

Chasing Midnight

By Janine Leong and Lindsay McKinley

Logline

After a lowly kitchen worker inadvertently learns that the luxury space station has lost all communication with Earth, including a source of resources, she is forced to build trust with an ally and work to stockpile supplies, stay alive, and get out before order collapses.

Characters

Rhea Solace – A 20-year-old member of the Polaris kitchen staff. She is of average height and build, with shoulder-length dark brown hair. She is independent, humble, smart, clever, and reserved. On Earth, her family's small car manufacturing company had their reputation ruined and business overtaken by another larger corporation's unfair play, leaving her family without work and disliked by the community. In an attempt to support her family, Rhea applied for a job on Polaris, sacrificing the possibility of achieving her own dream to work as a chef.

Jade Alexander – A 22-year-old mechanic working on Polaris. She has curly blond hair, blue eyes, and strong arms with a snake tattoo extending down from her shoulder. After getting into an accident at the age of 8, she was paralyzed from the waist down. On Earth, she used a wheelchair to get around, but while on Polaris, she uses crutches. She is naturally talented at working with tools and has a mind for figuring out how to make things work. Despite her family's disapproval of her profession and fear for safety, she wants to prove herself as a good mechanic so she applied for work on Polaris.

Otis Dalton – The 67-year-old founder and CEO of Polaris Enterprises: a technological development corporation. His current project is the launch of the Polaris Space Station. He is short, bald, and heavysset. He is selfish, greedy, conniving, and focuses the majority of his energy on making money. His initial corporate success was achieved through illicit deal making with those in power, and he has continued such manners of business throughout his career.

Gerald Hogan – The 47-year-old head of kitchen staff on Polaris. He is heavily built with greasy black hair. Although in his prime he hoped to become a successful chef, he has accepted that this dream wasn't meant to be and took the job on Polaris. He is orderly, a strict rule-follower, and his subordinates would describe him as unkind and harsh.

Theodore Frost – A 56-year-old owner of a large, successful car manufacturing company. His business has a past of working toward eliminating competition by swallowing or ruining small businesses. One such example was that of the Solace family. He is tall, thin, and has wiry silver

hair. He looks up to successful business people like Otis Dalton, but is inwardly very envious of their levels of success compared to his own.

Overview

Setting: The year is 2056. Polaris, billionaire Otis Dalton's luxury space station orbiting Earth, is having its grand opening and many prominent people are in attendance.

Act 1: Rhea, a Polaris kitchen worker, learns that the station has lost all communication with Earth. She meets Jade, a mechanic, and the two work together to try to ensure their survival.

Act 2: After increased suspicion about Polaris's situation, the rest of the passengers figure out the truth. Chaos breaks out leading to a range of disorganization, power struggle, and death.

Act 3: Rhea and Jade, in an attempt to escape Polaris, are forced to move quickly and try to repair the damaged pod. After unexpected health issues and technical malfunctions, the pod crash lands on Earth.

Detailed Description

Act 1

Polaris, the new luxury space station owned by Otis Dalton, a prominent businessman, is having its grand opening. As prominent guests arrive, Dalton begins his introductory speech and welcomes them aboard his new project. Many floors below the lavish ceremony, Polaris staff are watching the opening speech from broadcasts in their respective work locations. In the kitchens, Rhea Solace, a low ranking member of the kitchen staff works to prepare food for the opening feast. From the broadcast, she recognizes one of the guests, Theodore Frost, as the owner of the company that ruined her family's company and reputation.

While on an assignment to determine if a new shipment of food/supplies has arrived, Rhea overhears some of Dalton's personal staff discussing that the station has lost contact with Earth. From their conversation, she learns that no one knows what's going on and that no new resources will be arriving. Because Polaris is only just opening, it is reliant on shipments from Earth to supply it. In a panic, Rhea abandons her assignment and begins thinking about how she can prepare for the future. Her first thought is escape and she rushes to the docking port in hopes of finding the emergency escape pods. However, when she finally manages to get there, she finds that of the two pods that had previously been there, one is missing and the other has a massive hole in its side, seemingly broken beyond repair.

After she realizes that escaping is no longer an option, Rhea quickly makes a plan to try and obtain as many resources as she can to maintain her own survival for as long as possible. However, her hasty planning leads her to be caught by Gerald Hogan: the strict head of the kitchen. Fearful, she freezes up. Luckily, the kitchen's oven is currently under maintenance and Rhea is saved by the mechanic on duty who makes up an excuse for her being there near the food. Rhea recognizes her as Jade Alexander, who is known for spreading gossip. Although she saved her, Jade is both suspicious and curious about Rhea's real motive for being there. Rhea is forced to tell Jade the full truth about the situation. Although initially hesitant at the idea of having to support someone other than herself, Rhea reluctantly agrees to let Jade join her and the two begin to work together to collect and store supplies to better their chances of survival.

