. NEAR TIDELINE, CITY STREET - NIGHT**

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

**BUGGY:** (low) Uh oh. They're coming over. Hurry, Joule. Hide!

[SFX: BROTHER marches closer.]

**NARRATOR:** Buggy's face tightens as his sibling draws closer, and he shoos Joule toward the mountain of fly-ridden seaweed, begging her to jump inside. But something within her resists.

**JOULE:** Buggy, I've got to get to that machine. I can't sit around in seaweed and wait. Besides, I know how to handle siblings.

**NICO (CLOSER):** Buggy?! Whose voice is that?

**JOULE:** (unsure) I think.

rr

**NARRATOR:** Before Buggy can protest, Joule steps into the open. She puts out a hand to introduce herself and earn Nico's trust. But seeing jetty-black eyes and a *spear*, her mind blanks.

**JOULE:** (mind blank) Uhhhh.

**NICO:** (cold) Who are you?

**JOULE:** (mind blank) Uhhhh.

**BUGGY:** Rightttt. So, hey, Nico. This is my new friend ...

**NICO:** (cold) Quiet, Buggy. Get away from her.

**NARRATOR:** Buggy gives Joule a look like, "I told you so," then backs away. Nico's nostrils flare.

**NICO:** Whatever you're sellin', *stranger*, I'm not buyin'. I'll give you to the count of three before I gut you like a fish.

**JOULE:** Uh. That seems like an over-reaction. I can explain ...

**BUGGY:** Nico, don't ...

**NICO:** One ...

**JOULE (SIMULTANEOUS):** I know this sounds crazy, but I woke up in this place ...

**BUGGY (SIMULTANEOUS):** See, I met her while I was out, and I know I wasn't supposed to be out but...

**NICO:** (louder, over crosstalk) Two...

**JOULE (SIMULTANEOUS):** ... and then I saw this tin, only I didn't know it was called a tin, and Buggy showed up ...

**BUGGY (SIMULTANEOUS):** ... she looked lost and almost drowned, and I saved her, and so ...

**NICO:** (yells, over crosstalk) THREE! AHHHHHHHH!!!!

[SFX: SLOW MO]

**NARRATOR:** Nico pulls their spear back, aims, and-

[SFX: SLOW MO > NORMAL SPEED.]

**BUGGY:** SHE'S A TIME TRAVELER!

[SFX: Nico stops his attack yell.]

**NARRATOR:** —nothing. Joule cracks an eyelid. Buggy stands between her and the spear. Nico's face is screwed up into a tight bunch.

**NICO:** What?

**BUGGY:** (covering) Uhhhh what? Did you say "what"? What "what"?

**NICO:** What'd you just say?

**BUGGY:** (covering) I said ... she is my friend.

**NICO:** No you didn't. You said she's a "time traveler."

**BUGGY:** (covering) Time travel? Nah. Why would I say that? I mean, I know you'd never believe in time travel. You're so practical, and that's what I love about you, Nico—

**NICO:** *Stranger Girl*, what did you tell Buggy?

**JOULE:** Uh. It's Joule, actually. Joule Watts-Green.

**NICO:** I don't care *who* you are! You're filling my kid brother with a bunch of lies! Look, just because Buggy's gullible ...

**BUGGY:** I'm not gullible.

**NICO:** Buggy, you believe everyone. The *last* friend you brought home stole all of our stuff! It took weeks to find a new canoe.

**BUGGY:** First of all, Joule's name *isn't* Sticky Fingers Rick; I admit, that was a red flag. Second, *she saved my life*.

**NARRATOR:** Suddenly, Nico's demeanor shifts. Their face softens. The spear lowers.

**NICO:** (surprised) You did? You saved Buggy?

**JOULE:** I ... It was just an asthma attack. I found his inhaler.

**BUGGY:** Don't sell yourself short, Joule. Without you, I could be dead! Or worse! Anyway, the point is, Nico, she's nice. Soooo?

**NICO:** Fine. I won't stab her. Yet.

**JOULE:** Thanks. I guess.

**NICO:** But you, Stranger Girl, don't try to fool me with that sci-fi spacetime mumbo-jumbo. *What are you after?*

**JOULE:** What do you mean?

**NICO:** We all want something. I want a decent meal and for Buggy to stop sneaking out. Buggy wants to be a superhero or whatever.

**BUGGY:** Ooh, yeah! With a seagull sidekick! And a hovercar!

**NICO:** So what about you? Why are you bothering us?

**NARRATOR:** Joule hesitates. Nico is wiry, but tall, with oversized fists and the kind of crooked nose one only gets from a fight. She has no interest in upsetting them again. But the *truth* is ...

