

JOLT: A SAGA OF SURVIVAL

EPISODE 10
2022: THE NEW NOW

Written by
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Based on the novels of Roberta M Roy

JOLT: A RURAL NOIR

TWO CLOSE: A STORY OF SURVIVAL

HOME AGAIN 2020

TEASE

FADE IN:

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Happy New Year, 2022"

MONTAGE - NEW YEAR, NEW CHALLENGES

INT. WASHINGTON - CANON HOUSE - MEETING ROOM - DAY

The January Sixth Select Committee convenes. Behind the Members, a large TV displays an image of President Trump.

EXT. SOUTHWEST - FARMLAND - DAY

Arid soil swirls in a dust devil.

NOAA METEOROLOGIST (V.O.)
The continuing drought in the
Southwest is the most severe in
1,200 years.

Cattle roam parched land.

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRLINERS - DAY

In flight:

> Two Male Passengers in a heated fight over masking.

A Flight Attendant struggles to separate them.

> A Female Passenger punches a Flight Attendant.

EXT. UKRAINE - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Infantry divisions and armor clog the barely two land road.

Air support flies overhead.

EXT. MATTERS' HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

A summer block party underway.

Mask free, *The Upbeats* - Marty, CARL ATKINS (15), Jason and their new singer Hester prepare to perform.

END MONTAGE

END TEASE

ACT I "MOVING ON"

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Moving On"

INT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Breakfast.

LOU MATTERS (40s) greets Son MARTY (15) who bops in.

LOU
Mornin', Marty.

Marty hangs backpack and COVID mask on a chair.

MARTY
Mornin'.

He reaches for OJ.

JASON (17) shuffles in, hangs backpack and mask.

JASON
Mornin', Dad.

LOU
Mornin', Jay.

Jason pours OJ.

LOU
Best take warm jackets. Gonna drop
from high sixties to high thirties.

Marty's look: quizzical.

MARTY
Thirty degrees? A whole 30 degrees?

Lou nods.

Marty LAUGHS.

MARTY
Time for my fleece-lined jacket.

Off a mischievous look at Lou,

MARTY
Where are those fur lined gloves?

Lou shoves Marty. Playful.

INT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

The usual: a Teacher lectures and writes on a whiteboard;
Students take notes.

Everyone wears a mask.

DOOR PLACARD:

"Mary Matters
Speech Language Pathologist"

IN MARY'S OFFICE

MARY MATTERS (40s), Lou's Wife, works with MIRIAM (12), an
African American who grips a book with a platinum blonde girl
on the cover.

MIRIAM

But I like her.

Mary entices her with another book.

MARY

I like her, too. It'd be nice to
read books about other girls too.

Miriam ponders.

MIRIAM

I could write about her.

MARY

Could you write about how she meets
a new girl?

Miriam brightens.

MIRIAM

I could do that.

Mary reaches for a book with an Afro American child on its
cover.

MARY

Okay. Let's pretend she meets the
girl in this story.

MIRIAM

Okay.

MARY

We can take turns.

Mary opens the book.

Miriam engages her.

MARY

Would you like to read first?

MIRIAM

Okay. Then you read a page?

Mary nods, done deal.

MARY

Adiva felt shy. She was new to the school. She stood beside the teacher. The teacher introduced her to the class. "Class, this is Adiva. Adiva and her family have just moved here. Carrie, perhaps Adiva can sit next to you. Please, everyone, help Adiva to learn your names and make her feel welcome."

She rotates the book to Miriam and listens as she reads.

MIRIAM

Adiva put her notebook and pencil on the desk and sat down.

MARY

Would you like to write about what Jo-Jo would do to make Adiva welcome.

MIRIAM

I can do that.

Miriam picks up her pencil, writes, puts her pencil down, and looks at Mary.

MARY

Do you want to read what you wrote or should?

MIRIAM

I can.

Miriam looks at her paper and reads.

MIRIAM

Jo-Jo said hello to Adiva. Jo-Jo said my name is Jo-Jo. Nice to meet you.

MONTAGE - SEVERE WINTER STORM

EXT. RURAL OHIO - DAY

Wind HOWLS.

A farmhouse obscured by a whiteout.

LOCAL METEOROLOGIST (V.O.)
The affected areas received eight
to 12 inches of snow with isolated
higher amounts in snowbelt counties
where 12 to 16 inches fell.

EXT. OHIO - CITY - DAY

Deserted. Cars buried. Streets impassable.

