

# Oscar the Turtle Learns about Pollution and Climate Change

By Nina Bartolotta



**Oscar the turtle was happily swimming with his friends one day.**



**All of the sudden, a big wave swept  
away some of Oscar's friends!**



**Oscar felt so lonely. He just wanted a friend to swim with. Very determined to make a new friend, Oscar went into the deep blue to find one!**



**The first thing Oscar found was a plastic soda bottle. Being so young and not knowing much, Oscar asked the bottle, 'Will you be my friend? We can swim in the clear blue sea forever and ever!'**



**Unfortunately for Oscar, the bottle never responded. Well, Oscar thought, maybe he's just very tired. With that, he tied his new friend to one of his flippers and carried along to find another friend.**



**After wandering around for some time, Oscar's eye was caught by something shiny and colorful. He swam over to it and repeated the process that had gained him his first friend. He asked the candy wrapper, 'Will you be my friend? We can swim in the clear blue sea forever and ever!'**

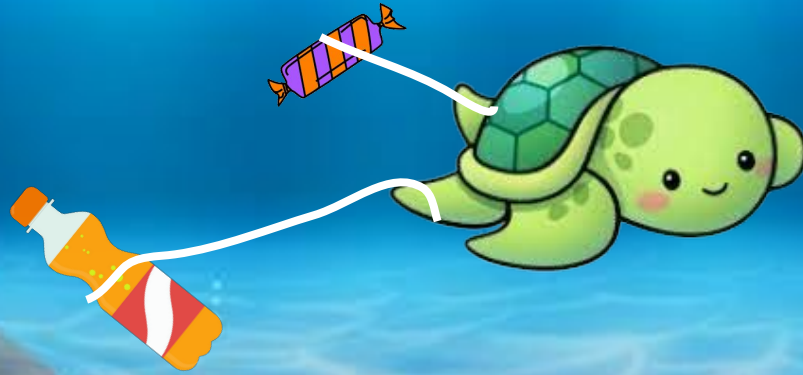


**Unfortunately for Oscar, as with his first friend, no response. He shrugged, and noticing that the wrapper didn't have any fins to swim with, tied it to his other back flipper and swam away again.**

