

THE SHADOW

\* Pilot for an animated series \*

Written by

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Based on the short story "The Shadow" by  
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COLD OPEN

**TEXT ON SCREEN: THE MAN BEGINS HIS JOURNEY**

EXT. A SHIP ON THE SEA - DAY

A Writer, a Learned Man, NILES, stands on the bow of a ship looking out to sea. Relatively youthful, he's a curious explorer with a fop of golden-ish hair and a goatee-sized beard. He consults a rolled map in hand and we see he is headed for Northern Africa.

The ship Captain, ERIK, approaches. Looking more like a reformed pirate, Captain Erik knows how to keep secrets and seems to have had his fair share of sea skirmishes.

Niles traces his finger along the map, from Bergen, Norway, down to the coast of Morocco.

CAPTAIN ERIK

We should arrive on land by morning, Sir.

Niles nods, staring off to sea.

NILES

Good, good.

CAPTAIN ERIK

I'm wondering if we should take any precautions? It's likely we'll need some protection.

Niles turns to Erik, placing a gentle hand on his arm.

NILES

No, no. These are just people, like you and me. Albeit with different foods and traditions. We're here to learn, Erik.

CAPTAIN ERIK

From the pirates, Sir.

Niles pauses to ponder.

NILES

Oh of course, well you would know more than I. Do what you think is best.

CAPTAIN ERIK  
We'll come around starboard-side.

Niles nods and pats the Captain on the shoulder then walks back mid-ship, as Erik gestures to the crow's nest to turn.

**TITLE ON SCREEN: THE SHADOW**

EXT. DOCK, NORTH AFRICAN PORT - DAY

The ship sits on the dock. Niles walks down the gangplank as he surveys the scene -- full of TOWNSPEOPLE -- merchants, shippers, and piles of shipments. The overhead sun is hot and Niles wraps himself in a cotton overlay and turban as he walks toward the town.

EXT. WALKWAY TO TOWN - CONTINUOUS

With the sun at 60 degrees, Niles' short, squat SHADOW follows behind. His Shadow moves with an imagined flicker, his head moving one way, Niles the other -- before he catches himself and gets in line.

ACT I

INT. NILES' APARTMENT - AFRICA - DAY

Niles stands looking out from the 2nd story patio doors. He notices the silent streets and his small shadow on the patio as he fans himself from the direct sun. He moves and sees his short, small shadow move.

But as he turns to shut his curtains, he sees a flicker of a curtain from the balcony across the way. But then he dismisses it and goes to his desk, where he sits and opens his notebook to write.

INT. NILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Niles is sweating profusely, pacing from the heat. He tries to lie down, but then gets up to blow out the candles. His shadow is longer and leaner as he stops to view it, moving in tandem with it as it moves across the walls.

NILES

What do you say, Shadow Friend? Is this the adventure we wanted? It's certainly a different world. When I finish my book, I hope everyone will see the world that I've seen.

In overheated fatigue, Niles stops and sighs. He blows out the last candle and becomes a silhouette moving in near darkness.

As he again lies down on the bed, he hears movement and socializing in the distance. The street is alive with people but he's too exhausted from the heat to get up. His shadow, a black shape in the semi-darkness, slowly moves around the room.

As he drifts off, a haunting melody picks up. It's coming from the balcony across the way.

EXT. NILES' BALCONY - EVENING

It's late afternoon and Niles opens the balcony doors, sighing in relief. He steps out precariously carrying a teacup, spoon and saucer on top of his precious notebook and places them on a little bistro table.

He stretches himself, as the long, low sun creates a shadow that stretches with him. Seating himself, he gently stirs the tea as he watches and hears the town come alive.

NILES

Now, this is why we're here. What an amazing world!

Only in one house, straight opposite to him, was there complete stillness. A flower pot with budding flowers is now there but the balcony windows and the apartment within remain dark. Niles begins to take notes, but then pauses as the same melody from the night before starts up.

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE STREET SCENE - EVENING

We see a narrow street with tall townhouses against a starry clear sky. At night it becomes very lively - upstairs and downstairs, and on most of the balconies along his street.