LOCAL METEOROLOGIST (V.O.)
Southern counties experienced mixed
freezing rain and/or sleet with
snow accumulations of six to 11
inches.

A gust whips up snow. Trees sway. Snow-heavy branches CREAK.

END MONTAGE

INT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Mary on the phone.

MARY
Sounds terrible, Nora.

INT. OHIO - STYKES' FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Over coffee, Mary's Sister-In-Law, NORA (30s), on the phone.

NORA
Thank God we have a fireplace.

INTERCUT - MATTERS AND STYKES' HOMES

MARY
Are Ohio winters usually so bad?
Eleven inches! And freezing rain on
top?

NORA
They shoveled all night?!
With a few breaks.

(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)
They finally made it to the barn so
they could feed the animals. After
that they crashed. Both sound
asleep now.

MARY
Oh, Nora. I'm so sorry. My thoughts
are with you. Give Bob and Cal my
love.

END INTERCUT

INT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Breakfast dishes yet to be cleared.

Lou and Mary linger over coffee.

MARY
Looks like the January Sixth
Committee is beginning to move.

LOU
They're issuing subpoenas to people
involved in the events before the
attack on the Capitol.

MARY
Some are saying it was necessary.
And deny there was violence.

Lou throws up his hands.

LOU
What's to deny? What they need to
determine is how it was set off.
And by who exactly.

MARY
It's gonna be a slow process. They
issued three subpoenas but there
were thousands at the Capitol.

Lou shakes his head.

LOU
Nobody ever said democracy was
simple. Or easy. It's messy.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Marty noodles at a piano.

Muslim HESTER (15) does not wear a hijab. She stands a bit apart from Marty.

Both in masks.

MARTY

A black key can be sharp or flat.

HESTER

So it depends on if it's up or down from the key?

MARTY

Yes. B, C, E and F keys have half notes between them.

Marty plays each pair.

MARTY

B - C. E - F. All the other white keys have whole notes between them.

Marty plays C, D, E then F, G, A.

MARTY

This key can be a C sharp or D flat. This, F sharp or G flat.

HESTER

Thank you, Marty. Would you play me the scale in half notes?

Hester lowers forehead, looks up with a shy smile.

HESTER

Please.

Marty does. Shaky yet serviceable.

HESTER

And in full notes?

Marty plays the scale in full notes then smiles at Hester.

MARTY

Please, don't ask me to play a melody.

(chuckle)

I don't have my guitar with me.

HESTER

Next time bring it. I like to hear you play.

INT. JUNIOR HIGH - MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

An informal meet between Mary and curriculum coordinator, ANGELINA SANCHEZ (40s), a sophisticated Ph.D. candidate who stands in the doorway.

ANGELINA

So many staff members left due to COVID. Luckily, you and Janice are still here so there's no need to increase caseloads.

Mary gestures at her small office.

MARY

More than one student and we'd need a shoehorn.

ANGELINA

Since most of your caseload evidences autism, they're more likely to have individual therapy prescribed.

Mary considers the problem.

MARY

Two at a time might work, but we need space for physical action to increase the flexibility of their expectations.

ANGELINA

How does that work?

Angelina sits.

MARY

Those with Autism have predictive expectations. It can be upsetting for a child with Autism if they don't observe what's expected.

ANGELINA

So you increase their flexibility in what they expect?

MARY

Yeah. Maybe game playing or role switching. I hand you a block, then you hand Sammy the block, then Sammy hands you the block who then hands it to me.

ANGELINA
(shakes her head)
Glad you've got a firm handle on
it.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jason tunes the TV to the weather channel.

Lou slides in beside his Son.

LOU
Patterns are really changing. A lot
different than when I was a kid.

Jason, a serious look.

JASON
Drought in the southwest. Tornadoes
in the Midwest. Floods near us in
Aesopolis. The planet is roasting.

LOU
Too much carbon in the atmosphere.

JASON
It's overwhelming and scary but at
the same time really interesting.

Lou pats his son on the back.

LOU
Sometimes I think the weather
channel is your favorite.

JASON
It interests me, Dad.
(corrects)
It interests me a lot.

MONTAGE - RUSSIA INVADES UKRAINE

EXT. UKRAINE - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Infantry divisions and armor clog the barely two lane road.

Air support flies overhead.

EXT. UKRAINE - CITY - DAY

Missiles slam an apartment building. A school. Hospital.