**JOULE:** Buggy said he'd help me find my ... time machine.

**[SFX: Long beat. Gull calls in the distance.]**

**NICO:** What'd I just say?

**BUGGY:** She's telling the truth, Nico. A real time machine. It's amazing. I saw it.

**NICO:** Oh, did you? Did it (laughing ramps up) have "time machine" written on the side? Or did she take you for a spin? Did you see some dinosaurs? Or wait, is she from the future? What's it like there? Worse? Just one big fireball? (laughs more)

**JOULE:** I'm glad you think it's funny. I'll have you know, I'm from the past and, without that machine, I can't get home. I'm stranded here.

**NICO:** (sarcastic) Oh no! I wonder what that's like. (laugh) So does this mean everyone used to dress weird. Or just you?

**JOULE:** I wouldn't say weird.

**BUGGY:** Nico, how about this? She's never heard of Bright. She thought an octopod was friendly! I had to hit it with a rock.

**NICO:** Buggy, you really go the distance to get out of trouble, don't you? I was so mad at you for slinking off again, I was ready to tie you to the canoe. But this excuse? It's funny. I haven't been this entertained since before Ma and Pa died.

**JOULE:** Wait, what? Buggy, you never mentioned ... that.

**NARRATOR:** Joule feels a chill. She thinks back to their long walk. She had told Buggy all about her mom's accident, about the year of tears and loneliness. Why hadn't Buggy said anything?

**BUGGY:** You seemed sad already. I didn't want to make it worse.

**JOULE:** I'm so sorry. ... How long has it been?

**BUGGY:** I don't really like talking about it.

**NICO:** Three years. Our parents moved halfway across the world because their whole country was underwater. Then they got here and died in a storm. That's the Sac for ya. Anyway, thanks for the trip down memory lane. We're not interested in helping. Buggy, get in the canoe. Time to leave.

**NARRATOR:** And now Joule's chance is getting away. Suddenly, an idea forms.

**JOULE:** Wait! Please. What if- What if you come with me?

**NICO:** You don't listen well, do you? I said we're not helping.

**JOULE:** What I meant was, What if you come with me *back in time*? This city used to be great. We had baseball and video games and cars and the T and ...

**NICO:** Food?

**NARRATOR:** For a moment, Nico looks stunned, as if the question slipped out of them. They're so skinny, it's no wonder why.

**NICO:** I mean, not that I-

**JOULE:** Yes. There's so much food. Good food. There's *pizza*!

**BUGGY:** Ouh. What's Pete's "ah?" Is it a seaweed? And who's Pete?

**JOULE:** *Pizza*. It's-it's really delicious. My dad orders it every Friday, and my brother and I put on our pajamas and we all watch movies while we eat. And Hart, my brother, he loves tools just like you, Buggy. You'd love him. And, Nico, you-

**NICO:** Alright, alright, alright! That's enough, Stranger Girl. (sighs) I do not believe anything you are saying ...

**BUGGY:** Nico, c'mon! Friends! Pete!

**NICO:** ... *but* - can't believe I'm saying this - Buggy and I have to go to the market anyway. So *I've* decided you can come with us.

**BUGGY:** Yessss! Our powers of persuasion worked!

**JOULE:** And after the market?

**NICO:** What am I, a tour guide? That's the offer, Stranger Girl. Grab an oar or don't. We're going either way.

**NARRATOR:** Joule has half a mind to smack Nico with one of the oars. Their moods switch by the second. But Buggy reassures her.

**BUGGY:** (whisper) Don't worry. There's someone at the market who can help. We'll find your machine.

**JOULE:** We better. 'Cause if not, I'm stuck here. And so are you.

[MUX]

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

[\*\*\*MIDROLL\*\*\*]

[MUX]

EXT. CANOING - DAY

[SFX: Paddles splashing rhythmically. Distant seagull.]

**NARRATOR:** The daytime brings unforgiving heat. On the water, the air is like a wet glove, and after hours of paddling, Joule is dripping sweat. Even so, she feels buoyed. Her feet are protected nicely by two spare boots Nico begrudgingly lent her, and she's finally sort of making progress on finding the machine.

[SFX: Buggy futzes with the RADIO. We hear a staticky voice.]

