

SCENE TEN: URSULA'S LAIR

(Flotsam and Jetsam enter with Ariel.)

FLOTSAM

Oh, Mistress of the Deep! You've a visitor ...

ARIEL

(blanching)

I'm not so sure ...

JETSAM

Now, now ... mustn't get cold fins ...

(Ursula appears. Ariel stares, agog.)

URSULA

Don't be shy, Ariel darling! It's me — your Auntie Ursula!

ARIEL

I shouldn't be here —

URSULA

Nonsense! We're family.

ARIEL

Father says you're wicked and hateful —

URSULA

Mmm, yes! But he says the same thing of humans, doesn't he, snookums? And we both know that's not true, don't we?

ARIEL

(suspicious)

Why did he banish you?

URSULA

The ocean wasn't big enough for the both of us.

(a beat, and then pointedly)

And now he's driven you away, too ...

ARIEL

He doesn't understand me.

URSULA

Oh, but I do, dumpling. We're so very alike, you and I — gals with ambition!

(with a conspiratorial wink)

Nothing scares a man more, does it?

(URSULA)

(draws Ariel in closer)

Now tell dear old Auntie everything.

ARIEL

I'm in love with someone. A human.

URSULA

Mmm ... yes — this Prince fellow. He's quite a catch. Well angel fish, the answer is simple! The only way to get what you want is to become a human yourself!

ARIEL

Can you help me?

5 - *Poor Unfortunate Souls*

Ursula

URSULA

Help you? My dear, sweet child — it's what I live for: to help unfortunate merfolk like yourself. Poor souls with no one else to turn to ...

I ADMIT THAT IN THE PAST I'VE BEEN A NASTY
THEY WEREN'T KIDDING WHEN THEY CALLED ME, WELL, A WITCH
BUT YOU'LL FIND THAT NOWADAYS
I'VE MENDED ALL MY WAYS
REPENTED, SEEN THE LIGHT AND MADE A SWITCH
TRUE? YES

AND I FORTUNATELY KNOW A LITTLE MAGIC
IT'S A TALENT THAT I ALWAYS HAVE POSSESSED
AND HERE LATELY, PLEASE DON'T LAUGH
I USE IT ON BEHALF
OF THE MISERABLE, LONELY AND DEPRESSED
(PATHETIC!)

POOR UNFORTUNATE SOULS
IN PAIN, IN NEED
THIS ONE LONGING TO BE THINNER
THAT ONE WANTS TO GET THE GIRL
AND DO I HELP THEM?
YES, INDEED!

THOSE POOR UNFORTUNATE SOULS
SO SAD, SO TRUE

(URSULA)

THEY COME FLOCKING TO MY CAULDRON
CRYING, "SPELLS, URSULA, PLEASE!"
AND I HELP THEM
YES, I DO!

NOW IT'S HAPPENED ONCE OR TWICE
SOMEONE COULDN'T PAY THE PRICE
AND I'M AFRAID I HAD TO RAKE 'EM 'CROSS THE COALS
YES, I'VE HAD THE ODD COMPLAINT
BUT ON THE WHOLE I'VE BEEN A SAINT
TO THOSE POOR UNFORTUNATE SOULS

Here's my best offer, babykins. I know a spell that will turn you into a human for three days. Now it's got a procedural clause, sort of a "*squid pro quo*." Before the sun sets on the third day, you've got to get dear ol' princey to kiss you. If you do, you'll stay human forever.

ARIEL

And if I don't?

(Flotsam holds a contract.)

URSULA

Nothing drastic darling, I'm sure ... Oh, look—small print: "Your soul is mine forever, and you're doomed to spend eternity in my watery, hell-soaked lair." Lawyers! Don't you just love 'em? Of course, there is one more thing ... my fee.

ARIEL

But I don't have anything!

URSULA

I'm not asking for much. Only ... your voice.

ARIEL

My voice?

URSULA

Don't worry. I have the perfect place for it.

(Flotsam and Jetsam bring out an enormous white glowing shell.)

Your grandpappy Poseidon gave his magic trident to your father ... but this was his gift *pour moi*.

ARIEL

Your magic shell!

URSULA

(slightly nervous)

You've heard about it?

ARIEL

Father says it's the source of all your witchcraft!

URSULA

Nonsense, darling!

ARIEL

He says you'd die without it—

URSULA

Die? Oh, please! It's a bauble! A vessel for your voice! Trust me, darling—your vibrato, your legato, even your belt—they'll all be safe'n'sound in here.

ARIEL

If I give away my voice, how can I ever—

URSULA

You'll have your looks ... your pretty face ... and don't underestimate the power of body language! Ha!

THE MEN UP THERE DON'T LIKE A LOT OF BLABBER
THEY THINK A GIRL WHO GOSSIPS IS A BORE
YES, ON LAND IT'S MUCH PREFERRED
FOR LADIES NOT TO SAY A WORD
AND AFTER ALL, DEAR, WHAT IS IDLE PRATTLE FOR?

COME ON, THEY'RE NOT ALL THAT IMPRESSED WITH CONVERSATION
TRUE GENTLEMEN AVOID IT WHEN THEY CAN
BUT THEY DOTE AND SWOON AND FAWN
ON A LADY WHO'S WITHDRAWN
IT'S SHE WHO HOLDS HER TONGUE WHO GETS HER MAN

COME ON, YOU POOR UNFORTUNATE SOUL
GO AHEAD!
MAKE YOUR CHOICE!
I'M A VERY BUSY WOMAN
AND I HAVEN'T GOT ALL DAY
IT WON'T COST MUCH
JUST YOUR VOICE

(URSULA)

YOU POOR UNFORTUNATE SOUL
IT'S SAD, BUT TRUE
IF YOU WANT TO CROSS A BRIDGE, MY SWEET
YOU'VE GOT TO PAY THE TOLL
TAKE A GULP AND TAKE A BREATH
GO AHEAD AND SIGN THE SCROLL!
FLOTSAM, JETSAM—NOW I'VE GOT HER, BOYS
THE BOSS IS ON A ROLL
YOU POOR UNFORTUNATE SOUL!

So how's about it, cupcake?

ARIEL

If I become human, I'll never see my family again.

#15A – Act One Finale

Ursula, Arie

(ARIEL)

My sisters ... even my father—

URSULA

Now do you want princey-poo or not? Five, four, three, two—

ARIEL

Yes! Yes, I'll do it! Where do I sign?

(Jetsam holds up the contract.)

URSULA

Not just any ink, darling.

(raises a tentacle)

Use mine.

(Ariel signs the contract.)

BELUGA, SEVRUGA, COME WINDS OF THE CASPIAN SEA ...

LARYNXES, GLACYDIS, AD MAX LARYNGITIS, LA VOCE TO ME!

Now, sing! Sing your voice over to me!

(Ariel sings into the shell.)

ARIEL

AH-AH-AH-AH, AH-AH-AH-AH ...

URSULA

Sing and keep singing!

ARIEL

... AH-AH-AH-AH-AH-AH, AH-AH-AH-AH ...

(As Ariel's voice soars, Ursula traps it in her glowing shell.)

URSULA

Now swim, swim, swim! Swim for your life, human child! Ha ha ha ...

(Ursula exits with the eels. Suddenly, Ariel starts to float toward the surface in a magical spin. Scales fall and she sheds her tail, revealing human legs. As the sun shines in the world above, Ariel crashes through the surface and takes her first breath with human lungs. The curtain comes crashing down. END OF ACT ONE.)