

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Book and Lyrics by Matthew Thompson
Music by Thomas Hodges

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Brooklyn Publishers, LLC in association with Heuer Publishing, LLC.
ISBN: 978-1-61588-254-0

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SYNOPSIS: Based on the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale of the same name, we follow Coral, the Little Mermaid, in her quest to become human. Curious ambition and a wondering heart leads our mermaid to the surface of her world, above the ocean blue. She rescues Evan, the sailor, who is later revealed to be a prince among men. In the name of love, Coral is willing to part from her family, defy her father King Neptune, and even traverse the murky Benthic Underworld of the Sea Witch, all in the name of her heart. This is the classic tale about sacrifice, friendship, love and the ultimate fish out of water.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 MEN, 8 WOMEN, 4-14 EITHER)

CORAL (f).....	The youngest daughter of King Neptune. A wonderful singer. Dreams of seeing the world above. She loves Evan. <i>(178 lines)</i>
PEARL (f).....	The oldest daughter of King Neptune. <i>(24 lines)</i>
BUBBLES (f).....	Another daughter of King Neptune. Full of energy. Into shopping and talking. <i>(13 lines)</i>
TEMPEST (f).....	Another of King Neptune's daughters. The sourpuss. Tends to see things for what they are not as opposed to what could be. <i>(14 lines)</i>
SEAGAZE (f)	Another of King Neptune's daughters. The innocent wallflower. Wide-eyed with a smile on her face at all times. <i>(20 lines)</i>

GRANDMOTHER (f).....	King Neptune's mother. She has been to the surface and has lived to tell the tale. <i>(43 lines)</i>
KING NEPTUNE (m).....	Ruler of Aquatica and loving father. He cherishes his mermaid daughters. His pain runs deep in regards to the loss of his wife. He is a good merman but can be prone to a violent temper. <i>(58 lines)</i>
EVAN (m).....	A prince posing as a sailor. Coral rescues Evan from the storm-battered ship saving his life and later falls in love with The Little Mermaid. <i>(62 lines)</i>
SEA WITCH (f).....	Neptune's cruel hearted half-sister. She has been banished. <i>(59 lines)</i>
ELVIRA THE EEL (f).....	The Sea Witch's minion. <i>(11 lines)</i>
WATER STORYTELLER (m/f).....	Lead narrator. <i>(20 lines)</i>
LAND STORYTELLER (m/f).....	Ensemble Story Teller <i>(20 lines)</i>
AIR STORYTELLER (m/f).....	Ensemble Story Teller <i>(14 lines)</i>
FIRE STORYTELLER (m/f).....	Ensemble Story Teller <i>(10 lines)</i>
OTTAVIO THE ITALIAN OCTOPUS (m/f)	Neptune's security detail. <i>(5 lines)</i>
POLY THE FRENCH CHEF (m/f)	The royal chef of Aquatica. <i>(23 lines)</i>
ENSEMBLE #1 (m/f)	Food Vendor (kelp then fish) in the ocean kingdom of Aquatica and later in the land Kingdom of Caprica Cove. <i>(2 lines)</i>

- ENSEMBLE #2 (m/f) Vendor in the ocean kingdom of Aquatica (waterbeds) and the land Kingdom of Caprica Cove (spicy figs). *(2 lines)*
- ENSEMBLE #3 (m/f) Vendor in the ocean kingdom of Aquatica (travel agent) and the land Kingdom of Caprica Cove (basket and blanket sales person). *(2 lines)*
- ENSEMBLE #4 (m/f) Food vendor in the ocean kingdom of Aquatica (veggie shark bites) and the land Kingdom of Caprica Cove (steak). *(2 lines)*
- ENSEMBLE #5 (m/f) Vendor in the ocean kingdom of Aquatica (crab sandwiches) and a townsperson in the land Kingdom of Caprica Cove. *(1 line)*
- ENSEMBLE #6 (m/f) Child of ENSEMBLE #7, Townsperson in Aquatica and Caprica Cove. *(2 lines)*
- ENSEMBLE #7 (m) Father of ENSEMBLE #6, Townsperson in Aquatica and Caprica Cove. *(2 lines)*
- ENSEMBLE #8 (m/f) Train conductor in the ocean kingdom of Aquatica and buggy driver in the land Kingdom of Caprica Cove. *(3 lines)*

