

Something Smells Fishy

Ashton Poage

EightySix Records

Characters

HAM..... Leader of the Shadowers, Peasant

CATARINA.... Princess of Highreach, Daughter to Jillian and Justinia

BRYNN..... Shadower, Ham's childhood friend

BOON..... Shadower, Ham's best friend

ADAM..... Prince of Cyllonia, Son to Reynard and Lucy

JILLIAN..... King of Highreach

JUSTINIA..... Queen of Highreach

REYNARD..... King of Cyllonia

LUCY..... Queen of Cyllonia

BENNY..... Wealthy Merchant

CHEF..... most renowned chef in all the kingdoms

OTHER UNAMED ROLES INCLUDE..... Guards, Servants, Cooks, Nobles, Peasants, Merchants

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Late at night, Ham is walking through the streets ever cautious of his surroundings and who may see him. He arrives at a window to an abandoned home. Ham takes a moment to look around, then quickly lifts open the window and sneaks inside. Within, the lights are out and not a soul is inside. Ham wanders about the room, anxiously waiting.

Catarina jumps out from inside the wardrobe, covering Ham's eyes from behind.

HAM

AGHHH!

Ham quickly jumps away.

CATIE!

CATARINA

Trying not to laugh out loud.

Shhh! Don't be so loud.

Catarina is in a pink night gown. Her long blonde hair is let loose hanging on one side. Her makeup is beautiful, yet minimal.

HAM

Well what did you expect? Jesus Catie, you about gave me a heart attack.

CATARINA

Drawing closer to Ham, putting her finger against his lips.

Hehe, I got you pretty good huh?

HAM

Yeah, you did I'll admit. But I'll remember this!

Pulling Catarina into his arms.

CATARINA

Oh, you will huh. What are you going to do about it?

HAM

Something terrible.

CATARINA

Bah! You would threaten a lady?

HAM

Ha I do not threaten milady, I am merely warning you, so you aren't ill-prepared.

CATARINA

Ah my hero! How could I ever repay you?

HAM

With a kiss?

Catarina chuckles, then kisses Ham passionately.

CATARINA

I've missed you.

HAM

And I you.

Ham and Catarina sit on the bed.

CATARINA

So, tell me. What's new? How's the guild?

HAM

Never been better. The Shadowers have made more gold this past month than we have since we started the whole thing.

CATARINA

Stealing gold isn't making gold, Ham.

HAM

Sure it is! Our name is getting out there now. I hear scared whispers about when people think the Shadowers are going to strike next.

CATARINA
(Chuckling)

I still can't believe you named your little group the "Shadowers". That's so edgy.

HAM

Isn't it? That's what we're going for. Everyone was all for it and look at us now. We initiated five new members earlier today. We're growing Catie. Watch and see. We will be the biggest thieves guild in the kingdom.

CATARINA

Hehe, you're cute when you get all ambitious. I have half a mind to report you to the guards.

HAM

You wouldn't dare.

Ham leans over, kissing Catarina.

Besides, we started taking on contracts now.

CATARINA

Contracts?

HAM

Yeah, like jobs. People are paying us to do their dirty work. We steal something for them or deliver a... message for them.

CATARINA

I don't like it...

HAM

I know Catie, but its nothing too terrible. We aren't killing people or anything like that. We're just trying to survive.

CATARINA

Yeah and then what happens when you get caught? They won't just let the leader of the 'biggest thieves guild in the kingdom' just walk away.

Beat.

I just don't want you to get hurt. I can't lose you.

Ham grabs Catarina and hugs her tightly.

HAM

That's the last thing you need to worry about. I'll always be by your side.

Beat.

Do you remember that old boat in the tree we used to play in outside the castle?

CATARINA

I do... *captain*.

HAM

Ham smirks and brushes a strand of hair from her cheek.

Do you remember that day it was raining and we were pretending to save the boat from sinking?

CATARINA

(Giggling)

Of course. I'll always remember that day. You told me you loved me, and that you would do anything to protect me.

HAM

And I always will.

CATARINA

Ham... you were six.

HAM

And? As soon as I saw you, I knew I wanted to marry you one day.

Catarina's smiles at Ham. Beat. Her smile fades.

CATARINA

Ham, you know we can't... father would –

HAM

Let me worry about that. We will find a way.

CATARINA

Do you promise?

HAM

Of course.

CATARINA

Swear!

Ham stands Catarina up before kneeling, grabbing her hands.

HAM

(Very proper and sudden British accent)

Miss Catarina Cheliyan, I swear to you here and now with God as my witness, that I will love you unconditionally for the rest of my days. I will find a way for us to be together.

