

Ariel⁵ - Flounder Scuttle

START

(PILOT, SAILORS)

AN' IT'S HEY TO THE STARBOARD, HEAVE HO!
WATCH OUT FOR 'EM, LAD, OR YOU'LL GO TO YOUR RUIN
MYSTERIOUS FATHOMS BELOW!

(The ship sails into the horizon. Ariel appears, just in time to snatch the sinking fork from oblivion. She holds it up; it catches the sun's rays; it makes prisms in the air.)

ARIEL

(admiring it)

Why, it's beautiful!

(A splash, and FLOUNDER appears. He's a rambunctious young fish, and Ariel's best friend.)

FLOUNDER

Hey, Ariel! There you are!

(Ariel hides the fork behind her back.)

ARIEL

Flounder!

FLOUNDER

(gazing at the strange terrain)

Whoa. Freaky.

ARIEL

What's the matter? Haven't you been to the surface before?

FLOUNDER

Yeah. Sure. Me and the other fish in my school, we come up here all the time.

ARIEL

Is that so?

FLOUNDER

Sure! We're not scared of sharks. Or boats. Or fishermen.

(with a nervous gulp)

What's a "chum bucket"? Are those for real?

ARIEL

You *are* afraid, aren't you?

FLOUNDER

No, I'm not! I'm here now, aren't I?

(a telling beat)

With you.

ARIEL

Flounder, you're blushing ...

FLOUNDER

It's sunburn. You get it up here.

ARIEL

Are you flirting with me?

FLOUNDER

Gross! Blech! No way!

(then)

But if I was—?

(Ariel ruffles Flounder's fins and gives him a peck on the head. Flounder is hopelessly smitten.)

ARIEL

Hey, guess what I found today! It was floating in the wake of a giant ship ...

FLOUNDER

Treasure?

ARIEL

I'll say! Look!

(shows him the fork)

Have you ever seen anything so amazing in your entire life?

FLOUNDER

Cool! What is it?

ARIEL

I don't know ...

(SCUTTLE the seagull flies down toward the shore. His feathers are askew, giving him the appearance of an avian Albert Einstein. Ariel spies him.)

SCUTTLE

(holding up a finger to test the wind)

Airspeed, check!

(glancing down at the ground)

Altitude, check!

(wiggling his feet)

Landing gear, check!

(a squawk)

CLEAR THE RUNWAY! AWK! Hello, Ariel!

ARIEL

... but I know just who to ask!

(And Scuttle lands.)

(waving the fork)

Scuttle, look what we found!

SCUTTLE

More human paraphenicular, eh? You've asked the right bird; I happen to be an expert on that very specie-ality!

FLOUNDER

Can you tell us what it's for?

SCUTTLE

Oh, this is rare, ridonkulously rare. And in Sistine condition!

ARIEL

What? What is it?

SCUTTLE

It's a dinglehopper!

ARIEL

A dinglehopper?

SCUTTLE

Commonly used in saloons, yes, of the beauty variety.

(demonstrates)

Humans they like to wear their hair in tails, pony or pig or duck, it's all the same to them. A primp here and a twirl there and —*voila!* A Pompadour-able. And all thanks to —

ARIEL

(marveling)

The dinglehopper!

SCUTTLE

Give ya two sand dollars for it.

ARIEL

Scuttle, no —

SCUTTLE

I'm tellin' ya kid, on the open sea, ya won't get more than a few clams. But I'm prepared to offer —

ARIEL

I'm not selling it, Scuttle! I'm saving it for my collection!

SCUTTLE

Howza 'bout a swap?

(brandishes an old-fashioned tobacco pipe with an enormous bowl)

I got something stupelicious! Museum quality, really. A banded, bulbous ... snarfblatt.

(Ariel and Flounder "ooh" and "ahh.")

Second cousin to the tuba.

FLOUNDER

It makes music?

SCUTTLE

Sure thing, kid.

(Flounder blows into the pipe; seaweed pops out the other end.)

I ain't just blowin' smoke. Why, it makes music so fantabulous—so absolutely marvica—

ARIEL

(suddenly stricken with panic)

Music? Oh no! The concert! Oh my gosh, my father's gonna kill me!

FLOUNDER

The concert was today?

#3A – Oh No, the Concert

ARIEL

I completely forgot! Come on, Flounder. Thank you, Scuttle.

SCUTTLE

Ya change your mind and wanna sell, call me first, ya hear?

Stop

Flotsam

Jetsam

Ursula

start

SCENE THREE: URSULA'S LAIR

(Slithering into view are FLOTSAM and JETSAM, two eels in service to Ursula the Sea Witch. Their spines crackling with electricity, they are as unctuous as used car salesmen, albeit with less charm.)

