

AN UPSTREAM BATTLE

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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.