Shoemakers and tailors and everybody else move out into the street; tables and chairs are brought out and lamps lit. Some people talk and others sing, and the people begin walking about and the carriages drive along, and the donkeys with bells on them go by - "Kling-a-ling-a-ling!"

Niles leaves his rented home and strolls down the street, randomly greeting locals and neighbors. He seems delighted, but doesn't seem to notice some folks arguing behind windows, some fearful glances, and downtrodden dark-skinned laborers.

His evening Shadow is long and moving about merrily. But it's the Shadow who notices the darker side of the scene. His head doesn't turn away as quickly as Niles' does.

Niles returns to his apartment just as the church bells ring out. He looks up and notices the neighbor's balcony door is now open. The flower pot is blooming. But inside it is still dark.

INT. NILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Inside, Niles lights his candles. He dances about with his joyful, long Shadow but pauses as he notices the music again coming from the house across the way.

NILES

What is that music, my Shadow  
Friend? It's so sad and mournful...  
but we've had such a lovely  
evening.

Suddenly there is a knock on the door. As Niles opens it, a friendly dark-skinned man walks in, a box in hand. It's KHALIL, his landlord. Niles' shadow, oddly, leans in, trying to hide and listen.

KHALIL

The nights are getting longer, so  
I've brought more candles for you.

Khalil puts down the box and looks around.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

You've been busy then? Looks like  
the writing is going well. We are  
unique people here, friend. I  
believe and have faith in you, to  
share the beauty of our culture,  
and our way of life.

NILES

Yes yes. Among many things. It's  
very different up north. The  
weather for one.

Khalil chuckles.

KHALIL

The sun has its own power here. As  
do we.

NILES

Would you like to stay for a drink?  
Some tea perhaps?

KHALIL

No thank you. I go home. To my  
family.

Niles stops him before he departs.

NILES

Wait, wait. Before you leave... do  
you know who's in the house  
opposite here? I've never seen them  
but they do seem like to play  
music. Endlessly. Not a problem  
though - just curious.

Khalil shakes his head.

KHALIL

I've heard tales of such music.  
Neighbors say it's always the same.

(MORE)

KHALIL (CONT'D)

Over and over. That's what they say.

NILES

Perhaps the musician has hope - to get it right, in time.

KHALIL

(shrugs)

Hope sometimes isn't enough, however long one goes on playing.

As Khalil shuts the door, Niles' shadow moves cautiously and carefully back into place.

INT. NILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

It's the middle of the night and Niles wakes up suddenly. He rises and goes to the balcony doors to see the opposite balcony door open and the curtains lifting gently in the evening breeze.

From over his shoulder, through his curtains, we see a muted glowing light coming from the balcony opposite. All the flowers shine like colorful flames. Into the balcony doorway walks a slender, graceful woman with long red hair, shining a magical glow. Niles stares, then rubs his eyes hard. When he removes his hands, she and the glow are gone.

EXT. NILES' BALCONY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We see his hand quickly pull back the curtain but it is the same as it had been -- darkness, and a full rather plain-looking flower pot. The door is ajar as before with the same music playing from within.

EXT. NILES' BALCONY - SUNRISE

Niles wakes early and rushes to the balcony to see if the beautiful woman will appear. As he moves the Shadow passes on the wall opposite. As he moves, it moves. He sits down and ponders this curiously, as the early morning bakery and milk deliveries continue.

As he sits there the sun rises higher. He stands and his shadow is now smaller. It can't project across to the woman's balcony. He sighs, rises, and heads indoors. But the Shadow stays outside a few moments longer, his arms attempting to reach across the way -- until he's pulled back inside.

## INT. NILES' APARTMENT - EVENING

Niles is madly writing away at his desk. He hears the music again, stands, and paces in frustration, fanning himself, sweating profusely.

Noticing the Shadow, he makes odd movements and gestures. But at one point, it moves differently for a moment and Niles stops abruptly.

NILES

Why, I do believe you're moving  
around on your own! Does this mean  
you can travel?

