

WBUR's
THE MIDNIGHT REBELLION
CHAPTER 26 - INTO THE LAKE
By Dean Russell

[MUX]

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

Chapter 26, "Into the Lake"

[MUX]

EXT. DUCK BOAT - STORM

NARRATOR: The storm rages across Sky Island ...

[SFX: WIND/RAIN AT FULL TILT]

NARRATOR: ... waves gnash like the jaws of beasts ...

[SFX: WAVES CHURN]

NARRATOR: ... and while the city falls and its people flee, one boat remains.

[SFX: BOOM! HUGE WAVE HITS BOAT]

JOULE: I THOUGHT THE STORM WAS DYING DOWN!

CUTTHROAT: STORMS NEVER DIE! SHE'S COME BACK FOR MORE! [LAUGHS]

[SFX: BOOM! HUGE WAVE]

NARRATOR: Joule, Nico, Buggy, Fin, and Captain Cutthroat cling to the gunwales, the cleats, the wheel, anything attached to the sturdy Duck boat as the sea crashes over them.

ALL: [ad-lib shouts]

NARRATOR: Ahead, the glowering statue of Brutus Bright stands tall on its rock platform in the middle of the lake.

BUGGY: A HUNDRED YARDS TIL THE ROCK.

CUTTHROAT: I'LL DROP ANCHOR AS CLOSE AS I CAN. WE GOTTA BE QUICK. FIND THE PRISON, FIND DOC GREEN, AND GET BACK ON THE BOAT.

BUGGY/NICO/FIN: TOCK-TICK. / SQUAWK.

[SFX: Boat jerking]

CUTTHROAT: (over storm) PREPARE YOURSELVES! WE GOT A BIG ONE!

NARRATOR: A rogue swell rises, massive, at their backs. Cutthroat holds the wheel, but the wave spins them. The boat crests and hangs weightless. The bow dips, and ...

[SFX: BOAT FLIES DOWN WAVE]

ALL: AHHHHHHH!

NARRATOR: ... it careens down the steep, curling slope ...

NICO: WE'RE GONNA HIT!

[SFX: BANG! HULL HITS ROCK. BOAT SMASHES AND SLIDE]

NARRATOR: Tires explode against jagged rock, its hull cracks, and it grinds to a halt.

[SFX: GRINDS TO HALT]

NARRATOR: Joule opens her eyes. Nico holds Buggy, who holds Fin.

JOULE: CUTTHROAT?! CUTTHROAT?! WHERE ARE YOU?!

NARRATOR: She peers anxiously around. Brutus Bright's massive figure looms over them.

JOULE: CUTTHROAT!

CUTTHROAT (DISTANT): OVER HERE!

NARRATOR: A hand motions from the other side of the totaled boat.

NICO: ANOTHER WAVE INCOMING!

CUTTHROAT (DISTANT): HURRY UP!

NARRATOR: Cutthroat is up on one of the statue's feet, heaving back a giant shoe tongue.

CUTTHROAT: GET IN! NOW!

NARRATOR: The next wave begins to break, the white foam like an avalanche. Joule and the others run. They jump down through the door: Buggy and Fin, Nico, Joule, Cutthroat.

[SFX: ALL SHOUT, GRUNT; WAVE CRASHES DOWN, HATCH CLOSES]

INT. PRISON, SKY ISLAND - CONT'D

NARRATOR: For a long moment, they sit panting in the dark. Cold air blows up through a grating floor. Joule waits for someone to speak – to say what she cannot – that, once again, their way home has just been destroyed while on a mission to save *her* mother.

No one says a thing. So Joule pushes herself up.

JOULE: Anyone got a light?

BUGGY: I do in my bag. A few. Here.

[SFX: PASSING out FLASHLIGHTS. They FLICK ON.]

NICO: Where are we?

NARRATOR: They edge down a passageway with metal walls, floors, and chains. They step past a gate into a low-ceilinged room stale

with a damp odor. The catwalk wraps around the walls, leaving a great chasm in the center of the room. Dozens of floors extend below.

BUGGY: Look. Prison cells. Along the walls. Joule! This is it!

NARRATOR: She wants to feel relief – they found it ...

JOULE: But why is it so quiet?

NARRATOR: Joule approaches the first cell and pulls the door ...

[SFX: CELL DOOR OPENS]

NARRATOR: ... which wasn't even shut. Inside is an unmade cot. The faucet is running. A half-eaten roll is on the floor.

[SFX: MORE DISTANT CELL DOOR OPENS]

CUTTHROAT (FAR OFF): Nothing in this one either.

NICO (FARTHER): No one over here.