MUSICAL NUMBERS

SONG #1	MYSTERY Coral
SONG #2	THE WALTZ Instrumental
SONG #3	FEED ME Poly and Ensemble
SONG #4	PEARL OF THE SEA Coral
SONG #5	STORMING Instrumental
SONG #6	LOST Coral
SONG #7	SEA WITCH The Sea Witch
SONG #8	BELOW THE OCEAN WATER Ensemble

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In addition to the composed songs, please feel free to insert the underscoring of “The Tide” and “Coral's Theme” where the director deems appropriate.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1	The underwater kingdom of Aquatica
ACT ONE, SCENE 2	The Royal Hall of King Neptune
ACT ONE, SCENE 3	The girls’ bedroom
ACT ONE, SCENE 4	The underwater kingdom of Aquatica The Sea Witch’s lair Busy market at Caprica Cove

ACT ONE, SCENE 1**AT RISE:**

In the dark, we hear the far off sounds of bubbling water. It grows in intensity until the sound explodes. The lights bump up quickly, very dramatically, in a variety of dazzling colors. We are in the underwater kingdom known as Aquatica. Music. WATER STORYTELLER enters.

WATER STORYTELLER: Way out at sea, the water is as blue as the petals on the loveliest cornflower and as clear as the purest glass, but it's very deep, deeper than any anchor rope can reach. Down, down, down under the sea is where the people live; the sea people.

LAND STORYTELLER enters.

LAND STORYTELLER: On the ocean's floor is where the most wonderful trees and plants grow. They sway and move through time as if they are alive with the slightest motion of the water.

WATER STORYTELLER: And buried between the fire red coral and the pearl-fruited trees and emerald sand stands the castle of the kind and beloved King Neptune. The windows are fortified with pure amber as the undersea world swims in and out and all around the fortress with everyday business.

ENSEMBLE crosses the stage. Sounds of the underwater city.

ENSEMBLE #1: *(Carrying some kelp.)* Fresh plankton! Crunchy kelp here! Freshest kelp in all the ocean! Take a bite out of my special plankton burgers! Nothing but the best!

ENSEMBLE #2: *(With flyers in his hands.)* Waterbeds! Waterbeds! The softest bed under the sea. You'll feel like you're floating while you dream!

ENSEMBLE #3: Swim away to a tropical paradise! Lay in the water with the gentle sounds of whale song echoing in the background!

ENSEMBLE #4: New veggie shark bites! Get 'em while they're cold! Right now! Only two clams a piece!

ENSEMBLE #5: Sand crab sandwiches! Sand crab sandwiches! Get 'em while they're hot!

ENSEMBLE #6: Daddy! I'm hungry!

ENSEMBLE #7: Not now, sweetheart. We have to hurry!

ENSEMBLE #8: (*Dressed as a train conductor.*) The Manta Ray Express is leaving in three minutes! Stops along the way include Atlantis, The Great Coral Reef, and Waterloo! All aboooooard!

FIRE STORYTELLER enters.

FIRE STORYTELLER: The ruler of this wondrous undersea oasis is King Neptune. And for several years, poor King Neptune has been widowed, ever since his beloved wife was lost on land.

AIR STORYTELLER enters.

AIR STORYTELLER: The pins of light that glimmer through the water every day are the King's five wonderful daughters that embody different characteristics of their beautiful mother.

As WATER STORYTELLER shares each of the sisters with us, they appear in a pin spot of light.

WATER STORYTELLER: The eldest is named Pearl, for her personality is constant and pure. Stable, organized, and punctual she is the voice of reason.

PEARL: Let's go girls! We must not be late. We have seven minutes before the ceremony. Comb your hair. Straiten your dress! Look sharp sisters of mine! Look sharp!

WATER STORYTELLER: The second eldest is named Bubbles, because of her up and up personality.

BUBBLES: (*Taking with a surfer accent.*) I can't believe it! Like, how's my hair? Isn't it perfect? Put me in your next movie, Steven Eelberg!

AIR STORYTELLER: The middle child is very shy and is named Seagaze, because she is always gazing off.

SEGAZE turns around and smiles weakly.

FIRE STORYTELLER: The fourth sister is named Tempest, for her fiery temperament and lack of patience.