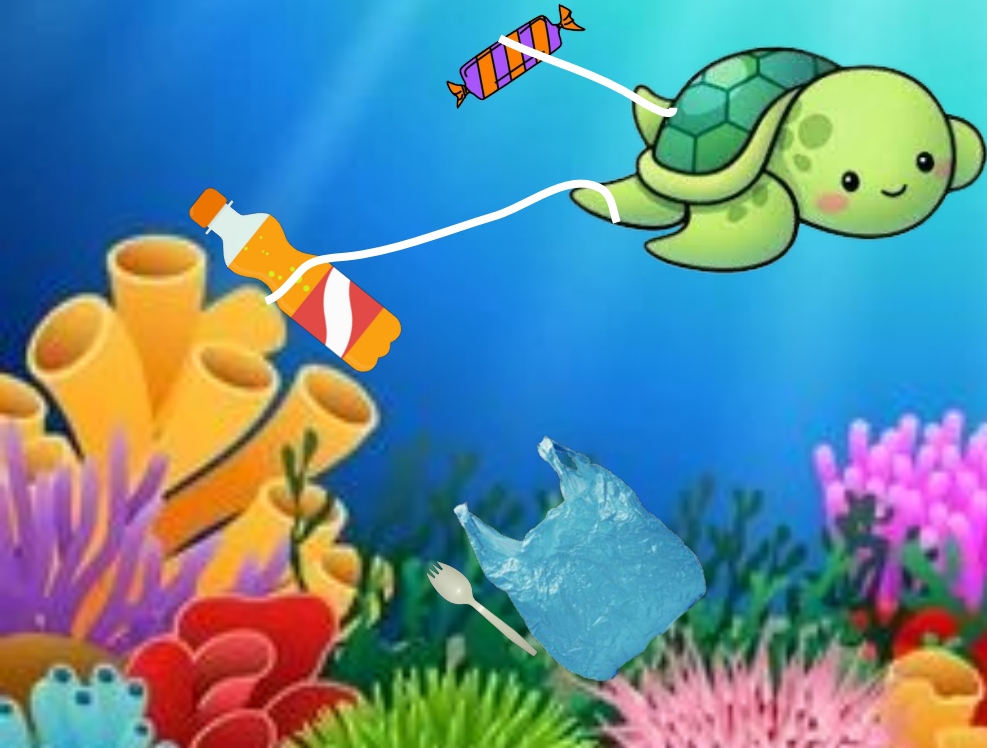




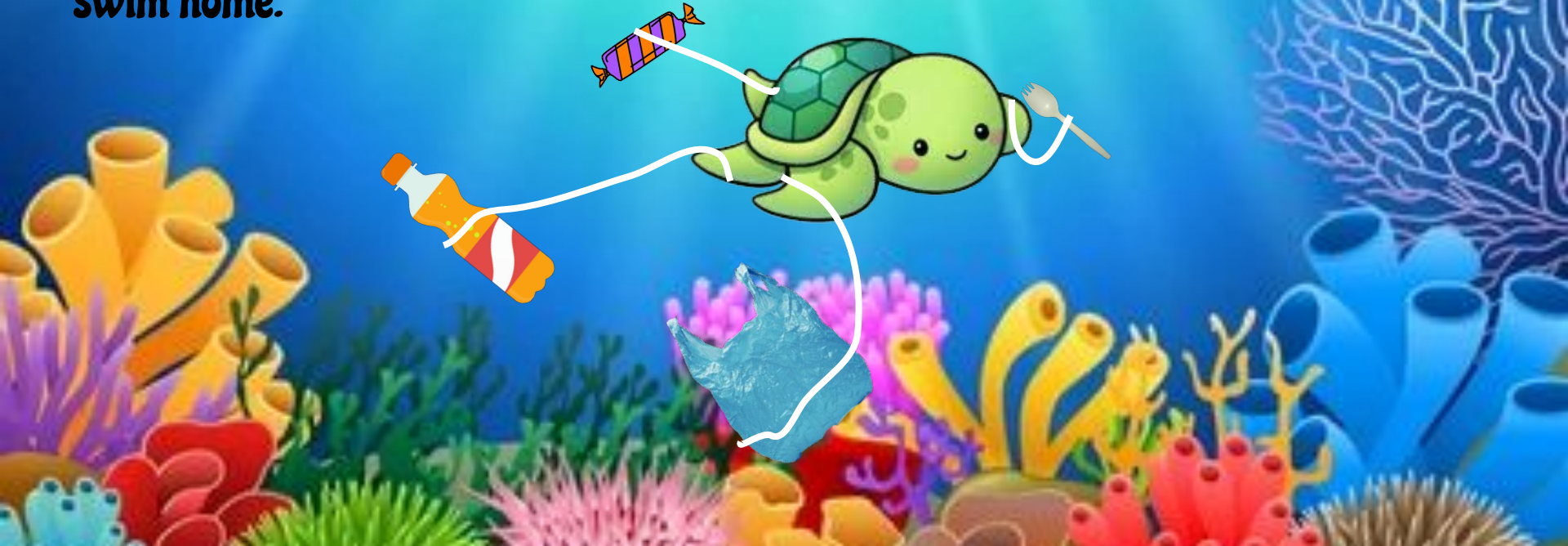
**More time passed and it was beginning to get dark. Oscar started back home, pleased with his discoveries of the day.**