**JOULE:** Are we close to the market?

**NICO:** Very. Buggy, time to pack away the radio.

**BUGGY:** Hang on. I almost got a signal ... yes!

**NEWSCASTER (RADIO):** [static]est Ant[static] Sheet [static] is close to collaps-[static] (fade under)

**BUGGY:** I've been trying to crack this secret message for a week now. This is the clearest I've gotten it.

**NICO:** And how many times have you claimed there's a secret message? Dozens? You're never right. It's just noise.

[SFX: Radio cuts out.]

**BUGGY:** Ah, squid suckers. I lost it again.

**NICO:** Good. 'Cause we're here.

[MUX]

**EXT. MUD MARKET - DAY**

[SFX: Bustling market sounds – shouting merchants, clanging metal, squelching mud underfoot, distant laughter]

**NARRATOR:** Mud Market, as it's called, is a long, silt-covered street, packed with tents and banners of every conceivable color. Merchants shout, flying flags with drawings of fish and bugs and clothes and other whatnots. Shoppers – if such a frivolous word can exist in dire times – jostle over every square inch of space.

**NICO:** Okay. Buggy, stay close. No wandering. Stranger Girl ...

**BUGGY:** She's coming with us. Right, Joule?

**JOULE:** Yeah. I guess. You said someone here could help, right?

**NICO:** Enough chatter! Stranger Girl in the back. And don't bump anyone, especially not any of the pirates.

**JOULE:** Um what?

**NARRATOR:** Nico sets off. Buggy slips into the crowd after. Joule, still scratching her head, somehow gets swept into the horde of people possessing a variety of bodily odors and hard elbows.

**JOULE:** [ad-lib getting jostled, grunts, yelps]

**BUGGY:** (calling back) C'mon, Joule. Keep up!

**NARRATOR:** She does her best to stay focused. And yet, her eyes wander at this place brimming with life.

**VENDOR 1:** Canned Algae-Os! Taste the green goo!

**VENDOR 2:** Say so long to heat stroke with a sunbrella hat!

**VENDOR 3:** Rats! Get your rats! The other white meat! They're delicious.

**NARRATOR:** Unfortunately, it is all very distracting. Not long into it, she slams into what feels like a brick wall ...

**[SFX: Joule bumps into PIRATE.]**

**PIRATE:** [growls] Watch it, kid.

**NARRATOR:** ... only to find it is a muscular man covered entirely in tattoos. Strapped to his back is a ... harpoon?

**JOULE:** Uh. Sorry mister.

**PIRATE:** That's "Captain," girly.

**NARRATOR:** His eyes lock onto the gold pocket-watch chain sticking out of her collar. Thankfully, Buggy grabs Joule just in time.

**BUGGY:** C'mon, Joule.

**NARRATOR:** They see a fishmonger, where Nico trades a sack of dead fish for several cans of "Algae-Os." Then they try several supply tents in search of a new inhaler. No luck. Joule is starting to get antsy, eager to talk to this mystery person, when finally ...

**MISS JO:** I recognize those footsteps. If it isn't my favorite scavengers. Buggy. Nico.

**BUGGY:** Here she is. Miss Jo. Everyone trusts her. Even Nico.

**NARRATOR:** ... they reach a shabby awning that shades what can only be described as junk. And also a woman who may be around the age of the universe. She rocks in a chair, fanning herself.

**BUGGY/NICO:** Hi. / Miss Jo.

**MISS JO:** What have you brought today? Batteries? A toilet seat?

**NICO:** Not much. Just some nuts and bolts. A few empty cans.

**BUGGY:** And!

**MISS JO:** And a friend. Hello, there.

**JOULE:** Uh. Hi.

**MISS JO:** Come here child.

**NARRATOR:** Miss Jo's eyes are milk-white with cataracts, blind. She reaches out to touch the pocket-watch's molded cover.

**MISS JO:** Lovely.

**JOULE:** Buggy said you might be able to help me.

**MISS JO:** Did he now? Hmm. You have lost something and, in turn, lost yourself. Isn't that right ... Joule Watts-Green?

**NARRATOR:** Joule stops breathing. So do the others.

**NICO:** Hold on. Do you know each other?

**JOULE:** No.

**MISS JO:** And yes. I know you. You do not know me. Yet.

**BUGGY/NICO/JOULE:** Whoa. / Nope. / What?

**MISS JO:** You were older when we were introduced. That's the funny thing about time. The second you think you get it, it changes.

**NICO:** This is a prank. Right? You're all pranking me?

**MISS JO:** I'm afraid it is not. By your tone, Nico, I can y.

**NICO:** Don't say "time travel."

**MISS JO [overlapping]:** Time travel.

**JOULE:** Wait, how do you know that? How do you know *me*?

**MISS JO:** You are asking the wrong questions, dear. As you will discover soon, time is of the essence. Tick-tock. Tick-tock.