The Shadow seems to ignore him as Niles lights the evening lamps and candles. As he carries the lamp onto the balcony, his shadow grows larger.

## EXT. NILES' BALCONY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The night in the village is as lively as ever, but Niles cannot help but stare across at the apartment. He moves so his shadow appears to stand on that balcony.

NILES

If I could I would go in there,  
just to see. To see the person  
playing the lovely music, and to  
meet the beautiful lady.

The Shadow moves on its own, poised on the balcony opposite, so near the doorway. Then it turns toward Niles expectantly.

NILES (CONT'D)

Oh my my, are you able to go in  
there? Will you do it?

The Shadow nods slowly and Niles' excitement grows.

NILES (CONT'D)

Yes yes, do go in! I release you.  
But please come back. I need to  
know everything.

Niles rises from the table and turns, and the Shadow turns too. As Niles enters into his own room, the Shadow turns away and heads into the apartment opposite.

Both balconies are now empty, except for the table on one, and the flower pot on the other. The music continues.



EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT TO MORNING (TIME PASSES)

The music continues as the night turns to full darkness with only stars in the sky. It begins to fade as the sun rises, until there is just quiet under the morning sun. The sounds of nature break the stillness.

*Night sounds-* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxwJ7pvGtmI>

*Morning sounds-* <https://youtu.be/zHkmKIMaCvA?feature=shared>

EXT. BALCONY - MORNING

Niles steps out onto the balcony, this time with a newspaper and a steaming cup of coffee. But as he emerges into the morning LIGHT, he stops and spins slowly, realizing there's no shadow. From below, he hears the voice of Khalil.

KHALIL

Morning neighbor! Salam to you-

Niles leans over the balcony to see Khalil across the street. They each wave a greeting but Niles pauses when he notices Khalil's shadow lingering behind him.

He snaps, pointing at the shadow, which seems to turn toward him as Khalil turns the corner.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Carrying a candle lamp, Niles steps out onto his balcony. He places the lamp behind him, encouraging the shadow to return. He paces, moves into different areas, coughs, gestures, and makes pleading motions with his hands, but the shadow doesn't return. Nobody comes. Niles is left standing forlornly as the music across the balcony swells.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - EVENING

Niles steps out of his apartment with his suitcase carrying an armload of books and papers. Khalil greets him at the door as they embrace.

KHALIL

Best future to you, my friend. I wish for you to remember my homeland fondly and share the beauty of who we are with the world.

Niles presses Khalil's hand in his.

NILES

Of course, of course, my time here has been incalculable. My journey to seek truth and beauty and poetry has fed my soul. But I seem to have lost my shadow.

Khalil points to the ground beside Niles.

KHALIL

But no, it is here. Small and growing. It will grow and change with the light, as do we all.

Niles nods happily and waves farewell to Khalil, as he moves down the street. The now-independent Shadow peers around a corner and watches as Niles leaves. He turns back toward town, running his hands together maliciously.

ACT II**TEXT ON SCREEN: THE MAN GOES HOME**

EXT. A SHIP ON THE SEA - EVENING

Niles stands on the bow of the ship. In front of him is his home port with tall mountain peaks in the background. Captain Erik approaches.

CAPTAIN ERIK

Almost home. Was the journey what you expected it to be? I will say we have a full stock of goods for sale, that's for sure.

NILES

Who cares for goods! I have seen art and poetry, and experienced enormous a kind of nature that I would never have imagined. And the people! The joy! The music! The passion!!

Capital Erik tilts his head curiously.

CAPTAIN ERIK

And what did you learn, Sir. As you intended to-

Niles pauses, not quite sure what he did in fact learn, and what he might have just romanticized.

NILES

Oh let's pull in. I know we're all anxious to be home.

As Captain Erik nods and turns away, Niles looks longingly at Erik's sunset shadow, lean and obedient -- and then admires his own new shadow, smaller but present.

NILES (CONT'D)

You will definitely like it here, my New Shadow Friend. Certainly less sun, so you will not grow as long. But at least YOU *will* stay close to me, as it should be.

