

IN THE SHADOWS

by

Dimitris Apostolou

1, Iraklidon st., 14121 New Iraklio, Greece
Tel: +306932899946
E-mail: rex_4539@yahoo.com
Website: www.dimitrisapostolou.com

FADE IN:

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - DAY

We see someone's shadow on a wall that walks the street. It's little NICHOLAS', who's returning from school, deep into his thoughts.

EXT. CLOCK - DAY

Nicholas passes in front of the village clock.

His friend, YANNIS, catches up with him.

YANNIS

Nicholas!

Nicholas stops and waits for him.

YANNIS

Do you want to go and play target practice with the slings?

NICHOLAS

I can't... My father's gonna be angry with me if I'm late.

YANNIS

(opening up his
appetite)

We'll be aiming at Mrs. Ourania's window...

Nicholas smiles.

EXT. BUSH OUTSIDE MRS. OURANIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Yannis prepares his sling.

YANNIS

One for me, one for you, OK?

Nicholas nods positively.

Yannis aims at a window from Mrs. Ourania's barn. Shoots but misses.

YANNIS

Damn you...

Nicholas aims with his sling and shoots the window. He finds the target and breaks it. The kids laugh, satisfied with their mischief.

YANNIS

My father says that you're a
hunter only if you retrieve your
loot!

NICHOLAS

Mrs. Ourania will see us!

YANNIS

Do you want me to tell to the
whole school tomorrow that you
chickened?

Nicholas disconcerts but approaches with spy moves towards
the window. We see his shadow as he approaches. He leans in
order to take a piece of the glass.

Mrs. Ourania approaches him without being noticed by
Nicholas, while Yannis sees her from the bush he's hiding
and covers his mouth in agony.

Mrs. Ourania grabs Nicholas from the collar.

MRS. OURANIA

I got you!

Yannis watches, laughing, from the bush.

She gives Nicholas a clout on the head but he manages to
get away from her holding and starts to run away.

MRS. OURANIA

Damn kid! If only your late
mother could see you... I'll tell
your father everything! Useless
child! You'll see what will
happen!

Nicholas turns and hides behind a corner, trying to catch
his breath.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nicholas enters the house, full of guilt. He drops his
books on an old radio and heads to the kitchen.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

In the kitchen he sees his FATHER sitting by the old,
wooden table, serious, with a bottle of liquor, almost
empty.

Nicholas freezes.

FATHER

Where were you again?

Nicholas, scared, doesn't answer.

FATHER
I said where were you!

NICHOLAS
(hesitating)
With Yannis, we went...

FATHER
(interrupting him)
Come here.

Nicholas approaches hesitantly to his father, who has another sip from the liquor.

NICHOLAS
We went...

Before even finishing the word, his father slaps him.

FATHER
God damn you... Get out of my
sight!

As Nicholas moves away with his head down.

FATHER
Useless child...

INT. HOUSE - NICHOLAS'S ROOM - DUSK

Nicholas sits on his bed, looking sullen. He takes a piece of old bread and eats. He looks at his mother's photograph on the small table.

In a while, noises are heard from outside and Nicholas heads to the window.

He sees a little truck with the sign of "Karagiozis shadow theatre" passing by from his window and some kids following it, running and shouting with joy.

Nicholas leans on his bed and has a smile on his face.

INT. HOUSE - NICHOLAS' ROOM - NIGHT

Nicholas stands up from his bed, opens the door softly and looks his father sleeping in the couch, snoring, dead drunk, with the bottle empty next to him and fallen on the floor. He closes the door softly again, goes to the window, opens it and jumps outside, starting to run.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

Nicholas reaches the square where the show is played.

Everyone's watching with exceptional interest.

We see the shadow theatre.

KARAGIOZIS

Tell me, Kolitiri, my son.

KOLITIRI

Yes, dad.

KARAGIOZIS

How do we call this thing, that we wear it, we tie it and we go?

KOLITIRI

We wear it, we tie it and we go... Help me a little bit, dad. I'm just a small kid.

KARAGIOZIS

I'll give you a small tip, son. It's made from leather.

KOLITIRI

It's made from leather... Help me a little bit more.

KARAGIOZIS

It has a tongue too.

KOLITIRI

Help me a little bit more...

KARAGIOZIS

It also has strings.

KOLITIRI

Help me a little bit more!

KARAGIOZIS

It's called shoe.

