

BLESS THIS MESS

Written by

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Based on everything.

COLD OPEN:

INT. OFFICE BULLPEN - DAY

RIO, 30s, charmingly type-A with a side order of new age neurosis, tosses things from her desk into a box, excited. She talks to a couple of unhappy, tired looking CO-WORKERS.

RIO

It was easy. I just went in and said: "My husband and I are moving to a farm in Nebraska and I quit."

MALE CO-WORKER

(depressed)

Whoa. That's awesome.

She starts to walk down the hall, they follow--

RIO

I mean, it's time to get out of New York. Four men have shown me their penises on the subway this month.

FEMALE CO-WORKER

Same.

RIO

And besides, look at this farm!

Rio shows pictures of the farm to her co-workers on her phone. We see: A BIG BEAUTIFUL FARM HOUSE.

RIO (CONT'D)

My husband's great aunt died and left it to him. There's my husband.

ANOTHER PICTURE: a young, awkward BOY wearing SHORT SHORTS.

RIO (CONT'D)

Ignore the fact that he looks like a young Melissa Etheridge in neon panties-- guys, look at all that space! No crazy people cursing at you. No cars. Fresh air...

MALE CO-WORKER

Cows.

RIO

Oh god, I hope not. Cows are so scary! I think it's just like plants and stuff. And *TIME*.

(MORE)

RIO (CONT'D)

Time to slow down and hang out with my husband instead of working 24 hours a day. Time to live a simpler life where not everything I touch has to be plugged in. Time to do a job where I hang up my hat, and say: "I made something today. With my hands." I mean, don't you ever look around and think: Am I gonna spend my whole life making rich people a little richer? Don't you ever think: Is this all there is?

FEMALE CO-WORKER

No.

MALE CO-WORKER

No. Literally never.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - LATER

Rio walks with her box and talks on the phone.

RIO (INTO PHONE)

Mike! My GPS says I'll be home in about 57 seconds, also someone asked me if we were just going to grow alfalfa, and I forgot.

EXT. ANOTHER NEW YORK STREET - INTERCUT

MIKE, (30s), the most positive hipster in New York, talks in front of a U-Haul attached to their electric car.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Alfalfa is just the beginning! I mean, in five years, we're getting corn up in that piece!

BACK TO RIO.

RIO

Corn! Yes! This is so exciting!

An AMBULANCE zooms by blaring its sirens. Rio accidentally bumps into a LARGE ANGRY MAN who yell obscenities at her. Without missing a beat--

RIO (CONT'D)

Oh, you can kiss my big fat ass, shmuck face!

LARGE MAN

You wish that ass was fat!

RIO (INTO PHONE)

And, just remind me, alfalfa's, like, that stuff on vegan sandwiches, right?

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
 Hold on, my editor.
 (takes another call)
 Hello?

INT. ATLANTIC MAGAZINE OFFICES - INTERCUT

Mike's EDITOR, exhausted, stressed, sits in a cramped office.

EDITOR (INTO PHONE)
 Mike? Calling you back. What's up?

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
 I wanted to tell you that I'm
 moving to a farm in Nebraska, so...
I quit!

EDITOR (INTO PHONE)
 You're a freelance writer. You
 never had an actual job here.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
 Yeah, I know, I've just always
 worked freelance, so I've never
 gotten to say "I quit!" to anyone--

EDITOR (INTO PHONE)
 You can still work virtually via
 the internet--

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
 Nope! I QUIT!

Mike ends the call, as Rio runs up, IN PERSON.

RIO
 Did I miss it? Did you get to quit?

Mike scoops Rio up in his arms. She drops her box. He spins her around and kisses her.

MIKE
 Hey. I just want you to know:
 There's still time for us to back
 outta this.

RIO
 (smiling)
 Should we do the nickel?

Mike digs for a nickel in his pocket. Takes one out, flips it, it lands in his hand. They lock eyes--

MIKE

Heads we stay, tails we go.

Mike lifts his hand: TAILS. They smile.

INT. NISSAN LEAF - MOMENTS LATER

Mike and Rio are packed into their tiny car. Rio gets out her LARGE PHONE, which is basically an extension of her arm.

RIO

I made a list of possible fun things between here and Nebraska--

ON SCREEN: We see Rio has made an actual "Fun List."

MIKE

God, I love your lists. Your lists are sexual for me.

RIO

(sexy voice)

Yeah, well, I put everything in categories: Educational. Historical-slash-Miscellaneous--

MIKE

Oo. *Miscellaneous!* Did you Google map them too?

RIO

MIKE (CONT'D)

(sexy)

WHOOOO!

Every. Single. One.

Mike starts the car as Rio throws on a mix she titled: *WHY YOU BE ROADTRIPPIN'?* Meatloaf's "I Would Do Anything For Love" starts. They both sing along with confidence despite not knowing all the words.

SMASH TO TITLE CARD: BLESS THIS MESS

EXT. OPEN ROADS/HIGHWAYS - DAY

The SONG CONTINUES as Rio and Mike's car zooms down highways and country roads with aerial views of farmland. This is America at its most rural and beautiful. This is the dream.