TEMPEST: Ahhh! My dress doesn't fit! Why do I have to be at this silly ceremony anyway! AHHH!

WATER STORYTELLER: And the youngest daughter of King Neptune is named...Coral. And Coral has the most beautiful voice in all the oceans.

CORAL: (*Singing a capella.*)

I SEE ALL THE STARS IN THE SAND,
A PEARL I DO HOLD IN MY HAND,
AND IF I COULD BE,
OUT OF THE SEA,
I WOULD SWIM THROUGH THE AIR AND THE LAND.

The SISTERS stop.

PEARL: Sister, you have the most spirited voice.

SEAGAZE: (*Very shy.*) And you're very beautiful!

PEARL: Don't you all think that Coral's voice is hypnotic?

BUBBLES: Like, I can't believe how sweet your voice is!

SEAGAZE: I think it's beautiful.

TEMPEST: (*Giving in.*) It's alright.

CORAL: Oh, my sisters, you are all so kind.

GRANDMOTHER enters.

GRANDMOTHER: Alright, my little tadpoles, chop, chop! Let's get going! It's almost time for Pearl's Age of Ascension Ceremony! Let's get going! Bubbles, straighten your dress. Tempest, wipe off that scowl. Coral, stop dreaming and help your sister. We don't want to keep your father waiting! Come on, let's go, my little fish!

CORAL: Grandmamma!

GRANDMOTHER: Yes, my sweet.

CORAL: Tell us again what the world above is like!

GRANDMOTHER: The world above the water is full of ships and towns and people and animals. And the flowers give off a fragrance.

SEAGAZE: You mean they smell?

GRANDMOTHER: That's right. And there are creatures called birds that fly above the water, through what is called the sky.

CORAL: (*Overexcited.*) I've also heard of something called moonlight!
It flows through this...sky! And there is another planet that shines in
the air!

PEARL: It's called a moon.

CORAL: Yes. And this...moon can glow orange or green or even blue!

CORAL: (*Singing a capella.*)

THE SKY IS A PLEASURE FULL OF WONDER AND SIGHT
TAKE ME ABOVE ON THE BACK OF A KITE
THE RAINBOW OF COLORS BLEED THROUGH THE SKY
WAY UP ABOVE I CAN FEEL MY FINS FLY!

SEAGAZE: Oh, sister, you have the most lovely voice in all the
oceans!

CORAL: You are so sweet, Seagaze.

GRANDMOTHER: You have a very special gift, my little Coral.
Remember that.

CORAL: Thank you, Grandmother, I will. Oh, Pearl, I am so excited
for you!

SEAGAZE: What do you think is out there?

TEMPEST: Who cares?

CORAL: I care.

BUBBLES: I'll bet you that there are billions and billions of totally
awesome beauty parlors! O! M! G!

PEARL: What is out there?

TEMPEST: I hear there is smoke and fog and you can't see and people
can't float like we do under the water.

SEAGAZE: The surface frightens me. How do you breathe,
Grandmamma?

GRANDMOTHER: It's something called air.

SEAGAZE: Air?

GRANDMOTHER: Yes, like we breathe air through our gills, the
humans breathe air through their mouths or head.

BUBBLES: So, they're like total airheads? (*She laughs obnoxiously.*)

CORAL: But they can't breathe under the sea?

TEMPEST: Everyone knows that.

PEARL: They have to hold their breath, silly.

GRANDMOTHER: The people on land cannot breathe under the water. Just like we can only visit the surface for so long before we must return to the ocean, for strength.

CORAL: (*Excited.*) What are the land creatures like?

SEAGAZE: Yes, are they nice?

BUBBLES: Are they like, totally good dressers or what?

CORAL: Do they live long?

GRANDMOTHER: No. They live only a fraction of our lifespan.

BUBBLES: I was never good at math.

GRANDMOTHER: We merfolk live to be up to 300 years. Humans do not.

TEMPEST: Are you 300 years old, Grandmother?

PEARL: Tempest. Don't be rude to Grandmother!

GRANDMOTHER: It's alright. You see, as age eventually overtakes us, we merfolk turn to sea foam and cease to exist.

CORAL: And what happens to the humans?

