

SCENE FIVE: THE PALACE BALLROOM

(Prince Eric runs into the room, breathless and giggling over their dinner antics.)

PRINCE ERIC

Just look at the two of us, eh? What a couple of misfits.

(Ariel enters and grins. Prince Eric stares at her a moment.)

You're a quiet girl in a noisy world. I'm a prince who'd rather be a simple sailor.
We're both ...

(searching for the perfect metaphor)

... fish out of water, you and me!

(Ariel blanches.)

What? Did I say something wrong? I'm sorry. Who needs words anyway?

#19 – One Step Closer

Prince Eric

(PRINCE ERIC)

A smile says just as much sometimes.

(Ariel smiles, reassured, even exuberant. Too giddy to contain it, she flexes up and down on her toes.)

Nimble on your feet, aren't you? Dancing beats small talk any day.

(Ariel demonstrates the dance Scuttle taught her.)

Why, sure. It's the way your feet smile ... or laugh. It lets you say so many things:

DANCING IS A LANGUAGE THAT IS FELT INSTEAD OF HEARD

(Prince Eric does a little jig.)

YOU CAN WHISPER, SING OR SHOUT
WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A WORD
TRY IT, GO ON, LIKE SO ...

(Prince Eric repeats the step. Ariel imitates him.)

JUST LET YOUR EMOTIONS TELL YOUR BODY WHAT TO DO

(Ariel does a step of her own – she's getting the hang of it.)

SEE HOW MUCH A SINGLE GESTURE CAN REVEAL!
AND EV'RY LITTLE STEP
EV'RY SINGLE STEP
IS ONE STEP CLOSER
TO SAYING WHAT YOU FEEL

(Prince Eric patiently teaches Ariel various formal dance steps.)

(PRINCE ERIC)

ONCE THE MUSIC HITS YOU, INHIBITIONS FALL AWAY
AND YOU FIND THAT YOU'RE EXPRESSING THINGS
YOUR VOICE DAREN'T SAY
DON'T BE AFRAID, LET GO!

SOON AS YOU SURRENDER, WHAT'S INSIDE WILL SWEEP ON THROUGH
AS THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN US DISAPPEAR!
AND EV'RY LITTLE STEP
EV'RY SINGLE STEP
IS ONE STEP CLOSER
TO TALKING LOUD AND CLEAR

A DANCE IS LIKE A CONVERSATION
EXCEPT YOU NEVER NEED TO MAKE A SOUND
AND ONCE YOU'VE BEGUN
YOU SPEAK AS ONE
GIVE AND TAKE
BACK AND FORTH
ROUND AND ROUND ...

(Prince Eric and Ariel launch into a dance – then another, and another, and another ... leading into a big sweeping ballroom dance. The two of them are completely in tune with one another, moving as one, poetry in motion ...)

A DANCE IS LIKE A CONVERSATION
EXCEPT YOUR LIPS DON'T EVER NEED TO PART
AND ONCE YOU'VE BEGUN
YOU SPEAK AS ONE
CHEEK TO CHEEK
TOE TO TOE
HEART TO HEART ...

(Prince Eric and Ariel are now inches apart, gazing into each other's eyes ... Ariel puts her head on his shoulder.)

DANCING IS A LANGUAGE THAT IS FELT INSTEAD OF HEARD
BUT IT SAYS MUCH MORE THAN LANGUAGE EVER COULD
AND EV'RY LITTLE STEP
EV'RY SINGLE STEP
IS ONE STEP CLOSER ...
ONE STEP CLOSER ...
ONE STEP CLOSER
TO BEING UNDERSTOOD

(The dance ends. Prince Eric bows, and Ariel mimics him. Just as he moves in for a kiss, wafting through the night breeze are the magical strains of Ariel's voice.)

19A - Good Night

VOICE

AH-AH-AH-AH, AH-AH-AH-AH

PRINCE ERIC

Do you hear that?

(Ariel shakes her head "no.")

VOICE

AH-AH-AH-AH-AH-AH, AH-AH-AH-AH

PRINCE ERIC

(thoroughly distracted)

Forgive me— I haven't been myself lately. It's after midnight. I should let you get some sleep. Good night.

(Prince Eric exits hastily. Ariel, crestfallen, watches him depart. Sebastian appears.)

SEBASTIAN

Out of the frying pan, into the fire! The things I do for you, young lady! Now, I know what I should do! I should march you right back home to your father—

(Ariel's eyes grow wide with alarm, and she shakes her head a vehement "no.")

— so you can be miserable the rest of your life ...

(sighs heavily; he just can't bring himself to stand in Ariel's way)

It's true. I got no backbone. All right, child. I'm in. Now we got to make a plan to get that boy to kiss you, before it's too late! You gotta bat your eyes, like this ...

Then you gotta pucker your lips, like this ...

(Sebastian demonstrates; Ariel copies.)

Oh, that's good! You put those two things together, you got that boy in the palm of your hand! Now come, child, off to bed with you —

19B - Back to Ursula's Lair

#20A - Before "Kiss the Girl"