CATARINA

(Joining the charade with the same accent)

Hmm. That will do. You may rise.

The two share a laugh, as Catarina lays down on the bed, pulling Ham on top of her. They kiss passionately.

Blackout

SCENE TWO

King Jilian and Queen Justinia are sitting at the dinner table. A messenger has just delivered the king a letter. Jilian reads the letter, then slams his fist down onto the table.

JILIAN

God DAMNIT!

JUSTINIA

What is it my lord?

JILIAN

He mocks me! He *mocks* me! He must think me weak!

JUSTINIA

Who?

JILIAN

Reynard!

JUSTINIA

The King of Cyllonia?

Slamming his fist down onto the table again, spilling the drinks.

JILIAN

He is no king! I am the only king!

JUSTINIA

What has happened?

JILIAN

He is asking for peace.

JUSTINIA

Well... shouldn't... how is this upsetting lord? Do you want to stay at war?

JILIAN

Of course not! But I should be the only King! Why must there be a king of Highreach AND Cyllonia?!

The kings hits the table once more. Beat. Jilian slumps into his chair, defeated.

With each passing year my dream of a one, united land, becomes farther away.

Justinia walks over to Jilian, standing behind him. She lays over his shoulder.

JUSTINIA

I understand your frustration. You are right. You should be the one and only king. The king of a great and vast nation of the two kingdoms combined. But my lord if I may speak freely, we've been at war for too long. Maybe a time of peace is what we need right now to rebuild our strength.

JILIAN

If I am to accept this peace... I most certainly will never hold both kingdoms.

JUSTINIA

What are his terms?

JILIAN

Marriage. Our daughter is now of age. He wants to bond his son, Prince Adam with our daughter. Their marriage will surely outlive the remainder of my life. Accepting this would be surrendering my dream.

JUSTINIA

I see...

Jilian stands up and walks to the window, defeated. He gazes outwards.

JILIAN

After all these years. But perhaps... perhaps it's for the best.

JUSTINIA

You don't have to accept my lord. You can still refuse and continue fighting.

JILIAN

True. But to what end? We both know how it would turn out. My numbers are dwindling Justinia, and we've lost almost every stronghold on the border. We would lose. I know it. And he knows it.

JUSTINIA

But how can you be so certain? You are still –

JILIAN

I am many things woman, but I am not a fool. If war rages on, we will certainly lose many more lives. Perhaps even our own.

Jilian turns around grabbing Justinia's hands.

I would rather not be able to dream at all, than to lose you. Than to lose our daughter. To lose everything we've accomplished. Everything we've built. If I must sacrifice my pride for the lives of my people... so be it.

JUSTINIA

You are very wise my love. I will follow you, whatever path you take.

JILIAN

(To a guard)

Fetch the princess. I would have her informed of her future.

Guard exits.

The King returns to the window and resumes his gaze. Justinia sits back at the table, picking up the mess. Beat. Guard enters with Catarina.

CATARINA

Father. You summoned me?

JILIAN

Ah, yes, dear. Take a seat.

They all sit at the table.

CATARINA

What's going on?

JILIAN

I have news of Cyllonia. We have agreed to end the war and enter a time of peace.

CATARINA

Ah! That's wonderful father! Will we be holding a celebration?

JILIAN

Something like that, yes. A marriage, in fact.

CATARINA

A marriage... father?

JILIAN

Yes. Between you and Prince Adam of Cyllonia.

CATARINA

WHAT?!

JILIAN

In order to secure peace, we must unite the two kingdoms by –

CATARINA

Rising to her feet.

I will not!

JUSTINIA

Catarina!

JILIAN

You will.

CATARINA

No! You cannot ask me to -

JILIAN

You *will*. The kingdoms must be bonded if we are to find amity.

CATARINA

I will not marry a man I have not even met! For *politics*! I will marry the man I choose! The man I love!

JILIAN

You do not get to *choose* Catarina! You do not get to love! You marry whomever I-

Catarina slams the table, knocking down the glasses again.

CATARINA

NO! Mother, please! I –

JUSTINIA

Catarina, you will listen to you father.

CATARINA

I cannot! I will not!

Jilian, now rising to his feet. Voice stern and menacing, carrying the power of a king,

JILIAN

You WILL! You have no option! It is your DUTY! You will obey me not because I am your father, but because your KING DEMANDS IT!

Long, tense beat.

CATARINA

As you command, *my lord.*

Catarina storms off. The king returns to his seat.

JILIAN

Well that went well, wouldn't you agree?

JUSTINIA

You could've been gentler.

