

JOLT SURVIVAL

PILOT

Written by

Roberta M Roy

Based on the novels of Roberta M Roy

JOLT: A RURAL NOIR

TWO CLOSE: A STORY OF SURVIVAL

HOME AGAIN 2020

robbiedobb@aol.com
(845) 454-5200

EMERGENCE - JOLT SURVIVAL SERIES - ACT I

1) FLASHBACK - THE TWIN TOWERS - DAY

Clips of the Twin Towers collapse.

2) FLASHBACK - THE MAGDUM HEIGHTS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - DAY

Sunny Day image of Indian Point Power Plant with signage suggesting it is the Magdum Heights Nuclear Power Plant.

"ARIANA, EAST CORDABAN, 35 MILES FROM MAGDUM HEIGHTS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT" APPEARS ON SCREEN

EXT. MATTERS FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

"EARLY 2017" APPEARS ON SCREEN.

A school bus stops in front of the Matters' home. MARY MATTERS is raking around the front bushes. JASON MATTERS, A serious dark blond haired fifteen year old and RICKY SOLER, a black haired fourteen year old step out. Both are wearing backpacks.

JASON

Hey, Mom.

Jason kisses his mom and heads up the stairs to the house. Waves to his friend.

JASON (CONT'D)

See ya, Rick.

RICKY

See ya, Jason. Tell Marty I said hi.

"LOCHLEE, NEW CARLTON, 200 MILES FROM MAGDUM HEIGHTS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT" APPEARS ON SCREEN

EXT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

A stern man of medium height in painter's clothes, DODY (60- 70), peruses Thaw's cabin and the area around it.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

The cabin is a large one room affair with a sleeping loft above and to one side. Against the front wall are cabinets and a kitchen sink beside which against the adjacent wall is a kitchen table with three chairs around it. An easel with an in-progress oil painting stands in the light beneath the skylight. Against the walls are some shelves with paintings s tacked vertically within them. Materials for rolling marijuana joints lie on one of the shelves.

THAW, Dody's son, a tall artist in his early thirties with shoulder length hair puts the finishing touches on a painting of a landscape when there is a knock on the door.

THAW and his dog, Tufty, a black and white mixed-breed English setter, welcome DODY, Thaw's father, in a relaxed somewhat skeptical manner.

THAW

Hey, Dad. C'mon in.

Tufty licks Dody's hand, but Dody pulls his hand away.

THAW (CONT'D)

That's okay, Tufty. Go lie down. Dad doesn't like being licked.

DODY

How are you enjoying civilian life? Liking your cabin? See you been working on it.

THAW

Yeah. Put up new wallboard and painted it. And sealed around the skylight.

Dody pulls the corners of his mouth down and points with his chin to Thaw's work.

DODY

See your still dabbling with color. Still haven't found anything more reliable?

Thaw gives a nod of head and a grin 'n' bear it look.

THAW

Sorry to disappoint you, Dad. Dody points to the rolling papers and marihuana.

DODY

And what's this here?

THAW

Well, in the Middle East, some of us used hashish, except it seemed a bit heavy for here so I've been smoking weed.

DODY

(scoffs)

And here I thought the military would make a man of you.

THAW

C'mon, Dad. It's no big deal.

DODY

Well, it is to me!

THAW

Only use it now and then . . .

DODY

Yeah. Well, get your life in order.

Dody heads for the door and leaves, his voice coming over his shoulder.

DODY (CONT'D)

Get a real job. Yeah, and get your life in order!
 . . . Then come see me.

Thaw stands quietly at the door looking out, watching his father pull away.

INT. MARTHA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Marlena, an Airedale, is barking welcomingly O.S. MARTHA, a retired librarian in her late 50's to 60's opens the backdoor, she finds Dody in painter's clothes.

MARTHA

Oh, come in, Dody.

Dody enters wordlessly, heads for the study area/living room. Martha follows.

INT. MARTHA'S STUDY/LIVING ROOM - DAY

MARTHA

Dody, I thought you were sick.

DODY

(exaggerates)

Am. Feel awful. Got this dang cold sore.

MARTHA

Anbesol.

DODY

Anbesol. . . Bet you are one of those people
who is always worrying and . . .

MARTHA

No. I'm not a worrier. I just like researching for
answers. I like to know as much
commonsense stuff as I can. Anbesol.

DODY

Anbesol. Yeah. I guess I could get some.
Anbesol.

(suddenly well)

Now what was it you wanted done?

INT. MARTHA'S GUEST ROOM - DAY

NEVILLE, a lanky, dark-haired, fair-skinned man in his early thirties, and Dody pull up some shag carpet. Dody changes the blade in one of the knives.

Visually intent on his work, Neville kneels on one knee and makes initial cuts into lengths of old shag carpeting.

NEVILLE

I saw Thaw the other day.

Dody yells and grabs his hand and squeezes it between his knees after which he shoves his left ring finger into his mouth and talks around it.

DODY

Dang it all! Nicked my finger!

Dody pulls his finger from his mouth to inspect it.

DODY (CONT'D)

Blasted blade must be getting dull.

NEVILLE

(continues working)

He was all suited up. Looked like he was headed for a date. Getting gas on 22. No sign of Tufty with him. In kind of a hurry. Probably headed to Bain. No place around here have to get that dressed up for. 'Specially that early in the morning. Sure wasn't going fishing in those clothes.

DODY

(ignores comments)

Neville, where'd I leave those other blades? Could of sworn I put them on the windowsill there.

"MARCH 2017" APPEARS ON SCREEN

INT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

A KETTLE of water STEAMS on the wood stove.

Thaw is painting and in the loft in the background lies NATALIE, a lovely young auburn-haired woman in her late twenties. She views Thaw through the railing.

Natalie raises herself on one elbow to better observe Thaw.

Thaw is using a broad brush and large, horizontal strokes and quickly covers the outer edges of a canvas with shades of green, blue and purple. Natalie watches silently and notes that centrally among the leaves against a lakeview, a naked woman runs laughing with her head at such an angle that her face turns to show over her shoulder. A small dog trots beside her.

Both seem about to be absorbed into the arch of the trees before them. Above the trees and beyond the runner's sight, a small white bird spreads its wings in the purple sky.

NATALIE
(sleepily)
Morning.

Thaw's below-the-shoulder-length, slightly wavy hair hangs freshly washed and combed. He continues to paint.

THAW
Morning, Nat. Sleep well?

Natalie smiles toward the back of Thaw's head.

NATALIE
I couldn't have slept better. How long have you been up?

THAW
Didn't look at my watch.

The rhythm of Thaw's strokes remains constant.

NATALIE
You could turn and look at me when you talk to me.

THAW
Why?
(laughs)
Chemistry?