KOPRITIS

He's just a kid! He's not able to answer. Ask me something!

KARAGIOZIS

Alright then. How do we call this thing, that's standing on the roof, it's mewling and it's called cat?

KOPRITIS

It's called cat?

KARAGIOZIS

Yes.

KOPRITIS

And it's mewling?

KARAGIOZIS

Yes.

KOPRITIS

It's... Um... Help me a little bit. I'm just a small kid too!

KARAGIOZIS

(laughing)

Alright then, I'll help you.

KOPRITIS

Does it have leather?

KARAGIOZIS

It does.

KOPRITIS

Does it have strings?

KARAGIOZIS

It does.

KOPRITIS

Does it have a tongue?

KARAGIOZIS

It does.

KOPRITIS

I found it!

KARAGIOZIS

What is it?

KOPRITIS

Slipper shoe!

Everyone laughs.

KARAGIOZIS

Congatulations...

SMALL SON FIGURE

Daddy?

KARAGIOZIS

What do you want?

SMALL SON FIGURE

I'm going to the square to play.

KARAGIOZIS

You're not going anywhere!

SMALL SON FIGURE

Daddy, I'm just a small kid too!
Why shouldn't I go?

KARAGIOZIS

No! Go inside the house! Now!

Nicholas watches the show enchanted and in his eyes, the shadow theater becomes reality, where KARAGIOZIS approaches Nicholas, smiling.

KARAGIOZIS

Did you like the show, kid?

Nicholas is speechless.

We see an over aged man (PUPPETEER) in Karagiozis' place.

PUPPETEER

Hey kid? Did you like it? Tell me.

NICHOLAS

Yes, I liked it, mister!

PUPPETEER

(with Karagiozis' voice)
See I've told you, Karagiozis,
and you didn't believe me? He
liked the show.

Nicholas stares with his mouth open. We see Karagiozis move away.

KARAGIOZIS

Ah, I'm going to rest for a while!

NICHOLAS

Don't leave!

We see the puppeteer stop and look at Nicholas, smiling.

PUPPETEER

What is your name, kid?

NICHOLAS

Nicholas.

PUPPETEER

Tomorrow we'll be here as well,
Nicholas. Come and see us again.

Nicholas smiles too, shining from joy and goes away, running.

INT. HOUSE - NICHOLAS' ROOM - NIGHT

Nicholas enters from the window as quietly as he can and goes under the rough blanket, as he is with his clothes on. His mind travels with Karagiozis. He sees shadow theater on the wall. He closes his eyes and sleeps like a baby.

INT. HOUSE - NICHOLAS' ROOM - DAY

Father shakes Nicholas violently from his bed.

FATHER
Wake up, damn you! You'll be late
for school.

Father holds his head from the headache.

FATHER
I won't say it again...

Father leaves the room. Nicholas gets up at once, besides being sleepy.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nicholas opens the door and looks for his father, quite scared. His father is not in the room. Nicholas takes his books from the old radio where he had left them and leaves.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

We read the sign on the wall: "Karagiozis shadow theatre. Tonight on the village square at 9."

Nicholas is sketching a drawing of Karagiozis during the break.

His friend Yannis watches him curiously.

The bell rings and everyone runs inside the classrooms.

Nicholas is in his own world and seems not to have listened to the bell. He smiles while sketching.

We see the sketch and realize he's been sketching some shadow theatre figures.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

We see the shadow theatre.

KARAGIOZIS
Why don't you want the woman I
brought you?

GEORGE

But she's limping, Karagiozis!

KARAGIOZIS

She's not limping so much. Her leg is just a bit short!

GEORGE

I don't want her!

KARAGIOZIS

If she wasn't limping, would you want her?

GEORGE

I'd want her.

KARAGIOZIS

Good. Let's say she wasn't limping. Wouldn't you have an engagement?

GEORGE

We would.

KARAGIOZIS

Wouldn't you go for a honeymoon?

GEORGE

We would.

KARAGIOZIS

When you'd return, wouldn't she cook? Wouldn't she wash? Wouldn't she clean?

GEORGE

Yes!

KARAGIOZIS

Let's say she climbed on the garret window to clean it, slipped, fell down... BAM! Broke her leg.

GEORGE

Yes!

KARAGIOZIS

Would you leave her like this?

GEORGE

No!

KARAGIOZIS

Wouldn't you put her leg on a plaster?

GEORGE

I would!