FLOTSAM

Oh, Mistress of the Deep ...

JETSAM

Beauty of the Brine ...

FLOTSAM

You should've seen it! All those Merfolk, singing Triton's praises, and cursing your name—

JETSAM

Declaring a national holiday—

(We hear a dark, malevolent, female voice, one that positively ripples with evil.)

URSULA

(offstage)

Holiday, my blow hole!

(Lights rise on URSULA, the gal who put the "fatal" in "femme fatale." She has a Super-8 figure, and eight floating tentacles. She's ripe with bitterness.)

It's the day my brother Triton got greedy, that's all! The day he stole my half of the Kingdom!

FLOTSAM

To think ... your very own flesh and blood—

JETSAM

(with a venomous hiss)

And he double-crosssssssed you—

FLOTSAM

His own sister—

(Ursula plots.)

JETSAM

Casting you into exile, a life of shame and unceasing solitude—

FLOTSAM

In the shadowy depths of a serpentine sea—

URSULA

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! Don't blow your fuses, boys ...

- stop

Eric

Grimsky

SCENE FIVE: PRINCE ERIC'S SHIP / SEA TOW BEACH

(Sailors prepare for a storm aboard the ship.)

SAILORS

HEAVE HO, HEAVE HO!

HEAVE HO, HEAVE HO!

STOW THE MAINSAIL!

BATTEN THE HATCHES!

start

PRINCE ERIC

I don't want to be King—

GRIMSBY

I swore an oath to your father on his deathbed that I'd turn you from an errant roustabout into a proper royal, so you're worthy to fill his shoes!

PRINCE ERIC

Now you're making *me* queasy.

GRIMSBY

And that's not all. I promised I'd have you married before your next birthday.

PRINCE ERIC

(*incredulous*)

Married?

GRIMSBY

Our kingdom needs a queen!

PRINCE ERIC

Did you ever try to take a princess sailing? It's a joke! Their crinolines get caught in the rigging. And most of 'em can't even swim—

GRIMSBY

Swim, sire? Is that a prerequisite?

PRINCE ERIC

Sure, if we go sailing! Where am I gonna find her, Grimsky? A girl who's as carefree and alive as the sea itself! Where?

~~(Ariel and Flounder bob up to the surface. Scuttle hovers nearby.)~~

~~SCUTTLE~~

~~Well, whaddya know—~~

~~ARIEL~~

~~Scuttle, be quiet! They'll hear you!~~

~~SCUTTLE~~

~~Ooh, I gotcha, I gotcha. We're being intrepidacious.~~

~~(Ariel covers Scuttle's beak, as Prince Eric stares out to sea, over the heads.)~~

PRINCE ERIC

It's too much to hope for, isn't it? Somewhere, out there ... a girl who's a match for a guy like me?

GRIMSBY

Perhaps you're not looking hard enough.

(A roll of low thunder. Ariel can't help but notice the dashing young man.)

ARIEL

I've never seen a human this close before.

SCUTTLE

Me neither!

ARIEL

I thought you were an expert.

SCUTTLE

On their stuff, sure! But egads—the sight of 'em! Horrible! That square jaw. Those broad shoulders. And two eyeballs the same color ... no variety—

ARIEL

I dunno. I think he's really handsome.

FLOUNDER

(wounded)

You do?

PRINCE ERIC

Trust me, Grimsby—when I come across the girl of my dreams, it'll hit me like lightning.

(And with that, lightning cracks across the sky.)

PILOT

Hurricane a'coming! King Triton must be angry indeed!

PRINCE ERIC

Batten the hatches, then everyone below deck! And quickly!

PILOT

Eric, take the wheel!

(Sailors race to prepare the ship for the storm.)

Ariel 47 -

Triton
Sebastian

SCENE NINE: ARIEL'S GROTTO

(Ariel sits beside the heroic bust. As she speaks, she almost seems to be confiding in it. In her hands she holds Prince Eric's spyglass.)

ARIEL

To think this belonged to him once; he held this in his own two hands.

KING TRITON

(offstage, enraged)

ARIEL—!

(When Ariel hears her father's voice piercing the tranquil waters, her whole body stiffens with fear. King Triton appears with Aquata, Andrina, Sebastian and Flounder.)

Ariel! Tell the truth! Did you save a human from drowning?

ARIEL

Who told—? Which one of you—?

~~*(Flounder and Aquata trip over themselves in response.)*~~

~~FLOUNDER~~

~~I'm sorry, Ariel. I'm nothing but a guppy, just a lousy guppy—~~

~~AQUATA~~

~~You got every single sole, and it's not fair—~~

KING TRITON

THAT'S ENOUGH! Leave us alone.