INT. NILES' LIBRARY - DAY TO NIGHT (TIME PASSES)

In front of his tall library windows that face the street, Niles spends months and years at his desk writing his books and stories, or standing by the windows watching the seasons pass by. He is surrounded with large bookshelves, and a room full of images and colors that remind him of his travels.

MONTAGE STARTS

The scene changes as the windows show his home in the cold, blue north, as ice and snow come and go.

Assistant JIA brings him a platter of food or tea and cakes. Her gentle nature is evident in her delivery to Niles. But she is aware of his needs. She's no dummy.

Neighbors acknowledge Niles as they trudge by. Some of them wave, and others hold up his book that they're carrying, and they smile.

Over time, Jia's long black hair turns white, and Niles ages as the days and months and years pass.

INT. NILES' LIBRARY - DAY

A very gentle but firm knock is at the door. Niles looks up but doesn't rise.

NILES

Come in!

The knock happens again, stronger. So Niles rises from his divan slowly and goes to the entry.

INT. NILES' DOORWAY - DAY

Niles opens the door and standing before him is a tall, extraordinarily THIN MAN, so thin as to be quite remarkable. He's extremely well dressed, evidently a man of distinction.

NILES

May I help you?

THIN MAN

Ah, I thought very likely you wouldn't recognize me. I've become so much of a body that I've actually got flesh and clothes; you would never expect to see me in such fine condition.

The Thin Man pauses, tilts his head a bit, and smiles oddly. Niles furrows his brow.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Don't you recognize your old shadow? To be sure, you never thought I should ever come back, and certainly could not imagine in this way.

NILES

My word, my word, this is extraordinary! Come in, come in!

INT. NILES' LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Standing at full attention, the Thin Man is dressed out in the finest possible black broadcloth, with varnished boots and a hat that would clamp down to a crown and brim. Niles is staring in amazement at this being who was exceedingly well dressed, believing that this is just what made him a complete man.

NILES

Well, well! I can't get over it. What does it all mean? Of course, we must have tea. And a name? You must have a name.

Niles rings the bell for Jia.

THIN MAN

I'm called Dovic, which I hope is amenable to you?

NILES

(curious, quizzical)  
Not a problem, interesting name definitely...

DOVIC

My story isn't ordinary as you can imagine, but then of course neither are you. And as you know all too well, I've trod in your footsteps since childhood.

Dovic paces the room as he talks, looking at this and that, touching and examining this and that.

NILES

Of course, but what a journey you must have had. Your transformation. Your travel to return here...

DOVIC

Things have gone wonderfully well with me since I was with you last, and I have become very well-to-do in every respect. If I wish to buy anyone out of service, I have the means.

Dovic rattles a large bunch of valuable seals hanging from his watch, and puts his hand to the heavy gold chain around his neck, his fingers glittering with diamond rings.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

As soon as you released me, I was determined to go my own way. But I've been longing to see you once more before you pass on. I wanted, too, to see this part of the world again, for it is in a sense my homeland.

NILES

My my, and is it really you? I could never have believed that my old shadow could come back to me as a man. And now here you are, and here I am. Older certainly, but not quite dead.

DOVIC

I am aware that you have got another shadow in my place; if I have anything to pay, either to it or to you, I hope you will be so good as to let me know.

NILES

But what do you mean? Pay?

DOVIC

I don't at all like to be in debt of any kind. And since you have freed me, there must be some sort of compensation I owe to you.

NILES

What debt is there to talk of? Be as free as the next man!

(MORE)

NILES (CONT'D)

I'm extraordinarily pleased at your good fortune. Do sit down, old friend, and tell me how this all came about, and what you saw at the house across the way, down there in the hot country.

Dovic sits and looks around conspiratorially.

DOVIC

I will tell you, but you must promise me that you won't tell anyone here in the town, wherever you may meet me, that I was once your Shadow. I have some thoughts of becoming engaged. I could support a family. Many families in fact.

NILES

But of course, this is between gentlemen. One man, one word.