BUGGY (FARTHER): Or here.

NARRATOR: An unwelcome feeling churns in Joule's gut. She peers down into the chasm. The other floors seem equally abandoned.

[SFX: THE PRISON RUMBLES AND GROANS]

ALL: Whah!

NARRATOR: The whole prison jolts and tilts, just as Bright Tower had. It's a warning. The island is really sinking now.

[SFX: RUMBLING STOPS]

CUTTHROAT: Joule. It looks like they've evacuated. I'm sorry.

JOULE: (hard) No. Don't say it.

CUTTHROAT: She's not here.

JOULE: We have to keep looking. Every floor.

NARRATOR: Joule pulls away.

JOULE: We can't turn back. We don't even have a way out, remember? No boat, no nothing.

CUTTHROAT: One of the rebels will come looking for us. They'll find us if we're at the top. If we keep searching, all we'll do is run out the clock and go down with the island. You're mom wouldn't want that.

NARRATOR: Joule doesn't want to admit he's right. But she considers her friends and what they've given to help her. And, even now that the machine is gone, they are still with her.

JOULE: I can't ask you all to keep searching. You've done enough for me. I'll go on alone.

CUTTHROAT: That's not what I meant. We—

NICO: Hold on. After all this, you seriously think everything we've done is for you?

JOULE: Uh. Isn't it?

NICO: Joule, I used to hate strangers. Remember that? I thought helping strangers was a quick way to get killed. And it's true. We still might die because of you.

JOULE: (sarcastic) Thanks. That makes me feel better.

NICO: But *also* because of you, we're *alive* for the first time. A month ago, Buggy and I were alone, eating algae, and stuck in the Sac because of Bright. Now, Bright and its whole snooty island is sinking. Even if we never make it out, Bright will be weaker. Who knows? The rebels might actually be able to free the Sac. Because of us. Because we helped each other. We're not your sidekicks and we're not just being nice. We're friends. Friends stick together.

BUGGY: Yeah! Plus, I came for adventure. And it's not over yet.

CUTTHROAT: That settles it. We stay 'til we search every cell.

FIN: (agreement, loud long call) SQQQQQQUUUUUAAAAAWWWK!!!

VOICE (VERY DISTANT): *Hello?*

JOULE: (to self) [small gasp] Mom.

NARRATOR: The end after the break.

[MUX]

[***MIDROLL***]

[MUX]

INT. PRISON, SKY ISLAND - STORM

[SFX: CREAKING PRISON; JOULE RUNNING DOWN CATWALK STAIRS]

JOULE: (running) Hurry! Hurry!

NARRATOR: Joule races down flight after flight, past empty cells, into the prison deep. The others lag behind, but she cannot stop, not until, countless steps later ...

[SFX: Boom! Joule hits the bottom (metal) floor]

JOULE: [breathing hard]

NARRATOR: She hits the bottom. The prison groans again, shifting under foot. But she steadies herself and scans with her light. This floor is different; there are no cells along the walls. Instead, she sees a cage, like for an animal.

A woman kneels inside. Her hair is gray and knotted, her skin sallow. She blinks furiously, shielding her eyes.

MOM: (unsure) Joule?

JOULE: Mom.

NARRATOR: Joule flies forward, reaches through the bars, and wraps her arms around the boney woman – fragile like a songbird.

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

MOM: Is it ... is it real ... are you real?

NARRATOR: Joule squeezes her mom tighter, as if to say, "Yes, yes I am real."

MOM: (overcome) Oh, Joule. My little spark. I never thought I'd see you again. I'm so, so sorry. For everything.

[SFX: Footsteps of others arriving]

NARRATOR: Dr. Elizabeth Green looks up when the others arrive. Buggy grins. Nico nods. Fin flaps his feathers. And, though you may not believe it, Captain Cutthroat wipes away a tear.

CUTTHROAT: Doc.

MOM: Todd.

[MUX CUTS OUT]

BUGGY: Uh. Todd? Your name is *Todd* Cutthroat?

CUTTHROAT: [growls]

BUGGY: (walking it back) Yeah. Cool. Todd. Great name.

[MUX RESUMES]

JOULE: Mom, these are my friends, Nico and Buggy.

BUGGY: Hi.

NICO: Hello.

MOM: It's nice to meet you.

JOULE: And, I think you know Fin.

FIN: (greeting a friend) SQUAWK!

MOM: Finito, it's good to hear your squawk again. (beat) But, Joule ... how are you here ... now?

JOULE: It's a long story.

CUTTHROAT: Too long, I'm afraid. Doc, we gotta get you out of this cage. Was everyone else evacuated?