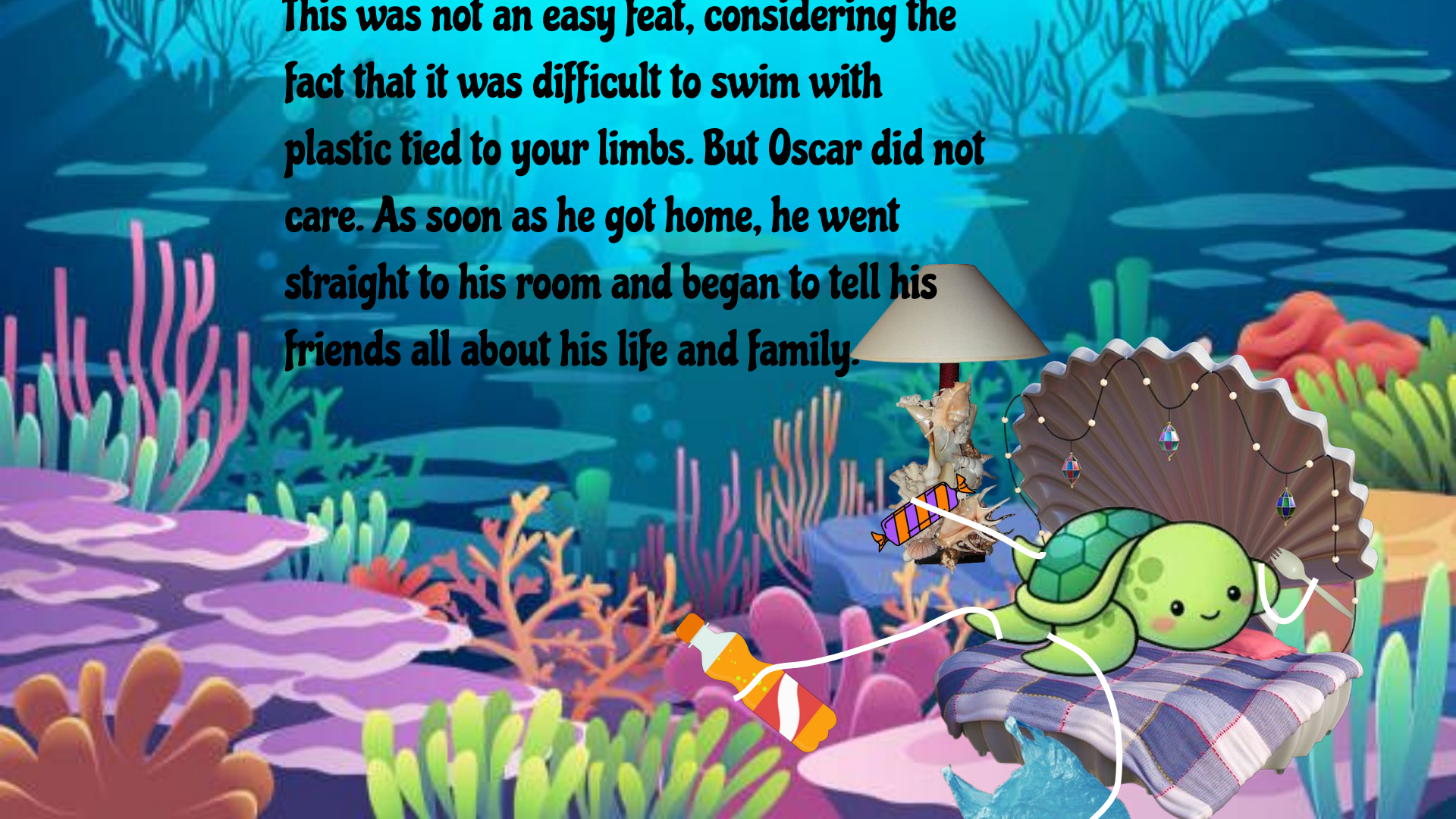
**As he was passing a seaweed pile, Oscar saw what he thought was the best find ever! In the seaweed pile, Oscar spotted a plastic bag and a utensil of sorts.**