EXT. WORLD'S BIGGEST EYEBALL ROADSIDE ATTRACTION - DAY

Mike and Rio are taking pictures of themselves in front of a humongous eyeball. Mike tries to put sunglasses on it. Rio marks "WORLD'S BIGGEST EYEBALL" off her extensive list.

INT. RIO AND MIKE'S LEAF - DUSK

Mike drives. Rio looks out the window at the sunset. A picture of the Nebraska farm house is taped to the dashboard.

MIKE

Can I tell you something?

RIO

Always.

MIKE

I didn't think you were going to say yes to the farm idea.

RIO

I didn't think I was either! It's is the craziest thing I've ever done. Except when I said "I love you" the first time we had sex and then pretended I'd said, "I love Jews."

MIKE

You know, it would have been so much less weird for you to say "I love you"-- But, anyway, that's one of the amazing things about you-- on the surface, you're so organized and like so uptight and nervous--

RIO

Um, okay, not loving this--

MIKE

But underneath all that, you're actually so... cool and brave.

Rio nods. Hmm. Is that true?

RIO

I didn't think you were serious at first. You were like: "Let's go to Nebraska and farm." And I was like: "Is this your way of telling me you have cancer and you're going to die?"-- but then, I was standing in a subway, with my butt just covered in sweat, thinking: "This is why I fell in love with him. He makes life this incredible adventure."

MIKE

See? You're so brave!

RIO

Yeah, and also, I crunched the numbers and there's a real market for organic produce. I want to own my own business!

MIKE

You're going to love this place. When I was there in the summer, it made me feel so alive! If I wanted something, I had to go outside and pick it, or grow it, I mean: Look at me! Look how soft I've gotten! The other night, I ran out of ranch dressing, and I went on Postmates and *paid* someone to bring me *more* ranch dressing. I didn't even have to put pants on-- I was wearing my comfy boxers. You know those super loose ones I have? The ones you love?

RIO

(she does not love them)
Hmm-mmm. I love those. It's like you're wearing a skirt.

MIKE

I mean, I want to be a man again! Even though I grew up in Cleveland, I've always felt like, spiritually, I'm from the soil. You know, in high school, I used to hike naked because I wanted to feel closer to the earth-- I was also very high so I forgot to put on sunscreen.

RIO

Is that why your balls are--

MIKE

Different colors, yeah.

RIO

There are no alternate realities in the universe that would convince me to hike naked.

MIKE

I'll take that as a challenge.
(she swats him)
So what's the first thing you want to do when we get there?

RIO

Oh man, it's like you said: You'll farm in the morning and I'll organize the business side of things and then, in the afternoon, we're going to just like sit outside under your big beautiful climbing tree and unplug and wear cowboy hats and, in my head, I'm playing a wind instrument--

MIKE

Yes! And I want to build a shed with my bare hands.

RIO

I love that! Remember when you made us that wooden door-stop and it worked, like, most of the time?

MIKE

I have a feel for wood, you know? Whenever I touch wood, I just know what to do with it.

RIO

Yeah... Can you tell me more about your "feel for wood"?

MIKE

Oh I'll tell you about my "feel for wood." Get over here--

Mike pulls her into a kiss. It gets hot and heavy-- the car almost crashes, as truckers HONK...

EXT. ROADSIDE PRAIRIE - DAY

Rio and Mike run, frolicking, through a prairie, suddenly Rio, turns on a dime, runs back towards the car:

RIO

COW! COW! COW! COWWWW!

INT. RIO AND MIKE'S LEAF - DAY

The car is now a mess: Fast food bags, empty bottles of Pepto-Bismol, souvenir dream catchers, American flag beer cozies. Mike drives and tries to sing along to a country song on the radio, as Rio crosses "Frolic in a Prairie" off her Fun List.

Rio's cell rings. She answers, and the call is on speaker.

RIO

Hi Mom!

INT. DONNA'S NEW YORK OFFICE/NISSAN LEAF. CROSS CUT.

DONNA (60s), Rio's sophisticated mom sips coffee and stares at her computer as she talks to her daughter:

DONNA (INTO PHONE)

Whatever you do, don't get out of the car in Iowa. A girl was murdered there in 2005.

REVEAL Donna's looking at a scary mug shot on her computer.

RIO

How did you know we were in Iowa?

DONNA (INTO PHONE)

I track your phone. What-- am I *not* going to track your phone? I'm your mother! Is Mike there? Do I have your permission to speak freely?

RIO

You're on speaker, Mom!

MIKE

Hi Donna!

DONNA (INTO PHONE)

This is too big of a change, Rio. You've never lived anywhere but New York. You don't even know how to drive.

RIO

Like, how long would you say you've been tracking my phone?

DONNA (INTO PHONE)

Bubbie, you guys aren't ready for this. You've been married a year. You went on your first date because he flipped a dime and got "Tails."

RIO

(smiling at Mike)

It was a nickel.

DONNA (INTO PHONE)

You're still pretending to be the best versions of yourselves. That's not marriage, that's dating. I mean, who is this guy really?

MIKE

Still here, Donna!

DONNA

Lemme tell you, when the poopie hits the fan, and you realize the two of you have to sit there and clean poopie off that fan all night long-- That's marriage. Marriage stinks. I mean, your father's fine, blah blah blah, but it's terrible.