MOM: Evacuated? No, they *escaped*. When the power went out, the cells opened. Electromagnetic locks on all of them ... all but mine. Bright doesn't trust me with electricity. What's going on?

JOULE: The island is sinking. There's a storm outside.

MOM: *What?*

JOULE: I told you, long story. Cutthroat, can you break the lock?

CUTTHROAT: I'll find something to pry it open.

MOM: And where's the Horologium? Do they still have it?

JOULE: I ... I smashed the panel and it exploded. I'm sorry, Mom. I couldn't leave it with ... with *Bright*.

MOM: (as if trying to clarify her question) No, I mean—

[SFX: DOOR OPENING, RUMBLING]

NARRATOR: All at once, the prison begins to tremble. A hidden door in the wall behind them slides open, revealing a dark passageway. And out of it ...

[SFX: SINGLE TIN FIREFLY BUZZING]

NARRATOR: ... buzzes a tin blue bulb.

JOULE: (fearful, exasperated) Not again.

[SFX: MANY TIN FIREFLIES BUZZING]

CUTTHROAT: Fireflies! *Take cover!*

NARRATOR: Hundreds, thousands of Bright's tiny, deadly tins surge into the room. They whirl into a great cerulean tornado, all the way up through the prison. Joule and her mom huddle together. Cutthroat covers Buggy, Nico, and Fin.

[SFX: TIN FIREFLIES CLING TO WALLS]

NARRATOR: The flies cling to the walls and glow yellow and red, superheating.

MOM: (over noise) You have to leave! We're underwater. The ocean is on the other side of the walls. If they melt, then—

[SFX: PSHHH! Water begins spraying through the walls]

NARRATOR: Suddenly, it's raining in the prison. The sea shoots through more and more holes. The hidden door closes, trapping them, and the room begins to flood. (beat) Once the damage is done, the flies leave their task and condense into a fiendish mass, flickering blue again. A man takes shape from the tins. And, together, the fireflies speak ...

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): (over noise) [evil laugh] Oh, Jou-ule. Did you really think you'd beat me?

JOULE: (to self) Oh no.

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): (over noise) One perk of being a robot is if my body breaks, I can download my mind onto another. Or thousands of others. [laughs] I can never die. You, on the other hand ... [laughs]

MOM: (over noise) You monster! How dare you threaten my daughter!

HARTREE (VIA FLIES / Glitching with HART's voice): (over noise) Ha! I knew you loved her more.

MOM: (over noise) Don't try that with me. You're not him!

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): Whatever you say.

MOM: (over noise) This is between me and you. Let the others go.

JOULE: (over noise) Mom, no. I'm not leaving you again.

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): (over noise) So sweet. But, honestly, I couldn't save you if I wanted to. You have destroyed my island. But I will grant you all a quick death – if Joule hands over the pocket watch.

MOM: (surprised) Wait, Joule, you still have it?

JOULE: (to mom) I–yeah, but ... (to Hartree; over noise) What do you even want it for?! The Horologium's destroyed!

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): Ah, I'm surprised *Dr. Green* didn't explain. I thought the same at first. Then I realized that machine you've been chasing with your filthy friends? It's a fake.

JOULE/CUTTHROAT/NICO/BUGGY/FIN: What? / Squawk?

JOULE: Mom ... what's he saying?

MOM: That's what I was about to tell you. The thing you destroyed is a vessel. A shell. It protects you when you time travel in case you show up inside a wall or under a river. It's not the Horologium.

JOULE: So ... the watch ... the thing I've had this whole time ... that's the real machine?

MOM: I'm sorry, Joule. I wish I could have told you sooner.

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): Mm. But you didn't. What a waste of *time*.
[laughs]

NARRATOR: Before Joule can say anything more, Hartree's buzzing hand reaches out and snatches the timepiece hanging around her neck. Hartree holds it aloft, his prize.

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): So long, Sailor.

CUTTHROAT: NOW! [GRUNTS!]

NARRATOR: Cutthroat springs up out of the water and into Hartree, and the body of flies scatters. Fin swoops, seizing the watch ...

FIN: (dive bomb) SQUAWK!

NARRATOR: ... and drops it into Dr. Green's hand. She clicks the crown thrice and rewinds, then places it in Joule's palm.

JOULE: Mom?

MOM: Everyone, hold onto one another. We're getting out of here.

NARRATOR: Nico and Buggy lock arms with Joule. Fin alights on her shoulder. Cutthroat turns towards them, but the tins recombine into an enormous wolf ...

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): [growls]

CUTTHROAT: Go! I'll hold him off.