DOVIC

One word, one shadow.

Jia enters the room, setting down a tea setting. She looks at Dovic in curiosity and leaves the room quietly, eyeing him with suspicion as she shuts the door.

ACT III**TEXT ON SCREEN: THE SHADOW TELLS HIS STORY**

Dovic, the Old Shadow, plants his varnished boots firmly on the arm of the New Shadow, which lay at his feet like a puppy, keeping very still and very quiet in order to listen.

DOVIC

Do you know who it was that lived in the house across the way? It was the most beautiful thing there is: it was Poetry. I was there for a full moon cycle, and the effect was the same as if one had spent three thousand years reading everything that has been sung and written. I say it, and it is the truth. I have seen everything, and I know everything!

NILES

Poetry? But how can that be? Poetry is on the page and in our minds. Poetry dwells in the hearts and souls.

DOVIC

Yes! But she also lives. She lives in dark corners and in large cities. She lives where hope does not. She carries the light with her.

NILES

Poetry! Yes, yes I saw her for one single brief moment. She was standing on the balcony and shining as the Northern Lights shine. Tell me, tell me more about her.

DOVIC

Remember, you were always sitting looking across, and there was no light there at all? But as I came in from the balcony to a sort of ante-room, there was this kind of twilight at the end of the hall, a glowing light. I should have been killed outright by it. Shadows cannot live in direct light, as you know.

(MORE)



DOVIC (CONT'D)

But I waited. I didn't wander where the maiden was. I was careful.

NILES

But what did you see? Did all the gods of ancient days pass through the vast halls? Did the heroes of old times fight their battles there? Were there children playing and sharing their hopes and dreams?

DOVIC

(getting impatient)

I tell you I was there, and I saw everything there was to be seen! It was there I turned into a living thing. When I was with you I never had thoughts or ideas of my own, or knew that I could. Every time the sun rose or set I did what I had to do. But now I could think for myself, and I wanted to be seen better than any man.

Dovic stood then and began to pace, much like Niles used to do. The New Shadow scurried away in pain to hide behind Niles, as it should.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

I saw everything and now I know everything!

Niles is enraptured, but also confused.

---- FLASHBACK TO THE AFRICAN VILLAGE ----

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE - NIGHT

Scenes of the Shadow making his way around the village show his journey while he narrates.

We see inside the homes of the village, but while the Shadow focuses on bad deeds done -- theft, assault, cruelty -- we also see kindness -- embraces, sharing, happiness. He ignores these, however.

DOVIC (V.O.)

I left her just as I left you. I needed to know more of the real world. I didn't want to live in books or poetry or beauty. So I made my way to the village under cover of darkness.

We see him hiding under a table while a couple argues and throws things at each other.

He stands at a window and watches as a young man steals items from a home, chased out by the angry homeowner.

His shadow hands reach over a clothes line and rips off a shirt and pants. Then his hands reach around a corner and grabs some shoes.

DOVIC (V.O.)

I found boots and clothes and those things that make you human. I stretched myself right up the walls. I peeped through the topmost windows, into the rooms, on to the roof. I peeped where no one else could, and saw what nobody else saw, and what nobody was meant to see. But I learned what I needed to learn.

---- FLASHBACK ENDS ----

NILES

Fascinating! It must have been beautiful.

DOVIC

The world's a mean place, old friend. I saw what most people aren't allowed to know, but what everybody very much wants to know: that is, their neighbors' wrongdoings.

He stands triumphantly in front of Niles, blocking the window view, yet he himself has no shadow.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

And thus I learned. I wrote directly to the people concerned, and there was a panic in every town I visited. They were terribly afraid of me.

Niles sits up, his brow furrows in concern. But Dovic continues on boastfully, proud of what he's accomplished.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

But oh, it gave me real power! The professors made me a professor, the tailors gave me new clothes.

(MORE)

DOVIC (CONT'D)

The master of the mint coined money for me, and the women said I was very good-looking.

He strokes his bear vainly.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

They all became amazingly fond of me. In this way I became the man I am. A real man.