GRANDMOTHER: The humans have an eternal soul and live forever in a different plane.

SEAGAZE: That's cool.

CORAL: Wow. So...what do humans look like?

GRANDMOTHER: They are different. No fins, but feet.

CORAL: Feet?

PEARL: Yes. They use feet to walk.

CORAL: Walk?

PEARL: Humans use feet to walk on the land. They cannot fly through the water like we can.

GRANDMOTHER: Your sister is correct.

CORAL: What do they look like?

GRANDMOTHER: (*Dreaming.*) They are handsome. Very handsome indeed.

GRANDMOTHER catches herself.

CORAL: Grandmamma, have you ever met a human?

PEARL: Coral, now, don't be silly. We are not allowed to communicate with on-landers. You know that.

SEAGAZE: Yes, because if anyone is ever caught talking to an on-lander, the punishment is...

TEMPEST: Death.

GRANDMOTHER: Yes, well, the law is the law. Your father has sworn to uphold this ancient edict, just as your grandfather did before him. The land today is like a museum. You can look, but you cannot touch. Now, enough chatter, little ones. Let's get going. Chop, chop!

Music. The sisters hurriedly get ready. They all giggle.

PEARL: My sisters, we are family. So that means we stick together. Agreed?

ALL THE SISTERS: Agreed.

PEARL: Sea anemone powers activate!

PEARL and the SISTERS make a circle. PEARL puts her hand in the middle and the SISTERS place their hands on top of one another.

ALL THE SISTERS: SEA ANEMONE POWERS ACTIVATE!

The girls spin in a circle as they make a "power" sound, until they fall down laughing.

CORAL: I am so happy for you, Pearl. Your ball will be the best ever!

PEARL: If only Mother was here to see me. To be here with us.

CORAL: Why did they take her, Pearl?

PEARL: Some things cannot be explained, sweetheart. We just have to accept them and move on. But we can remember. We can always remember.

TEMPEST: I miss Mother.

BUBBLES: I miss her laugh.

CORAL: I miss her smile.

PEARL: You're lucky, Coral, you know. You have Mother's smile.

CORAL smiles.

CORAL: I just wish she was here to see you. To be with us. And now she's gone.

PEARL: You know she's really not gone. As long as we remember her.

PEARL hugs CORAL, and then all the sisters hug as one.

PEARL: Now, no more tears. I still have to get ready for tomorrow's ceremony.

All the girls start to help PEARL get ready. CORAL stands off, daydreaming.

CORAL: Oh, the wondrous land. I can only image what it must be like. The air, the trees, the rocks! It's another world! There must be the most amazing adventures ever imagined. Oh, I'd give my left fin to see the outside world!

PEARL: Stop dreaming and help me get ready.

PEARL playfully teases CORAL. Everyone, except CORAL giggles and laughs. The OCEAN STORYTELLER and AIR STORYTELLER enter. Everyone but CORAL exits.

WATER STORYTELLER: As the sisters giggle and play and the day comes to an end, Coral sits quietly and thoughtfully. Many a night, she stands by the open windows and looks up through the dark blue water, where the fish flap their fins and tails.

AIR STORYTELLER: She dreams of the moon and the stars and the land above. And as the evening slips across the calm blue waterscape, Coral, the little mermaid, falls asleep and dreams of the white clouds and the air high up in the sky.

Magical music plays as CORAL sings.

SONG #1: MYSTERY (CORAL)

CORAL:

I DREAM OF A LAND THAT MOVES AND TURNS,
I LONG TO SEE SMOKE AND FIRE BURN
HOW DO THE HUMANS FLOAT THROUGH THE AIR?
AND WHAT IN THE OCEAN IS A BEAR?
LIZARDS AND SEAGULLS AND HOGS, OH BOY!
I PLAY WITH THE WORLD LIKE IT'S MY TOY,
WEAR FLOWING DRESSES TAPERED DOWN TO MY FINS
AND WHAT IN THE WORLD IS A CHICKEN OR HEN?

CORAL: One day, I will see the world. I swear it.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE:

Dreamlike music and lights. The FIRE STORYTELLER is on stage. The scene has shifted to the royal hall where KING NEPTUNE is ruling.

FIRE STORYTELLER: Coral dreams of days to come and sleeps as sound as she ever has, with visions of the future. And as the new sunlight breaks through the water in fractured prisms, the day is new once again.

