

SLEEPING WITH THE FISHES

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INT. FISH TANK - NIGHT

Dirty decorative fish rocks and a fake barnacle ornament crammed inside a small, murky, macroalgae infested saltwater fish tank; a clear sign of owner neglect.

FIN(a betta fish), SPOT(a clown fish), and BOW(a rainbow fish) celebrate a birthday under the violet night-light.

FIN
Any big wishes?

BOW
I'd like to go home.

FIN
Sick of us already?

BOW
No, no, I just--

SPOT
We get it Bow, life used to be better.

A sudden overhead light brightens the semi-dark fish tank and blinds Fin, Spot, and Bow. They take shelter inside the barnacle ornament.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

CLARA(30s), and MIKE(30s) drunkenly stumble into their messy home full of boxes, takeout containers, and just trash in general.

Clara holds a small, snack-sized plastic bag with a new fish inside. The fish, too big to fit, struggles to breathe with droplets of water lining the plastic bag.

MIKE
Red or white?

Mike heads for the kitchen.

CLARA
Red!

Clara plops the new fish into the murky fish tank.

INT. FISH TANK - CONTINUOUS

Fin, Spot, and Bow, still hiding from the light, are startled by the sound of a splash. They swim out to the open section of the fish tank and judge the new fish with their small eyes.

ARROW(a Platinum-Arowana fish) looks back at the group dazed and confused. He holds back tears and shivers.

BOW
You alright?

Arrow quickly swims behind the algae infested decorative rocks.

Fin, Spot, and Bow stare out of the fish tank at Clara as she taps her sharp finger nail on the glass and smiles devilishly.

SPOT
The noise!

The fish scatter, unable to escape the deafening sound.

Clara walks away from the fish tank.

Fin, Spot, and Bow regroup in the open section.

FIN
That bloody tapping.

SPOT
She's going to kill us like
Stripes.

Bow sees Arrow staring at them nervously through the algae.

BOW
You're going to scare him.

Fin and Spot look over.

SPOT
Sorry, buddy.

FIN
Care to join us?

Fin holds out some "birthday" fish food. Arrow retreats to darkness.

SPOT
More for us.

Spot grabs some food out of Fin's fin and chomps on it.

FIN
Don't eat it all!

SPOT
(muffled)
What?

Bow swims into the algae darkness and finds Arrow in the corner shivering in shock.

BOW
It's alright buddy.

ARROW
I don't want to die here!

Bow distracts.

BOW
Got a name?

ARROW
Uhhh, yeah, Arrow.

BOW
Well Arrow, welcome to your new home.

Arrow looks at the filth surrounding them. Bow's eyes wander with his.

ARROW
It's awful in here.

BOW
At least it has water.

ARROW
I guess..

BOW
Come with me.

Bow leads Arrow to Fin and Spot in the open section.

BOW
Gang.

Fin and Spot turn around.

BOW
This is Arrow.

Arrow awkwardly waves a fin.

SPOT

Didn't mean to spook you about
Stripes.

FIN

Hungry?

Fin holds out the fish food.

ARROW

Starving.

Arrow swims over.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Clara and Mike are cuddled up on the couch with wine glasses and stare at a laptop screen; a fish trading website shows the price of a Platinum-Arowana fish.

CLARA

\$400,000!? We're going to be rich!

MIKE

We need to sell it asap.

The front door BURSTS open. A hooded attacker, TREVOR -- covered in dark clothing -- rushes in brandishing a handgun.

TREVOR

Where's the fish!?

Clara and Mike, drunk, startled, and terrified fall to the floor. They point at the fish tank.

Trevor turns his head around the home and clocks the fish tank. He points the handgun at Clara and Mike.

TREVOR

Stay there!

Clara and Mike remain frightened and still.

Trevor walks to the fish tank and looks inside. He sees Arrow peering back at him and smiles.

Trevor, now distracted, doesn't notice drunkenly confident Clara and Mike quietly rising to their feet.

They nod at each other and RUSH after Trevor.

Mike grabs Trevor's gun arm while Clara jumps on his back. Trevor, bigger than both of them, holds his ground and shakes Mike off.

Trevor swings his gun arm around, still struggling with Clara on his back, and points the handgun at Mike.

TREVOR

Don't make me use this!

Mike freezes with his back against the fish tank. Clara slips off Trevor's back, causing Trevor's finger to squeeze the handgun's trigger--

POP

INT. FISH TANK - CONTINUOUS

-CRACK-

A bloody bullet pierces through the fish tank water, mixing blood and dirty algae.

Fin, Spot, Bow, and Arrow scatter in all directions.

Fin swims up, Arrow swims down, Spot hits the left glass wall, and Bow gets stuck in a whirlpool near the bullet hole.

BOW

Help!

Fin, Spot, and Arrow gain their directions and swim to Bow.

FIN

Swim away!

BOW

I can't!

Bow is halfway out of the fish tank when Arrow swims full speed and grabs Bow with his fin. He struggles to bring her back in.

ARROW

Pull my tail!

Fin and Spot take the hint and grab Arrow, creating a daisy-chain of fish.

They pull with all their fish might and wade backwards, bringing Bow back into the fish tank and away from the draining hole.

SPOT
Nice plan Arrow!

BOW
I thought, I thought I was..