KARAGIOZIS

Wouldn't you take her to the hospital?

GEORGE

I would!

KARAGIOZIS

Wouldn't you spend money to heal her leg?

GEORGE

I would!

KARAGIOZIS

So why don't you take the limp woman now and spare all the expenses?

Nicholas stands up and goes backstage.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Nicholas sees the puppeteer performing with ardent desire and skill.

GEORGE

(angry)

Tell me something!

KARAGIOZIS

What?

GEORGE

(angry)

Why do you shout to the small kid, heh? Why do you hit him?

The puppeteer turns, blinks his eye to Nicholas and goes on with the show.

GEORGE

(angry)

Don't ever lay your hand on the kid again. I will crush you!

KARAGIOZIS

I just...

GEORGE

(angry, interrupting him)

Shut up! Do you like me hitting you? Here we go!

George's figure starts to hit Karagiozis' figure.

KARAGIOZIS

Stop! Let me expl... Ahhh!

Nicholas' joy is obvious.

The crowd laughs pleased with the show.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

The crowd has left. Nicholas is left alone in front of the square, disappointed.

The puppeteer approaches him.

PUPPETEER

Why are you sad, Nicholas? Didn't you like the show today?

NICHOLAS

I liked it, mister... But tomorrow you'll leave and never come back...

The puppeteer pats Nicholas' head and smiles to him.

PUPPETEER

Be here tomorrow morning at 9 where I'll be leaving.

Nicholas lowers his head, disappointed.

PUPPETEER

Mind you and I'll prepare a surprise...

NICHOLAS

I'll be here, mister! But I have to leave now, cause if my father discovers I'm not home...

Nicholas starts running for home.

PUPPETEER

Good luck, Nicholas!

INT. HOUSE - NICHOLAS' ROOM - DAY

The clock on the wall reads 09:05. We see Nicholas lying in bed with his eyes wide open, staring at the clock. He stands up, goes slowly to the door, opens it with caution and sees his father sleeping again on the couch with a half-empty bottle of liquor next to him.

Nicholas closes the door, making a big noise that makes him freeze and stay still for a while, trying to listen around him. Slowly he goes towards the window and tries to open it.

FATHER (O.S.)
Where do you think you're going?

Nicholas, scared, freezes, watching his father approaching.

FATHER
You don't speak, hey?

Nicholas is frozen.

FATHER
Come here. Yesterday afternoon, Ourania came by and asked for money because you broke her window, she said. Is that true?

Nicholas lowers his head.

FATHER
(angry)
Speak out. Speak out!

Nicholas doesn't say anything.

FATHER
And where did you loaf again yesterday afternoon, you scoundrel? I was looking for you!

NICHOLAS
(whispering)
At Karagiozis...

FATHER
(aggressively)
Where?

NICHOLAS
At Karagiozis.

FATHER
Who is this clown? I'll give him a couple of slaps!

NICHOLAS
No, he's not...

His father interrupts him with a slap.

FATHER
Shut your mouth! Look at this tongue... Next thing you'll wanna rule this house!

NICHOLAS
Father, I have to go.

FATHER
What did you say? You're not
going anywhere!

NICHOLAS
Father, please! He'll leave...

FATHER
Shut your mouth, damn it! You're
not going...

His father interrupts, as he sees Nicholas trying to leave.
He grabs his arm.

FATHER
Did you hear what I said?

Nicholas pulls his arm but his father doesn't release it.
Nicholas hits him, surprising his father who releases his
arm. Nicholas starts running.

His father stands indisposed and surprised.

FATHER
Come back... Do you hear me...?

His father lowers his head and turns to the mother's
photograph on the small table. He takes it and looks at it,
with eyes ready to shed tears, like asking for her
forgiveness.

EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - DAY

Nicholas, with tears in his eyes, runs with all his power.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

Nicholas reaches the square and sees the little truck,
that's already departed. Nicholas, running, in despair.

NICHOLAS
Mister!

He gets tired and stops. He shouts with all the power he
has left.

NICHOLAS
Mister, don't leave!

Disappointed, he looks at the spot in the square that the
theater was set up. He sees a wooden box. He runs quickly
and opens it.

Inside, he sees the carved figure of Karagiozis. He pulls it out and holds it in his hands with his eyes filled with tears.

We see the shadows of Nicholas and Karagiozis on the ground. Nicholas smiles.

FADE OUT.