"EARLY FALL 2017" APPEARS ON SCREEN

INT. MATTERS' KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Mary Matters, a speech language pathologist, sits with LOU MATTERS, a nuclear engineer. Both are in their late thirties to early forties. Mary smiles and places her hand on Lou's arm affectionately.

MARY
Just the two of us, Lou.

LOU

Yes. Nice that Jason and Marty are now old enough to go to a movie with friends. Gives us a chance to talk.

Lou places his hand over Mary's but at a point, she pulls her hand away and clasps her hands together.

MARY

Oh, Lou, last night I had an awful dream.

LOU

Another meltdown at The Plant?

MARY

In it, this green sticky goo spread out from the Plant and moved implacably to our front door. Then it oozed through the space beneath it, crossed the vestibule and started down the stairs, I woke in a sweat.

LOU

Yup, meltdown worry, disguised as goo. Mary, even if there were a meltdown, we're more than thirty miles from The Plant. You know. We could either hunker down or if we knew soon enough, flee.

MARY

But suppose you were there at work? Or I had to pass through the area on my way home?

LOU

Mary, it seems that the longer I work at Magdum Heights, the more you worry.

MARY

Well, The Plant is over fifteen years old and given 9/11 and Three Mile Island, I just can't help it.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

With TUFTY nearby, THAW talks with LEM, a neighbor and close friend in his early fifties.

THAW

So, Lem, I figure part of it is looking the part.

LEM

The lab coat you use for painting is a definite.
But new shoes and the tweed jacket and tie
are a must for the interview.

THAW

Just plaid would be bad.
(laughs aloud.)
Imagine. An interview with Dr. Milford Owens.
(laughs)
And me . . . Teaching art at Nick- Sue.

LEM

By Nick-Sue, you mean New Carlton State
University?

INT. MATTERS' KITCHEN - DAY

MARTY is a platinum blond boy of about twelve, brown haired. JASON, brown haired and taller, is about fifteen. They are doing homework on the kitchen table.

TRACKING SHOT

Mary comes through the kitchen door from the garage and passes through to the living room where she leaves her briefcase, after which she returns to the kitchen to wash her hands.

MARY

Hi, guys.

When she is done washing her hands , Mary hugs each of the boys.

MARTY

Say, Mom. Could you help me with my
science project?

MARY

Sure. After dinner. How are you, Marty?

MARTY

Doing okay.

Marty stands expectantly waiting to hear more.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Kara got a new pup.

Marty opens his notebook but stops to talk with his mother.

MARTY (CONT'D)

She calls it Felicia. It's a French poodle. Black.

MARY

How old is it?

MARTY

Six weeks. I think I'll do my math first.

Marty opens his math book and picks up his pencil.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Still takes a bottle.

MARY

And how about you, Jason?

JASON

Soccer practice today. Managed a goal.

MARY

Good for you, Jay!

JASON

How about you, Mom.

MARY

Got somethin' for us. Came in the mail.

Marty looks up expectantly.

JASON

What?

MARY

Some KI. Potassium Iodide. Just in case.

MARTY

In case of what?

MARY

In case there is ever a meltdown. . . Taking the pills prevents absorbing radioactive iodine. Which prevents cancer of the thyroid.

JASON

Sounds good. Where'll you keep them?

MARY

In the wood room in the cellar. With the dosimeter. In the go-bag. In case of a meltdown.

MARTY

Cool, Mom. Leave it to you!

PULL BACK TO REVEAL LOU

Lou enters through the door from the garage.

LOU

Gangs all here, eh! Be back soon. Just got to shower first.

LATER

Lou re-enters the kitchen. His hair is wet and he has on fresh clothes. Mary has the dinner near ready.

MARY

Which of you sets the table tonight?

JASON

My turn. Marty clears.

MARTY

Hey, Dad. Mom got us some KI to use in case there is a meltdown.

Mary busies herself off to the side with dinner. Lou remains nonchalant.

Lou approaches Marty and evidences interest in Marty's homework.

LOU

Yeah. Never hurts to have some.

"BAIN, NEW CARLTON, 100 MILES FROM MAGDUM HEIGHTS NUCLEAR
POWER PLANT' APPEARS ON THE SCREEN

INT. NATALIE'S PLANNING DEPARTMENT OFFICE- DAY

NATALIE sits musing at her desk.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Meetings, dinners, presentations . . . But not
much significant forward movement . . . City
Planning is less idealistic than I envisioned. .
. I need another placement. . . Hopefully the
newly forming Inter-County Planning
Department with its coverage of wetlands and
open spaces will have one for me.

Natalie dials the phone and waits.

NATALIE

Thaw? It's me. Nat.

THAW (V.O.)

(sounds very pleased.)

Natalie! I'm so glad to hear your voice. How
are you?

NATALIE

Thaw, I've been thinking.

THAW (V.O.)

(half jokingly} Aren't you always?

NATALIE

Yes. But this time it's different.

THAW (V.O.)

Oh.

NATALIE

Thaw, I think we need to stop seeing each other for a while.

Thaw pauses to grasp Natalie's intent.

THAW (V.O.)

You do?

NATALIE

Yes. I need to sort things out . . . decide what I am doing with my life. Maybe my friends are right. Maybe I need a change.

THAW (V.O.)

You've met someone else.

NATALIE

No. I just need a change. You understand.

THAW (V.O.)

Well, yes. And no.

NATALIE

Well, I don't really understand it myself. That's why I need some time. I'll call you when I've thought it over.

THAW (V.O.)

How about if I call you?

NATALIE

Please don't. I'll call you. It might be a while. But I'll call you.

THAW (V.O.)

Okay, Nat. I love you, Nat. But okay.

Natalie hangs up the phone. Tears stream down her cheeks. She pulls a tissue from the box near the phone and her mind wanders.

MONTAGE

1) Images of Natalie interacting with other planners in her office.

2) Images of Natalie at home with friends.

Natalie hangs up the phone and muses.

NATALIE (V.O.)

But what am I going to do now? What am I to do? What's a mature city girl involved with a drop-dead handsome, financially strapped and probably really afraid-to-commit woodsman-artist to do? What?

Natalie wipes her eyes, blows her nose, and begins idly to thumb through the stack of mail she had absentmindedly placed on the telephone table as she passed it coming in from work earlier in the day.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Electric bill . . . Amnesty International . . .
NARAL . . . Environmental Defense Fund . . .
Office of the Governor of New Carlton . . .
"Office of the Governor?!!"

Natalie hastily tears open the letter from the Office of the Governor and reads.

INT. MILFY'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. MILFRED (MILFY) OWENS seats himself behind his desk. He gestures toward a chair for Thaw, places the portfolio of pictures of Thaw's paintings on the desk, and opens it, studying each of the page for a few seconds. Finished, he leaves the book open.

MILFY

So, Mr. Wamp . . . You prefer I call you Mr. Wamp? Or Theodore?

THAW

Theodore is fine, Dr. Milfred. But most people call me Thaw.

