

Divine Court

By

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INT. COURT ROOM - DAY - FIRST DAY

JENNIFER TURNER is in Divine Court and on the witness stand fighting for her afterlife. She doesn't want to be reincarnated and sent back to Earth and will prove why she's done with the third planet from the sun and why it doesn't need her anymore. A BAILIFF stands in front of the bench, and a COURT REPORTER is seated to the side of it.

BAILIFF

All rise for honorable God, the
Creator.

GOD walks into the court room and takes a seat on the bench. Jennifer's stunned that God looks nothing like she pictured or was told what the creator looks like. PROSECUTOR MARSHA BANKS sits at the Plaintiff's table along with Jennifer's Case Worker, MRS. SMITH. TYLER LOVETT, Jennifer's attorney, sits at the Defendants table.

BAILIFF

Please be seated.

GOD

Before we begin I would like to address the witness. Jennifer, I know you don't want to go back to Earth but the planet could use your help. There's still time to change your mind.

JENNIFER

Thank you, your honor. I mean God. But I'd like to continue with the trial.

GOD

Very well. Mr. Lovett, you may address your witness.

Tyler Lovett, attorney for Jennifer, rises and approaches the bench to question her.

TYLER

Thank you, God, your honor. Jennifer, why don't you tell the jury why you feel you're done with Earth.

JENNIFER

Well, I, um. It's just that I no longer want to be on the planet. Don't get me wrong, I love nature,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER (cont'd)
animals, the arts, music,
festivals, and other things about
Earth. But the people are another
matter. I mean, come on! Are they
for real? They think they're
advanced, but the technology is
soooo archaic. And then there's the
U.S. health care system which is
totally screwed up. I mean, little
kids can run lemonade stands better
than the idiots who run hospitals,
clinics, and health insurance
companies. Plus, humans still act
like barbarians, some of which are
still fighting wars that started
5,000 years ago. Really? Don't ya
think it's time to, Let it Go. And
don't get me started on how some of
humans are easily led and can't
think for themselves. They eat up
what politicians and celebrities
feed them as if it was candy. The
don't get the facts. And then
there's...

The jury and other members of the court GASP in shock.

GOD
Order! Order in my court!

JENNIFER
Sorry, your honor, I mean God. I'm
just being honest.

GOD
You don't have to apologize. I
agree that humans haven't evolved
as fast as I would have hoped, but
they still deserve compassion and
understanding.

JENNIFER
I guess so. But why do I have to be
subjected to their behavior? As far
as I'm concerned I did my time.

TYLER
(clears his throat)
Jennifer, could you elaborate. How
do you still think that humans
still act like barbarians?

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

They use religion, which is man made, no offense God, (looks at him), as a basis to start wars.

The jury and court audience make a RUCKUS.

GOD

None taken.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry, but it's the truth. Religion is one of the many reasons why Earth still has wars. I mean, look at all of the them. They're all the same. There are some differences here and there, but the message is still the same. People just don't get it. And look at the the Middle East. They've been around for over 5,000 years and they still can't get a long. The story's old and needs to end.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. JENNIFER'S APT. - DAY (2003)

A news program plays on Jennifer's TV in her apartment. The REPORTER is SPEAKING about the U.S. and Iraq conflict.

REPORTER

The U.S. is leading the War in Irag determined to unveil weapons of mass destruction. They're joined by their allies in the U.K.

The news program continues to play. A voice calls, "Jennifer, Jennifer!"

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY - FIRST DAY

Jennifer is standing in the witness box pointing her finger at God. Tyler calls her name.

TYLER

Jennifer!

Jennifer realizes she's standing and sits down.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

Sorry.

TYLER

Are you okay to continue?

JENNIFER

Yes. I just don't want to go back!
It's my soul. I should have a say
in whether or not I go back. What
happened to free will?

GOD

You still have free will my child.

JENNIFER

Then why am I in court?

GOD

Even though you have free will, it
may be necessary for you to
reincarnate on Earth once or twice
or many lifetimes. If you would
have allowed your case worker to
help you, you would have understood
that. But you decided to fight the
process, which is why we're in
Divine Court today.