Niles stands indignantly and opens his mouth to speak but nothing comes out. Dovic walks over to offer his outstretched hand to Niles.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

I understand. This is too much to grasp at once. So I should I bid you farewell for now. You can reach me on the sunny side, and I'm always at home when it rains.

Niles accepts his outstretched hand hesitantly. They shake.

CUT TO

Niles stands at his window and watches Dovic ride off in his carriage. Jia arrives to take the tray and he turns toward her.

NILES

That is most remarkable!

JIA

I do now know who or what that was; I am uneasy.

NILES

Whatever do you mean, Jia?

JIA

Be careful, Sir Niles. Dark spirits have a way of hiding right in front of us.

Niles ponders this and returns his chair, picks up his pen and begins writing.

EXT. NILES' HOME - DAY

Dovic's carriage pulls up and Niles steps outside to greet him.

DOVIC  
Hello! How goes it?

NILES  
I am well. But I admit to being slightly troubled and I don't know what to do with myself.

DOVIC  
This is unfortunate. What can it be? Is there anything can I do?

NILES  
I believe the world is a place of beauty and kindness. I'm often faced with hearing about such awful things that leave me in despair. I feel it quite keenly.

DOVIC  
I'm not understanding you, for I have everything and yet do not feel what you do.

NILES  
I'm truly human in that way, I suppose. I write about the true and the good and the magical in this world. But nobody cares or understands as they could. Life can be Poetry, but perhaps we cannot fathom it that way.

DOVIC  
It's you who doesn't understand the way of the world, you know. You'll get quite ill like this, you ought to travel. I'm going to travel this summer. Will you come with me? I should like to have a companion. Will you go with me as my shadow? It'll be a real pleasure to have you with me, and I'll pay expenses.

NILES  
That's quite odd. Me? As your shadow? How would that work?

DOVIC  
It will work just as you take it to work.

NILES  
That's madness.

DOVIC

Well, after all, the world's like  
that, and so it always will be.

Niles shakes his head and Dovic tops his hat toward him.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

Good day then, old friend. I will  
return as the spring goes to bed.  
Perhaps you might reconsider.

Dovic's carriage drives away.

ACT IV**TEXT ON SCREEN: COURTING THE PRINCESS**

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Side by side, Dovic and Niles ride in the carriage.

NILES

I must thank you for getting me  
outside. It's already done me a  
world of good, this travel.

They drive on, but the sun is lower now. Dovic gestures to  
the driver to pull over.

DOVIC

If you're going to be play the part  
of my shadow, it's time for you to  
sit behind me now. The sun is going  
down.

Niles rises compliantly.

NILES

But of course, happy to oblige, old  
friend.

Niles moves into the back of the carriage and it continues  
on. As they enter the town near the palace, Niles leans over  
to Dovic.

NILES (CONT'D)

It's been a lovely ride and I'm  
glad to be reunited. Since we've  
grown up together, I'm happy to  
call you Brother. Shall we drink to  
our brotherhood?

DOVIC

(haughty disdain)

What you say is very well meant,  
however as a scholar you know very  
well what an odd thing that would  
be. You are now my Shadow, but I'll  
gladly allow you to call me  
'brother,' if that appeases you.

Niles nods awkwardly; this clearly doesn't sit right with  
him. Regardless, he lets it be and sits back to enjoy the  
ride through the village, yet his expression is troubled.

EXT. PAVILLION FOUNTAIN NEAR THE CASTLE - DAY

At the pavilion, the carriage stops. Visitors and tourists walk about. They step outside their carriage and stretch, looking around. As they promenade, people stare at them, as Dovic is quite an imposing figure.

INT. ROYAL CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

PRINCESS CAMILA, who lives in the nearby palace approaches in her carriage. Young, beautiful and smart, she is fearless and also curious. As the carriage approaches the fountain she notices the two men and knocks for the carriage to halt.

The Princess leans forward to whisper to her CARRIAGE DRIVER through the small window.