BUGGY: No!

NICO: Cutthroat!

JOULE: You have to come with us!

MOM: Ten seconds.

[SFX: WEIRD TWINKLY SOUNDS]

NARRATOR: Joule tries to move, but her legs lock ... and like Joule's first time in the machine, a shimmering, iridescent film stretches out from the pocket watch, over her skin and over the others. She feels an immense pressure.

CUTTHROAT: (singing) *Farewell and adieu to the Bright burnin' ol' days ...*

JOULE: No!

NARRATOR: Cutthroat picks up a broken cell bar and whirls it overhead like a harpoon. The wolf superheats, the water steaming around it.

HARTREE (VIA FLIES): [growls, barks] / [steams]

NARRATOR: The beast charges.

CUTTHROAT: TOCK-TICCCCKKKKKK!!! / **JOULE:** WAIT!

[SFX: TIN BARKING, THRASHING]

MOM: ... three, two, one. / **JOULE/BUGGY/NICO/FIN:** AHHHHHHHHH—

[SFX: WOOSHING CRESCENDO — CUT TO: SILENCE]

[MUX]

NARRATOR: Congratulations, you have reached the end of *The Midnight Rebellion*. It has been an honor and a pleasure, and we hope you enjoyed every bit. Even the parts where everyone dies.

Remember, you— ... hold on a second. It sounds like ... it sounds like we're not quite done.

[FADE IN]

[SFX: WAVES, SHOREBIRDS, BOAT HORNS, BOARDWALK SOUNDS, KIDS]

[SFX: WET FOOTSTEPS ON SAND]

NICO: So this ... this is ... ?

JOULE: Yeah.

BUGGY: And that means we just ... ?

MOM: Yes.

NICO/BUGGY/FIN: Whoa. / Wow. / Squawk.

BUGGY: Does this mean the adventure's over?

JOULE: No. Not even close.

[FADE OUT]

NARRATOR: Thank you for listening to *The Midnight Rebellion*.

Remember that you have power. Take action to slow climate change. Tell us what you're doing by emailing midnightrebellion@wbur.org.

You can find a list of tips and a survey about the show at wbur.org/midnight.

And you can keep listening to more chapters. Try the paths you didn't take and see which one you like most.

This is *The Midnight Rebellion*. Tock-tick.

[REBEL ANTHEM]

*Farewell and adieu to you Bright blue-eyed devil,
Farewell and adieu to your doom-tickin' tins,
We'll drain 'em and beat 'em in the name of ol' Boston,
We'll rewind the clock, a'fore Midnight again.*

*We rant and we roar like twelve a.m. rebels,
We bear our harpoons and ships sharp as fns,
But the true battle is what we sow, grow, and strengthen,
We rewind the clock, a'fore Midnight again.*

*Now if it is so, what they say of Green Lightnin',
Her watch goes tock-tick, and the past is nigh come,
May she take this message to great Mas and Fathas:
We don't want your words; fight the clock, or we're done.*

*Farewell and adieu to the Bright burnin' ol' days,
Farewell and adieu to the ends of the end,
Cast out the Doom Clock in the name of ol' Boston,
Follow the tides: fall low, rise again.*

*Cast out the Doom Clock and make the world timeless,
Follow the tides: fall low, rise again.*

[FULL 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.

Story by Dean Russell, with Joanna Lewis, Taylor Orci, Craig Rowin, and Kristine Songco.

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Additional post-production by Mumble Media. The Mumble Media post-production team is: Jayme Catsoupes, Cara Ehlenfeldt, Liz Mak, Lee Mengistu, David Tatasciore, Renée Vargas, Jake Young, and Sharif Youssef.

The Midnight Rebellion is starring ...

Me, Basma Ayatte, as Joule,

Jett Dinh as Buggy,

K. Zedric Acruz as Nico,

Jay Preston as Cutthroat,

Cadden McArthur as Fin,

Jalen Askins as Hartree,

Elohim Nycalove as Hart,

with:

Erika Henningson as Dr. Elizabeth Green,

and ... Erik Ransom as the narrator.

Additional performances by Alex Cazares, Emmanuel Chumaceiro, Giselle Fernandez, Marc Graue, Emily Jankowski, Sarah Jiang, Amory Sivertson, Dean Russell, Ian Russell, and Jake Young.

Casting by Rebecca Schankula.

Art by Sophie Morse.

Animation by Rory Panagotopoulos.

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To the countless scientists, journalists, policy-makers, and more who have dedicated their lives to understanding and fighting the climate crisis: We thank you.

To the kids inheriting this Earth: It's not over.