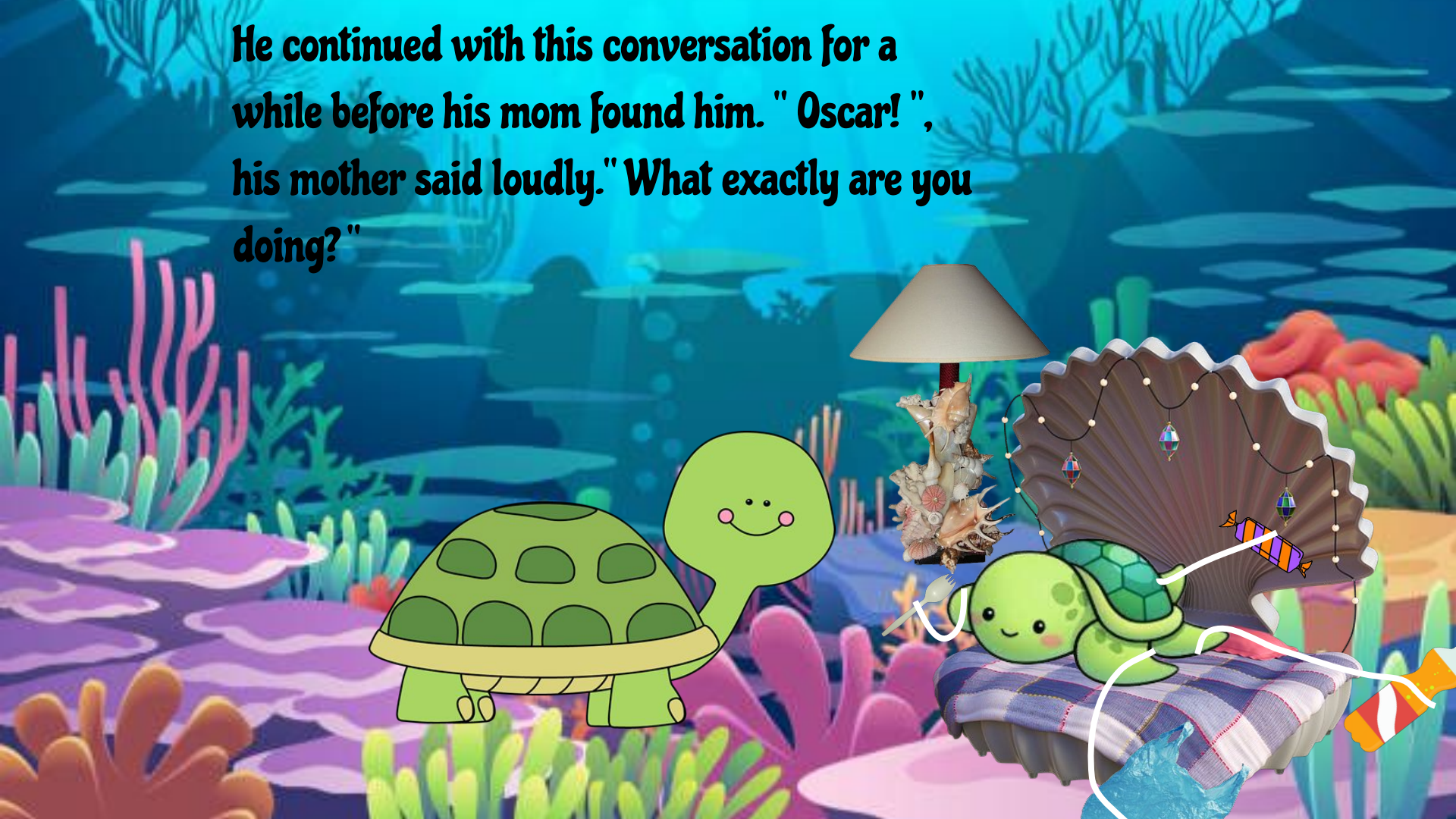
**Oscar was confused and fascinated by the latter. It wasn't quite a fork, but not quite a spoon. It was the strangest thing Oscar had ever seen and he loved it! He didn't even bother to ask them to be his friends, he was too excited to show his mom what he had found. He tied them to his front flippers and started to swim home.**