EXT. UKRAINE - TRAIN STATION - DAY

Chaos. A bustle of bodies jammed wall-to-wall.

Refugees exit buses then line up for trains.

Women, Seniors and children kiss Young Men goodbye. Many for the last time.

END MONTAGE

INT. MATTERS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - WORK AREA - NIGHT

Lou types away on a computer keyboard as Jason looks on.

JASON
Dad? What's next?

LOU
Hard to say. Watch and wait.

JASON
How can Ukraine hold them back?
It's so small compared to Russia.

LOU
The West will send weapons.

JASON
What about troops?

LOU
Can't get directly involved. It'd
be like the U-S declaring war on
Russia. Too much at stake.

Jason digests.

JASON
Russia has alotta nukes.

LOU
So do we. Two of the best reasons
for the U-S to stay out of it.

EXT. MATTERS' HOME - DAY

Before Lou crosses the street, he scans left and right several times. He makes his way to --

EXT. ATKINS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

Lou dons a mask before he rings the doorbell.

JIM ATKINS (30s) answers.

JIM
Come in, Lou. Glad you feel
confident enough to look left so
you can cross the street.

LOU
Graduated to first grade; look both
ways before you cross.

Lou walks on Jim's left into --

INT. ATKINS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jim sits to Lou's right to accommodate Lou's loss of left
field of vision.

JIM
How's Matters' Website Design
doing?

LOU
Just got a new job from B-J's Lawn
Services. Started work on it this
morning. Nothing too complex.

Jim glances out the window.

LOU
Whaddaya think about the Ukraine?

JIM
I dunno. That Putin...

LOU
Yeah. First he orders ten days of
phony military maneuvers.

JIM
Then pretends he has the right to
send troops into Ukraine like he
owns the place.

LOU
Scary. Could be a drumbeat to a
larger East-West conflict.

JIM
At least NATO countries are
imposing sanctions.

LOU
Surprised they moved so fast. Putin
moves, sanctions come down the very
next day.

JIM
Let's pray it stops there.

INT. JUNIOR HIGH - MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Mary busy at her computer when Angelina enters.

ANGELINA
Morning. Have some bad news.

MARY
Good morning. What is it?

ANGELINA
Janice's husband has COVID.

MARY
Oh no! How bad?

ANGELINA
It seems manageable. He's at home
with the whole family. Quarantined
for ten to 14 days.

MARY
Oh my! Anything I can do?

ANGELINA
Pick up some of her caseload.

MARY
I could double up some of my cases.

ANGELINA
Any thoughts on how?

MARY
Well, I have some children with
autism that if I could use the gym
when I see them I could set up
games for them to play.

ANGELINA
Games?

MARY

Communication games in which two children and I share different materials as they follow and offer differing directions. The emphasis would be on encouraging them to view things in a variety of ever changing ways . . . Following directions . . . Giving directions . . . Looking to the right . . . Looking to the left.

ANGELINA

How many children might you group?

MARY

Oh, I think three groups of two. That would give me six open sessions in which I could do individual therapy with the newees.

ANGELINA

When you are ready, could you let me know how many openings you have so I can schedule her most pressing cases.

MARY

Certainly.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Socially Distant and maskless, Jason eats lunch with CASSIE (17). They sit at right angles to each other.

JASON

I've been wondering what it would take to become a meteorologist.

CASSIE

Like a T-V weatherman? A new face to start.

Cassie LAUGHS.

JASON

Ha-ha. Very funny. For N-O-A-A, maybe.

CASSIE

You'd have to know geography.

JASON
Yeah, but think about studying air.
How it moves. Its temperature. How
much water it holds.

CASSIE
Air is a gas. You'd have to study
gases.

Jason sips milk. Thinks.

JASON
Did you know the earth's atmosphere
is 65 to 75 miles thick?

CASSIE
Really?

JASON
Except greenhouse gases are
shrinking it.

CASSIE
Yeah. Ozone layer.

Cassie gives Jason's question thought.

CASSIE
I think you'd have to be good at
advanced math.

JASON
Probably physics.

CASSIE
Why physics?

JASON
My chem teacher said physics is the
study of fundamental mathematical
relationships that govern natural
phenomenon.

Cassie opens her mouth in mock amazement, pats Jason's arm.

CASSIE
Ya' done good, man.

For a moment, Jason becomes lost in possibilities.

He and Cassie clean their mess and leave the table.