MILFY

So, Thaw. How can I help you?

THAW

I'd like to teach. I'd like to teach oil painting.

MILFY

Tell me about yourself.

THAW

Well, for starters, I don't have a degree. But I can paint and sculpt. I can understand other people's styles. I know color . . . balance. I've read and studied about many of the world's greatest artists. I think I have my own style . . . and that one day my work will become well known.

RESPONDING - JOLT SURVIVAL SERIES - ACT II

1) FLASHFORWARD - ON ROAD - DAY

As Mary drives, her driver's side car window is open. A dirty bomb explodes and splashes her arm with radioactive materials. She parks, rubs her arm to clean it, descends, opens the trunk, disrobes, tosses her clothes, and pulls on sweat pants, shirt, and flip flops she takes from the trunk.

2) FLASHFORWARD - INT. MATTERS HOME IN ARIANA - DAY

Marty and Jason run upstairs from their cellar. Through their living room window they view the red glare of flames in the distance.

3) FLASHFORWARD - EXT. MAGDUM HEIGHTS POWER PLANT - DAY

Lou exits his car carrying a briefcase. An explosive blast from a dirty bomb causes him to fly backwards and hit his head against a telephone pole.

INT. LA PETITE GALLERIE - DAY

Opening the FRONT DOOR, its BELL JINGLES and a YOUNG, ENERGETIC VOICE calls from behind one of the DISPLAY WALLS.

RORY

(from the back room)

Be right with you.

A second later Rory appears. His thick auburn hair falls to the side of his brow. His dark brown eyes sparkle above a ready smile. He wears loose-fitting beige pants, work boots that were obviously new, a brown-orange loose knit sweater under which shows the collar of a light yellow shirt and a darker tie through which run aquas, yellows and reds that lend his appearance only a slightly more formal tone.

RORY (CONT'D)

Theodore! Well if it isn't Theodore Wamp in the flesh! I was wondering when you were going to show. How's it been going, man? Painting up a storm? Whatcha' got there?

With a sudden switch to a careful and smooth movement Rory lifts the painting from Thaw's hands and lays it face up on the counter before the frame samples.

RORY (CONT'D)

Nice. Very nice.

Rory reaches for a BROAD MUTED PINK GOLD FRAMING SAMPLE.

RORY (CONT'D)

Yes. Genuinely nice. Definitely needs gold.

Rory pulls out a SMALLER BLACK CORNER.

RORY (CONT'D)

That would never do it justice. Too small. Closes in the picture. What you want is an openness. Something that will complement not stop the colors.

Rory tries a few more FRAMING CORNERS.

RORY (CONT'D)

Nope.

Rory returns to his original choice.

RORY (CONT'D)

Yup. That's it. What do you think?

THAW

Well, I like it. I like it very much. But will I like the price?

INT. NICK-SUE CLASSROOM - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Thaw is in a room filled with a dozen stools and standing easels. Paintings hang along the walls at odd angles, in various levels of completion. A female student enters the class. She nods in Thaw's direction and busies herself arranging her stool and easel. Thaw, approaches his desk and stands and watches as the class fills. Students arrange their stools and easels and mount their oils. Thaw rises and addresses the class.

THAW

Good morning, all.

EXT. THAW'S TRUCK NEAR LA PETITE GALLERIE IN BAIN - DAY

Wearing a suit and tie, THAW pulls up to the curb and notes that his watch reads eleven eighteen. He closes the truck windows and turns off the motor. He then reaches across the driver's seat, grabs his backpack and swings it over his shoulder, slams the door shut and heads for the rear of the truck. As his backpack inhibits his freedom of movement, he grabs the top painting with his left hand on its closer broad side and lets it waft downward slowly, picture side out, after which he heads for the gallery.

The day is mild and small gusts lift and release softly the stiff, broad 4' by 3' canvas. It is a celebration of spring with delicate colors featuring a swirl of mauve and soft green feathers, budding leaves, and tiny stars or flowers all wrapping into and around a nest of eggs containing one newly hatched, awkwardly shaped bird.

"THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018" APPEARS ON SCREEN

INT. MATTERS' KITCHEN- DAY

Once inside the kitchen, Jason places the empty terrarium on the counter, pours him self a cold glass of milk and Marty runs himself a drink of water from the tap. Jason gives a sideways nod and they both descend the stairs to the Matters' basement wood room to oil Jason's bike chain.

INT. MATTERS' BASEMENT - DAY

Central to the basement is a storage room lined with shelves. On the shelves are four rolled sleeping bags, jugs of water, canned foods including spam and tuna fish, closed boxes, one of which is tin and marked 'For Emergencies Only'. Also there is a plastic box labeled Potassium Iodide and a variety of board games and boxes of cards. There are also First Aid supplies and a see-through plastic box containing bars of soap, sweat pants, sweat shirts, and flip-flops. Marty walks along picking up the items and opening the boxes. When he opens the one marked 'For Emergencies Only,' there is a wad of some ten or so hundred dollar bills which he opens, fans out, and refolds and replaces as if it they are familiar to him.

MARTY

Never liked it down here. Never liked the
thought we might have to hunker down here.
Hurricanes! Fallout! No windows!

JASON

Well, it's for emergencies. See.

Jason ticks off the items as he points to them.

JASON (CONT'D)

First aid supplies . . . canned foods . . . bottles
of water . . . plastic bags . . . sweat pants and
sweatshirts . . . flip-flops . . . dad's dosimeter.

Marty opens a plastic box marked Potassium Iodide.

MARTY

What's Potassium Iodide for? Pain?

JASON

No. That's KI. In case the plant were to go
down. It protects the thyroid.

MONTAGE

1) Fires in the distance

2) People fleeing. Running. Getting in cars. Driving off.

EXT. LEM'S FRONT DOOR - DAY

THAW knocks on LEM's front door.

THAW

Lem. Have you heard the news?

LEM

Yes. It came in on my short wave.

THAW

I think we need to make some plans. Ones
that will include the whole village.

LEM

Yes. But Martha is expecting us for lunch.
Maybe, we should invite the mayor to join us.

THAW

Yeah. And given his military background, he could facilitate setting up a POD.

LEM

And Martha. We could use her librarian's people skills.

THAW

Okay. I dropped the fish we caught off at Martha's last night. So just let's head over.

LEM

You know, Thaw, I think in addition to the meltdown there must have been some dirty bombs. They think arson, but as they are clearing the area, they have not addressed the cause. But dirty bombs are suspected . . . maybe six . . . set off in areas between Aesopolis and Ariana.

THAW

So terrorism.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF SECONDARY COUNTRY ROAD/THRUWAY - DAY

Both with backpacks on, Jason and Marty race along the road until they reach an intersection with a more main road at which point Jason signals they stop and ditch their bikes behind the trees.