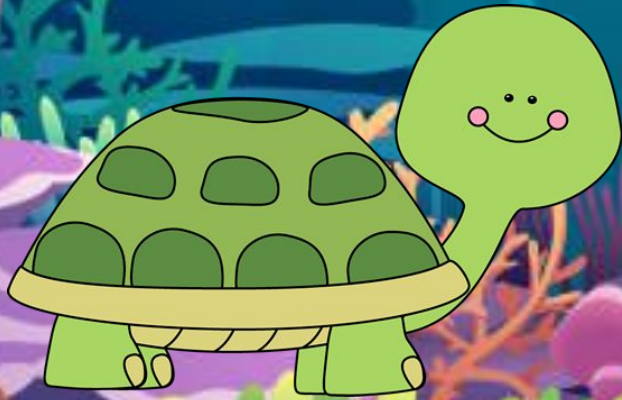
**This was not an easy feat, considering the fact that it was difficult to swim with plastic tied to your limbs. But Oscar did not care. As soon as he got home, he went straight to his room and began to tell his friends all about his life and family.**



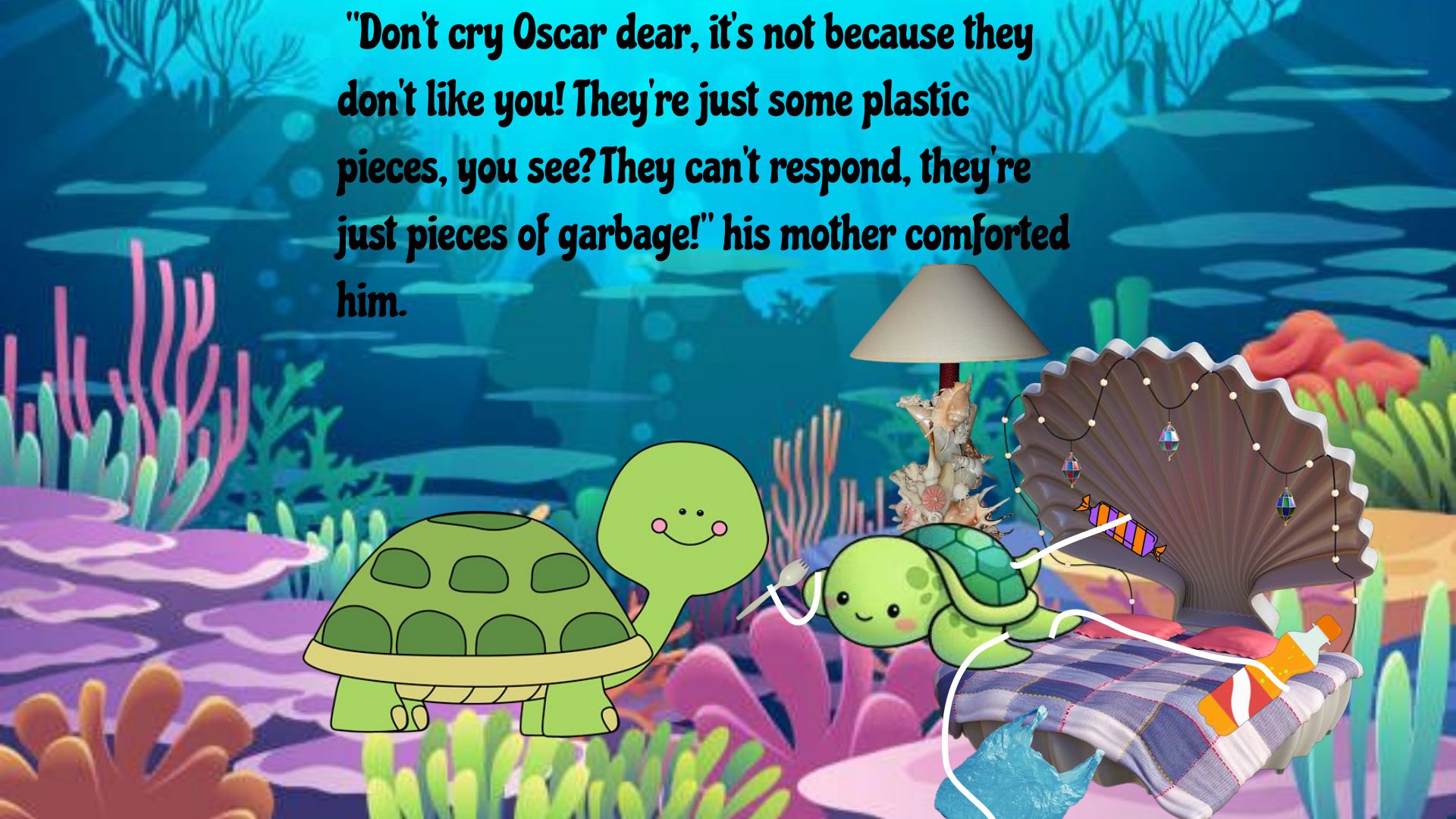
**He continued with this conversation for a while before his mom found him. "Oscar!", his mother said loudly. "What exactly are you doing?"**