AT ANOTHER TABLE

Marty and Hester finish lunch. The cafeteria near empty.

MARTY

Hester. I've been thinking.

Hester LAUGHS, flirty.

HESTER

That's always a good thing.

She notes Marty's seriousness, listens.

MARTY

The school prom is coming up.

HESTER

I heard about it.

MARTY

Any chance you'd like to go with me?

Hester, a tad shocked.

HESTER

You're asking me to go to the prom with you?

MARTY

I am. Will you?

HESTER

You mean with a gown? And dance with you?

MARTY

You wear the gown.

Hester snickers.

MARTY

But yes. And dancing with me.

HESTER

I'll have to ask my parents.

MARTY

If they say yes...?

She considers then grins.

HESTER

If they say yes, then, yes. I'll go to the prom with you.

Marty and Hester 'high five'.

END ACT I

ACT II "SPRING AND SUMMER"

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Spring and Summer"

MONTAGE - THE NEW NOW

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Students pass taped up NOTICES: "Masks are no longer required. Social Distancing is still highly recommended."

CLASSROOM

Students maintain distance but move around unmasked.

INT./EXT. ARIANA - STREET - DAY

Unmasked, boisterous Students ride a school bus.

EXT. OHIO - CLARK COUNTY - DAY

Uprooted trees. Damaged outbuildings.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Clark County residents began clean up after a suspected tornado tore through the area. We spoke to local residents about the storm.

LOCAL RESIDENT (V.O.)

"Sure was a twister. Seen 'em before. I looked at my wife and said, 'Let's git to the basement.'"

Residents take chain saws to downed trees and clean up.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

An Angry Driver fills their SUV. The numbers roll too fast.

Station's PRICE SIGN: "Regular \$5.01"

END MONTAGE

INT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Mary on the phone.

MARY
Is everyone okay, Nora.

INT. OHIO - STYKES' FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Nora leans a phone against her ear.

NORA
Yes. It hit just north of us. Near
Springfield. Uprooted hundreds of
trees and damaged outbuildings.

INTERCUT - MARY AND NORA'S HOMES

MARY
First a ton of snow gets dumped on
you then a tornado, no less.

NORA
Climate change is hitting us hard.

Nora chuckles.

NORA
The report was the winds were
'weak'. That we lucked out.

MARY
What's weak?

NORA
E-F one; 80 to 110 miles per hour.
Weak my great aunt Gertie!

MARY
Horrible!

NORA
Crossed the country club a few
miles away but only took down trees
and caused minor damage to one
house. I guess we were lucky.

END INTERCUT

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - NIGHT

Prom night.

The decorating committee transformed the gym: round tables
with white tablecloths; colored lights. Kinda magical.

A DJ spins tunes.

Hester, gorgeous in a handmade gown. Marty, dapper in tux.

At a table, Cassie, Jason, Hester and Marty.

MARTY

What do you say? Care to cut a rug?

The slang lost on her.

MARTY

Dance. Would you like to dance?

Hester averts eyes for a tick then smiles up at Marty.

HESTER

Yes. Let's.

Marty offers a gentleman's hand to Hester.

She follows him to the dance floor where they hold each other and sway to a slow dance.

JASON

Look at him. My little brother...

CASSIE

Not so little. Get used to it.

Jason leads Cassie to the dance floor.

INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - SERVICE BAY - DAY

Mary pulls to a stop.

A SERVICE ADVISOR (30s) approaches her car as she exits with mask in hand.

SERVICE ADVISOR

Ma'am. We're asking people to please wait in their cars.

As Mary reenters the car,

MARY

Is there a problem?

SERVICE ADVISOR

Due to COVID, we're asking customers to stay with their car until they're called.

MARY
(smiles)
I understand. Makes sense.

SERVICE ADVISOR
So nice to see a smile.

Mary tilts her head, confused.

SERVICE ADVISOR
You wouldn't believe how angry it
makes people. Especially younger
ones.

MARY
COVID effect.

SERVICE ADVISOR
Suppose so. Doesn't make my job
easy to be a COVID cop.

INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - SERVICE WAITING AREA - DAY

Chairs. TV. Free bad coffee and stale doughnuts.

The only one masked, Mary waits with an AUNT (30s), her 12
year old NEPHEW and an ELDERLY WOMAN (70s).

Mary checks the time on her phone: 9:45.

The Nephew buries head in a phone, rides low in the chair.