JASON

So, Marty. We ditch our bikes here on this side of the road, cross the thruway, and begin hitching north.

The boys put their bikes in a stand of trees, cross the highway, and walk backwards thumbing with their left hands. They are wearing backpacks.

JASON (CONT'D)

The key is to be out of the area as fast as possible. I think its maybe twenty minutes since we saw the red glow. So if we catch a ride in the next five or so, we're good!

MARTY

Yeah. In an hour we could be seventy-five miles north of the Plant.

Just then, an old man in a truck with homemade wooden sides on it stops. The driver calls out to them through the half open window. Jason and Marty approach the truck.

HANK

Whatchu' boys upta, now? Why ain'tcha in school?

JASON

Parent-teacher conference day. We need to get to Waxton.

Marty opens the passenger side door and speaks through the opening.

MARTY

Yeah. We have to meet our grandparents there.

HANK

They tell you to hitchhike?

MARTY

Yeah. My dad's truck broke down near them.

JASON

(indicates his bag))

And I have to bring him some spark plugs and jumper cables.

MARTY

Yeah.

HANK

Okay, hop in. I don't usually do this, but I don't like to see kids out on the road. Got grandkids of my own, you know.

Jason pushes past Marty and climbs in first. He lodges his backpack on the floor beside his feet. Marty puts his backpack next to his brother's, climbs in, and closes the door which SQUEAKS and does not shut well.

Jason reaches over Marty, reopens and re-shuts the door well, and Hank puts the truck in first and goes.

HANK (CONT'D)

Well, we're on our way. Sorry, the radio is on the fritz.

Hank pulls over into a gas station near a Bixby road sign.

HANK (CONT'D)

Well, this is as far as I go. My home is down this next street. You can come there and use my phone to reach your dad. Or you can use the payphone here.

JASON

Thanks, Hank. I'll use this one. Come on, Marty. Open the door.

Marty pulls down the handle and swings the door open.

MARTY

Thanks a lot for the lift, Hank.

HANK

You're welcome, Marty.

Jason offers his hand to Hank.

JASON

Yeah. Thanks so much, Hank.

HANK

Well, you know where I am if you need me. Number 10. Down that street.

JASON AND MARTY

Thanks, Hank.

Jason descends from the truck and slams the door with the force. It SQUEAKS and BANGS. Hank puts the truck in gear and drives off, calling to the boys through the open window.

HANK

See ya.

JASON AND MARTY
(both wave)
See ya!

INT. MARTHA'S DINING TABLE AREA

Over a FISH dinner set at a table for eight that runs the length of a side wall in Martha's kitchen, MARTHA, THAW, LEM, LARRY, the very dapper young village mayor, discuss the need for a Point of Distribution (POD) for use with anticipated forced refugees.

MARTHA
When do we think these refugees will begin to arrive?

LEM
I think we can expect some on the six o'clock train. Those coming by car are likely to arrive tomorrow or later.

LARRY
I understand the gridlock downstate is horrendous. Which will slow many.

LEM
And so many are without military emergency response training which puts them at heightened risk.

LARRY
Well, for those with training, Bain and Bixby are about one hundred miles from The Plant, so I think they'd head for there. But if they are informed, they'll prefer the two hundred mile distance, which means Lochlee.

LEM
And the train from Bain stops here.

MARTHA
Seems people either want to get away or get home.

(MORE)

MARTHA (CONT 'D)

The radio said they are setting up road blocks to prevent people from approaching The Plant and for those thirty-five or more miles from the plant, they want them to hunker down for seventy-two hours. They want them to go to cellars and stay away from the windows. And not to drink or eat anything that is not bottled or canned. Due to the potential for radioactive contamination.

LEM

But the electric grid is down around the meltdown so they're having difficulty getting messages out.

INT. LEM'S TWO BEDROOM HOUSE ON BUTTERNUT - DAY

As Thaw feeds and waters TUFTY, LEM sorts through his cabinets to assess food supplies.

THAW

The meltdown is sure having a strong after effect. How's your family doing, Lem?

Lem continues to sort through the canned goods in his cabinets, putting some into groups on his counter top.

LEM

My sister and her two children are coming up from Waxton.

(pauses)

Probably for the duration.

THAW

Natalie and her sister Judith with Hannah are also coming.

LEM

Where are you going to sleep them all, Thaw?

THAW

Well, I've got my air mattress . And then I thought maybe until we get something better, I could borrow yours.

LEM

If you want. Sure. But maybe Natalie's sister and daughter should stay here, instead. They could have one bedroom; my sister and her two daughters could have the one with the double bed and bunk beds; and I could sleep on the couch in the living room. It opens out.

THAW

Lem. That would be too much.

LEM

And four of you in effectively one room would not be? How old is the daughter?

THAW

Twelve or so.

LEM

Come on now. So, who's sleeping where? You taking the air mattress? Is Natalie?

THAW

Well, no . . .

LEM

Tell them they can sleep here. Let Natalie's sister decide which she thinks is better. Hell, I've slept on that couch many a night. And it wasn't even open.

THAW

(laughs)

I can guess what Natalie will choose.

Lem smiles Thaw's way.

THAW (CONT'D)

Lem, I think we better call Martha about tonight.

LEM

I already did. She's coming over. She said she'd meet the 6:10. She agreed we all need a game plan . . .

(MORE)

LEM (CONT'D)

for the community as well as ourselves. This thing is bigger than we are. Much bigger.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

MARTHA and JOSETTE, a young woman of Mediterranean heritage, stand together some distance from the train as it pulls in. Josette holds a SMALL CHILD. People peer from both of the cars' windows. On the platform stand a number of women wearing yellow neck scarves. Along the edge of the train platform are three men wearing matching yellow hats and scarves. They wear holsters with guns at their waists. More than twenty people descend from the two open doors of the nearer car. They are of varying ages. Some are in family groups. The women in scarves greet them and take them to waiting vehicles.

CAMERA TAKES IN TRAIN SCENE FROM A SOMEWHAT DISTANT VANTAGE POINT NEAR JOSETTE, HER CHILD, AND MARTHA.

JOSETTE

But, Martha, when is it going to stop? Do we just wait and see? Will we really be able to limit the total number to be accepted? Those of us with children are very worried!

MARTHA

(empathetically)

It's hard to figure what will work, Josette. I'm worried, too. Just times are difficult.

INT. TOWN HALL MEETING - NIGHT

LARRY, NATALIE, LEM, MARTHA, AND THAW sit at the head table facing an audience of mostly Townees.

LARRY

As you may know, Natalie has served on the Bain Planning Board, so Natalie will address our need for a more orderly arrangement of the temporary housing Newees are developing.

NATALIE

I'm impressed by the number of villagers who have taken in Newees.

(initiates applause)

However many people are living in their cars or the ice-fishing shanties. Some have brought tents and trailers. Some have built lean-tos.