FIN
It's alright Bow, it's all good.

Arrow inspects the bullet hole as water continues to drain out.

ARROW
Not for long! We need to block the hole.

SPOT
With what?

Arrow looks around the tank and gets an idea.

ARROW
The algae! Bundle it up and it should block the hole. Bow, head up top and watch the water level, make sure it doesn't get too low. Spot, grab some large algae. Fin, help me block the hole.

The fish swim to their positions, all fins on deck.

Spot wraps algae around his body, swims to Fin, and untangles the light, translucent aquatic leaves.

ARROW
We need more!

BOW
Hurry up down there!

Spot swims away as Fin and Arrow bundle the algae together.

FIN
Will this work?

ARROW
It better.

Arrow and Fin place the bundled algae against the bullet hole.

The algae is instantly sucked out of the bullet hole, followed by more water.

FIN

Ohhh no..

Bow floats down, only half the fish tanks water left.

Spot returns to Fin and Arrow with more algae.

ARROW

The algae's not enough.

SPOT

We're going to die!

Arrow looks around and notices small and large sediment rocks on the bottom.

ARROW

The rocks! Fin grab some rocks,
Spot give me the algae.

Fin swims to the bottom of the fish tank. Spot gives Arrow the algae and he pops it into his mouth.

SPOT

You're going to eat it!?

BOW

Below 50%!

Fin returns with sediment rocks. Arrow pops the rocks into his mouth and mixes them with the algae.

SPOT

You really are going to eat it.

BOW

30%!

Fin and Spot look up. Bow is a tails distance away from them.

FIN

Hurry up Arrow!

Arrow spits out the algae and sediment rock concoction. It's a strong, thick bundle.

BOW

15%!

Bow floats next to Fin and Spot. Their top fins sticking out of the water barely covering their bodies.

Arrow drifts the algae/sediment blocker toward the hole. The water's dangerously low when--

It PLUGS! The water level evens off, giving just enough room for the fish to stay submerged.

SPOT
Didn't have any doubt!

Good work! FIN Nice Arrow! BOW

The group pats Arrow on his tail when they look up and notice Trevor approaching the fish tank.

ARROW
Don't worry, he's with me.

INT. HOME - CONTINUOUS

Clara, clutching Mike's *bleeding* stomach wound, watches Trevor grab a small fish net on top of the tank.

CLARA
(to Mike, quietly)
We need that money.

Mike, ghostly white, shakes his head no. Clara ignores him and rises to her feet.

Trevor puts the net inside the fish tank but--

Clara RUNS at him and slips on the blood smeared wood floors. She collides into Trevor, causing him to lose the handgun and slam into the fish tank.

INT. FISH TANK - CONTINUOUS

Fin, Spot, Bow, and Arrow feel their world spinning as the fish tank wobbles back and forth.

BOW
That's not good!

ARROW
Into the barnacle!

The disoriented group makes their way to the barnacle ornament. Arrow waits for everyone to get inside as the fish tank careens off the table.

The fish world is upside down, leaving Arrow separated from the barnacle ornament when--

INT. HOME - CONTINUOUS

The fish tank shatters on the ground, sending rocks, algae, and dirty blood water across the wood floors.

Fin, Spot, and Bow, nestled safely under water inside the upside down barnacle ornament, watch Arrow helplessly squirm on the wood floor.

SPOT

He's not going to make it!

BOW

We need to help him!

FIN

We can't!

Arrow flops across the partially wet wood floors and chokes on open air.

Trevor avoids stepping on Arrow and runs after the handgun, but Clara reaches it first.

Before she can fully grip the handgun Trevor kicks her over and the handgun falls from her fingertips. He picks up the handgun and aims it at Clara's terrified head.

TREVOR

I will kill you!

Clara screams and falls flat on the ground.

Arrow takes one last look at his fish friends and smiles that they are alive. He closes his eyes and takes one last breath when--

Trevor scoops Arrow off the ground. Arrow barely opens his eyes to see Trevor, HIS OWNER, smiling at him.

Trevor picks up the barnacle ornament and notices the other fish inside with water. He sets Arrow in gently.

INT. BARNACLE ORNAMENT - CONTINUOUS

Arrow takes a deep breath, gains his composure, and looks at his friends surrounding him.

FIN

You're absolutely crazy.

SPOT

I knew he'd make it!

Bow rushes over and "fish-hugs" Arrow.

BOW
You saved us.

If fish could blush Arrow would be bright red.

The group, under just enough water to survive, looks out of a translucent window on the barnacle ornament.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Trevor grips the barnacle ornament tight in one hand and aims the handgun at Clara and Mike with the other.

CLARA
He's going to die!

Mike, eyes wide, looks at Clara with a thousand yard stare.

MIKE
Die!?

TREVOR
He'll be fine..

Clara holds *bleeding* Mike. They cry in pain as--

INT. BARNACLE ORNAMENT - CONTINUOUS

Fin, Spot, Bow, and Arrow laugh at Clara and Mike's demise.

SPOT
I knew we wouldn't die!

FIN
They had it coming for what happened to Stripes.

BOW
Where are we headed now?

The group turns to Arrow. He looks at them and smiles.

ARROW
Home.

The fish watch Clara and Mike sob in unison and laugh as the front door closes on them.

THE END