Not truly interested, the Women stare at a TV cooking show.

The Elderly Woman smiles at Mary who points at the TV.

MARY
Have you been watching the January
Sixth hearings?

ELDERLY WOMAN
Wouldn't miss them.

MARY
Pretty informative.

ELDERLY WOMAN
They are -- not in a good way.

MARY
Looking forward to what they
"inform" us about today.

The Elderly Woman agrees in a nod.

The Service Advisor pages the Elderly Woman. A small wave to Mary and she disappears.

The Aunt stays with the television but glances at Mary.

MARY

I read that talking to strangers is uplifting.

AUNT

You mean it makes you feel better?

MARY

I decided to try it out. We don't get out like we did. Wandering around in stores, I wind up talking to someone.

AUNT

Sometimes it's easier to talk to a stranger. Like you might tell them something you wouldn't tell a friend.

MARY

Never thought of that. But yes. Do you talk to strangers?

AUNT

Not recently.

MARY

I talked a bit to the Service Advisor. He said he was happy to see someone pleasant. He said so many that come in are angry.

The Aunt hikes a thumb in the direction of her Nephew.

MARY

Especially younger people.

AUNT

I worry most about the kids.
(re: Nephew)
Lives in a kinda shell.

MARY

COVID splintered us. There's social media isolation within age groups. That's on top of isolation at home. Especially those who live alone.

AUNT

And if you suggest it'd help to go
to church a half hour each morning --
- they're not gonna do it.

Mary points to the TV.

MARY

Do you mind watching the January
Sixth hearing? It starts at ten.

YOUNGER WOMAN

I don't know. What it's about?

How could someone not? Mary stifles her shock.

MARY

Trump's 'Stop the Steal' and the --
I don't know what to call it --
insurrection. It's on all channels.
Except Fox.

YOUNGER WOMAN

I watch Fox. They say there was no
insurrection. I like Fox.

A polite nod from Mary.

EXT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Lunch with the whole family.

MARY

At the dealership yesterday, I was
talking with a woman. We both
agreed COVID separated us in ways
we could never have imagined.

MARTY

Some still mask inside.

JASON

During distant learning, we were
separated from our friends.

LOU

I'm always online. Texting.
Zooming. Occasionally on the phone.
I mean, if I didn't have real
people -- you, friends, neighbors --
I'd be lost.

MARY

The woman was concerned about how much time her nephew spends on his phone.

MARTY

Video games. There's a lot that're really violent.

JASON

We like balance. We have *The Downbeats*. We play sports. Have friends I-R-L. You know, touch grass.

LOU

Don't know the lingo, Jay. I-R-L? Touch grass?

JASON

In real life, Dad. Touch grass; get offline.

MARTY

(chuckle)

Whatsa matter, Dad? Don't you speak English?

Lou squints at Marty.

LOU

Bite me!

MARTY/JASON

Huh?

Lou and Mary LAUGH.

LOU

Here endeth the slang lesson.

MARY

Not every family eats their meals together like us. None of us is on a special diet; one meal for all.

LOU

Mary, what if you were to only eat gluten free and avoid milk products. Jason, you're a vegan. Marty, you eat eggs and fish, but not meat. I'm on a Mediterranean diet. You'd need an air traffic controller to land a meal.

MARTY

(laughs)

We'd have to cook for ourselves.

MARY

That's reality in some families.
Kids up all night playing online
games with other kids. Meals split
by differences in diet. COVID
keeping people isolated. No money
for a family vacation.

Jason toasts with his iced tea.

JASON

To the Matters. All talking.
Different ages. Different genders.
All eating chicken sandwiches on
whole wheat and drinking milk.

Marty toasts Jason with his tea.

MARTY

To what matters... Matters.

LOU

Radical!

EXT. MATTERS' HOME - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Lou, Jim and friend, CARLOS SOLERS (30s), chew the fat.

CARLOS

I think we need unity on this.

LOU

You bet. Bipartisan support and
international unity.

JIM

The only way we'll be able to get
anything passed in Congress is for
them to work across the aisle.

Jim looks from Lou to Carlos.

JIM

Unified in support of Ukraine.

CARLOS

Do we send soldiers? Or only
weapons?

JIM

Sending troops would be the kickoff to World War Three -- and the end of everything.

CARLOS

We need to slow Putin down. How do we do that?

LOU

Embargoes. Sanctions. Stopping the purchase of Russian oil. Stop Russians from traveling to the West. Freeze Western bank accounts.