JENNIFER

Great. We experience resistance in
the afterlife, too.

GOD

You don't have to experience it.
The power lies within you.

JENNIFER

But I don't want to go back! I want
to be free and do what I want to
do! I'm sure there are others who
can help Earth. And, I'm only one
person. Whether or not I go back
won't really make a difference.

Some people in the court audience SHOUT and stand up! God
POUNDS his gavel.

GOD

Order! Order! Order in my court!

Everyone sits down. Tyler moves closer to Jennifer.

(CONTINUED)

TYLER

Jennifer, that's a bold statement to make. Are you sure about this? Do you feel that passionately about not going back to Earth?

JENNIFER

I do and will fight. I'm sorry God, but I can't go back. I won't!

GOD

Very well. We'll adjourn for today and resume tomorrow at 10 am.

God POUNDS his gavel and the courtroom empties. He looks at Jennifer and their eyes lock. She realizes she's in for the fight of her afterlife.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY - SECOND DAY

Jennifer and Tyler sit at the Defendants Table. Prosecutor Marsha Banks and Case Worker Mrs. Smith sit at the Plaintiff's table.

BAILIFF

All rise for his honorable God, the Creator.

Everyone in the court room stands. God walks into the courtroom and takes a seat on the bench.

BAILIFF

Please be seated.

GOD

Ms. Banks, please call your first witness.

MARSHA

Thank you, your honor, God. Prosecution calls Case Worker Mrs. Smith to the stand.

Jennifer's case worker, Mrs. Smith rises and walks to the witness stand. She doesn't look a day over 65.

BAILIFF

Please raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

(CONTINUED)

MRS. SMITH

Of course. Besides, God would know
if I'm lying.

The jury and court audience LAUGH. God smiles. Jennifer
rolls her eyes.

MARSHA

Mrs. Smith, you were assigned as
the Caseworker for Ms. Jennifer
Turner. Is this correct?

MRS. SMITH

Yes.

MARSHA

Could you please tell the jury what
your job entails?

MRS. SMITH

Well, it's my job to sit down with
new arrivals and help them get
acclimated to being in non-physical
form vs. physical form. Many souls
have a difficult time adjusting.
It's my job to see they're
comfortable and ready for detox.

MARSHA

Detox? Could you elaborate?

MRS. SMITH

Certainly. Souls like Ms. Turner
are only here for a short time
before they're reincarnated and
sent back to Earth. Before they
depart, we must detox or cleanse
their soul of their previous life.
Their cells retain memory but we
like our souls to have a fresh,
clean start.

MARSHA

And how did Ms. Turner react to
this news?

MRS. SMITH

I'm afraid she didn't take it very
well. She said she wasn't going
back to Earth and that was final.

(CONTINUED)

TYLER

I object! God, this is hearsay!

The jury and other members in the court make a commotion.
God POUNDS his gavel.

GOD

(loudly)

Silence! Silence in my courtroom.
Overruled. Ms. Banks, please ask
your witness to elaborate.

MARSHA

Yes, your honor. God. Mrs. Smith
was there anyone who witnessed Ms.
Turner's reaction?

MRS. SMITH

Yes. My assistant, Ms. Thompson saw
Ms. Turner burst out of my office.

TYLER

Objection!

GOD

Overruled. Ms. Banks, I suggest you
produce Mrs. Smith assistant.

MARSHA

Yes, your honor. God. This is the
first I'm hearing about this. Thank
you Mrs. Smith. That will be all.

GOD

Mrs. Smith, you may step down.

Mrs. Smith leaves the witness stand and takes her seat at
the plaintiff's table.

GOD

In lieu of this revelation about
Mrs. Smith's assistant, this court
will adjourn until Wednesday at 10
am. Ms. Banks you have until then
to produce Mrs. Smith's assistant.
Mr. Lovett, I assume that's all
right with you?

TYLER

Yes, your honor. God

GOD

Very well. Court is adjourned.