Act 2

Rhea and Jade continue to stash and ration their food and supplies. As far as they're aware, very few people are aware of the truth of the situation. However, an unexpected oxygen leak and emergency gathering of Polaris' staff and guests increases group suspicion about safety issues on the space station. When Otis Dalton can't be found, people begin to further speculate about what is going on. During this meeting, Rhea overhears another mechanic who works with Jade mention that they heard a rumor that Polaris had lost connection with Earth. Assuming the worst, Rhea fears that Jade has betrayed her, potentially risking others knowing about their supplies and losing their leverage.

Rumors continue to spread throughout the station among both the guests and staff. After someone tries to find the escape pods and sees one gone, it becomes clear that Dalton and multiple members of his personal staff have abandoned the station. Both the guests and workers begin to fear for their lives. Although not entirely informed of the situation, people begin to realize that they are running out of time and won't be getting new supplies. This realization leads to masses rushing to hoard supplies, raiding the kitchen, and stealing from each other.

During this chaos, Rhea slips away to check if her own stash is safe, and finds Jade waiting for her. Initially believing that the rumors were Jade's fault, Rhea refuses to listen to her explanation, but Jade assures her that she had nothing to do with what happened. As there is not much food and water left, panic causes people to begin taking drastic measures to survive. Some have the foresight to realize that they should be rationing supplies, but others are only thinking presently and take anything they can get their hands on, eating food scraps and plants.

In an attempt to maintain order and seize the opportunity for power, Theodore Frost tries to take control. The others with money believe they have more power, but they don't have the survival skills of the workers who grew up more independent. As a result, they are dependent on the staff and there is a power flip. Although initially successful, Frost's efforts to ration food and maintain order ultimately fail, and the passengers grow angry at him because he is an unlikeable and an incapable leader. Rhea protects her supply stash and must be even more careful to keep it hidden.

A long week passes and starvation begins to plague the passengers, some of the weaker ones even facing death. Many of the rich passengers had not faced deprivation to this extent before, and the intense hunger shortens their tempers and weakens their bodies even more. This extreme hunger releases their inhibitions at staying rational and chaos ensues. As the clock ticks, everyone fends for themselves and Rhea and Jade rely even more on each other, cautious about every decision they make.

Act 3

In the midst of the mayhem, Rhea thinks of revealing the damaged pod to Jade. Jade takes a look at the problems, but is unsure if she will be able to fix it. Due to the pod's damage, the oxygen filter has been severely compromised. Throughout the next few days, Jade steals away to work on repairing the pod. Although the process is tedious, Jade forces herself to stay in control and do everything she can to fix the pod. Eventually, she builds a makeshift solution to the oxygen issue and the escape pod is functional for the time being.

Rhea and Jade load up the salvaged pod with some of their supplies and prepare for their departure. On the day that they were planning on finally leaving, they go into the storage room where the pod has been hidden, but are surprised to find Theodore Frost waiting for them. Although he had discovered the pod, he was unable to start it alone. Frost speaks to Rhea and Jade pretending that he has had a change of heart, begging them to let him go with them. Because of his history with her family, Rhea isn't even slightly swayed by his pleading. Despite even attempting to bribe them with money, Jade and Rhea see through Frost's ulterior motives and reject his proposals. In a swift motion, Jade uses one of her crutches to knock him out, and they rush to get into the pod before anyone else can find them.

After stalling multiple times, the pod's launch mechanism finally works and the ejection process begins. Filled with relief, Rhea and Jade exit Polaris in the escape pod. Landing coordinates have been pre-coded into the pod, but due to the damage, Jade wasn't able to access them, so they don't know where they are headed. The pod continues flying away from Polaris, toward Earth, however, as it approaches the atmosphere, the oxygen filter malfunctions. They frantically try to make repairs with the shrinking time window. Jade's weakened conditions make her more vulnerable to the oxygen depreciation than Rhea, and despite her struggles to remain conscious, Jade passes out from lack of oxygen. Without Jade, Rhea is left with no choice but to let the pod enter the atmosphere and do her best alone to steer towards safety. The pod falls for around two minutes before crash landing in an unfamiliar urban area. After recovering from the impact, Rhea manages to wake up Jade and the two look out the pod's window and are faced with a world of smoking rubble and buildings in flames with seemingly no people in sight.