WATER STORYTELLER enters.

FIRE STORYTELLER: We now turn our story to the ruler of this underwater oasis, King Neptune.

The dreamlike music gives way to the sound of royal horns signaling the arrival of KING NEPTUNE. A pin spot of light comes up on KING NEPTUNE. LAND STORY TELLER enters.

LAND STORYTELLER: Strong and resolute, the white-bearded, proud leader of Aquatica and father of five mermaids, he reigns with a mighty fin and a soft heart. Each morning the King gazes towards the islands of land above as he pays honor to his lost wife, his beloved who was taken from the ocean, taken from her life in the kingdom forever by the land-dwelling humans. For she was never seen again.

AIR STORYTELLER enters.

LAND STORYTELLER: For many years, the King was sad and upset at the human race for taking his one and only true love.

FIRE STORYTELLER: And so King Neptune changed the law.

AIR STORYTELLER: The Age of Ascension Ceremony continues, but no one is allowed to travel to the surface any longer.

FIRE STORYTELLER: The punishment is too terrible to speak of, and so no merfolk risk the consequences of breaking the law.

ALL STORYTELLERS: And so, our scene is set!

SONG #2: THE WALTZ (INSTRUMENTAL)

The set transforms into the royal court of KING NEPTUNE. The sound of horns! There are many different colored lights flashing across the stage. KING NEPTUNE, CORAL, ALL SISTERS, GRANDMOTHER and the ENSEMBLE are dancing to a new underwater tune. OTTAVIO the OCTOPUS stands off to the side. When the music ends all of the characters applaud and cheer. After everyone has settled, KING NEPTUNE, enters dressed in royal garments.

KING NEPTUNE: My friends and family of Aquatica, I welcome you to the annual Enchantment Under the Waves Dance, in celebration of my eldest daughter's Age of Ascension. Our commitment to our community ensures that the underwater community is safe and remains the most beautiful world on Earth!

Lots of applause.

KING NEPTUNE: And today we have prepared the most wonderful feast. Where is our head chef? Where is Poly?

OTTAVIO THE ITALIAN OCTOPUS: (*Speaking with a thick Italian accent.*) Mama Mia! I don't know where he could have gone-a. He was just-a here-a! Maybe he's-a swimmin' with the fishes! Poly! Poly! Where are you!

POLY THE FRENCH CHEF: (*Speaking with a French accent.*) Pardon, Mousier! I am here! Here am I! Whew!

OTTAVIO THE ITALIAN OCTOPUS: The King desires to know what you are cooking for our guests?

POLY THE FRENCH CHEF: An excellent question! And I shall answer! (*Clears his throat.*) To start, I have prepared a delicious meal starting with a plankton salad with a sand dollar dressing sprinkled with crisp sea cucumbers. For the main course I have secured some excellent green anemones and souffled them until just right. And for dessert: chocolate kelpcakes with oyster frosting! I am sure your excellency will enjoy my most amazing meal!

POLY sings.

SONG #3: FEED ME, POLY! **(POLY AND ENSEMBLE)**

POLY THE FRENCH CHEF:
WHEN YOUR BELLY'S ACHING
AND YOU NEED TO EAT,
YOU WISH YOU HAD A BUFFET
WITH A FRONT ROW SEAT,
AN OMELETTE OF SMELT EGGS
OR A NICE SOUFFLÉ.
POLY'S HERE TO FEED YOU
AND TO MAKE YOUR STOMACH SAY,
FEED ME, POLY!

(Spoken.) I'm hungry now,

FEED ME, POLY!

(Spoken.) Make me look like a sea cow!

GIVE ME LOTS OF YUMMIES ON A PLATE FOR FREE,
GIVE ME LOTS OF YUMMIES UNDER THE SEA!

ENSEMBLE:

(*Except POLY.*) FEED ME, POLY!

POLY THE FRENCH CHEF: (*Spoken.*) Your wish is my command!

ENSEMBLE:

(*Except POLY.*) FEED ME, POLLY!

POLY THE FRENCH CHEF: (*Spoken.*) I'll feed you in the sand!

ENSEMBLE:

(*Except POLY.*) FEED ME! FEED ME! FEED ME!