**JOULE:** Okay then. The right question. The machine. I lost it two nights ago near my house, what was my house. How do I find it?

**MISS JO:** Hmmmmmm. I think (beat) follow the tides.

**JOULE:** That's ... vague.

**MISS JO:** If the tide was going out when you arrived, it will have carried the machine to the harbor and Bright Seawall. If the tide was flowing in, your destiny lay at the bottom of Black Marsh.

**JOULE:** I don't know which way the tide was going. I blacked out.

**BUGGY:** Ooh. I think it was *out*. No, *in*. No, I don't know. It was midnight two nights ago. I remember that. Is that helpful?

**MISS JO:** Listen closely. Tides come and go every six hours and twelve minutes. (beat) It is nine a.m., and low tide is in an hour. (beat) Work your way backward, Joule. If the tide is going out now, (beat) which way did it go then? You can ask your friends to help. Buggy. Nico.

**NICO:** Nope. No way! No more "time" talk. We're done here.

**MISS JO:** Oh, Nico. One day you will learn.

**[SFX: Metal alarm bell rings in the distance.]**

**NARRATOR:** Miss Jo holds up her hand and dials an ear toward the market entrance down the street. Her face hardens.

**[SFX: More metal bells, closer. A seagull squawks. People yell.]**

**JOULE:** What is it? What's wrong?

**CROWD MEMBER:** THE TINS ARE COMING! EVERYONE RUN!

**MISS JO:** Listen to me, *all* of you. This is far bigger than you know. You are not the only ones searching for the machine.

**JOULE:** What? But no one else knows.

**MISS JO:** Bright knows. And Bright is after you, Joule. It will use you to find the machine. And it will do anything to capture you. It will find and punish those who help you. Which means ...

**BUGGY:** Bright's after us too.

**NICO:** Great. You really know how to pick 'em, Bug.

**MISS JO:** Whatever you do, do not let Bright get the machine.

[**SFX: Distant mechanical stomping, shockbolts.**]

**MISS JO:** Work together and you cannot fail. Now, go!

[**MUX**]

**NARRATOR:** Go. But where? You must decide. How?

**(FLASHBACK) BUGGY:** *Ooh. I think it was out. No, in. No, I don't know. It was midnight two nights ago. I remember that.*

**(FLASHBACK) MISS JO:** *Tides come and go every six hours and twelve minutes. It is nine a.m., and low tide is in an hour. Work your way backward, Joule. If the tide is going out now, which way did it go then?*

**NARRATOR:** If you think the tide was coming in, go to Chapter 6, "Make for the Marsh." If it was flowing out, select Chapter 11, "Seek the Seawall."

Chapter 6, "Make for the Marsh."

Chapter 11, "Seek the Seawall."

Choose wisely. This is *The Midnight Rebellion*.

**[CODA - TMR TIPS]**

**NARRATOR:** Think about this: Joule may be a stranger in a strange land, but she's not alone. Because of climate-fueled wildfires, storms, and droughts, millions of people are also forced to move to unfamiliar places. Scientists predict that by 2050, there could be more than one billion climate migrants around the world.

But here's something powerful: communities that welcome newcomers with food, support, and kindness are the ones that stay strong. To help, donate gently used clothes to local shelters, volunteer with groups that aid new arrivals, or make friends with the new kid. Helping the planet also means helping each other. Be Buggy.

And keep listening for more tips and more angry pirates. Up next: *Chapter 6, "Make for the Marsh,"* or *Chapter 11, "Seek the Seawall."*

**[CREDITS]**

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

It was written and produced by Dean Russell.

It was directed by Emily Jankowski and Dean Russell.

Emily Jankowski did the mix and sound design for this episode.

Supporting mix and sound by Mumble Media.

This episode is starring:

Basma Ayatte as Joule,

Jett Dinh as Buggy,

K. Zedric Acruz as Nico,

Alex Cazares as Miss Jo,

And, me, Erik Ransom as the narrator.

Additional performances by Giselle Fernandez, Sarah Jiang, and Jay Preston.

Samata Joshi is Managing Producer.

Paul Vaitkus is Production Manager.

Ben Brock Johnson is the executive producer and WBUR's Director of Digital Audio.

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For a full list of cast and crew, visit our website:  
[wbur.org/themidnightrebellion](http://wbur.org/themidnightrebellion).