(Andrina takes Flounder by one fin, Aquata takes him by the other, and they swim off.)

You too, Sebastian.

(With a regretful look in Ariel's direction, Sebastian exits, too. Father and daughter are alone now.)

So did you?

ARIEL

I had to rescue the Prince—

KING TRITON

You had to?

ARIEL

Without me, he would've perished!

KING TRITON

He's a human—you're a mermaid.

ARIEL

I can't hate him just because he's different. Perhaps you can, but it's just not in me—

KING TRITON

"Different"? They catch us with their hooks, they spear us with their blades—

ARIEL

They're not all like that!

KING TRITON

Have you forgotten what they did to your mother?

ARIEL

We don't know that for certain—

KING TRITON

Can there be any doubt? She slips out one morning for an innocent swim and never returns—!

ARIEL

You can't *prove*—

KING TRITON

I know it in my heart, and that's enough. Murderers, all of them!

ARIEL

You can't blame all humans for a few wicked ones—

#12C – Grotto Destruction

KING TRITON

I won't have you build a shrine to them! Worshipping their rubbish! The debris that sullies our waters—

(King Triton raises his trident menacingly.)

ARIEL

Daddy, no—

KING TRITON

The totems of their decadence!

ARIEL

Don't! Please!

KING TRITON

NEVER AGAIN, ARIEL! NEVER AGAIN!

(With several mighty blasts from his trident, King Triton obliterates the magnificent bust, which evaporates in a million shards. Ariel falls to the ground, distraught. A pause. King Triton sees how pained Ariel is. After a slight moment of hesitation – could it be regret? – he swims away. Bereft, Ariel searches through the rubble. She picks up the garland of red sea anemones, and places it around her neck. Next, she finds the spyglass, her most precious treasure, and clings to it fiercely. Sebastian enters and tries to comfort Ariel.)

#13 – If Only (Ariel's Lament)

Ariel

SEBASTIAN

Ariel.

ARIEL

He ruined all my things, my human stuff! If he really and truly loved me, then he'd never –

SEBASTIAN

Oh, child, it's because he loves you –

ARIEL

Well, he sure has a funny way of showing it!

(with resolve)

He can break every single treasure I own ... but he can't break me!

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, well you just might break his heart –

ARIEL

And you! Some friend you turned out to be! Bringing him here – to my secret place –

SEBASTIAN

For your own good, child.

(a beat, and then)

I pray you wake up from dis madness and soon. You're swimmin' in some dangerous waters.

Stop
(Sebastian exits, and Ariel is left alone. She picks up the broken shard of a teacup, the lens from a battered telescope. She holds them tightly in her palms pressing them against her heart.)

ARIEL

IF ONLY HE WOULD LOOK!

IF ONLY HE COULD SEE

start

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
Ariel
Flotsam
Jetsam

(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. The answer is simple! You've got to become human yourself!

ARIEL

Can you help me?

#15 — *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 DON'T 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!

Stop

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

Sebastian
Triton

start

SCENE NINE: KING TRITON'S COURT

(King Triton enters with Sebastian and Flounder.)

SEBASTIAN

Most merciful Triton, I pray that you'll keep calm—

KING TRITON

Where is she? Where is Ariel?

SEBASTIAN

She'd be so angry if she knew I was here!

KING TRITON

I entrust my youngest daughter to you! And what happens? I ought to have you cracked! I ought to have you shelled—

FLOUNDER

He almost was, Your Greatness. And all for Ariel—

KING TRITON

You ought to be ashamed of yourself, too! What kind of tragedy will it take—

SEBASTIAN

A tragedy involving the Sea Witch, to be exact.

KING TRITON

(his alarm growing)

What did you say?

FLOUNDER

(chiming in, unable to stop truth-telling)

These two eels came and they took her straight to Ursula, and she traded her voice for a pair of legs, and if the Prince doesn't kiss her—

KING TRITON

Her voice? She bartered away her voice to become human?!?

SEBASTIAN

By sunset tomorrow, that child could be giving up her very soul—

KING TRITON

Her soul?

SEBASTIAN

— and all to that wicked sister of yours.

(The full gravity of the situation dawns on King Triton.)

KING TRITON

It's time I settled things with her once and for all.

(King Triton, Sebastian and Flounder exit.)

stop

Ariel

Eric

Grimsby

(Prince Eric is unconvinced and disheartened. Grimsby pounds in a frenzy to help the singing.)

Start

GRIMSBY

Surely one of these lovely voices matches the music in your heart—

PRINCE ERIC

I wish I could say "yes"! But she's not here.

