



Script

Judge Whale:

Long before your courts stood on land, there was rhythm in the tides and reason in the reefs. I am called many things: Leviathan, Tohora, Old One, but today, you may call me Judge Whale.

I have witnessed empires rise and fall, coral kingdoms vanish, and rivers turn into ghosts. I carry stories in the barnacles on my back, memories in the weight of my bones. But today, I will tell you one story, not from my world, but yours. A human story.

Once, not long ago, a group of women stood before the highest court of your continent. They were not young warriors or silver-tongued lawyers. No, they were elders. Grandmothers. tetas, abuelas and nonnas

They called themselves the *KlimaSeniorinnen*, the Climate Seniors.

They came with wrinkles, walking sticks, and fire in their hearts. They came to say:
“Planet Earth will recover eventually, simply without us. Some people have accepted this outcome, but many others see the chance we have now to create something new, in the sense that transformation is often or always preceded by a crisis. I believe this strongly and I keep up this belief or hope, because it inspires me.”
(Quote from Elizabeth Stern, one of the *KlimaSeniorinnen*)

And do you know what happened?

The court listened.

For the first time, a court recognized that failing to act on climate was a violation of human rights.

It was a quiet revolution, in gowns and gavels, not in protests and parliaments.

But I ask you now... if human elders can speak for the young, who speaks for the ocean?
For the kelp forests burned by heat, for the fish whose migratory paths are twisted by warming currents, for my coral cousins, once radiant, now bleached and brittle?

I do not come to you as a victim. I come to you as a witness, as a judge, and as a storyteller. And today, this courtroom belongs not to humans alone. Today, we put forth a question: If the ocean had legal standing, if it were recognized as a being with voice, dignity, and rights, what justice would it ask for?

This is not a trial of guilt, but of imagination. You are not just the audience, you are the Ocean. And by the end of this tale, it is you who must decide: Will the ocean remain a silent witness, or will you let it speak through law, through love, and through you?



Now... let the case begin.

Plastic

Oh, here we go again, another courtroom, another round of finger-pointing, and guess who's back in the defendant's seat? Me. The usual suspect. Public enemy number one with handles.

You all see me and shudder. You blame *me* for the mess you made, as if I swam into the ocean myself, wrapped myself around your corals and strangled your sea turtles for fun.

No. I was made. Designed to be useful, then disposable. I held your groceries, your takeout, your convenience.

And then? Tossed out, by hands too clean to carry the guilt, and now I'm the villain? A plastic scapegoat in your theatre of redemption?

You call me lifeless, but I've outlived your resolutions, your greenwashed promises, your policy papers. I am your legacy. I don't biodegrade, but neither do your lies.

And now... *now*, you speak of justice? You give the ocean a voice? Really? You expect me to believe the sea has opinions? Since when does saltwater have standing in court? Since when do waves write declarations?

I mean, look around, the same species that birthed me in boardrooms, drowned me in landfills, and stuffed me into the bellies of whales, now stands here, cloaked in righteousness, pretending to be the ocean's conscience?

The ones who built this system are now pretending they're here to heal it.
What does that say about the world?

So before you judge me, ask yourselves this: If I'm the symptom, what's the disease, or even yet what does that make you?

Sea Turtle:

You speak so loudly for something that floats.
But maybe that's what you do, you float.
Never stay. Never root. Never feel the pull of home.

Plastic (scoffing):

Oh, here we go, -- the turtle, wise and wounded. Let me guess, another sad tale from the reef?



Sea Turtle:

You think it's just a tale?

My nesting beaches are drowned. My hatchlings, blinded by city lights. My brothers starved from bellies full of you.

Plastic:

You think I asked to be in their bellies? You think I chose to fly from a bin into the sea?

Sea Turtle:

You're not the only one who's been discarded. The ocean has been used and tossed aside by the same hands that made you.

Plastic (muttering):

And yet they all cry for her now. Convenient.

Sea Turtle (cutting in):

Because we have to.

Because it's not too late.

Plastic:

Not too late? *Not too late?! You're crawling across sands that burn your eggs. Your kind's been swimming through poison for decades.*

Sea Turtle:

And yet I swim still. And I will speak, even if my shell cracks beneath me. Because someone has to believe we're worth saving.

Plastic (laughs bitterly):

You *believe*? That the humans who paved paradise and named it "progress" will now unpave it with petitions and puppet shows?

Sea Turtle:

Yes. Because some of them *are* listening now. Because stories shift hearts, hearts shift laws.

Plastic:

Hearts don't pass legislation or sign treaties.

Sea Turtle:

But they spark the ones who do. And you know what scares you, Plastic?

Not that I'm wrong, but that I might be right.



Plastic (defensive, rising):

I'm scared of nothing. I'm made to last forever.

Sea Turtle (softly):

Exactly. That's the curse, isn't it?

Plastic (lowers voice):

You think I wanted this?

Sea Turtle (gently):

No. I think none of us asked for this, but we're here now, in this courtroom, with Judge Whale, and the Ocean watching.

Plastic (quiet for a moment, then sharply):

Then let them judge.

Let's see if the tide turns.

COURTROOM

Plastic (to Judge Whale):

Your deepness, you've lived long enough to know how this works. People don't change. They manufacture guilt, not justice.

Sea Turtle (interjecting):

That's not true! Judge Whale, please, some of them *are* changing. We've seen laws shift, communities rise, voices like waves gathering strength.

Plastic (rolling eyes):

Oh spare me the poetry. You think a hashtag can save a species?

Sea Turtle:

I think *hope* can. And laws. And you, Judge Whale, if you recognize the ocean as more than a backdrop.

Plastic (to Judge Whale):

Don't let them romanticize this, your deepness. I'm not the villain. I'm the consequence.

Sea Turtle (cutting in):

And I'm the cost! I'm what we lose when we pretend the ocean is just water, not a world.

Plastic (rising):



We're not in a fairy tale, -- (Sea Turtle) . You're living in a graveyard. Wake up!

Sea Turtle (heated):

And you're proud to be its gatekeeper?

Plastic:

I never asked to be born!

Sea Turtle (overlapping):

But you were! And now you have a choice ...

Plastic (mocking):

What, to join the eco-club and sing Disney tunes?

Sea Turtle (angrily):

To listen. For once, to listen!

Plastic (shouting):

Why listen to a dying reef?

Coralia (shouting):

Why listen to a plastic ghost?

Judge Whale (shouting louder):

ENOUGH.

You squabble like waves in a storm, but this is not your ocean alone.

You speak of justice, of blame, of hope, of loss.

But you forget,

the ocean hears you.

I cannot judge this case alone, not when the salt in my blood remembers both your truths, not when the verdict belongs to something older than law, life itself.

(She turns to the audience: THE OCEAN)

And so I ask **you**, the Ocean, the witness, our world, what do you say? Should the sea remain silent? Or shall we, at last, give it voice?



UNITED NATIONS
OCEAN CONFERENCE
NICE, FRANCE 2025



UNITED NATIONS
OCEAN CONFERENCE
NICE, FRANCE 2025