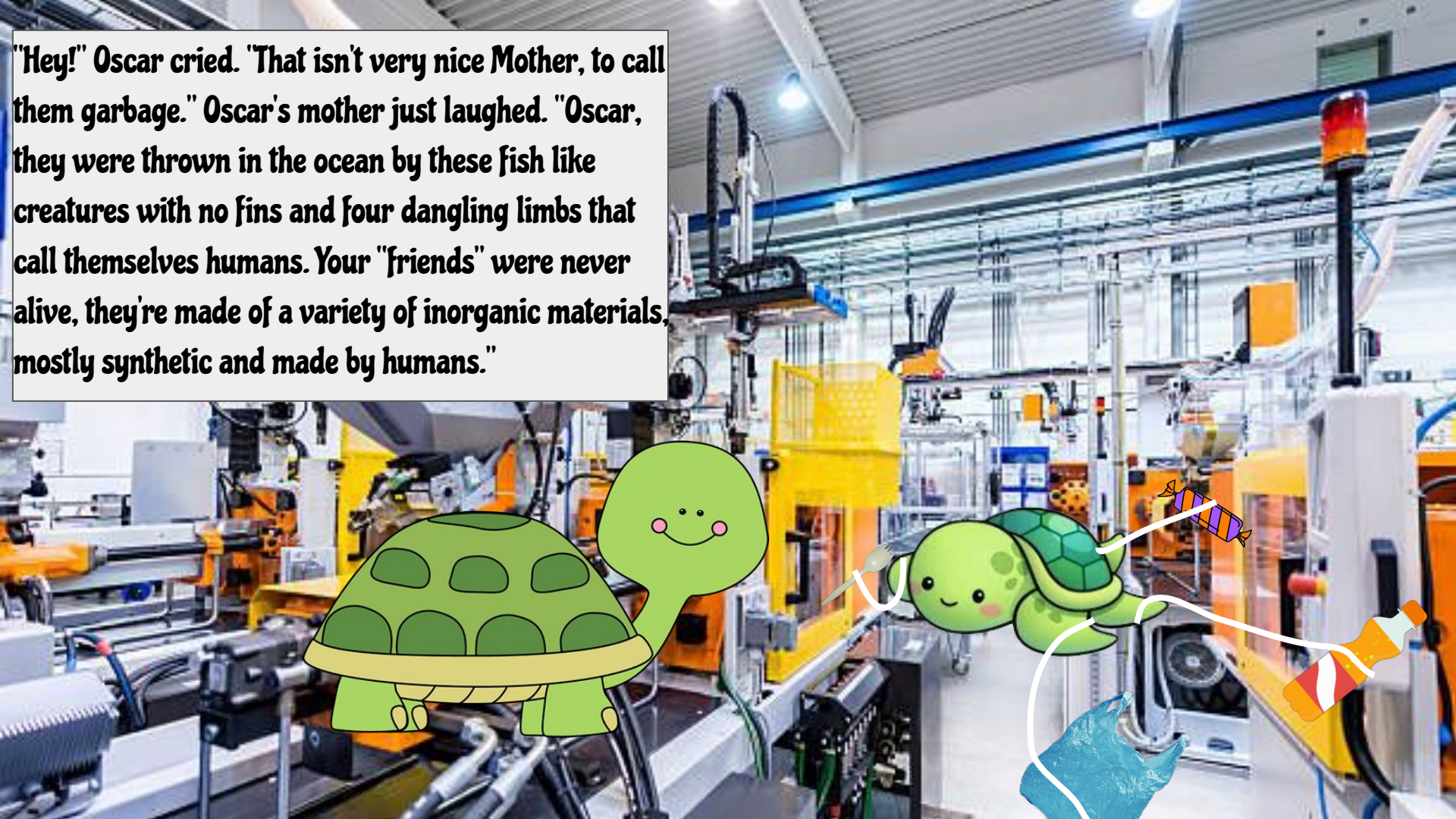
Oscar responded, "Mom, meet my new friends! They don't say very much....or move very much....well I guess I can't even say we're friends, they won't answer me! Do they even want to be my friends?" And with that, Oscar began to weep.



