

BRANDON
(deadpan)

Well. That went well.

Bella erupts.

BELLA
I can't believe you're an Armageddon nutcase!! Why would God want to destroy the planet! I've read Revelation, yes, but I've also read the rest of the New Testament and the only way to reconcile the disparate views in the New Testament is to mull them over and figure out what really matters. And I would think that a supposed Christian, for god's sake, would privilege the books of Mark, Luke and John, the books about a loving, forgiving God, over the book of Revelation.

BRANDON
All the books of the New Testament are equally important, in my opinion.

BELLA
Why didn't you tell me your opinion before I invited you on? You let me think you were some sort of spiritualist like a Gaian!

BRANDON
What difference does it make now? Besides, it seemed like the audience hated you as much as they hated me.

BELLA
(looking at her phone)
Hah! You're wrong about that - too! Planet First just brought in over two hundred new members. And my "fuck you Rescue Gúzman" speech is going viral. The heart and thumbs up emojis are outpacing the thumbs down like crazy.
(taps phone and GIGGLES)
(MORE)

BELLA (CONT'D)

However. Your “I’m an Armageddon Christian Soldier” speech is going viral too. Ninety percent of the comments are negative. Here’s one: “The planet’s burning up and this supposed Christian is blaming God? What church does he attend? The church of Satan?”

BRANDON

I’m glad you’re enjoying this. Do you honestly believe the Boomer generation caused more damage to this planet than the rapidly increasing world population? There were less than two billion people on this planet a hundred years ago, there are eight billion people on it now! China generates more than twice as much carbon dioxide as the U.S. every day.

BELLA

Oh, I see. It’s not an American problem.

BRANDON

Of course it is. I’m not saying that.

(beat)

So is this how you and Planet First operate? Insult older people so smug younger people like you can feel virtuous by joining Planet First and giving money?

BELLA

I’m not like this normally. A button got pushed, as you Americans say. Rescue showed you no respect. The audience showed you no respect, and I got irritated, though God knows why. I should have gone on alone. You wasted precious minutes of time I could have used to ask them to contribute to the cause, like Rescue said. He was right about that. I’ll never make that mistake again.

BRANDON

You blew up at them because of the way they treated me?

BELLA

Look, Brandon. You have a right to your opinion. Everyone does. But your opinion is uneducated, like Rescue said. And that’s a big minus. Just so you know.

BRANDON

And do you lack compassion, like Rescue said?

BELLA

I was stating facts. Just not in the sugar-coated way people like to hear them.

(pointedly)

But people need to face facts before it’s too late.

BRANDON

Yes. They do.

Bella SIGHS. She returns to her phone. Brandon watches her.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Are you in trouble with Planet First?

BELLA

What do you think? I was rude to an entire American generation and swore at Rescue. I have to take online sensitivity training and finish it before I speak at the panel I organized at the global warming conference. That's six eff-ing online modules, each one an hour long, and of course I have to pass them all. I have to publish an apology to all of the Boomers who support Planet First. Out of the eight thousand members of Planet First, there are only - ha! - thirty-six Boomers. But management is pleased that the podcast brought in new members, a lot of donations, and it's gone viral. My supervisor said she's glad I felt empowered enough to stand up for myself; she told me everyone agrees Rescue was being preemptory without realizing it.

BRANDON

"Preemptory"?

BELLA

(impatiently)

Really, Brandon? He expected me to obey him and not challenge him.

(her irritation with him shines through)

He disrespected you, and he expected you not to challenge him either. And you did not.

BRANDON

(pointedly)

I spoke my truth. How badly people react to it is their limitation, not mine.

Bella takes a deep breath and returns to her phone.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

(beat)

But I am really glad they're not firing you. I'm sorry that it might have gone that way. And, if it had, that I would have contributed to it.

She appreciates this, but doesn't want him to know.