

# BFF

If it only weren't for people's ignorance, then a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

It was hot! Like seemingly every day now, the temperature was hotter than before. So, when first clouds and then rain came out of nowhere, the two men walking along the narrow country road felt relieved. They could cool down a bit. But when the rain became a gush, they quickly took shelter under the branches of a big tree.

"Why is it," asked one of the men, "that when it's pouring like this, underneath trees it's almost dry?"

The brothers Friend and Foe were just that, sometimes friends, sometimes foes—but they never agreed on anything. It wasn't so much that they had different opinions as it was that they had very different opinions.

Friend liked black, Foe loved white. Foe preferred daytime and Friend choose night.

The topics of their differences were diverse, and it wasn't so much that some of their opinions were political in nature as it was that they were very political in nature.

Foe respected authority rule, Friend that people had a voice. Friend was pro-life, and Foe was pro-choice.

"As always a foolish question," replied Foe. "Next!"

"Is it though?" asked Friend. "Think it through—where does all the rain go?"

"Do I really have to explain basic rainology to you, Friend? Well okay—it rains, there's a tree, the tree has leaves, the leaves stop the rain. There. Boom. Done!"

The rain continued its deluge on all sides of the tree, but underneath was just a light sprinkle.

"Yeah..." Friend looked smug. "But one leaf can only hold so much water. When there's too much it will tip over and let the water go."

"Yes, but then leaves underneath that one are still in the way and will collect it."

"What if they're also full? What if all leaves are full? Then the water has nowhere to go but down. So, I'm thinking—it can stay dry underneath a tree for only so long. When the tree is saturated, when all leaves are full of water, the same amount of water must reach the ground underneath the tree as next to it."

"I see what you're getting at," said Foe, "but perhaps it would be more of a flood, and then dry again. The process starting over, going in waves."

"No," said Friend. "That would be the case if the tree had only one giant leaf. But it doesn't—a large tree, like this one, has hundreds of thousands of leaves. They would average the amount of flooding down to a steady flow, just like normal rain. It wouldn't be much different underneath the tree than beside it."

The rain was now tapering off, but it was still clear that they were much dryer underneath the tree. So, they stayed.

"Well, whatever you say, you're wrong!" said Foe with an arrogant smile. "Why else are we still dry?"

"As I said, a tree like this one has hundreds of thousands of leaves, maybe a million. It takes a long time for them all to fill up. But if the rain would continue, and you would stay here, I'm sure that you would eventually find out that I am right."

"Whatever!" said Foe and looked at the sky. The sun was now breaking through the clouds again. The rain stopped.

The two brothers continued their walk in the unforgiving sunshine; Foe quickly putting Friend's reasoning out of his mind. It wasn't so much that it was hot as it was that it was very hot!

One of the brothers was wise, the other one not nearly so. The first one informed and the other one with a long way to go.

It had been a serendipitously pertinent discussion, but it wasn't so much that they didn't realize that as it was that one of them didn't realize that at all.

Though not a pro-lifer, Foe enjoyed living. If only circumstances had been a bit more forgiving...

Decision makers of the world had invariably been shortsighted. The planet had been giving hints for decades; hints which grew to be more and more obvious in nature; hints which hinted to the fact that something was rotten in the state of nature. Still ignorance ruled! The point of no return was long past. The climate was running amok, feeding itself faster and faster to reach a culminating climax sooner rather than later.

What had happened was the global warming predicted by scientists arguing that climate change was real. The scientists had been right—the globe was now warm.

And one planet can only hold so much heat. When there's too much it will tip... The Earth was saturated!

Though different as different could be, the brothers shared some basic traits. They didn't know it yet, but they awaited matching fates.

Friend wiped the sweat from his forehead. Foe drank the last of a coke. It wasn't so much that it was very hot as it was that it was very very hot!

Friend looked up at the scolding sun and shielded it with his hand. "Foe, this thing about you being pro-choice. Do you ever stop to think that perhaps that wasn't such a good idea?"

"What are you talking about now?" asked Foe.

"Just look at the weather. Years ago, we used to get snow here in February; now we're happy if we get a nightly low in the sixties. It's all well and good that people are free to choose, but don't you think that some regulations would have been just a little bit useful? If people are free to choose they will choose badly—especially if money's involved. And money is always involved!"

"Pro-choice, pro-life, pro-wateva..." Foe seemed unstable. "Friend, your l-lot always had the better name. I mean, who's nah... not pro-life!?" He was now sweating profusely and seemed almost delirious. "But brother, not everything has to do with life... we all dah.. die someday." He felt disoriented and took his shirt off—a daze caused by the haze. "I'm sure ..." He didn't finish his thought; instead he staggered and collapsed.

For decades the discussions had been fierce. The two camps had been the pro-choicers and the pro-lifers. The pro-choicers, who denied man-made climate change, argued that people had the choice to do just that. Pro-lifers thought that mankind surviving themselves trumped all. But it no longer mattered if some, like Foe, were pro-choice, or, as Friend, pro-life. This was the end of that strife.

Friend found a piece of grass with shade on the side of the smoldering road. Laying his brother down, he sat beside him and wished for better times.

He'd seen this coming, but his brother had not. He saw Foe's eyes staring into the abyss, and thought as so many times before—ignorance is bliss!

The earth was hotter, that was one thing; but the more disturbing fact was the effects of the warming. The arctic ice sheets had melted, raising the sea level. Droughts had killed off the rain forests. Most coral reefs were dead. Desertification was rampant.

People didn't just die from heat—they did it from floods, storms, wildfires, starvation... Countries were at war. Wars which would soon turn nuclear.

As things were and had been, this day had been sure to arrive. People were still alive, but not many would survive. Then, once again, perhaps the Earth would thrive.