RIO

I stopped listening literally the second you said "poopie"--

MIKE

Hey Donna! We may get a goat as like, a natural lawn mower!

DONNA (INTO PHONE)

Rio, what's the nearest pharmacy so I can call in your 'script of Xanax for the moment when all of your life decisions come crashing down around you and you realize you made a horrible mistake?

RIO (INTO PHONE)

I love you too. Bye!

They pass a sign that says "YOU ARE NOW ENTERING NEBRASKA." They both whoop and holler...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

Outside their car, they stare at something off screen.

MIKE

I mean. Just needs a little paint!

REVEAL the FARMHOUSE, their new home. It's aged a lot since the pictures Rio saw. It's basically a wooden architectural nervous breakdown.

RIO

Yeah. Paint... is one thing it needs.

Rio adds to her phone list: *PAINT*. As they walk closer, we see the tree where Mike once climbed is very dead.

RIO (CONT'D)

Oh no, the tree...

MIKE

We can still sit under it. We just have to be careful we don't get hit by a dead branch. I can buy us some helmets!

As they get closer, they see A SMALL WEATHERED PLACARD READING "BLESS THIS MESS," teetering above the front door. Mike picks Rio up, and carries her over the threshold. They take two steps in when-- CRASH! THEY BOTH FALL THROUGH THE FLOOR. A beat. THEN, CRASH! A SECTION OF ROOF CAVES IN. A beat, then:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Oh look, there's a basement!

INT. THE FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Sunlight hits Rio and Mike, as they peacefully sleep on a mattress on the floor. We hear BIRDS SQUAWKING.

RIO

Baby, listen to the birds. No sirens, no people. It's so serene.

Rio lifts her eye-mask, and freezes and whispers--

RIO (CONT'D)

Mike. *Mike*...

MIKE

(eyes closed)

Yeah, this is it. This is why we came here. Nature, all around us.

Mike opens his eyes and starts.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Oh god, what do they want?

REVEAL a number of BIRDS sitting around the bed, staring at them. They've flown in from the GAPING HOLE in the roof.

RIO

We have to fix that roof.

MIKE

(odd scream to the birds)

YAAAAAH! YAAAAAAAHAH!

RIO

I love you but please never make that sound again.

MIKE

What? This sound? YAAAAAH!

INT. FARMHOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mike has his hand under the dilapidated shower waiting for the water to warm up, as Rio scrolls through her phone.

MIKE

I'll just hop up on the roof and see what's what. Maybe get some wood. Get some nails. Hammer the nails in the wood...

RIO

Your voice is, like, noticeably deeper when you talk about hammers.

MIKE

Get used to it. Nebraska's bringing out the man in me.

(then, re: water)

Oo, that's still chilly!

RIO

Okay, I'll project-manage and bullet point a roof action plan, and we can cultivate a list of necessities from there--

MIKE

Hey, water's warm. Should we do it?

RIO

Yeah! Go! Go!

Mike and Rio get in at the same time. The water is VERY COLD.

MIKE

Not warm! Huge mistake!

RIO

But on the plus side, the water pressure makes it feel like someone is gently peeing on us.

Their giggles are interrupted by the SOUND OF A TOILET FLUSHING. Rio freezes. They whisper back and forth:

RIO (CONT'D)

What was that?

MIKE

There's someone in here!

MIKE (CONT'D)
 (weirdly formal)
 HELLO! WHO IS THERE?

RIO
 Why are you talking like a castle
 guard?

MIKE
 I have no idea!

No answer. The sink starts running! Rio panics, brandishes
 the soap, screams, and throws back the shower curtain.

RIO
 YAAAAHHHHHH!

An OLDER CRAGGY MAN in a t-shirt and bathrobe stands over the
 sink. This is RUDY, 60s, strong, silent type. No bullshit.

MIKE
 (recognizing him)
 Rudy! So good to see you! Hi!

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Rio, now in a robe, sits in the 1970s style kitchen near a
 lit scented candle. Mike and Rudy hug.

MIKE
 This is Rudy! Aunt Margaret's
 neighbor-- I haven't seen him
 since I was a kid!

RUDY
 I see you married a woman, Mikey.

MIKE
 It's Mike now. Just Mike!

RUDY
 That's good, Mikey. Why's that
 candle smell like cats?

RIO
 It's actually lavender, which is a
 natural stress reliever.

RUDY
 Says who?

MIKE

(slight twang)

So Rudy, what brings you to these parts?

RIO

I think what Mike's saying is that we couldn't help but notice that you just sorta walked in and just sorta used our bathroom--

RUDY

Lost my house couple years ago. Maggie said I could move into the barn. But there's no plumbing out there so I've gotta use your bathroom sometimes.

RIO

Sometimes? What do you do the rest of the times?

Rudy shrugs. Rio reacts.

RIO (CONT'D)

Okay. Great. Good to know.

(to Mike, a barely audible
whisper-talk)

Tell him he can't use our bathroom.

MIKE

What? I can't hear you.

RIO (CONT'D)

Tell him he can't use our bathroom.

MIKE

Hey, did you know Rudy can balance an egg on a machete?

RUDY

Still can. You got an egg?