God POUNDS the gavel and leaves. Tyler and Jennifer converse as does Marsha and Mrs. Smith. Everyone leaves the courtroom.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY - WEDNESDAY

The jurors are seated in the jury box. Marsha and Mrs. Smith sit at the Plaintiff's table while Tyler and Jennifer sit at the Defendant's table. ALANA THOMPSON, mid-20s, is Mrs. Smith's assistant. She sits in the first row behind Marsha and Mrs. Smith.

BAILIFF

All rise for his honorable God, the Creator.

God walks into the courtroom and takes his seat on the bench.

BAILIFF

Please be seated.

GOD

Ms. Banks, I assume by this affidavit I received that you found Mrs. Smith's assistant.

MARSHA

Yes, your honor. God

GOD

All right. Ms. Banks, call your first witness.

MARSHA

Yes, your honor. God. The people would like to call Alana Thompson to the stand.

Alana walks to the witness stand.

BAILIFF

Please raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

(CONTINUED)

ALANA

(nervously)

I do.

GOD

You may have a seat young lady. Now don't be intimidated by these proceedings. There's nothing to fear.

ALANA

Yes, your honor. I mean God.

GOD

Ms. Banks, your witness.

MARSHA

Thank you. Ms. Thompson, could you tell the court what it is you do as Mrs. Smith's assistant?

ALANA

Well, I greet new cases and offer them something to drink and point out the magazines we have for them to read while they wait. I also answer the phone, send out correspondence on behalf of Mrs. Smith, and handle other administrative duties.

MARSHA

Ms. Thompson, do you recall the day Ms. Turner entered Mrs. Smith office.

ALANA

(nervously)

Um, I do.

MARSHA

It's all right. Remember, you're under oath.

ALANA

It's just that she was so rude. I mean, I can understand this since she just died and all, but the she was really annoyed and agitated.

TYLER

Objection. Your honor, this is hearsay.

(CONTINUED)

GOD

Overruled. Go on Ms. Thompson.

ALANA

Ms. Turner wasn't happy about having to see a caseworker. I mean, I can't blame her because it's not like new arrivals know what to expect. But I didn't anticipate such hostility. She wasn't the most pleasant case, I mean soul, I've met.

Jennifer smirks and rolls her eyes.

MARSHA

Were you afraid of Ms. Turner?

TYLER

Objection.

GOD

Ms. Banks, you're stepping into dangerous grounds. The jury will disregard the question. Continue Ms. Banks.

MARSHA

Yes, your honor. God. Ms. Thompson, do you remember anything else about your encounter with Ms. Turner?

ALANA

Yes. She kept mumbling that she's not going back. That no one could force her to go back there.

Alana points to the ground.

ALANA

I mean who wouldn't want a second chance at life on Earth.

TYLER

Objection. Your honor, God. We're not hear to listen to this witness's opinion about the planet.

GOD

Ms. Thompson, please refrain from giving us your opinion and stick to the facts. Sustained.

MARSHA
No further questions.

GOD
Mr. Lovett, your witness.

Tyler gets up from the Defendant's table and walks to the witness stand.

TYLER
Ms. Thompson, as Mrs. Smith assistant, you're supposed to greet new cases and make them feel comfortable. Is this correct?

ALANA
Yes.

TYLER
Surely you could understand why Ms. Turner was upset. I mean, after all, she just died.

ALANA
Yeah.

TYLER
With all do respect, Ms. Thompson, it's none of your business how the new arrivals act. Again, you're Mrs. Smith's assistant.

Alana narrows her eyes at Tyler.

ALANA
(smiling)
Mrs. Smith values my opinion, and I give it when I feel the need to.

TYLER
Really. And has Mrs. Smith ever made a decision about a case based on your opinion.

MARSHA
Objection.

GOD
Overruled. I would like to hear the answer.

ALANA

Not that I'm aware of.

TYLER

Thank you. That's all I have.

God turns toward Alana.

GOD

Very well. Young lady, you may step down.

Alana steps down from the witness stand and walks back to her seat behind the Plaintiff's table. Tyler walks back to the Defendant's table and grabs a DVD. He approaches the bench.