PRINCESS CAMILA

People talk about this tall man.  
They wonder where he's from, where  
he gets his wealth, and why he has  
no beard. And I see that he can't  
cast a shadow. *The man has no  
shadow.*

The driver sees this too and squints protectively. Despite this, the Princess is curious. As the carriage stops, she opens the door and peers out, speaking directly to Niles and Dovic.

PRINCESS CAMILA (CONT'D)

What's the matter that you can't  
cast a shadow? Why do you have no  
beard?

DOVIC

(bowing gracefully)  
I'm very glad to meet Your Highness  
at the fountain. You see too well.  
But know that I have, in fact, a  
quite unusual shadow. Do you see  
the person who always goes about  
with me? Other people have an  
ordinary shadow, but I don't care  
about what is ordinary. Just as you  
give your servant finer clothes  
than he demands, just so I have had  
my shadow smartened up into a man.

(MORE)

DOVIC (CONT'D)

What's more, you can see that I have even given him how own proper shadow. It costs money, but I do like to have something unique for myself.

She stares at him quizzically.

PRINCESS CAMILA

I should like to know more.

DOVIC

Whatever you wish, My Lady. My name is Dovic. Dovic Varjo.

PRINCESS CAMILA

Know that you are invited and welcome to the ball in 3 days. We can discuss what I want to know there.

He nods and bows, as she shuts the door of her carriage and it moves on.



ACT V**TEXT ON SCREEN: THE SHADOW MAKES HIS MOVE**

INT. PALACE BALLROOM - NIGHT

The Princess and Dovic dance together at the ball. His dancing is light as a feather, and she laughs gayly at his charm and wit. Niles stands near a door, observing with a detached expression and a half-smile.

PRINCESS CAMILA  
How is it that you know these things, Sir?

DOVIC  
I have traveled often and seen many things. People and their lives have been unlocked before me.

PRINCESS CAMILA  
But where are you actually from? Where is your home?

DOVIC  
My home is here, although one could say I was born in the South, where the sun shines hot and the shadows are long.

She nods and squints. Princess Camila isn't fooled by this simplistic answer. And Dovic is well aware that she's gazing at him as if she can see through him.

She remains guarded, and puts him to the test.

PRINCESS CAMILA  
I see. As part of your travels, how have the stars led you to other lands? I'm very curious about how this works.

Dovic remains silent but his grin takes a harder appearance.

PRINCESS CAMILA (CONT'D)  
Or better yet, people who live elsewhere, how do they live that's so very different? How do their customs vary from ours? Other lands fascinate me so.

Dovic remains impassive, but doesn't answer.

PRINCESS CAMILA (CONT'D)  
(her voice hardens but  
still charming)

These are the kind of things one  
must know, especially a well-  
traveled man such as yourself.

Dovic is eyeing Niles menacingly. Niles takes note and  
flinches cautiously.

DOVIC

I have lived many lives and  
experiences, Your Highness. But I  
really believe my shadow there near  
the door can best answer your  
questions.

PRINCESS CAMILA

Your shadow? Well, you have brought  
him then. That would be most  
remarkable.

DOVIC

Well, I don't say for certain that  
he can, but I think it, seeing he's  
been following me and listening to  
me all these years. But your Royal  
Highness will permit me to call  
your attention to the fact that he  
takes such pride in passing for a  
man, he must be treated as one.

PRINCESS CAMILA

Of course. I treat all my subjects  
the same -- shadow, human or beast.  
We are all living beings, are we  
not, Sir?

Dovic nods oddly, and she pauses for an instant before  
removing herself to greet Niles.

He bows and they begin conversing. Dovic finds himself  
curious and dances with one or two others, all while keeping  
an eye on them.

Princess Camila is engaged and enchanted, as she should be,  
for Niles answers everything wisely and well. He is  
everything that Dovic is pretending to be but truer.

At the end of two dances, she returns to Dovic, who bows as  
she approaches.

DOVIC

I hope he has not been a disappointment, Your Highness.

PRINCESS CAMILA

On the contrary. His knowledge was vast and wise. I can only conclude that if he is truly your shadow, you are a man of unique qualities.