RIO

More importantly: *Do you have a machete?*

RUDY

Yup.

RIO (CONT'D)

(covering)
Good, very cool, very cool.

RUDY

Hey, the house's gonna be wrecked if you don't fix that roof before the storm comes.

RIO
What "storm?" When is that coming?

RUDY
Soon.

RIO
Does that mean... today, tomorrow?

Suddenly, they see BEAU AND SUE BOWMAN (40s) waving through the window. They start walking up to the kitchen door.

RIO (CONT'D)
Who is that? That's trespassing!

Beau and Sue open the kitchen door and are about to walk in.

RIO (CONT'D)
STOP THERE OR I'M CALLING THE COPS!

MIKE
Babe... I think they're just saying hi.

RIO
Why? We don't know them.

Beau and Sue speak over each other, seemingly very friendly.

BEAU	SUE	
Hi! I'm Beau Bowman. We're your neighbors--	And I'm Sue Bowman. And I brought you a little treat. Just something I invented.	* *

Sue hands a plate over to Mike, who takes a look.

MIKE
Hot pockets! Thank you so much!

SUE
They're not Hot Pockets. They're pastries stuffed with meat and cheese. I call them "Meat Bags."

BEAU	RUDY
(not a fan) Rudy.	(even less of a fan) Beau. Sue.

BEAU	SUE	
We just wanted you to know that if you're thinking of selling this place--	We're looking to expand into the slaughter industry--	* * * *

BEAU

And your land would be perfect for--

Beau pantomimes slitting an animal's throat.

MIKE

Thanks, but we're not selling.

Rudy grins as Rio starts leading them out the door.

RIO

Little thing, but next time you drop by, please text first or really any kind of communication--

MIKE

Lovin' these meat bags, guys!

Beau and Sue are out the door again. Beau yells out--

BEAU

Fix that roof before the storm comes!

RIO

Wait, you know about the storm? When is it coming exactly?

BEAU

Soon.

SUE

Yeah, soon.

Rio shuts the door, and starts scrolling through her phone.

RIO

So we need to fix this roof *now*.

RUDY

I'll take you to the store. Get in my truck.

RIO

(weird whisper-talk)
Are we okay getting in his truck? Can you hear me, Mike? Are we okay--

MIKE

What? I'm sorry, I just can't hear you when you do that voice, Rio--

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. RUDY'S OLD TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Rudy drives as Mike and Rio sit awkwardly in the front cab. Rio now wears a BRAND NEW COWBOY HAT and some "country" gear.

RUDY
What's that on your head?

RIO
A hat.
(off Rudy)
Is there something wrong with my hat, Rudy? I feel like you're not telling me something...

MIKE
It's a great hat, I love it. You look like a football mascot, but in a great way.

RUDY
Store's there.

Rudy gestures to a fairly run-down hardware store that's also sort of a restaurant, and a grocery store.

MIKE
You coming in?

RUDY
(distant)
Nah. Constance is in there...

INT. CONNIE'S HOME 'N' GOODS. MOMENTS LATER.

Rio and Mike walk into the store. A couple customers stare at them. Rio elaborately tips her hat to a nearby man.

RIO
Hello sir.

MIKE
Oh man, you just tipped your hat!

RIO
Yeah, I really feel like a local.

MIKE
You look like a local.
(then)
Is this the hardware store?
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Because they also have cereal,
toys, bullets, and I think that's a
fur coat. No. It's a dead animal!

RIO

So, fixing the roof, we need-- let
me look it up--

MIKE

Just going off instinct-- We
definitely need this.

Mike picks up a LARGE TOOL, which he immediately drops. It
makes a loud noise, people turn and stare. Rio tips her hat.

INT. CONNIE'S - CHECK-OUT COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER

Mike and Rio stand in front of a sullen teenager, CHERRY
(17), who wears a Jay-Z t-shirt and a scowl.

RIO

Excuse me. Hi. Howdy.
(tips her hat)
We're trying to fix our roof and
would love to talk to a roofing
expert or someone who can answer a
few of our questions... Could you
point us to your roofing
department?

Cherry stares at them for a beat. Then calls off:

CHERRY

MOM! THE PEOPLE FROM NEW YORK ARE
HERE!

MIKE

Oh, how did you know?

CHERRY

She's wearing that stupid hat.

RIO

Okay. Young lady. What's your name?

CHERRY

Cherry Terry.

MIKE

Cherry *Terry*?

CHERRY

Yeah. That's what I said.

RIO

Okay, Cherry Terry. Is this the way you treat customers? Because we can take our business elsewhere--

CHERRY

Uhhh... where? The next hardware store is 20 miles away.

RIO

So what? You just get to treat people however you want?

CHERRY

Basically.

RIO

(at a loss)

Well. Cool Jay-Z t-shirt. I saw him live at Madison Square Garden. So.

CHERRY

(impressed but covering)

Really? Whatever.

MIKE

Was that the concert where you fainted because of the crowds...

RIO

Shhhh...

CHERRY

My mom won't let me play his music.

RIO

Because of all the swear words and the sex? Like in *Footloose*?

CHERRY

No. Because he cheated on Beyonce.