JIM

NATO and the European Union working together.

LOU

And supplying weapons.

CARLOS

Yes. Weapons.

Lou raises an eyebrow.

LOU

No nukes though.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Jason and Marty deep in homework.

Lou joins them with a cup of coffee in hand.

JASON

Smells good.

LOU

Want some?

JASON

No. Doing my chemistry. Don't want any C-12, H-22, O-11.

LOU

Sugar?

JASON

You got it, Dad.

MARTY

Show off.

Jason rolls his eyes.

LOU

You like the sciences.

JASON

Math first. Then science.

LOU

Physics?

JASON

Something to do with climate. A field that counters climate change.

LOU

Interesting. Never thought about climate as an academic area. Environmental Sciences. Maybe meteorology.

EXT. MATTERS' HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

A summer block party underway.

Mask free, *The Upbeats* - Marty, CARL ATKINS (15), Jason and their new singer Hester prepare to perform.

Marty tunes his electric guitar. Carl plays quietly on the drum. Jason manages the sound system.

Hester holds a mike but focuses on Marty.

Two picnic tables make room for all the Matters' neighbors.

Jim, Lou and Carlos barbecue over a fire pit.

Mary, LENORE (30s), Jim's wife, and ADELE (30s), Carlos' wife, maintain distance on the picnic table benches.

MARY

Pretty international group. American, Cuban, Salvadorian, Afghani.

LENORE

I get a kick out of how nicely Marty and Hester get along.

ADELE

How did he convince her to sing
with *The Upbeats*?

MARY

Marty practices piano before lunch
each day and Hester accompanies
him. And knowing from music class
she has a nice voice, he plays and
she sings there.

LENORE

Oh. I get it. Probably kind of just
happened.

EXT. SOLERS' HOME - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Junior entrepreneurs Marty and Carl sweat mowing lawns for
cash. Marty mows, Carl rakes.

Break time: off with work gloves for a rest under a Maple.

MARTY

Have you thought about your future?
What you wanna do?

CARL

I don't know. Maybe a lawyer.

MARTY

Well, you write well. That's
important. How'd ya come up it?

CARL

It's important to keep the Rule of
Law alive.

MARTY

Wow, man. You've been watching too
much news.

CARL

You asked me, and there it is. What
about you?

MARTY

Music says it all.

CARL

You're good at it.

Carl slaps Marty's shoulder.

CARL

Look at how far *The Upbeats* have
come along.

MARTY

I especially like piano. I mean,
now that I'm studying it.

CARL

And you can read music.
(indicates)
Ear only.

Both quiet to bask in the glorious summer day.

END ACT II

ACT III "FALL"

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Fall"

MONTAGE - INFLATION-BUSTING

INT. WASHINGTON - HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CHAMBER - DAY

The Inflation Reduction Act passes.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

By a vote of 220 to 207, the landmark Inflation Reduction Act passed the House today. The law aims to curb inflation by reducing the budget deficit, lowering prescription drug prices, and investing in domestic energy production while promoting clean energy.

Representatives mill and shake hands.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Now calm, Angry Driver tops off. The numbers roll slower.

Station's PRICE SIGN: "Regular \$4.38"

END MONTAGE

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - SOCCER FIELD - DAY

A game about to start.

Hester, Marty and Carl file into the bleachers.

MARTY

Don't ya think our Varsity'll make division finals this year?

Carl hitches his shoulders. Not willing to commit.

African-American siblings, JUSTIN (16) and YASMINE (14) join the Group.

MARTY

Hey there, Justin. Yasmine.

YASMINE
Hi, y'all. Nice day.

HESTER
Glad you both made it.

JUSTIN
Wanted to see with my own eyes how
good they are.

MARTY
I think Rodrigo has it.

JUSTIN
Jason and Art are right their with
him.

CARL
Yup. Definitely a winning team.

The team runs onto the field.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE GAME

> Jason -- score
> Art -- razzle-dazzle footwork that fakes out the Goalie
> Rodrigo -- goal for the win

Hester and Marty cheer.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

At a large table, the Matters, Atkins, and Solers adults.

They enjoy the dinner spread before them. No masks.

MARY
Pinch me! Out for actual dinner. In
an actual restaurant.

JIM
(caveman grunt)
Can't beat charring meat over an
open fire!

Carlos gestures.

CARLOS
Except, no kids. That's been a long
time coming.