**"Don't cry Oscar dear, it's not because they don't like you! They're just some plastic pieces, you see? They can't respond, they're just pieces of garbage!" his mother comforted him.**

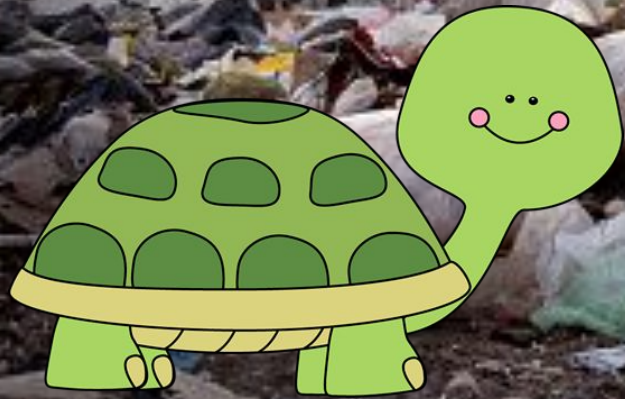


**"Hey!" Oscar cried. "That isn't very nice Mother, to call them garbage." Oscar's mother just laughed. "Oscar, they were thrown in the ocean by these fish like creatures with no fins and four dangling limbs that call themselves humans. Your "friends" were never alive, they're made of a variety of inorganic materials, mostly synthetic and made by humans."**

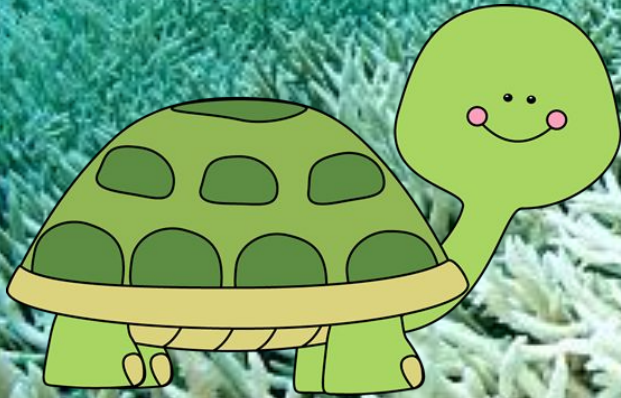




**These factories produce waste for miles and it doesn't help that plastic never goes away. It stays on earth for years and makes our ocean home, dirty. That's why those "friends" you made, are unfriendly to us. The plastic itself can also lead to global warming due to the chemicals (greenhouse gas emissions) that are produced as it breaks down.**