POLY THE FRENCH CHEF: (*Spoken.*) How 'bout a nice plate of...

ENSEMBLE:

(*Except POLY.*) FEED ME! FEED ME! FEED ME!

POLY THE FRENCH CHEF: (*Spoken.*) ...plankton and crab cake for dessert?

ENSEMBLE:

(*Except POLY.*) FEED ME! FEED ME! FEED ME!

POLY THE FRENCH CHEF:

YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND!

ENSEMBLE:

(*Except POLY.*) FEED ME, POLY!
FEED ME, POLY!

POLY:

GIVE ME LOTS OF YUMMIES ON A PLATE FOR FREE,
GIVE ME LOTS OF YUMMIES UNDER THE SEA!
FEED ME, POLY!
YEAH!

KING NEPTUNE: I am sure it will be wonderful. Now, where are my daughters?

PEARL: Here, Father.

TEMPEST: Here.

BUBBLES: Here!

SEAGAZE: Here!

Beat.

KING NEPTUNE: Where's Coral?

CORAL runs in.

CORAL: Here, Father!

KING NEPTUNE: Good. Of all the jewels under the sea, my daughters are my most cherished of all. And today we celebrate my oldest daughter Pearl, as she has reached the Age of Ascension! And even though we no longer travel to the surface our celebration continues. Coral, my sweet, you have prepared a special song for this occasion? Will you grace us with your voice, please.

She nods and begins to sing.

**SONG #4: PEARL OF THE SEA
(CORAL)**

CORAL:

PEARL, MY SISTER,
YOU MAKE ME SO PROUD,
AND NOW YOU HAVE WALKED
ON THE LAND AND THE CLOUDS.
STRONG AND SO MIGHTY,
HER HEART IS SO BRAVE.
I WANT TO FOLLOW YOU
UP TO THE SURFACE ONE DAY.
UNDER THE OCEAN
ONE LOOKS UP AT THE SAND.
WHAT CAN BE UP THERE
WALKING ON LAND?
THE WORLD IS DIFFERENT,
FULL OF COLORFUL BOATS,
I'VE NEVER GAZED MY EYES
ON A RHINO OR GOAT.
TICKING OF CLOCKS
AND THE CHUG-CHUG OF TRAINS,
I WANT TO WALK WITH AN UMBRELLA
THROUGH THE RAIN.
OH, WHAT COULD BE UP THERE?
OH, WHAT COULD BE UP THERE?
AS I LOOK AT THE SEAFOAM
AND WATER ALL AROUND,

I WANT TO BE WALKING
UP THERE ON THE GROUND.
DANCING AND SWIMMING
THROUGH THE OCEAN IS NEAT,

(Spoken.) BUT OH, I WOULD LOVE TO WALK ON TWO FEET!

(Sung.) OH, WHAT COULD BE UP THERE?
OH, WHAT COULD BE UP THERE?
OH, WHAT COULD BE UP THERE?

KING NEPTUNE: *(Interrupting.)* Coral!

The entire court is in shock.

CORAL: Father.

KING NEPTUNE: *(To the rest of the court.)* My daughter is young and knows not the ways of the ocean.

CORAL: It is the Age of Ascension Father. Pearl should be able to see the surface!

PEARL: Coral.

CORAL: According to Grandmamma, all merfolk make the Age of Ascension.

GRANDMOTHER: Coral!

CORAL: *(Speaking quickly.)* As a young person it is imperative that we continue our traditions. It is our honor to the sea. It is our right as merfolk!

KING NEPTUNE: THAT IS ENOUGH! We are an underwater paradise with no help from man. The humans are arrogant, selfish people, who care about nothing but themselves! They pollute our pristine waters! They take from the ocean without asking! They kill our reefs! They kill our creatures! They killed my wife! *(A long pause.)* No one is allowed to break the surface of the sea. No one! Anyone that is caught on the surface shall suffer my wrath! And anyone that dares to defy me shall share the company of the Sea Witch! Is that understood?!

Everyone looks at a frustrated KING NEPTUNE, who says nothing. The lights slowly fade as the FIRE STORYTELLER enters. Everyone stands and looks sad, except for CORAL.

FIRE STORYTELLER: And so King Neptune reminded the underwater city of Aquatica of his pain and his wrath. And since that fateful day, no merfolk have dared oppose the King.