Dovic takes her hand and pulls her back onto the dance floor. At the end, he takes her onto the balcony and gets on one knee. Their shadows while the music plays on.

EXT. PAVILLION FOUNTAIN NEAR THE CASTLE - DAY

Back in the park, Dovic and Niles promenade around the fountain with the other people, with Niles remaining a few steps behind.

DOVIC

Listen, my good friend, I will soon be as fortunate and as powerful as anyone can be, and now I will do something special for you.

NILES

You owe me nothing, brother. This travel has done me a world of good. And meeting the princess has certainly been a highlight.

DOVIC

I'm offering you a life of ease. From now moving forward, you shall always live with me in the palace, and drive out with me in my royal coach, and you shall have a hundred thousand dollars a year.

Niles stops in confusion, as Dovic turns toward him.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

But you must allow yourself to be called a shadow by everyone, you must never say that you were at one time a man, and once a year, when I sit on the balcony in the sunshine and allow myself to be looked at, you must lie at my feet as a shadow ought to do.

NILES

This makes no sense to me, brother. I have my own life. And while I greatly appreciate the generosity of your offer, I have no desire to live my life in servitude to you or anyone else.

DOVIC

I may as well tell you that I'm going to marry the Princess. The wedding is to take place this very evening. That is why I ask this of you.

Niles is in shock and dismay.

NILES

No, no! That is really too much! I can't allow it. I won't do it! It's deceiving the whole country and the Princess too. I shall tell the whole story - that I am the man and you are the shadow; you're only dressed up.

Dovic pauses, eyes squinting. Then he turns and walks briskly back toward the carriage. Niles rushes to catch up.

NILES (CONT'D)

This is very wrong, old friend. So wrong.

DOVIC

Nobody will believe you, so I see nothing wrong with it.

NILES

Be reasonable, please. What can I do to change your mind? This is unfathomable. I shall go straight to the Princess!

DOVIC

But not before I do. It will be you who will go to prison. Not I.

With that, Dovic jumps into the waiting carriage, takes one look at Niles, his old master, and whisks away.

INT. PALACE ROOM - DAY

In a rush, Dovic enters the palace room, where he hurriedly bows, kissing the hand of the waiting princess.

PRINCESS CAMILA

Why, my beloved, you are all in a tremble. Has anything happened? You mustn't be ill tonight; we're going to be married!

DOVIC

I have had the most terrible experience that can occur to anyone. My shadow has gone mad! He believes that he's the man and that I—just think of it—am his shadow!

PRINCESS CAMILA

Well, that's awful. Perhaps he's troubled. I hope that— No. This could become a problem, I suppose.

DOVIC

Indeed, Princess, it will be. There will be rumors.

She pauses to consider, then shrugs, her kind heart forgiving all.

PRINCESS CAMILA

Poor shadow. I do enjoy him so, yet it's most unfortunate for him.

She continues to fan herself and dismisses it, but Dovic has not. He speaks slowly and carefully.

DOVIC

It would really be a kindness to be rid of him in our life. Indeed, when I come to think of it, I do believe it is essential that he should be quite quietly put out of the way.

The Princess sucks in her breath, in shock. But then continues listening to her beloved.

DOVIC (CONT'D)

It's really very hard. He's been a faithful servant to me. But it's for your protection, of course.

Dovic sighs in feigned sadness as the Princess pauses.

PRINCESS CAMILA  
You are a noble character.

The Princess rings her bell, and one of her guards comes over. As she whispers in his ear, Dovic drinks his champagne, smiling wickedly.

EXT. PALACE GARDENS - NIGHT

It's the royal wedding. The whole town is illuminated. Canons go off, and the palace soldiers march in celebration.

Decked in their wedding attire, Dovic and Princess Camila emerge onto the balcony to the acclaim of the townsfolk, and receive loud "Hurrahs!"

EXT. PAVILION NEAR THE FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Across the garden, as the sun sets, the silhouette of Niles hangs from the big tree like a dark shadow swinging in the breeze.

Fade out