LARRY

Yes. And the lumber yard is running out of materials.

Dropping many th-sounds and final consonants and using a country dialect, Dody rises and speaks from the crowd.

DODY

I been working among the Newcomers and a bunch of them have carpentry skills. I think we should pull them all together and help with a planned approach to building shelters.

LARRY

Dody. Could you do that? Pull them together? And arrange for them to meet with us tomorrow evening?

DODY

I can do that. There are a couple here right now who might be willing to help us.

Dody sits but not before sharing nods with a couple of men in the audience.

NATALIE

The Board has drawn up a Lochlee Town Zoning Map. The plan is that all temporary dwellings will be placed in rows so as to form streets that we will name. Then we'll number the dwellings so each resident will have an actual address.

LARRY

And as for the cars, they will be parked neatly near the lakeside by the boathouse, in the church parking lot, and if necessary along one side of less main roads. And Dody--maybe your team of carpenters could help move poorly placed temporary housing to the lakeside.

DODY

Gottcha, Lar.

LARRY

It's late now, so we'll call it a night, but if there's anyone who hasn't as yet been deputized who'd like to serve as a Peacekeeper, please see me before you leave. Not all Peacekeepers will be expected to carry guns.

"SECOND DAY AFTER MELTDOWN" APPEARS ON THE SCREEN

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A NURSE in enters. LOU is in bed in a HOSPITAL GOWN with a DRIP BAG attached to his arm. Lou watches the nurse as she checks the DRIP BAG.

Looking down she seems startled to find LOU looking at her.

NURSE

Hello. Are you awake?

Lou blinks his eyes in response.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Can you talk?

Lou blinks again. The nurse pats Lou's arm.

NURSE (CONT'D)

I'll be right back.

On the nurse's return she brings an older man and a young woman, both in white coats. Lou, reads their badges, looks each in the eyes, and blinks twice at the wearer after reading each.

DR. GEORGE, a tall, dignified doctor, enters, offers his hand to Lou.

DR. GEORGE

I'm MARTIN GEORGE, your doctor. You've had a pretty severe injury to your head.

Lou blinks.

Connie is carrying a card with picsyms, words, and phrases on it.

CONNIE

I'm CONNIE WILLIAMS. I'm a speech language pathologist.

Lou blinks.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Is speaking difficult for you? Lou blinks.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Yes. So, for now we will use yes/no questions. You can answer with one blink for yes and two for no. Do you understand me?

Lou blinks once.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Good. Can you read this card?

Lou blinks once.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Do you know your name?

Lou blinks once.

INT. TOWN HALL MEETING - NIGHT

Seated along the length of a LONG TABLE are NATALIE, THAW, LARRY, LEM, and MARTHA in that order.

They face a large AUDIENCE of worried VILLAGERS that include JOSETTE and her YOUNG CHILD. Larry serves as chair to the discussion in progress. A SECRETARY at the end of the table takes notes.

CAMERA PANS HALL AND SETTLES ON LEADERSHIP TABLE

A plaque with the word MAYOR on it sits in front of Larry.

LARRY

With the number of new arrivals steadily increasing, the impact of The Magdum Heights meltdown worsens with each day.

MARTHA

Well, Larry, I met the train on the first evening. Six people and one cat descended.

LARRY

So what did you do, Martha?

MARTHA

I took them home with me.

LARRY

And now?

MARTHA

Oh, they're still with me.

LARRY

No. I mean the numbers.

CAMERA PANS OUT TO TAKE IN AUDIENCE AND LEADERSHIP TABLE

MARTHA

So far there are about a hundred that have come by train and a hundred and fifty by car.

LEM

Let's see. Lochlee's population is about a thousand twenty five.

(stops to think)

That's an increase of a quarter!

Dody rises and remains standing.

DODY

Yup. We collected beds, blankets, and sleeping bags so twenty five or so are sleeping here in the fire house, twenty at the church, fifty at the school, and those in the welcoming committee have some in their houses.

MARTHA

I've met the trains each day. But Ellenville is not the train's last stop. I see some families descend, look around at the size of the crowd, and get back on.

Martha shrugs her shoulders and lifts her hands, palms upward.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Maybe they foresee that further on up the line there will be fewer of them.

NATALIE

I think we need to encourage more to move on. And we need to limit the number of persons we accept.

LARRY

And how do we do that? We're not likely to get any outside help anytime soon!

NATALIE

We could inform the Northern Line that we will be limiting the number of passengers who can descend and they in turn need to have their conductors explain that. Maybe keep it to twenty or so in the morning and the same at night.

CAMERA TAKES IN LEM, NATALIE AND MARTHA

LEM

Yes. And what about three or four men with guns lined up along the platform where they disembark to monitor the situation.

NATALIE

Well, as we don't have a police force, perhaps we could deputize some twenty hunters, preferably ones with military training.

MARTHA

Maybe we call them Peacekeepers and deputize some who will not carry guns. We need reasonable people at each train exit to explain the situation to those wishing to descend.

LEM

Maybe a few armed Peacekeepers could line up along the far edge of the platform while teams of unarmed ones could be stationed near the train exits to welcome Newees as they descend.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

Along the lake, shanties, cars, tents, and put up lean-to's and small houses among which families and individuals wander and children play along the lakeside fill the background. In the foreground a SANITATION COORDINATOR talks with WILLIAM MCLEAN, an informed young man who is new to the town.

SANITATION COORDINATOR

We're exhausted. All of us.

WILLIAM

Given the situation, I think we need to get the masons to build a small crematorium as cremation would result in significantly less need for digging.

SANITATION COORDINATOR

Never thought of that.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE AT SCHOOL - DAY

FINN, an eleven year old white boy on the autism spectrum, opens the door, puts his lunchbox on the student desk that abuts the end of Mary's desk, sits facing MARY, but does not initially engage with her.

MARY

Good morning, Finn.

Finn mumbles a good morning but does not look up from his lunchbox which he was busy opening to remove the high protein power drink his mother had prepared for him.

MARY (CONT'D)

Would you like to take off your jacket, Finn?

Finn stands, removes his jacket, hangs it on the back of his chair, and sits again, never in the process engaging with Mary visually.

MARY (CONT'D)

I see your mom fixed you something to drink.

Finn does not look toward Mary.

FINN

Yeah. It's a high protein drink. To help me start the morning.

MARY

Very nice. I am sure you need it as your mom says it's hard for you to eat when you first wake . . . and you do get hungry.

FINN

Yeah.

The two of them sat in silence as Finn drains the cup, replaces the cap, puts the cup back in the lunchbox, and closes it.

MARY

So how was the ride to school?

FINN

We had to stop for a train. It was going south.

MARY

Oh, really?

Finn does not respond and continues to look straight ahead.

MARY (CONT'D)

Finn, do you think you could look at me?

Finn looks at her immediately, but then looks away.