GRIMSBY

(re: Princess 2)

But her father rules all Prussia.

(re: Princess 4)

She's richer than Midas!

(re: Princess 1)

She's one of triplets, but they're willing to break up the set!

PRINCE ERIC

No, Grim!

GRIMSBY

You'll be the death of me, boy! What am I to do? The sun has nearly set. Soon, your birthday will be over. You must choose someone! Perhaps if we steel ourselves ... take another listen:

(Ariel, aware that this is her last chance, enters and battles her way into the center of the throng.)

#25 – Ariel Steps Forward

Ursula

PRINCE ERIC

Ariel?

GRIMSBY

For heaven's sake, child—you mustn't.

PRINCE ERIC

Shh! Wait, Grimsby. Be quiet, and listen! Go ahead, Ariel.

(The whole room quiets in anticipation. Ariel is blinking back tears, already praying for a miracle. She takes a slow deep breath. It looks as if she's about to attempt a note. But instead, she gets an idea. She catches Prince Eric's gaze, and then—in her own, inimitable way—executes a few of the very dance steps he taught her two nights before. When she's done, the princesses all titter derisively. Ariel looks to Prince Eric, helpless.)

GRIMSBY

(crestfallen)

Oh, child! Poor, lost child.

(then to Prince Eric)

I had so hoped, dear Eric, that you might find love somewhere in this room.

PRINCE ERIC

(smiling, his gaze fixed to Ariel)

Perhaps I have. I've just been too blind to see it.

GRIMSBY

But that's impossible, she didn't utter a sound.

PRINCE ERIC

No? Well, that's funny. Because I heard every single note, as clear as a bell.

(a beat, and then)

That must mean something, old boy.

GRIMSBY

(beaming)

Perhaps it does.

stop

(Suddenly, wafting on the breeze, the siren call:)

VOICE

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

(Ursula has unleashed Ariel's true voice yet again.)

GRIMSBY

Can it be? Another contestant?

VOICE

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

PRINCE ERIC

That's it! That's the voice!

(Prince Eric can't help himself; the voice cuts right through him. Ariel looks at him, panicked; her whole face is a plea.)

GRIMSBY

Oh, dear. This is most unexpected!

URSULA

(offstage)

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

SCENE THIRTEEN: THE BEACH

#27 – *Finale Ultimo*

Triton, Ariel, Ensemble, Eric

(Prince Eric bounds in, followed by Grimsby.)

Start

PRINCE ERIC

Tomorrow at sunrise, we search again.

GRIMSBY

But Your Majesty, she's lost.

PRINCE ERIC

I won't rest until I've found her.

GRIMSBY

Look, sire.

(Ariel enters with King Triton.)

PRINCE ERIC

Ariel!

ARIEL

Oh, Eric.

PRINCE ERIC

Could it be? It's been your voice all along, hasn't it!

(noticing King Triton)

Who are you?

(King Triton looks up to see Prince Eric – the dashing young seafarer who hopes to claim his daughter.)

ARIEL

This is my father.

KING TRITON

I'm King Triton.

GRIMSBY

(flustered)

Astonishing, I must say. Why, it defies plausibility.

PRINCE ERIC

(summons his courage, to King Triton)

Your Majesty? At last, I've found someone who makes me eager to seize the future,

Ariel
Eric

Triton
Grimsby

(PRINCE ERIC)

and claim my birthright as King. But if I slip out to sea sometimes, I don't think she'll mind ... because she'll be right there next to me, keeping us both on course.

(takes a knee)

With your permission, sire, I'd like to make her my wife.

KING TRITON

My permission? Ariel can speak for herself.

(Ariel casts King Triton a loving, grateful look then turns to face Prince Eric.)

ARIEL

Yes, Eric. Oh, yes.

(Prince Eric and Ariel exit to prepare for the wedding.)

GRIMSBY

(still flummoxed)

Can't be happening, no. Grog after bedtime, a bad idea ...

KING TRITON

You're the young man's father?

GRIMSBY

Heavens, no; His Majesty's long dead. I'm his guardian, nothing more.

KING TRITON

Well, I wager his father would be very pleased ... with both of you.

GRIMSBY

(touched)

Why, thank you, sir. He's my one shining achievement—a bright light in a dark world.

KING TRITON

Congratulations to us both, my friend.

(Grimsby is still gob-smacked by all that he's seen.)

GRIMSBY

And to you ... yes ... and to you ...

(The Mersisters and sailors enter. Flounder is there, too, with Allana at his side. Prince Eric and Ariel enter, dressed to marry. King Triton smiles at his daughter.)

KING TRITON

IF ONLY YOU COULD STAY
AND NEVER SAY GOODBYE.