

*Watershed* by Louis

There is nothing so majestic as fish in boxes. Glass boxes. With water, I should clarify. Any other way would be rather un-majestic, and smelly. Yes, these aquatic creatures glide so effortlessly, and we have the utmost privilege to gaze upon their shimmering scales.

I wonder if they know they're not in the ocean. Do they have a preference? Certainly less predators here. Hmm, if I was in the water, would they think I'm a fish too? Ah, the cichlids look hungry. Lemme check the back.

Man, Applebee's waiter is NOTHING compared to marine exhibit assistant at *the* Watershed Aquarium. Two weeks in and I'm still surprised; maybe they hired me because of my ichthys necklace. Ah, here's the fish food.

This job's so chill. Who's gonna rock the boat at the fish place? All I need to do is tell oblivious schoolchildren to take their hectic little fingers off the glass. I mean have some decency!! Parents need to control their lawless midgets' digits. The trout will FLIP when you cause their little fish ears to suffer a series of sonic BOOMS just 'cause you wanna get their attention, pulling them away from their important business, such as swimming in one direction, or swimming in the other direction.

Dinnertime, cichlids! They love the flakes. Oh and by the way, on my third day, the octopus somehow climbed out the top of the tank, fell eight feet, and started scooting around the floor and people were freaking out. So I just picked it up, got bit 'cause I grabbed it by the teeth (oops), and then reeled back and threw it into the tank. It was apparently against protocol, but how was I supposed to know, TONY?? I read the whole handbook you gave me front to back, but there ain't nothing in there about octopi fugitives. What do you want me to do, kiss it?

Anyway, today is a good day. It's Teen Weekend, so lots of programs going on for high schoolers. It's busy, but older kids at least tend to not have hands that are magnetically attracted to panes of glass. And now that the cichlids are fed up, they won't get mad at me. Kids are filing down the hall, gazing at the gorgeous aquatic life in the massive tanks on either side of them. Time to kick back on my little chair and relax.

That is, until I hear a loud rolling sound. I can't believe my eyes. Turning the corner into the hallway is a kid wheeling a huge object on a dolly, covered by a tarp. Heh, I wonder if it's a life-size statue of myself holding the octopus -- "World's best marine exhibit assistant". Well, I'm too far away to be able to tell. Another kid is following close behind with a camera. Suspicious, I sigh and languidly (but professionally) approach them.

While I'm still thirty feet away, the kid says, "Hey guys, welcome back to another video. Today we're gonna try out another one of my DIY inventions." Oh great. One of those Insta-tubers or whatever. Why don't they take some video of our splendid fish, hmm?

"I got something extra cool today, guys. And luckily, we found another filming location since they kicked us out of the greenhouse" he continues. I shout, "Hey, what do you guys have under there?" He yanks the tarp off the object. I am stunned.

"The world's largest tuning fork!" Before I can react, the kid winds up with a huge sledgehammer to strike it. Desperate, I stumble forward. "Hey, hey, not at the aquarium!"

The Great Clang.

That... frequency... is something I will never un-hear. It reverberates through my very soul. There is no delay; the tanks on either side of us burst instantaneously. We are submerged in a flash. As I scramble up towards the surface, the octopus bites me again without hesitation. I gasp for air near the ceiling, only to find the two boys talking.

"Well, that's one way to *drown out* all the noise, hah."

"Patrick!! This camera cost me two hundred bucks!"