

## 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 get every single solo, 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.

*(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