TYLER

Your honor. I'd like to enter this DVD of Ms. Turner's life as Exhibit 1B.

Marsha quickly stands up.

MARSHA

(hastily)

Your honor. This is highly irregular. I wasn't aware of such a DVD.

TYLER

Your honor. If I may refresh Ms. Banks' mind. Every soul that arrives is given a life review. The purpose of that review is to show the soul its former life. They have a chance to review it, usually with their caseworker. Perhaps Ms. Banks forgot about that.

GOD

Ms. Banks, I'm surprised you overlooked the DVD.

MARSHA

Yes, your honor.

TYLER

If I may, your honor. I'd like for all of us to review Ms. Turner's life.

The jury and audience GASP. God POUNDS his gavel.

(CONTINUED)

TYLER

Your honor, God. I know this is an unusual request but given the unusual nature of this trial, I think it's a fair one. This is, after all, the first time a soul has disputed his or her going back to Earth.

GOD

Very well.

God SNAPS his fingers and a TV and Blu-Ray/DVD player appear.

GOD

Bailiff, please put the DVD in so all of us can watch it.

BAILIFF

Yes your honor, God.

The Bailiff walks over to Tyler who hands him the DVD. The Bailiff walks to the TV and Blu-Ray/DVD player and puts it in. The title "This is Your Life Jennifer Turner" appears on the screen. Jennifer seems tense and fidgets in her seat. God notices.

GOD

Ms. Turner, you don't look so good. Would like like a recess?

JENNIFER

No, your honor. God. I'm fine.

Jennifer's life plays on the TV. It was a good life, but she can't help but wonder if she lived fully. She flinches at certain parts, like dating Greg Montgomery. The DVD finishes.

GOD

(clears his throat)

This court can use a recess. We'll adjourn and return in 30 minutes.

God POUNDS his gavel and the courtroom empties, accept for Tyler and Jennifer who's paralyzed by what she just watched. Tyler gives her shoulder a gentle squeeze.

TYLER

Come on Jennifer, let's get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

If you don't mind, I'd like to sit here for a moment.

TYLER

Okay. I won't be gone long.

Tyler leaves the courtroom. Jennifer gets up and stretches, walks to the window, and stares at the courtyard below. Rays of sunlight wash over her. She feels a peace like she's never experienced before.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY - WEDNESDAY - RE-ADJOURNMENT OF COURT

Jennifer sits down at the defendant's table. Tyler walks in and sits next to her and notices something different about her. Everyone returns, too. God approaches the bench and POUNDS his gavel.

GOD

This court is now in session.

Jennifer stands up. Tyler urges her to sit down, but she waves him away. Jennifer walks towards the bench, faces God, and then turns her back slightly to him.

JENNIFER

Your honor, God. If I may, I'd like to address the court.

GOD

All right. I'll allow it.

JENNIFER

Thank you. Everyone while court was adjourned, I had time to think. Anyway, I changed my mind. I'd like to be reincarnated and go back to Earth to see if I can help mankind progress faster with their ascension.

The courtroom ERUPTS. God POUNDS the gavel.

GOD

Order, order in my court. Jennifer, are you sure? What's changed? Once the decision's final the reincarnation process can't be stopped.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

I understand. As I said, I thought about it. Of course, if I go back to Earth, I want to choose everything from my parents, eye color, body type, etc.

GOD

Of course. You got to choose that the last time.

JENNIFER

Well it sure as hell didn't feel that way!

The court audience and jury GASP.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry, your honor, God. I just want to make sure I get the experience I want. And if I want to change my life's course, I can do that, too. Do we have a deal?

GOD

Very well. You have a deal. You can finalize the details with Mrs. Smith whom I know will be only too happy to work with you.

God looks at Mrs. Smith, and she nods her head Yes.

Jennifer and God shake on the deal. The courtroom erupts once more. Tyler and Marsha look dumbfounded. Jennifer walks towards Tyler, hugs, and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

A bright white light washes over the courtroom...

THE END