

Paper Straws

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FADE IN:

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

ACACIA is stood by a screen showing the Eco-Choice logo and a hoodie with the aglets highlighted. Before her sits a stiff wall of gray suits.

ACACIA

Last year alone, disposed-of aglets amounted to 50,000 tonnes of plastic dumped into the sea and landfills. If the new Eco-Choice Wearables line uses these bio-degradable aglets then every hoodie and pair of jogging bottoms sold will be two more turtles saved from a choking hazard, two more birds with stomachs unclogged. If Eco-Choice is to set a new standard for sustainability in the fashion industry, then a zero-tolerance to unnecessary plastics is essential. Together we can, and we will, change the industry's relationship with our planet. Thank you.

The wall of suits remains motionless until one body leans forward

CEO

Thank you for that, Acacia, was it? A strong contender for sure. Does anyone else have anything to say?

The suits don't move.

ACACIA

I'd just like to say, I think it's really amazing that a large multinational like Gobble Gobble Incorporated is finally taking its corporate responsibility seriously. Bad practices have been allowed to go on too long and I would honestly be so proud to be a part of a clothing line that's carbon neutral.

DIRECTOR

If you don't count the air miles.

Acacia's smile falters and a couple suits shift uncomfortably in their seats.

CEO

Thank you for coming in Acacia. We have a few more people left to see so if you wouldn't mind waiting outside, we have tea and coffee available.

ACACIA

Sure, thank you.

Acacia leaves the boardroom.

The suits exchange glances. One rolls their eyes.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Acacia enters a cubicle and closes the door behind her.

As she sits down she sees the door swing slightly ajar. The lock is broken.

She goes to the loo then carefully tears half a sheet off the toilet roll.

INT. OFFICE CORRIDOR

CEO and Director are walking together.

CEO

Just a few more to go. Anyone caught your attention so far?

DIRECTOR

A couple. I was wondering what you thought of-

Director gives a furtive glance around as they enter the toilets.

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

The cheek of that hippie girl though!

Acacia's feet come up to her chest.

Lecturing us on corporate responsibility. She doesn't have to answer to shareholders! Hit targets! Justify her own existence!

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (cont'd)

So much easier to sit on a high horse  
than trudge through the mud.

CEO waves a hand to shush her and quickly has a glance under  
the cubicles. There are no feet in sight.

In the clear, she turns back to Director more relaxed.

CEO

Always the way isn't it. Wannabe  
Greta Thumbergs that tweet about  
rising sea levels but still start  
every morning with smashed avocado,  
and spend every summer in a Thai yoga  
retreat.

Acacia looks down and fingers her Thai hippie bottoms.

CEO turns to the mirror and starts to fix her make up.

CEO (cont'd)

Her pitch might just be the one  
though. Everyone's fighting for a  
piece of the eco-pie, and a tree-  
hugger might just give us an edge.  
Let her think she's changing the  
world, it's no skin off my nose.

DIRECTOR

Yeah, until she realises Eco-Choice  
is a drop in the ocean compared to  
the rest of Gobble Gobble.

CEO

If her bio-whatever lace-end thingys  
make it into the clothing line she'll  
be able to get a job at any fashion  
company on Earth. Even if she does  
get herself all worked up over her  
carbon footprint, she'll make the  
sensible decision.

You ready?

Director looks up from her phone.

DIRECTOR

Oh, I just came to have a bitch.

The two leave the bathroom.

The toilet flushes and two feet lower back to the ground. Acacia comes out and goes up to the mirror, wiping away a tear.

Acacia stares at her reflection.

INT. BOARDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Acacia steps back into the boardroom.

CEO  
Acacia, we all loved your pitch.

CEO looks to her colleagues who in turn give forced nods and smiles to Acacia.

CEO (cont'd)  
Eco-Choice is going to every continent except Antarctica. We would like your product to be a part of that line and for you to join our development team. How does that sound?

CEO bears an expecting smile but Acacia says nothing.

The suits begin to glance at each other.

CEO (cont'd)  
Well?

ACACIA  
Um, great.

Life breathes back into the suits that all start congratulating each other.

CEO produces a bottle of prosecco and Director produces disposable champagne flutes which she starts fixing together.

Acacia tries to find her smile as glasses of prosecco are passed around, none offered to her.

The screen fades to black and three statistics fade into view one by one.

"40% of boards spend 0 hours discussing climate risk."

"27% of board members feel responsible for their company's impact on climate change."

"11% of board members feel they can influence their company's impact on climate change."

"The Alumni / Harvey Nash Board Report 2020 - in partnership with London Business School's Leadership Institute"

The 3 statistics fade out and are replaced by a call to action.

"Personal change means nothing if boards don't change too."

"Don't let them pass the buck on to you."

"Make your anger heard."

FADE OUT