RIO

Yeah, well, if I listened to my mom, I'd be married to a guy named Gideon, carry an NPR tote bag, and **only wear shirts made of micro-fiber**. Don't let your mom tell you how to live your life!

CHERRY

Cool.

Rio grins.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Don't let your mom do what?

Rio and Mike turn around to see CONSTANCE TERRY (40s) who glares at Rio and then turns to Mike.

CONSTANCE
I'm Constance Terry- a friend of
Maggie's. I'm sorry for your loss.
She got a little racist at the end,
but nobody's perfect.

She pulls Mike into a big hug. As they're hugging, Cherry leans into Rio.

CHERRY
So what other concerts did you go
to in New York--

CONSTANCE
(cutting her off)
What're you guys looking for?

MIKE
We have a hole in our roof and--

CONSTANCE
The storms coming.

MIKE (CONT'D)
The storm's coming. Right.
Rudy told us about the storm.

CONSTANCE
Is Rudy here?

MIKE
No, he stayed in the truck--

RUDY (O.S.)
Hello, Constance.

REVEAL Rudy, nervous, staring at Constance. Rio and Mike look at each other-- what? The air is thick with sexual tension.

RUDY (CONT'D)
I like those pants.

CONSTANCE
Thirty percent off... Amazon Prime.
They're a little snug in the rear.

RUDY
They're the greatest pants I have
ever seen.

Cherry gags. Rio laughs.

CHERRY

You need help with the roof? Go
talk to Jacob.

EXT. CONNIE'S - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Rio and Mike walk to the back, where the lumber is stored.

RIO

Who's "Jacob"? We don't need a
"Jacob"! We need a roof expert!

MIKE

You don't think I can do it?

RIO

Yeah, definitely, just... you might
need a *little* help--

MIKE

Just to spitball with someone.

A MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You fixing a roof?

Rio and Mike turn to see JACOB (20s, inexplicably gorgeous).

JACOB

Hi, I'm Jacob.

RIO

(sotto, to Mike)
Wow.

MIKE

(sotto to Rio)
Yeah. That jaw line. Tip your hat.

RIO

A tip of my hat to you, sir.

LATER

Jacob is stacking wood as Mike and Rio watch.

JACOB

So what size lumber do you need?
(removing a layer)
Sorry. Gets sticky before a storm.

RIO

Well, what size wood would you say?
(a school girl)
(MORE)

RIO (CONT'D)
Haa, that's funny, I said "would wood"!

JACOB
What's funny?

RIO
You know, "would" and "wood"--

Jacob stares blankly at her. Mike rolls his eyes.

MIKE
Oh god.

RIO (CONT'D)
(sotto, to Mike)
Please let me have this!

MIKE
Jacob, I can take it from here.

JACOB
Sure. For sheathing, we got CDX plywood-- this is a half inch, but I'd go OSB depending on the rafter spacing. Is it 24 inches?

Mike stares at Jacob, completely lost, but refusing to show it. He pulls himself up taller:

MIKE
Oh, it's more than 24 inches, Jacob. It's much more.

JACOB
A lot more than 24 inches? Hmmm.

INT. RUDY'S OLD TRUCK - LATER

Rio and Mike are now crammed in with a HUGE AMOUNT of wood and tools. They bought way too much. Rudy drives.

RIO
So, Rudy, is Constance single? Because you're, like, totally in love with her.

RUDY
Who told you that?

RIO
Nobody! I just love setting people up, I'm kind of a Yente--

RUDY
A what?

RIO
 What do people do on dates here?
 Ooo, could you guys go on, like, a
 sexy horse ride?

Rudy turns the radio on LOUD. Rio calls over the song:

RIO (CONT'D)
 DO YOU HAVE A FLOWY, LINEN SHIRT?

MIKE
 BABY, I'M GETTING THE SENSE HE
 DOESN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT...

EXT. FARMHOUSE ROOF - HOURS LATER

Mike has been on the roof for hours. Tools and lumber everywhere. No progress has been made. Rio stands below, reading instructions off her phone.

RIO	MIKE	*
It says to calculate the	What? Can you come up?	*
size!		*

Rio looks at the ladder, missing a couple steps.

RIO
 That ladder is a safety hazard.

MIKE
 Just a couple steps missing--

RIO
 (looking at her phone)
 Honey, all you have to do is
 calculate the size of the--

MIKE
 I tried that! It's not right!

RIO
 (covering her frustration)
 Yeah. Yeah. Cool. Cool. But, you
 know, we won't know if it's right
 unless you follow the directions.

MIKE
 Directions are wrong sometimes.

RIO
 When are directions wrong?

MIKE

Remember in the 1800s? Everyone thought it was safe to put cocaine in Coca-Cola? And other times...

RIO

The storm's coming *soon*, and we don't know what "soon" means!

A beat. They look at each other.

MIKE

Are we fighting?

RIO

No. We don't fight. We're just having a disagreement. It's cool. I'm going to read these directions one more time--

Mike hits his hammer-- the hammer head goes flying.

RIO (CONT'D)

Why did you-- How did you break a hammer?

MIKE

Because I'm really strong!

Mike starts climbing down the ladder. It looks precarious. One of the steps breaks. Rio gasps.

MIKE (CONT'D)

All good! I'll just get a new hammer, and you can figure it all out on your phone!