Lenore smiles, nods.

LENORE

True. Just thankful they all get along so well with each other.

ADELE

We've been lucky. No feeling of isolation that's been the rule for... well, across the country.

LOU

Even me. Confined to the house. Never felt alone. So nice to be among friends. I can't tell you how important you've all been to my rehabilitation.

MARY

And during the time the boys were on the road. Especially before I knew where Lou disappeared to.

Lou raises his drink,

LOU

To our good friends. Thank you.

They all CLINK glasses.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

The Family enjoys dinner.

JASON

What if we keep on using oil?

LOU

The planet keeps getting warmer.

Marty puts his hands in the air and snaps his fingers.

MARTY

"There'll be a hot time in the ol' town tonight!"

MARY

The thing is, Marty, it's not funny. We're really in a fix.

MARTY

Sorry. So we cut back on oil. Go to wind and solar power.

LOU
And nuclear fusion. Like we've
discussed.

Jason, exasperated.

JASON
There's more we can do. Planting
trees. Recycling. Using geothermal.

MARY
Jay, I do appreciate your passion,
but this isn't going to get fixed
overnight. Let's enjoy our meal.
Tomorrow is another day.

Jason gets the hint.

Dinner continues in a lighter vein.

EXT. FARM - FIELD - DAY

In protective gear and gloves, Jason helps a BEEKEEPER (50s).

Jason brushes bees from the lid. They use a Smoker to keep
the bees docile.

JASON
Happy to work with bees. They're
more important than most people
think. Without them we'd have less
produce. Nutrition would suffer. In
a way, we're saving the planet.

BEEKEEPER
Ya think so?

JASON
Did I tell you I've decided to
study meteorology and become a
climatologist.

BEEKEEPER
Climatologist, eh?

JASON
Maybe help architects plan
structures that withstand heat,
rain and drought better.

BEEKEEPER
Ya don't say.

Jason steps back as the Beekeeper replaces the hive cover.

JASON
Or help factories establish
environmentally friendly practices.
Especially to decrease carbon
emissions.

BEEKEEPER
Workin' to make the world 'bee'
more friendly, huh.

Jason LAUGHS.

JASON
Never thought of it that way.

INT. OHIO - STYKES' FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jason and Bob's Son, CAL (20s) on the phone.

CAL
You got stung by beekeeping, eh?

JASON (V.O.)
Helping to keep the world green.

CAL
Pollination is so important. Like
supporting the soil's richness.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

At the table, Jason sips milk.

JASON
Like fertilizing?

INTERCUT - STYKES AND MATTERS' HOME

CAL
There's also crop rotation. And
planting summer crops. That way we
don't have to dig deep and disturb
the soil with weeding.

JASON
That helps sustainability?

CAL
Preserves the soil's richness.

JASON

And probably reduces the chance of drought.

CAL

In one rotation we plant crimson clover. It's a legume, so it adds nitrogen to the soil.

CAL

And we've been planting our veggies closer together. Their root growth then reduces the food available for weeds which reduces the need for us to weed.

JASON

We have to preserve what we have.
Helps slow climate change.

CAL

We're on the same page, bro.

END INTERCUT

END ACT III

ACT IV "WINTER"

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Winter"

MONTAGE - STORMS

INT. WASHINGTON - CANON HOUSE MEETING ROOM - DAY

The January Sixth Select Committee delivers their verdict.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

The House select committee
investigating January six, 2021,
laid out a damning case that former
President Donald Trump's efforts to
overturn the 2020 election led to
the violence at the US Capitol. In
its report, the committee
recommends barring Trump from
holding office again.

As Chair, Congressman Bennie Thompson bangs the final gavel.

EXT. OHIO - VARIOUS - DAY

A Bomb Cyclone goes off.

LOCAL METEOROLOGIST (V.O.)

A bomb cyclone is expected to bring
heavy rain and wind gusts of 45 to
65 miles per hour and a 50 degree
drop in temperatures by midnight.

People shelter. Little movement on this raw, raw day.

END MONTAGE

INT. JUNIOR HIGH - GYM - DAY

Mary works with Miriam and FINN (12). She arranges three mats
on the floor.

She lays a doll, a toy train engine and a book on mats.

MARY

Miriam, you sit on that mat. Finn,
you sit on this one.

Miriam kneels on one as asked.

Finn doesn't move.

MARY
Thank you, Miriam.

Mary addresses Finn.

MARY
So, Finn. Please join us.

