

ASTER I know it / won't be

ELLA The die is cast. You know? It's cast. We went *this* direction. Don't you think? Big choices were made hundreds of years ago and now... well, there are huge, complex, well-funded, historical and financial forces that were put in motion generations ago, and...well... you can't go backwards, can you?

The world can't go backwards. The government can't go backwards. Exxon can't go backwards. I can't go backwards. Nothing can go backwards.

~~Nothing ever goes backwards. Everything just has to do what it has to do...~~

ASTER Would you...

ELLA What?

ASTER ...want to go backwards?

ELLA I'm sorry?

ASTER You put *you* on the list. You said, the world, the government, *you*... Would you want to go backwards? [*With significance...*] Do things differently?

ELLA I just meant...

ASTER I think I know what you meant. And I think you know what I mean. Don't you?

ELLA I think so...

ASTER So? If everything just... *has to do what it has to do...*

ELLA Please don't. I don't think I can take it...

ASTER You know what's going on here. You're feeling the same things I'm feeling, I know you are. Am I wrong? Am I completely delusional?

ELLA No, no, / but I...

~~(During this, VANYA, a bouquet of flowers in hand, appears and sees them. He hides and listens to the rest of this, amazed and appalled...)~~

ASTER What's happening here is real. It's *real*.

ELLA No, it's/ not.

ASTER            It is! I have no idea what it is or what it means, but this is the world, this is *life*, this is LIFE, and all I know is I want you so badly I can hardly form a coherent thought or finish / a fucking sentence...

ELLA            *[To us and herself and the universe...]* I can't believe this is my life!

ASTER            Will you meet me later?

ELLA            No.

ASTER            No?

ELLA            No!

ASTER            Why not?

ELLA            *Because you're just another kind of backwards.*

ASTER            No, I'm not!

ELLA            Oh, trust me, you are! I've been where you want me to go and it is not a place I can live. I have to go forward no matter how I feel / about it, even if

ASTER            Why? Whose rule is that? Who says that that's the way it has / to be?

ELLA            I do...

ASTER            Well, I think you're wrong. I think you're an amazing creature / and I think

ELLA            Oh, God...

ASTER            we owe it to ourselves and to the universe to give whatever this is between us a chance and see where it might take us and what new paths in our lives might open up because of it.

ELLA            *[She grabs him and kisses him hard on the mouth for several seconds, like a quick meal, and then just as abruptly, breaks away]*

ASTER            So you'll meet me?

ELLA            No.

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↑END