KING NEPTUNE: Now, leave me alone! Let me be, I say!

No one moves. They are all in shock. Finally, OTTAVIO speaks.

OTTAVIO THE ITALIAN OCTOPUS: Alright, you're wise guys! Break it up! Break it up, Nothing to see here! That's it. Keep it movin'! The boss says we'll celebrate later! Yeah, yeah!

All exit. CORAL is the last one to leave. He looks at her GRANDMOTHER who has remained. They share a moment and then CORAL exits.

KING NEPTUNE: The nerve! The nerve of my daughter. She is arrogant and stubborn as a lion fish, undisciplined as a wild sea horse, and has the temper of someone like, like...

GRANDMOTHER: Like you?

KING NEPTUNE: *(sighing)* I suppose. Mother, Coral, must learn.

GRANDMOTHER: Then you must teach your daughter to listen, first.

KING NEPTUNE: This I know. I talk to her and-

GRANDMOTHER: Don't talk to her. Talk *with* her. She is your daughter. And if you take the time-

KING NEPTUNE: I do not have the time. I have a kingdom to run.

GRANDMOTHER: If something is important to you, you make the time.

KING NEPTUNE: It has been difficult since Serenia left us.

GRANDMOTHER: Life goes on my son. You loved your wife. And your daughters loved their mother, as we all loved her. But right now, your youngest daughter needs to talk. And she needs someone to listen. She needs her father to listen.

Silence. KING NEPTUNE thinks about this.

GRANDMOTHER: Think on these things my son. Sleep well.

GRANDMOTHER exits. KING NEPTUNE is alone and sad. He looks around his kingdom. The lights slowly fade. Transition music. Lights rise on the ALL STORYTELLERS.

WATER STORYTELLER: As King Neptune stewed upon his thoughts,
Coral lay asleep under the sea.

LAND STORYTELLER: Meanwhile there was trouble brewing above
the surface.

Dramatic music. The sound of lighting from under water. A storm is brewing on the surface. A light slowly rises on CORAL, asleep.

AIR STORYTELLER: Gale force winds had...

ALL STORYTELLERS: KNOCKED...

FIRE STORYTELLER: ...a royal ship off course.

WATER STORYTELLER: Through the storming tempest the sailors
were...

ALL STORYTELLERS: THROWN...

LAND STORYTELLER: ...to and fro across the bow as the vicious
waves lapped at wooden planks. Far below the ocean, the storm
barely registered.

LAND STORYTELLER: And as if in a dream...

ALL STORYTELLERS: Coral awoke!

*The STORYTELLERS clap their hands in CORAL'S direction as her
eyes quickly open!*

SONG #5: STORMING (INSTRUMENTAL)

FIRE STORYTELLER: Something was calling her, tantalizing the little
mermaid.

She raises her head and opens her eyes and looks to the sky. She "swims" to the surface, staying in the pin spot. CORAL is now at the surface of the water. She can't breathe.

AIR STORYTELLER: Having never breathed the open air before she began to drown.

WATER STORYTELLER: Diving below the surface, she learned to hold her breathe as she climbed out of the water to observe the gruesome sight.

Lights rise on the opposite side of the stage. In silhouette is EVAN at the helm of a ship.

FIRE STORYTELLER: The waves rode up and down as the lightning and thunder boomed across the open sea.

LAND STORYTELLER: Off in the distance Coral saw a vessel: a ship, rolling and pitching through the storm. As the rain pelting down on the surface of the ocean her eyes grasped a glimpse of little dots moving about yelling and screaming.

EVAN is thrown off stage by the force of the storm.

FIRE STORYTELLER: Nearby she could see another object. What was it, bobbing in the water so close to her?

WATER STORYTELLER: Just as her eyes had adjusted to the open air, a giant wave swept the object further away. Determined and curious, our little fish out of sea swam closer and closer with all of her might.

LAND STORYTELLER: Near the surface of the water the storm belted the ship and the little mermaid.

Evan is thrown on stage, standing, as if bobbing in the water.

WATER STORYTELLER: Suddenly the bobbing object began to cough and gasp.

LAND STORYTELLER: It was a human!

AIR STORYTELLER: It was a boy!