FINN

Yeah. An arm dropped down across the road, so we had to stop. And the red lights blinked. And pretty soon came the train. Going south. A cargo train. No passenger cars. Long. It often comes about the time we are to cross the tracks.

MARY

Trains are interesting. Where do you think that one was going?

FINN

Aesopolis.

Finn looks pointedly at Mary.

FINN (CONT'D)

May I go now?

MARY

Where will you go?

He continues to engage visually with Mary.

FINN

To class.

MARY

Will you be polite to the new girl?

Finn still continues to engage visually with Mary.

FINN

Yes. I'll just ignore her. I won't look at her. I won't say anything to her. I'll just start my journal work.

MARY

And if she says something to you?

FINN

I won't answer her.

MARY

And if that is difficult for you to do, what will you do?

FINN

I will ask my teacher for some time away and go and sit on the window ledge in the hall.

MARY

Sounds like a plan.

FINN

So, I can go?

MARY

Yes. And I will follow as I need to know you go directly to class.

"A FEW MONTHS AFTER THE MELTDOWN" FLASHES ON THE SCREEN

INT. MARTHA'S DINING AREA - NIGHT

Martha's home renovations have been completed and a number of refugees now live with her. They include the Puerto Rican emigrants Domingo and Maria and their two daughters, Rozlyn, aged twelve, and Juanita, age ten. Domingo and Maria both evidence Spanish accents but Rozlyn and Juanita do not.

Also living with them is Elaine, a pregnant young woman whose partner, Manfred, has radiation sickness and has been hospitalized.

Rozlyn and Martha set the table for seven as GRANNY and MARIA huddle by the stove and JUANITA plays with Marlana, the wire-haired terrier, with a knotted rope.

JUANITA plays with MARLENA, the wire-haired terrier, with a KNOTTED ROPE. At a certain point DOMINGO, the recently surfaced Porto Rican husband to Maria enters.

GRANNY

Juanita.

Juanita quiets her play with Marlana.

JUANITA

Yes, Granny?

GRANNY

Could you call Elaine and ask your dad to come in for dinner? And when you do so, ask Dody if he'd like to join us.

Juanita rises and heads out the back door for her dad.

Elaine enters from the living room.

ELAINE

I heard you, Grannie. I'm here.

Juanita returns through the back door with Domingo.

JUANITA

Dody says not tonight, but thanks anyway.

Martha, Rozlyn, Beatriz, and Granny place items of food on the table and everyone sits to eat, passing the food among themselves sometimes gesturing but overall without comment. Marlana and Prissy lie beside the table.

GRANNY

Martha, just in case no one else has said it, thank you so for welcoming us into your home.

MARIA

(smiling grandly)

Sí. ¡muchas gracias! somos como tu gran familia.

MARTHA

Da nada. You are all welcome. I'm just glad I can help.

(pauses, turns to Domingo)

So are you and Dody done with the closets now?

DOMINGO

(with heavy Spanish dialect)

Yes. It's finished now.

MARTHA

Wonderful. And so helpful to all of us.

INT. CAR ON WAY HOME FROM REHAB(MOVING) - DAY

Mary drives and Lou is in the front passenger seat.

MARY

Excited to be coming home for the weekend, Lou?

LOU

Sure. Lookin' forward to it.

(pauses)

So Mary, about the boys. What are we going to do to try to locate them?

Mary gives Lou a quick side glance.

MARY

Well, I'm working with the Red Cross, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System . . . NamUs for short . . . and the police.

LOU

What do they say?

MARY

They say the number of missing persons that resulted from people running to escape the risk of radioactive contamination is still high and about a third of those who left are still unaccounted for.

LOU

Don't they use the shelters?

MARY

They said that many people took to the woods and just roughed it.

LOU

Yes. Well, Jason has a fair knowledge of survival skills and he would watch over Marty. Maybe they are among those that are just roughing it.

MARY

And everyday there are reports of people reuniting after long separations.

LOU

But there must be something we can do, Mary.

MARY

Yes. So let me tell you about the flyers Lenore and I have been distributing.

LIFE GOES ON - JOLT SURVIVAL SERIES - ACT III

INT. STYKES BARN IN OHIO - DAY

JASON and MARTY talk as Marty sits on a STOOL using a MILKER to milk a COW.

JASON

So. Today's Sunday. We get to Skype with Mom and Dad. How do you think they seemed?

MARTY

(continues to milk)

Well, I think they are well. Dad was quieter than he used to be. And didn't seem to joke around. And he has lost weight and could use some sun. Mom seems fine but a bit tired.

JASON

Can't wait for them to be here.

MARTY

Me, too.

JASON

So, I've been thinking.

MARTY

Yeah. What about?

JASON

Well, about our time in Bixby.

MARTY

Yeah.

JASON

And how you fell in with that gang of street kids.

MARTY

Yeah.

JASON

And got to stealing.

MARTY

Aw, come on. Not that.

JASON

And I wanted to ask you if it was just a phase.
Or is that you?

MARTY

You know, I've thought about it myself.

JASON

And?

MARTY

Well, at the time it just seemed everything we
had . . . except each other . . . had been stolen.
And these kids, they thought it was fun.

JASON

Yeah?

MARTY

And it was kind of fun. Kind of a game. Kind of
exciting.

JASON

And since then?

MARTY

Well, I see it as a stage. Something I went
through. I like making cookies better. And
playing board games. And milking cows. And
feeling useful. And wanted. And having a
place of my own.

JASON

Yeah . . . And parents.

MARTY

Yeah.

JASON

So, is it done?

MARTY

Yeah. It's done.

JASON

And when the summer's over?

MARTY

Back to school. Back to hitting the books.
Back to playing sports.

Marty takes down the claw from the cow's udder which has been released.

INT. MATTERS LIVING AREA - DAY

Back from school, Mary approaches Lou at his computer, places her left hand and arm across his shoulders, leans, looks him in the eyes, places her right hand on his left shoulder, and kisses him soundly on the mouth and Lou rolls back his chair, pulls Mary onto his lap.

MARY

How you doing with your rehab, Hon?

LOU

Oh, really well! And you?

MARY

Likewise. What did you do today?

LOU

Well, first I purchased and downloaded copies of Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. I'm gonna need them. Not only for web design, but also as a way to lessen the effect of my left side sight loss.

MARY

Yes. They should help.

LOU

You know how I have been working on improving my visual scanning and using the Read-Right site to increase my reading speed?

MARY

Yup.

LOU

Well, I'm up to one fifty words a minute! And I've been researching where I might study graphic design. Found the perfect place. New York Institute of Art and Design.

MARY

Really?

LOU

Yes. Really! I would learn online. And at my own pace. They give you a personal mentor when you are advanced. Not only do you have unlimited access to their professionals for advice on projects you are working on, but they will even advise you on how to start a business!