RIO

(covering)
Perfect!

MIKE

(covering)
Great! Love you!

INT. BARN - A LITTLE LATER

Mike pokes his head into the barn.

MIKE

Rudy? Could I borrow a... hammer?

REVEAL Rudy has turned the barn into a bunker, filled with various "prepper" items stockpiled for the apocalypse. Rudy comes out, eating freeze-dried food out of a bag.

RUDY

Hello. Welcome to my bunker.

EXT. BELOW THE ROOF - SAME TIME

Rio is very cautiously two steps up on the ladder.

MAN'S VOICE

Hi neighbor!

RIO

AHHHH! What the fu--

Rio jumps, as Beau and Sue Bowman poke their heads around the corner, and throws her phone in surprise.

BEAU

Is this a bad time?

SUE

I brought pie!

INT. BARN - SAME TIME

Mike takes in all of his supplies.

MIKE

Wow. If the apocalypse comes, I'm coming straight here!

RUDY

Don't. I won't let you in.

MIKE

Whatcha eating? Can I have some?

RUDY

Squirrel. You won't like it.

MIKE

Try me.

(chewing, it's not great)

Hm, sweeter than I thought it'd be!... I don't remember this when I was kid. When did, uh, when did the prepping for the apocalypse start?

RUDY

After my wife passed. Had to do something. Felt right.

MIKE

Have you ever thought, um, just throwing it out there: What if the end of days never comes?

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

I mean, might be worth getting back out in the world a little bit... Having fun? Remember when you took me out on the tractor?

Rudy smiles, loses himself in the memory for a moment.

RUDY

You screamed like a dog in heat.

MIKE

Yeah, I was very pumped. I can't believe I'm saying this, but: Can I have some more squirrel? Is it young squirrel? It's so tender...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SAME TIME

Rio talks to Beau and Sue as she inspects her cracked phone.

RIO

Hey, so, now's just not a great time to hang out so... I'll let you go... Bye!.... Goodbye for now!

Rio waits for them to take the cue and leave, but they don't.

BEAU BOWMAN

Sue just thought you might not have the whole story--

SUE BOWMAN

You're from the city!

BEAU BOWMAN

That soil's you got is dead.

RIO

What do you mean by "dead"?

BEAU BOWMAN

Nothing's growing out there. Hasn't for a long time. But we'll still give you a good price for it.

RIO

(making a decision)

I... how much we talking about?

This is interrupted by Mike driving up from the barn on a LARGE OLD TRACTOR. Rudy follows close behind, grinning.

MIKE

RIO! LOOK! I'M DRIVING A TRACTOR! HI EVERYONE!

RIO (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

*
*
*

*

*

BEAU BOWMAN

Just talking to your wife about how much money we'd pay for the farm.

MIKE

(surprised, betrayed)

What do you mean? Rio...? You want to sell the farm...

Mike thinks he's stopped the tractor and gets down. BEHIND HIM, we see that the tractor slowly KEEP MOVING.

RIO

Mike, I'm sorry! I was just asking. Can we go somewhere and talk?

RUDY

Hey! Hey! The tractor!

*
*
*
*

Everyone turns and watches in horror as the tractor drives slowly into the side of the house. A beat.

BEAU BOWMAN

Hm. Price just went down a bit.

Rio gets scarily quiet.

RIO

Okay. Yeah. Can someone tell me where the nearest pharmacy is? I need to get some medication. Actually. You know what? I've got my phone. I can do anything.

Rio starts walking off down the road.

RUDY

She doesn't know how to drive.

BEAU BOWMAN

What?

SUE BOWMAN

No!

MIKE

Wait! Rio! I'll take you!

Mike hops in the Leaf, but the car won't start.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Damnit! My car's out of batteries.

RUDY

I don't get it. Is it a toy?

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEEXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

Rio walks down a long empty stretch of road. She's crying, and trying to Yelp where the nearest pharmacy is on her cracked phone when, all of a sudden, SHE COMES FACE TO FACE WITH A COW BLOCKING HER PATH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD.

RIO

Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God.

Rio shakily dials 9-1-1.

RIO (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Hello, this is an emergency. This is Rio Levine-Young, and-- there's a cow-- looking at me, and I don't know what to do-- AAAH!

The cow takes a step towards her. She DROPS HER PHONE. The cow STEPS ONTO THE PHONE and stays there. Rio is too afraid to move. WIDE SHOT: Rio and the cow standing off.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

A BUCKSNORT POLICE CAR pulls up. Rio and the cow are still frozen in a stand-off. The sheriff exits her car: IT'S CONSTANCE. Cherry peeks out the passenger seat of the car.

CONSTANCE

Hey sweetheart. You need some help?

RIO

(whispered)

Shhh. Don't, don't make it mad. Wait, what are you doing here--

CONSTANCE

Oh, I'm the sheriff too! I also run a theater if you like musicals.

Constance walks up and effortlessly shoos the cow away.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

Shoo, cow. Shoo. Get on, go.

As the cow leaves, Rio throws her arms around Constance.

RIO

You saved my life. You're the most amazing woman I've ever met...