FIRE STORYTELLER: The same age as Coral.

WATER STORYTELLER: More determined than ever, with all of her strength and determination she swam toward the boy, in the dark, with only the lightening and the moon to illuminate the way, she swam faster and faster and harder and harder.

Still standing the WATER STORYTELLER "pulls" EVAN over to CORAL.

AIR STORYTELLER: As the boy lost consciousness Coral grabbed him and swam with all the energy she could muster.

CORAL grabs the unconscious boy. Lightning and thunder. Music.

LAND STORYTELLER: As the storm pressed on, minutes turned to hours. Coral held the boy at the surface never allowing his face to fall into the water. Finally the storm subsided and the two young people found themselves on a far distant shore.

Dramatic music ends as the STORYTELLERS exit. The lights reveal a distant shore. They lay on the beach. EVAN, the boy, is unconscious. CORAL looks over him, curiously. Suddenly he wakes up in a huge cough.

EVAN: Wha— Where am I? (*Noticing Coral.*) Who are you?

CORAL: My name is Coral.

EVAN: Coral? Did you save me?

She pokes at his nose, curious.

EVAN: Hey.

CORAL: Sorry. I pulled you from out of the water. Your eyes were not open.

EVAN: The last thing I remember, I was on my ship and the yard arm came whizzing by and slammed me into the ocean. I was overboard and then... That's the last thing I remember.

CORAL: I found you in the water, and took you... here.

EVAN: Where are we?

CORAL: I'm not sure.

EVAN: Thank you. You saved my life.

CORAL: You were drowning.

EVAN smiles at her.

EVAN: Your face... is so... pretty.

CORAL: No one has ever called me pretty before.

EVAN: *(Standing up.)* Well, you are pretty. And more people should say it.

CORAL recoils as she notices EVAN standing on his feet. EVAN takes her hand.

EVAN: Let me help you up.

CORAL: I...

EVAN attempts to pull her up and then drops her hands. He gasps and notices.

EVAN: Your legs.

CORAL: I...

EVAN: You have no legs. Just a flipper. You have a tail? What...are you?

CORAL: I'm a mermaid.

EVAN: A mermaid! I thought mermaids weren't real.

CORAL: You're looking at me right now aren't you?

EVAN: Maybe I am and maybe I'm not. Maybe I'm not really awake.

CORAL reaches out her hand. He holds it.

EVAN: You are real.

CORAL: I've never seen... a human before.

EVAN: Well now we're even. Because I've never seen a mermaid.

CORAL: *(A capella.)*

YOU CAN'T SWIM SO WELL, BUT I'M CURIOUS NOW,
I LOOK AT YOUR FACE AND I JUST HAVE TO SAY WOW,
HOW DO YOU TRAVEL WITHOUT ANY FINS,

EVAN: (*A capella.*)

I FLAP MY ARMS AND I TRY TO SWIM.

CORAL: Is this...land?

EVAN: Yes.

CORAL: I...I've never been to the surface. Well, no merfolk have been to the surface since...my mother.

EVAN: What happened to your mother? Tell me.

CORAL: She was captured. We used to play at the surface all the time. We would watch the humans, but they would never see us. My sisters and I would dodge in and out of tide pools and lie across the rocks and bask in the sun. And then one day as we were returning to our world, my mother was caught, entrapped in a net. Carried across the ocean by people...human people. We never saw my mother again. Since that day, my father has vowed to never visit the surface again. And no merfolk ever has...until now.

EVAN: I'm so sorry.

CORAL: Thank you for your sympathy. (*Changing the subject.*) What are those big puffy white things in the ocean?

EVAN: In the ocean? Oh, you mean the sky!

CORAL: Yes, the sky. It's blue.

EVAN: Those are called clouds. You've never seen clouds before? Oh, I suppose you haven't, if you've never seen land or the...I guess there are a lot of things that you haven't seen before.

CORAL: What area of land are we on?

EVAN: (*Looking around.*) That's a great question, and I really don't know. Why don't we find out?

CORAL: Okay.

EVAN: My name is Evan. I'm a sailor.

EVAN puts out his hand to shake. CORAL doesn't know what to do.

EVAN: Um... It's a...It's a greeting. It's called shaking hands. It's what you do when you meet a new person.

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