Mary lays her head on Lou's shoulder.

MARY

I'm so happy for you, Lou.

"FALL 2020" APPEARS ON SCREEN

EXT. OUTSIDE ON THE MATTERS' HOUSE - DAY (SEPTEMBER)

MARY welcomes the ATKINS, JIM who is a Black school administrator, ARLENE, a contracts specialist with IBM, and CARL, their mixed race thirteen year old son.

MARY

Hi. I came over to welcome you to the neighborhood. I'm Mary Matters.

Mary stretches her hand out to each of the adults and gives a wave to their son who stands a bit behind his parents.

ADELE

Hi, Mary. Nice to meet you. I'm Adele Atkins.
This is my husband Jim Atkins -- and our son,
Carl Atkins.

They all shake hands with Mary - Carl only after a prompt from his mother to come closer and say hello. And at about that moment, Marty pulls up on his bike.

MARY

Marty, these are the Atkins . . . Adele . . . Jim . .
. and Carl.

MARTY

Nice to meet you all.

Marty uses the kick stand to balance his bike and shakes hands all round, ending with Carl.

MARY

So, Carl. Will you be attending the middle
school?

Carl nods in assent.

MARY (CONT'D)

Then you and Marty will probably ride on the
bus together.

MARTY

Yeah. Tuesday it'll pick us up by the street
sign on the corner. We can sit together if you
like.

Carl smiles.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You want to?

CARL

Sure.

MARTY

It'll be here at 7:15. I'll come over around 7:10 and we can get on together. . . What grade are you in?

CARL

Seventh.

MARTY

Yeah. Me, too.

MARY

It'll be nice for Marty to have a bus buddy. Because of the meltdown my sons have not been in school here for a year.

ADELE

Yeah. Jim had been working near the plant, but the district offices closed so he was happy to find a position here in Ariana schools.

MARY

Oh, I also work in the schools. I'm a speech language pathologist. Most of the students I see are emotionally disturbed and many are autistic. Most are middle schoolers. And you, Adele?

ADELE

My contracts' specialist job has not changed but Ariana is where Jim will be located and is also close to IBM so we're here. . . And at least its more than thirty miles from the Plant . . . Not that we're expecting another meltdown.

INT. MATTERS DINING ROOM/MIRIAM'S HOME -DAY

Due to COVID and the need for distant learning, MARY dials the phone and calls LETTY. Letty is the BLACK GRANDMOTHER to MIRIAM, an apparently white child with black hair, age eleven, who is on the Autism Spectrum.

MARY

Oh, Letty. So glad I caught you. How are you?

LETTY

Well, not so good.

MARY

Really? Working from home too much?

LETTY

Well that's part of it. But the worst of it is that Wallace, my husband, has COVID and is quarantined upstairs in our apartment, and Miriam and I are staying in one room downstairs with my friend, Samantha.

MARY

Oh, dear. Tight!

LETTY

Yes. And Miriam refuses to do anything I ask her to do! And I can't seem to get her to admit when she has done something she should not have.

MARY

Hmm.

LETTY

Yes. She should be doing much more than she is! Her writing is terrible, and she refuses to write more carefully! And her math! She needs to catch up! She also still has difficulty with dividing and multiplying. And when I want her to practice, she refuses!

MARY

Hmm.

LETTY

And she is very rude to me. But not to her counselor. Why, they will talk for an hour over Zoom and Miriam is always so nice and polite!

MARY

Any luck with using Google Classroom?

LETTY

No. She refuses to use it. All she is willing to do is to read stories on Abdo. Digital! And her Jo-Jo books!

MARY

Do you think she might talk to me?

LETTY

I'll try. . . Miriam , Miss Mary is on the phone. Would you like to talk to her?

After a bit, Miriam picks up.

MIRIAM

Hello?

MARY

Oh, Miriam. It's Mary. How are you?

Miriam answers calmly and pleasantly.

MIRIAM

I'm fine. How are you?

MARY

Oh, I'm fine. I was just wondering if you would like to do Google Classroom with me.

MIRIAM

Sure. Let me go over to the computer.

MARY

Well, not right now, Miriam. But how about we make a date, and I set up a session for you for the next time I call and meantime, you can do one of the lessons I have already set up for you on it and next time we can talk about it and catch up on how you are doing.

MIRIAM

Oh. Okay.

MARY

Can I talk again with your grandmother? I need to find out when would be a good time.

MIRIAM

Okay. Granma?

LETTY

Hello?

MARY

So Letty, I think Miriam will let you help her set up Google Classroom. If she does, then can you find my lesson for her on it? I'll call again Friday around 1:00. Would that be okay? I think you told me you don't work on Friday afternoons.

LETTY

I'll be here.

EXT. THE MATTERS' FRONT PORCH - DAY

After settling in at three foot distances on the Matters porch, MARY, LENORE, and ADELE converse. The women are all Caucasians in their mid thirties. All are masked until they sit, at which point they remove their masks to talk.

MARY

Boy, I thought we had it rough before this month hit. October 2020! A real killer. Hurricanes in the Gulf Coast. Wildfires in the West. BLM marches still going strong.

ADELE

Not to mention COVID on an upswing in most states. And conflicts over stay at home orders and masking.

MARY

No help from Congress for the homeless and jobless.

LENORE

And now the President refusing to mask and isolate . . . even after testing positive for the virus! . . . And the presidential election heating up!

All three women quiet and contemplate to themselves.

LENORE (CONT'D)

So Mary. How's Lou doing?

MARY

You know, two years ago he was the center of our concerns. But he's doing so well, I tend to forget he still has to accommodate to his vision loss.

(laughs)

And instead of his relying on me, I rely on him. He helps the boys with their school work, makes our lunches, and puts in thirty to forty hours a week now either with Staples or on digital design contract work.

LENORE

You hadn't moved here when he first came home, Adele, but believe me, even I can see the enormity of the progress he has made.

MARY

Yeah. Gotta be thankful!

MONTAGE

- 1) Images from the Trump and Biden election rallies.
- 2) Images of excerpts from the Trump-Biden Presidential debate in which the journalists are cautioning the need for turn-taking.
- 3) Selected images from the Trump-Biden campaigns demonstrating the contrast in following social distancing and masking recommendations.

INT. SOLERS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Unmasked but with masks sticking from some pockets, the SOLERS, MATTERS, and ATKINS adults relax together.

CARLOS

Hurricane Ida really whacked the city! Did you see the water just pouring into the subways?

LOU

Good old climate change! Drought and fires in the west and now storms and flooding beyond the South and Midwest . . . even here in the Northeast!

JIM

Why were we so surprised by Ida's force?

CARLOS

I just think it's just a bad year.

Everyone ignores Carlos' comment except Lou.

LOU

Well, get ready for the next one! Who knows what it will bring?

CARLOS

At the dealership we are beginning to sell more hybrids.