FINN
I wanna sit on a chair.

MARY
Well... okay. Get yourself a chair.

Finn picks a chair and drags it to the edge of the mat.

Mary seats herself cross-legged near the items on the mat.

MARY
We're going to play delivery
person.

Mary hands the train engine to Miriam.

MARY
Miriam, please deliver this to
Finn.

On all fours, Miriam delivers the train to Finn who places it
across his knees.

Miriam returns to her spot and copies Mary's crossed legs.

MARY
Now, Finn. You're the delivery
person. Deliver the train to me and
deliver the doll to Miriam.

Finn walks to the edge of Mary's mat, reaches to hand the
train to her. She hands the doll to Finn.

He grips the doll around its neck and walks just close enough
to hand it to Miriam.

Miriam accepts and places it across her knees. She studies it
then straightens its dress.

Finn plops on his chair.

MARY

Nice delivery, Finn. But you had to walk so far. Suppose you pull your chair near Miriam. On the mat.

Finn thinks a beat, rises, bends down, and pulls the mat away from the others. He moves near Miriam then sits on it.

MARY

Great, Finn. Back to delivering.

Mary holds out the book to Miriam.

MARY

Please deliver this book to Finn, Miriam.

Miriam delivers to Finn who accepts it.

MARY

Here's the train, Miriam.

She accepts it.

MARY

Finn, may I have the book?

Finn remains seated. He reaches to pass the book to Mary.

MARY

Miriam, perhaps you'd prefer to share with Finn. Which would you prefer to keep? Train or the doll.

MIRIAM

I like the doll.

MARY

Finn, perhaps you could ask Miriam for the train.

FINN

(formally)

May I have the train?

Miriam hands Finn the train. He studies it with intensity.

EXT. ATKINS' HOME - FRONT DOOR - DAY

A cold, icy day. Carlos and Lou ready for it in heavy winter coats, hats and gloves.

They knock. Jim answers and invites them into --

INT. ATKINS' HOME - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Jim shuttles them into the warm.

JIM
Come in. Come in. Ain't fit for man
nor beast out there.

Carlos rubs his arms to warm up.

CARLOS
'Say that again.

LOU
Bone-chilling cold.

LIVING ROOM

Jim and Carlos settle in with Jim.

JIM
Weather's whacked.

CARLOS
Temps went down like crazy last
night.

LOU
That's not all that's gone down.

CARLOS
Yeah? Like what?

LOU
Inflation dropped from a high of
eight percent to five point seven.

JIM
Sure didn't feel like it when we
went Christmas shopping!

Jim rises to head for the kitchen.

JIM
Coffee anyone?

Nods of 'You bet!' from Carlos and Lou.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Jason and Cassie wait for the class to start.

CASSIE
As a climatologist you can predict
the climate next year?

JASON
Or five years. Or ten.

CASSIE
Really?

JASON
Sure. You use math, latitude and
longitude to predict whether or not
it's going to snow, hail or rain.

CASSIE
How about a T-V weatherman? You
have to have a cool name though.
(thinks)
Dusty Storm!

Jason shakes his head and LAUGHS.

JASON
I'd be able to figure out how much
thermal energy we might get from
the sun at a location. For solar
energy.

The teacher enters. Jason and Cassie turn about.

INT. OHIO - STYKES' FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Christmas.

A tall, fully decorated live pine the focal point in a room
of cheery Holiday decorations.

BOB (40s), Nora's husband, joins her and Cal on a Skype.

THE STYKES
Merry Christmas!

INT. MATTERS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Mary, Lou, Jason, and Marty around a laptop.

Also cheery decorations but a small artificial tree.

THE MATTERS
Merry Christmas!

INTERCUT - SKYPE: STYKES AND MATTERS' HOMES

The two families sing *We Wish You A Merry Christmas*.

CLAPS and lots of LAUGHS at the end.

NORA

So nice to see you all!

MARY

And you!

LOU

Heard you've been having some weather.

BOB

Broke all records.

CAL

Rain changed to snow with once-in-a-generation cold. Wind chills were minus 30 to 35.

BOB

A spring day now. Up above zero this morning. Even with no wind chill, we're at minus 12.

Quiet descends for a moment.

LOU

I'm grateful we all pulled through. Here we are on the cusp of a new year. I wish the best for each and every one of us in '23.

CHEERS and WHISTLES from the rest.

FADE OUT.

END EPISODE