

AN UPSTREAM BATTLE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. LITTLE FISH ACADEMIA - HALLWAY - NOON

Sockeye (a small, bright red salmon) swims along the corridors of a expansive coral reef schoolhouse. His backpack sways from side to side while he wears a contemplative look on his face. Scans the environment.

Many sea creatures go about their days. Rainbow Fish travel in one massive pack.

Sockeye  
Same formation, as always.

He redirects his gaze to an EEL. It sneezes heartily, accidentally zapping a nearby PUFFERFISH. Pufferfish expands and Eel covers its mouth with its fins.

Sockeye (CONT'D)  
Typical.

He spots a poster on the wall.

ANGLE ON: Change starts with you!

Sockeye looks down momentarily before continuing forward.

MONTAGE OF THE SCHOOL DAY

-- Sockeye stalls himself above his seashell desk, as a teachers begin their lecture.

-- Students diligently take down notes. Sockeye apathetically looks out the window. Notices a particularly large waterfall. He makes a small doodle of it during class.

-- Sockeye slams his head against his desk as his teachers drone on and on, class after class, until the bell rings.

END MONTAGE.

Sockeye swims out of class straight into the

MESS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Sockeye eats his fish flakes until a small, grey lumpfish approaches him.

LUMP  
Got any parasites I can feast on?

SOCKEYE  
Knock yourself out.

LUMP swarms around Sockeye. He pops off with a full stomach.

LUMP  
You really don't pay attention  
where you swim, do you?

He burps but Sockeye remains silent. Lump's expression drops.

LUMP (CONT'D)  
Something bugging you?

SOCKEYE  
Yes, actually. I'm tired of playing  
a role in this cookie cutter  
school.

LUMP tilts his head.

SOCKEYE (CONT'D)  
For cod's sake, just look around  
you. Piranhas bite, sharks  
intimidate and salmon... They just  
swim upstream!

LUMP  
Meh, I don't think it's all bad.

SOCKEYE  
Well, I do! If I'm going to be  
gridlocked into doing one thing  
forever, I'm going to do the most  
extreme version of it I can think  
of.

Sockeye pulls out his notebook and flips through its pages.

SOCKEYE (CONT'D)  
I'm gonna swim up this!

Lump squints at it. Sockeye's drawing is incomprehensible.

LUMP  
Didn't you fail art class?

Sockeye grabs Lump by the fin and leads him out the school.

EXT. LITTLE FISH ACADEMIA - CONTINUOUS

The two fish look up at the massive waterfall. The rush of  
the water current ripples through the water.

SOCKEYE

If I swim up there, I'll definitely  
be put in the fishtory books.

Lump quickly backs away.

LUMP

You eat a dreamfish? Because you  
must be hallucinating if you think  
you're gonna swim all the way up  
there.

Sockeye rolls his eyes and begins to swim up the waterfall.  
The force of the water pushes him back down, but Sockeye  
starts again. Lump sighs.

LUMP (CONT'D)

Alright, guppy. I gotta get back to  
class so you probably should too.

Sockeye ignores him. Lump swims back to school.

MONTAGE OF THE UPSTREAM BATTLE

-- Sockeye continues swimming but continuously is knocked  
down by the current.

-- Eventually, it turns to night. Sockeye is making less and  
less progress with his goal. Just as he's about to give in,  
Sockeye spots the poster from before. He's reinvigorated.

-- He trains by the base of the waterfall by swimming against  
the rippling water and marking his jump height.

-- The sun rises over the water level. The light glimmers on  
Sockeye's back. It illuminates the water in a beautiful  
orange hue. He swims up to the bottom of the waterfall.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. LITTLE FISH ACADEMIA - MORNING

Fish slowly pool into the courtyard. Lump looks over to the  
base of the waterfall. No Sockeye. He turns back to the coral  
reef.

While the fish continue on, EEL sneezes again at PUFFERFISH  
and it inflates them. PUFFERFISH floats upward.

PUFFERFISH

Holy carp!!

EEL

I know, I'm sorry. My plankton  
allergies are really bad this time  
of year.

PUFFERFISH

No, look!

The fish turn around and look up. Lump's eyes widen.

LUMP

Oh. My. Cod!

Sockeye is well near the top of the waterfall. The school of  
fish cheer him on.

LUMP (CONT'D)

Go Sockeye! Go!

Sockeye hears the applause and tiredly continues up the  
waterfall. The top edge is so close.

SOCKEYE

I can do this... I can do this. I  
can do this!!

Sockeye makes the leap. The school of fish watch as he soars  
out of the water. A furry figure appears at the top of the  
waterfall. Sockeye's expression drops.

A BEAR CUB catches Sockeye in her mouth and crunches on him.  
His blood pools into water. All of the fish scream in horror.  
They swim frantically and bump into each other.

LUMP

(yelling)

What sick monster would do this?!  
For the love of-!

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Bear Cub walks proudly to a GRIZZLY BEAR with the salmon in  
its mouth.

BEAR CUB

Look, papa! Look at what I caught.

GRIZZLY BEAR

Aww, that's my girl! A big girl  
salmon for my big girl's victory.

THE END.