LOU

Yes, electric cars will help. . . But producing the electricity needed remains a key question.

Carlos remains silent.

JIM

(ironically)

Tell me about it.

LOU

My boys have been asking me if we are going to get rid of nuclear power.

JIM

What do you think?

LOU

Right now nuclear fission provides twenty per cent of our power and the ITER in Southern France will be the first nuclear fusion plant. Except it won't be ready for maybe four or more years.

During this conversation, Carlos seems distracted and avoids involvement in it.

JIM

Internationally supported. Right? Germany, France, us . . . And even that, as you say, won't be ready before 2025 or 26.

LOU

And it'll be another twenty five years before we can produce energy here with fusion. So the best we can do is to build safer nuclear fission plants.

JIM

With fission they split the uranium atom. But what do they fuse?

LOU

Much smaller atoms - deuterium and tritium - and make helium.

JIM

Helium, huh?

LOU

Yup. And fusion offers four times the energy of fission and . . . Can you imagine? . . . and four million times the energy of coal or gas.

JIM

And the risk?

LOU

Well, unlike fission, fusion produces a short lived minimally radioactive product.

Carlos decides to reenter the conversation.

CARLOS

So then perhaps once the plants are built, the cost of energy will be less.

LOU

Well, I suppose that's possible. But the cost of the building a fusion plant is extreme - maybe ten billion dollars. And takes ten or more years to complete.

MARY

Enough of this heavy talk. It's Saturday night! And, hurray, we are no longer involved in distant learning! Time to celebrate!

"AUGUST 2021" IS DISPLAYED ON THE SCREEN

- 1) Images of the fury of Hurricane Ida.
- 2) Images of its aftermath.
- 3) Images of flooding in the NYC subways.

"FALL 2021" APPEARS ON SCREEN

EXT. THE MATTERS' BACKYARD - DAY

Observing social distancing and masking when they are closer, at a weekly cookout with neighbors, masked Marty and Jason converse.

MARTY

We've practically got this down to science, Jason.

JASON

(laughs - amused)

Yup. We know the drill. Three foot distances or we mask. No political commenting. Upsets Carlos. Wooden picnic table moved to just outside the circle. Solers, Atkins, and Matters each get their own metal table.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

Masks on if we are not seated in our agreed upon seats. Three to six foot distances away from each other.

Marty takes a bow and sweeps his arm to an area where there is a table, a guitar, an amp, and a laptop.

MARTY

Performance area for the Upbeats!

JASON

Oh . . . And I fire up the grill but dad can use it to grill our food on.

Lou and Mary arrive on the scene. They are masked. The boys are arranging food and utensils on the tables.

MARTY

Hey, Dad. Did you hear this one?

LOU

No. What?

MARTY

A guy goes into a bar and asks for a tornado twist, a hurricane, and a perfect storm cocktail.

LOU

Yeah.

MARTY

The bartender gets the drinks and says, "That's \$20.20."

Lou laughs and gives Marty a sideways look.

INT. MARTY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The STUDENTS are just entering the class. The TEACHER is in the hallway at the jam of the door greeting the children.

As they enter, HESTER, a recent thirteen year old immigrant from Afghanistan who wears a HIJAB and is fluent in English is just in front of MARTY as one of their female classmates, SHIRLEY, a fair-skinned, large boned agemate speaks in a half voice to Hester.

SHIRLEY

So, how's the Virgin Mary doing today?

Hester does not respond and moves on toward her desk where she places her backpack. Shirley bumps into Hester, knocking her against her desk.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

(in a mock apology)

Oh. So sorry, Mary . . . Mary, Mary, quite contrary.

Marty moves toward the female classmate.

MARTY

(innocently)

So, Shirley. You go to church?

INT. MARY'S SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Both masked, RODRIGO, a recent Mexican immigrant who speaks with a heavy Spanish accent, and MARY are sitting in Mary's office looking at a First Pictionary.

MARY

Let's look at the animal page. I will point to each animal's name and say it.

Mary points to each animal's name, reads it aloud, and Rodrigo repeats it.

MARY (CONT'D)

(points around page)

What are these, Rodrigo?

RODRIGO

(with heavy Spanish accent)

They are animals.

MARY

(mimes closing her front teeth)

Rodrigo, can you say animalzzz.

RODRIGO

Animalz

MARY

Yes. Animals. They are animals. Mary points to Rodrigo.

RODRIGO

(clearly)

They are animals.

INT. MATTERS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jason, Ricky, and Lou are all unmasked.

LOU

Yeah. So, sure, the Senate voted 69 to 30 to give overwhelming bipartisan support to the president's infrastructure bill, but now the Democrats want to tie it to the passage of a social safety net for health care, child and elder care, and education that lessens the chance of the infrastructure bill being passed.

JASON

But don't they think it is important to rebuild the nation's deteriorating roads and bridges and help slow climate change?

RICKY

Sure. But I heard that in expanding the nation's social safety net, the second bill will also address climate change.

JASON

So, Dad. The question is, are you going to address the importance of passing both these bills on your climate change website?

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

Or do you think we should settle for just the first one? Or do you not talk about them in anyway?

EXT. THE MATTERS' FRONT PORCH - DAY

JIM and CARLOS, his Cuban neighbor, are seated distantly and maskless on the Matters' front porch.

CARLOS

So, Jim. How are you doing with the Matters Digital Design Services?

JIM

Doing well. Staples is using MDDS services on a daily basis now and the Cassie's Corner website is expanding and drawing more traffic.

CARLOS

So she is actually selling things?

JIM

Mostly masks. And she now offers both home sewn masks with pm 2.5 Filters and ready made N95 masks.

EXT. THE MATTERS' BACKYARD - DAY

MARTY, JASON, RICKY, and CARL perform musically as The Upbeats for JAVIER (a recent immigrant from El Salvador who speaks little English), CANDI (Jason's female classmate), and ART AND HESTER (English speaking recent immigrants from Afghanistan). All are distanced and unmasked with masks in sight here and there. When they are on break, Marty pays particular attention to Hester who is bare-headed.

INT. JASON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Jason's social studies class is learning about climate change and it is Jason's turn to share what he has learned. He stands before the class to make a brief presentation. All in the room are MASKED.

JASON

Clean energy is needed to reduce the effects of carbon dioxide on climate change. Right now, nuclear power provides about twenty per cent of our clean energy. And to meet our increasing needs, we need to build more wind, air, and solar power sources. Before we can build more nuclear plants, they should be more secure against meltdowns. Yet nuclear power the most likely form of future clean energy, except instead of nuclear fission where we split the uranium atom, we will use nuclear fusion where we'll fuse deuterium and tritium - and make helium. A much safer yet more powerful energy source.

- 1) Images of the fury of Hurricane Ida
- 2) Images of its aftermath
- 3) Images of flooding in the NYC subways