

WBUR's
THE MIDNIGHT REBELLION
CHAPTER 23 - ACCEPT
By Dean Russell

[MUX]

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

Chapter 23, "Accept"

[MUX]

INT. ROTUNDA, BRIGHT TOWER - DAY

[SFX: MACHINE WHIRRING]

HARTREE: So what will it be? Save your friends, or save yourself?

NARRATOR: The Horologium begins to shake. Its door hangs open, tempting Joule. She knows she should get inside and go back.

JOULE: I could bring down Bright before it's too late.

NARRATOR: How? She'll sort that out later. The point is, she can fix *everything*. But only by sacrificing Buggy and Nico and ...

JOULE: ... Mom ...

NARRATOR: Joule yanks the pocket watch, its chain snaps, and she hurls the timepiece across the room.

[SFX: POCKET WATCH SKIDS]

JOULE: Take it. Have your future.

HARTREE: [laughs] I knew you'd cave. Just like old times.

NARRATOR: Hartree picks the watch up gingerly and rubs his thumb over the glowing clock face. His lips curl.

JOULE: Well? You have what you want. Let them go.

HARTREE: So demanding, sister.

JOULE: *That was the deal.*

HARTREE: [sigh] Fine. Go down to the basement and follow a tunnel directly to the prison. There is only one key to her cell. Here. A key for a key.

NARRATOR: She catches it easily. She opens her palm. The key is so small and plain compared to the pocket watch.

JOULE: And my friends?

HARTREE: Oh I have no idea where they are.

JOULE: *What? You said—*

HARTREE: A little business advice, sis: always read the fine print. I said, "I wouldn't hurt them." I didn't say I'd hand deliver them to you and send you all off licking lollipops and singing sea shanties. The tall one escaped custody an hour ago, and the short one ... well, he jumped into the lake, didn't he? As promised, I didn't hurt him, but I'm sure my great whites enjoyed their snack.

JOULE: You're not my brother. You're a computer virus.

HARTREE: Ha! Everyone's a virus. We take and destroy and call it living. That's what humans do. The sooner you accept that, the sooner you'll realize that you might as well do what you want and stop worrying about others. (beat) Now, I've got a ride to catch. Stairs are on your left ...

[SFX: ELEVATOR DING! DOORS OPEN]

HARTREE: ... or the elevator's unlocked, if you can stomach it.

NARRATOR: And with that, Hartree climbs into the Horologium ...

[SFX: HOROLOGIUM DOOR CLOSSES]

NARRATOR: ... the air turns hot, the machine starts to condense, sucking in light like a black hole – and ...

[SFX: MOMENTARY SILENCE]

JOULE: Oh no.

[SFX: BOOM! HUGEEEEEEEEEE EXPLOSION! GLASS SHATTERS!]

[MUX]

INT. ATRIUM STEPS, BRIGHT TOWER - DAY

[SFX: SNEAKERS RUNNING DOWN STAIRS, SKY]

NARRATOR: Moments later, Joule is running in the dark. Skipping steps, two, four at a time, down the spiraling steps inside the two-hundred story building.

JOULE: (running, to self) ... one-oh-one, Floor one hundred ...

SNIFFING MAN: Get out of my way!

NARRATOR: As best she can guess, when the Horologium disappeared, the shock wave took out the power across the island. The elevator platform fell. The entire building went into a panic. Worse, the island's defenses were no longer online. The stabilizers, the reinforced walls, all ran on electricity that no longer flowed. And outside, the once-impenetrable dome is now coming apart ...

[SFX: GLASS SHATTERS, STORM INSIDE THE DOME]

NARRATOR: ... thanks to the storm Joule had forgotten about, raging outside.

JOULE: (running, to self) seventy-two ... too many floors ...

NARRATOR: Joule blocks the storm from her mind and concentrates on getting to her mom. Nico and Buggy after that. She finds an emergency flashlight, and then continues down, on and on, until ...

JOULE: (stops) No. How is that possible?

NARRATOR: ... as she reaches the first floor, she sees it flooding.

[SFX: Jumps into knee-high water, moves around]

NARRATOR: By now, Bright Tower has cleared out. Joule, knee-high in water, swivels the light, searching.

JOULE: *There.* Basement.

INT. BASEMENT STEPS, BRIGHT TOWER - CONT'D

NARRATOR: The door to the basement stairs flies open from the weight of the flood water the second Joule touches the handle ...

[SFX: OPENS DOOR, WATER FLOWS IN]

NARRATOR: But there is no closing the door behind her. Water flows in, cascading down the steps. Joule grips the handle tightly and manages to keep her footing. Once she reaches the basement, the water is already waist-high.

INT. BASEMENT TUNNEL, BRIGHT TOWER - CONT'D

[SFX: Moving through waist high water.]

JOULE: (shivering) It's cold.

NARRATOR: She finds the tunnel ...

JOULE: (calling out) Hello! Anyone down here?! (beat) Anyone?!

[SFX: A LONG, HOPELESS PAUSE]

VOICE (VERY DISTANT): (calling out) HELLLLO?!

NARRATOR: Joule starts. The light is too weak to reach. So she wades in farther, muscles tensing as she braces herself.

[SFX: JOULE SHIVERING, MOVING THROUGH WATER]

JOULE: (shivering, calling out) Hello! Hello!