CONSTANCE
 (to Cherry, mystified)
 I'm the most amazing woman she's
 ever met!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Rio and Constance lean onto the side of the police car, as
 Cherry sits on the hood. Rio stares at her DESTROYED PHONE.

CONSTANCE
 I should be mad at you-- telling my
 daughter not to listen to me.

RIO
 I didn't mean it like that--

CONSTANCE
 No, you're right. Maybe because we
 live here, it's easier to hold on
 tighter. I imagine in New York
 City, kids grow up fast.

RIO
 Yeah, but, I mean, my mom still
 tracks my phone.

Constance leans in, whispers:

CONSTANCE
 How do you do that?

CHERRY
 I can hear you!

CONSTANCE
 Now what are you doing walking on
 this road by yourself?

RIO
 Well, a tractor ran into our house,
 and the storm is coming and the
 soil on our farm is dead and my
 husband and I almost got into a
 fight, and we never fight, and--

CONSTANCE
 Hey. Hey. Honey. My husband and I
 never fought, and we broke up a
 year after we got married.
 Fighting's good. Fighting is two
 people who care enough to get ugly.

This lands on Rio, then:

RIO

Hey. Is there any way you could take me to the pharmacy? I need to pick up a prescription for Xanax.

CONSTANCE

The pharmacy's about 45 minutes away. But I know where you can get some Xanax.

Constance points up to Heaven.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

Up there. The best Xanax is prayer. Give me your hand.

RIO

Ooo. This is not really my thing...

Constance reaches out to grab Rio's hand. Closes her eyes. Cherry looks at Rio and ROLLS HER EYES. Rio grins.

CONSTANCE

Amen, God is good.

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

The sky has gotten darker. The storm is about to hit. Rio walks up to the house.

RIO

Mike? Where are you? Can we talk--

MIKE (O.S.)

I'm up here! Rio!

She looks up: Mike up ON THE ROOF.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I wanted to fix the roof, but...

RIO

Come down! The storm is here!

MIKE

Yeah, I want to come down, I really do, but, um, I can't move. If I take a step, the whole thing's going to collapse...

Suddenly, a CLAP OF THUNDER. Mike starts a little, and the roof makes an ominous creaking noise.

RIO

Don't move! Don't move!

MORE THUNDER. Rio goes to the ladder. Rio starts to climb. It's terrifying.

RIO (CONT'D)
I can do this. I'm brave. I'm not brave... I'm brave again.

UP ON THE ROOF.

MIKE
Ok, now just grab the mattress and push it under the hole--

RIO
You don't have to yell--

REVEAL Rio is now RIGHT NEXT TO HIM ON THE ROOF.

RIO (CONT'D)
I'm right here, dummy.

MIKE
WHY ARE YOU UP HERE?!

RIO
I came to get you! I scaled up the ladder! I've never scaled up anything in my life! But I did it to save you--

MIKE
Honey, that's great! But you see how we are *both* stuck up here now--

RIO
No, we're not--

She moves towards him, and the roof creaks. Rio FREEZES in place on the roof, as THE RAIN STARTS.

RIO (CONT'D)
What do we do?

MIKE
Don't move!

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

The rain pelts down on them, as they stay frozen.

RIO
I'm cold.

MIKE
I know, baby.

RIO
 I'm wet.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 I might have some meat bags
 in my pocket.

RIO
 I have to pee.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Just go, it's raining anyway.

RIO
 No, I'm going to hold it. I'm going
 to hold it forever. Mike?

MIKE
 Yeah?

RIO
 Do you understand now why it's
 important to follow directions?

MIKE
Oh my god!

RIO
 I mean why do you think you can
 just do whatever you want and--

MIKE
 Well, why do you trust what's on
 your phone more than you trust me!
 I mean, I'm sorry that I'm not
 Jacob, the most beautiful man who's
 ever worked at a hardware store!

RIO
 God, he's attractive.

MIKE
 I know, he's a goddamn dream!
 (then:)
 Why did you ask Beau what the price
 for the house was? And why didn't
 you trust me to fix the roof?

RIO
 Because look at us! Look at the
 roof! I mean, the only good thing
 about dying tonight is that we
 won't have to see what the house
 looks like tomorrow-- Are we
 fighting?

MIKE
 Yes, we're fighting!

RIO
Good! Good! Because we need to
fight sometimes!

MIKE
Fine!

RIO
Also, I'm sorry.

MIKE
For what?

RIO
Tricking you. I made you think I'm
this cool, chill, brave person, but
I'm not. I'm a mess. I've just been
pretending to be the person you
want me to be. But if we die
tonight, I want you to know that
I'm scared *all the time*. Like, all
the time, like did you know that I
secretly back up your work when
you're out of the house?

MIKE
What? Really?

RIO
And I carry a photo of you in my
wallet in case I lose my memory so
I can show people to help me find
you-- And I'm scared that you don't
brush your teeth enough--

MIKE
Because I use mouthwash, and it's
the same thing--

RIO
No, mouthwash is not the same thing
as brushing, it's not even close!

MIKE
Agree to disagree--

RIO
No! I just disagree! And another
thing, I need you to know, I... I
hate those loose boxers. They're
horrible. Whenever you put them on,
I start drinking--

MIKE

Why didn't you tell me any of this?