**Pollution isn't the only issue these factories cause. These same factories also produce chemicals that go into the air and contribute to climate change. This hurts our coral reefs, which cannot handle the high temperatures and can lead them to die.**



**"So you see Oscar, We need to get rid of your not so friendly friends and find another place for them," his mom finished with a sigh. Oscar had just the idea.**

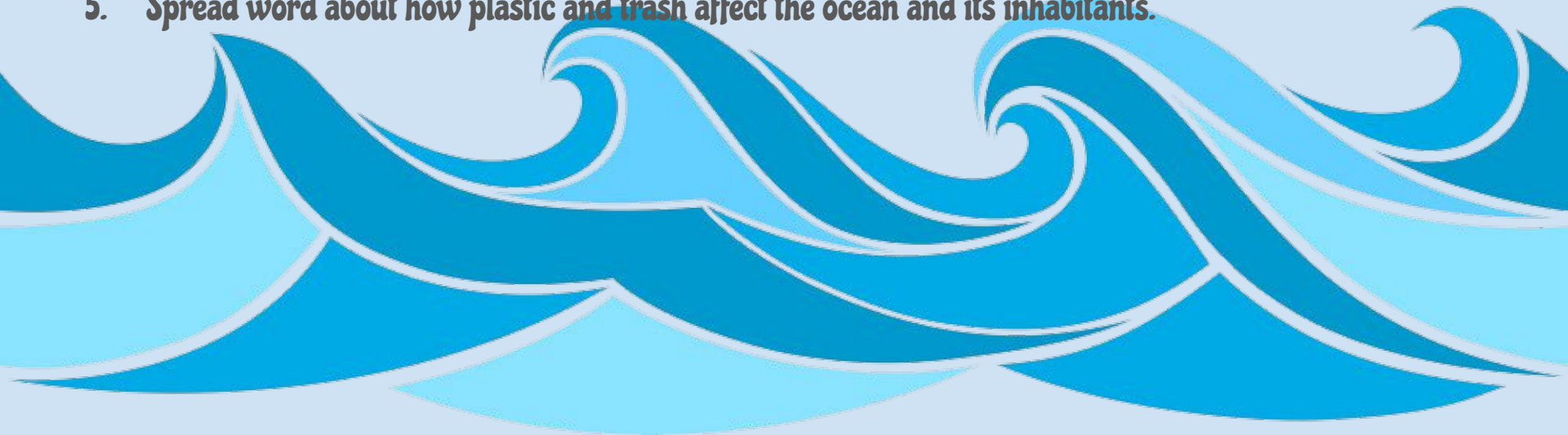


**Oscar and his mom gathered up some real friends, and picked up a bunch of garbage in the sea. Then they put it all together, so the mermaids could take it to shore. This would help keep their home just a little bit cleaner.**



# So the real question is, how can you help?

1. Use reusable shopping bags
2. Use reusable water bottles
3. Recycle correctly
4. Take part in beach or water clean ups.
5. Spread word about how plastic and trash affect the ocean and its inhabitants.



# fact sheet

- **The two largest found items in the ocean are cigarettes (2,117,931) and food wrappers / containers (1,140,222).**
- **Plastic waste kills around 100 million marine animals each year.**
- **1 in 3 marine animals is found with garbage wrapped around it.**
- **100% of turtles recently studied contain plastic waste inside of them.**
- **Most marine animals cannot tell the difference between garbage and their food source.**
- **"Marine plastic pollution breaks down into microplastics and contributes to climate change both through direct GHG emissions and indirectly by negatively affecting ocean organisms." –blogs.worldbank**

## Sources

[fairPlanet](#)

[7 Solutions to Ocean Plastic Pollution – Oceanic Society](#)

[100+ Ocean Pollution Statistics & Facts \(2020–2021\).](#)