NARRATOR: Did she imagine it? That voice? The water continues rising. It's up to her ribs. She can't feel her toes.

JOULE: (shivering, calling out) PLEASE! MOM!

VOICE (DISTANT): (beat) (calling out) Joule?

JOULE: MOM!

NARRATOR: Joule charges ahead, half-running, half-swimming, around a bend in the tunnel, and then into a vast cavernous space. And there is a caged woman. Her hair has gone gray, her face is lined. But her ears are as big as Joule remembers.

MOM: Joule ... how ... how are you *here*?

JOULE: (nearly crying) It's a long story.

MOM: (stunned) I never thought I'd see you again

NARRATOR: Joule unlocks the door, and leaps into her mother's arms.

JOULE: (crying) I missed you, Mom. I missed you so much.

MOM: I'm sorry, Joule. I never meant to leave you.

NARRATOR: Joule feels a warm hand on her cheek and looks up.

JOULE: The machine ... I-it's gone. I failed you.

MOM: Oh, my little spark. You're *here*. If anything, I failed you. Parents are supposed to save their kids. You saved me.

[SFX: WRENCHING NOISES]

NARRATOR: The prison suddenly tilts. The walls warp and split. Water sprays in from all over. It rains from the ceiling ...

[SFX: LOTS OF WATER POURING IN]

MOM: We have to go.

NARRATOR: They hurry up the metal staircase, but as the walls continue to bend and break, so do the steps. The staircase snaps.

[SFX: RAILING BREAKING FREE, CREAKING AND SWINGING]

JOULE/MOM: [SHORT SCREAM] / HOLD ON!

JOULE: Mom, what do we do? We have no way to the top.

MOM: The water's rising fast. This place will fill up, and we'll swim to the top. Just hang on to me. We'll be fine as long as-

[SFX: CRESCENDO TO SILENCE]

NARRATOR: Joule never hears the rest of the sentence ... because that is when the ceiling tears open. And the Gulf flows in.

[SFX: CEILING TEARS, RUSH OF WATER, then UNDERWATER - FADE OUT]

EXT. FENWAY PARK - MONTHS LATER

[NOTE: This next sequence should feel very slightly dreamy.]

[SFX: LONG SEAGULL CRY, BASEBALL SOUNDS]

BUGGY: Swing batter batter, swing batter batter, swing ...

NICO: You know you're not supposed to heckle your own teammate.

BUGGY: ~~Heckle?~~ Who said I was heckling? I'm *being supportive*.

[SFX: Ad-lib back and forth FADES UNDER]

NARRATOR: The hour is exactly noon. Joule Watts-Green pulls her hat low, shielding her eyes from the warm November sun. It's the first clear day they've had in weeks, and Fenway is sodden. They had spent the morning pulling up drowned crops and, by the end, the field was so barren that Cutthroat agreed to a baseball game.

[SFX: SWING AND A MISS, CATCHER CATCHES]

CUTTHROAT: Strike three! You're out!

NICO: These rules make no sense. Three strikes? Why not five?

CUTTHROAT: Because it's three. Joule. Get on up here.

JOULE: Good try, Nico.

NICO: Yeah, yeah.

NARRATOR: Joule sets her grip and lines up with the plate. The pitcher tucks a strand of loose hair behind her ear. She smiles.

CUTTHROAT: Don't go easy on her just 'cause she's kin, ya here?

MOM: She doesn't need me to go easy. You ready, Joule?

JOULE: I'm ready. I'm ready.

[SFX: PITCH, SWING, HIT - CUT TO: SILENCE (MAYBE WAVES)]

[MUX]

NARRATOR: You have reached AN END of *The Midnight Rebellion*. It may not be THE END that you were hoping for. But you can ...

[SFX: REWIND.]

NARRATOR: ... rewind and make the other choice. Find out what happens if Joule keeps the key in *Chapter 25, "Refuse."*

This is *The Midnight Rebellion*.

[CODA]

JOULE: As I just learned, sometimes every option hurts.

Climate change works like that too. There isn't a magic fix. Choices helping some people may cost others – or yourself.

You can practice making hard choices:

Speak up when something feels unfair—even if it's uncomfortable.

Share, repair, and reuse items like clothes, technology, or sports equipment instead of buying new.

Join with others: hard choices are easier together.

Keep listening for more tips and a better ending. Up next: *Chapter 25, "Refuse."*

[CREDITS]

BASMA: *The Midnight Rebellion* is a production of WBUR in Boston.

Created by Ben Brock Johnson and Dean Russell.

Written and produced by Dean Russell.

Directed by Emily Jankowski and Dean Russell.

Mix and sound design for this episode by Paul Vaitkus.

Additional post-production by Mumble Media.

This episode is starring ...

Me, Basma Ayatte, as Joule,

Jett Dinh as Buggy,

K. Zedric Acruz as Nico,

Cadden McArthur as Fin,

Jay Preston as Cutthroat,

Jaylen Askins as Hartree,

Erika Henningson as Dr. Elizabeth Green,

and ... Erik Ransom as the narrator.

Managing Producer: Samata Joshi.

Production Manager: Paul Vaitkus.

Director of Digital Audio: Ben Brock Johnson.

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