RIO

I don't know! I was scared that you would find out who I actually am and you would leave me-- I mean, you're never scared! We're on a roof in a thunder storm, and you're perfectly fine--

MIKE

No! I'm not.

RIO

Then what are you scared of? Tell me! I will honestly be turned on to know you have fears! Name one thing!

MIKE

I'm scared... that I don't actually know how to fix a roof.

RIO

Huh. Look at us right now. You don't.

MIKE

I know! But I didn't want you to know that. I wanted you to feel like I can protect you-- that I'm a real man, like Jacob--

RIO

Jacob? You think I'd be happy with Jacob for more than an hour?

MIKE

You'd be happy with him for an hour?

RIO

I mean, I'm a human woman!

MIKE

Right on. But that's what I mean: you should be with a man who knows about rafter spacing and-- I'm scared that you don't really think I can take care of you.

RIO

Wait... what?

MIKE

And that's why you think you have to do everything yourself--

RIO

No! I've just never been good at letting other people help me.

MIKE

I know, but I'm here. I don't know how to do everything, but I'll always be here. And from now on, I'm going to tell you when I'm scared--

LIGHTENING BOLT.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Like now. That was super scary. And, in the spirit of honesty, I'll admit that your mother scares me even more than being up here in a thunderstorm.

RIO

She scares me too.

MIKE

This feels good. Okay, what else? I don't actually know much about farming. And this whole thing might have been a huge mistake. Also, that time I said my cellphone was stolen in the subway-- I actually just dropped it because I was trying to like a picture of a baby on Instagram--

RIO

I don't know how to spell the word "guarantee," I've been pretending for years. I don't know where the "a" goes.

MIKE

I've never read "Grapes of Wrath." I told you I did, and then I had to google the story and--

RIO

It's okay. I knew. I knew when you said it was about grapes.

MIKE

You know what scares me the most?
What my life would be like without
you.

RIO

(emotional)

Well... I'm not going anywhere.
(then--)
Mainly because I physically can't.

Mike reaches out his hand, and Rio takes it.

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE - ROOF - MORNING

Rio and Mike, haggard, watch the sun rise over the prairie,
still holding hands.

RIO

Hey. I want you to know that I peed
a long time ago. It was quick, but
it happened.

MIKE

I did too.

Suddenly, they hear footsteps below.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What's going on? What is that?

THERE'S DOZENS OF BOOTS STOMPING AND NOW SOME CHATTER TOO.
Rio and Mike look out to see... a LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE,
including CONSTANCE, CHERRY, BEAU, SUE, AND JACOB.

RIO

What-- what's happening?

SUE

Sorry, we didn't call first.

CONSTANCE

We're here to fix your roof.

CHERRY

And we brought blankets.

JACOB

Do you remember me? I'm Jacob.

MIKE

Thank you, but--

RIO

We don't have any money.

Constance and the people in the crowd start laughing.

CONSTANCE
Neither do we!

Rio and Mike stare as: Jacob suits up with a tool belt, then removes his shirt EXPOSING HIS HULKING CHEST, etc. People start setting up ladders, cleaning up debris, unfurling tool kits... Rio and Mike can't believe their eyes.

RIO
This is...

MIKE
Amazing.

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Rio and Mike emerge, looking like drowned rats sprinkled with roof shrapnel. Constance covers them with a blanket.

CONSTANCE
We gotta warm you up!

Cherry hands Rio her Jay-Z t-shirt.

CHERRY
Hey, take this. It's dry.

RIO
I will cherish this with my life.

CHERRY
(smiles)
Whatever.

RUDY (O.S.)
Hello, Constance.

Everyone turns to see Rudy, now wearing what looks like a FLOWY LINEN SHIRT. His hair is spiffed up.

CONSTANCE
Rudy. You look... different.

RUDY
I brought some food for everyone.
It's just, uh, some stuff I've been
saving. Do you like squirrel?

Rudy gestures to some boxes of supplies from his bunker.

CONSTANCE
Well, let me take a look--

Constance and Rudy head off, as Beau and Sue approach.

BEAU BOWMAN

We just wanted to say if you're still interested in making a deal--

RIO

Nope. We're keeping the house.

Mike looks to Rio, surprised. She smiles at him. CUE MUSIC: Meatloaf's "I Would Do Anything For Love"...

MIKE

Are you sure?

RIO

Nah. Want to flip for it?

Mike gets out the nickel, and flips it.

MIKE

Tails.

Mike pulls her in, and they kiss each other like they mean it. Suddenly Cherry interrupts them--

CHERRY

Um, are you guys gonna make out or you gonna help us fix this roof?

RIO

Oh yeah! Of course. So sorry!

MIKE

Yes, absolutely! Copy that.

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The music continues, as Rio pulls some shingles through the dirt. Then suddenly she stops. Screams. Points.

RIO

Look! Mike! Alfalfa! The soil's not dead! We're gonna grow alfalfa!

Mike comes running over. Sure enough, a small sprout peeks through the soil. They both freak out and celebrate. ANGLE ON Constance, Cherry, and Rudy watching them.

CONSTANCE

When do we tell them that's a weed?

RUDY

Let them have their moment.

BACK ON Rio and Mike, who jump up and down like kids. Crane up.

THE END!