JILIAN

She will understand her role. She must.

JUSTINIA

Perhaps if she were to meet the boy first? Getting to know him before the wedding might set her mind at ease.

JILIAN

Hmm. Yes. That is a good idea. Very well. I will write to King Reynard and inform him of our decision. I shall invite him here, to dine with us. A bachelor party of sorts.

JUSTINIA

A grand feast it will be lord.

JILIAN

Indeed. Come, let's begin the preparations.

The King and Queen exit.

Blackout.

SCENE 3

Lights up on an old warehouse with many members of The Shadowers about. Groups are engaged in unheard conversations. Many are laughing and drinking. The guild is obviously thriving.

At a separate table centerstage, Ham sits with Doon and Brynn. Doon has had many pints of ale. The character of Doon has an Irish accent.

DOON

Alright alright, I got it. I GOT IT! This is the one.

BRYNN

Come on then! Let's hear it!

HAM

This should be good...

BOON

Boon stands up onto the table, raising his mug, and begins to dance and sing.

Jimmy crack corn and I don't care! Jimmy Crack corn and I don't care! Jimmy crack corn and I don't caaaaaaaare!

Everyone around laughs and claps as Boon finishes singing and returns to his seat. Ham buries his face in his hands.

BRYNN

That's it? That's the one?

BOON

Yeah! It's simple, catchy, easy to learn! It will do great with the kids. Trust me, they'll love it!

HAM

So... Jimmy cracks corn... but we don't care?

BOON

Yep!

HAM

Then why are we singing about it?! Now, if Jimmy was *on crack*, we'd probably care then.

Brynn laughs.

BOON

So... you don't like it?

HAM

Boon. I love it. Great stuff. Better than your last one for sure. How'd that one go again? Pop goes the-

BOON

WEASEL! Pop it goes the weasel does!

Ham, Brynn, and Boon all start laughing and enjoying each other's company. Suddenly, a cloaked woman, Catarina, enters the warehouse carrying a bag. The room goes quiet.

BOON

Uh...who're you?

CATARINA

I heard the Shadowers were available for hire. So, I'm here to offer you a job.

Ham recognizes her voice and stands up. Brynn eyes him. No one in the guild knows about Ham and Catarina's secret affair. Ham tries to hide his concern.

HAM

Alright, we're listening.

CATARINA

I want you to kill Prince Adam of Cyllonia.

The guild members erupt into laughter. Ham does not.

BRYNN

I don't know what you've heard missy, but we're thieves, not murderers. We don't take that kind of-

CATARINA

I'm offering you 10,000 gold pieces. A third of it will be paid in advance.

Catarina throws the bag she was carrying onto a nearby table. The bag spills open and gold pieces fall out of it onto the table and the floor. The room is silent except for gasps and whispers.

BOON

DEAL!

HAM

Hold on a minute Boon! We all agreed that –

BOON

Ah to hell with that Ham! Look around you! We're not just a small group of stragglers anymore! We are a *force*! A small army of thievin' bastards! We could use that money to get the guild famous!

Murmurs from the members in agreement.

HAM

Right, but this is the PRINCE of Cyllonia we're talking about. I'd be more willing to budge if it was some commoner, but the *Prince*? This is an impossible task.

Catarina removes her hood. Her hair is fashioned into a braided updo, and her makeup is exquisite. Sounds from the members, as they all immediately recognize her. Voices can be heard saying: "The princess!" "No way." "It's her, Princess Catarina."

CATARINA

I understand the risk of what I am asking of you, that is why I can assure you that you will have my protection. Should such a situation arise, I can-

Brynn suddenly stands up from the table.

BRYNN

I'm with Ham on this one. We should not involve ourselves in political affairs. Once we do, there's no coming out of that.

Members murmur in agreement.

CATARINA

I know you all may have your suspicions but see this as an opportunity for a future relationship. If my father, the King, sees that you all are competent and reliable, I can assure you that he will continue to utilize your guild for future jobs. He will reward you well and-

BRYNN

We will not become your puppets! We are a-

BOON

We won't be puppets Brynn, we will be RICH! This is the princess we're talking! The King! We will have protection, fame, and everything we need to-

BRYNN

No! We will become slaves to the royal family! We won't be a guild anymore! Everything we've done so far, we did ourselves! We don't need to rely on some-

BOON

But the King knows about us now, Brynn! How else do you think the princess found us? All the more reason to accept! If we refuse, do you think the King is just going to let us go free and keep on stealin'? Better to serve him than fight him!

During Brynn and Boon's arguments, members voice their affirmation for each point made. Now they are worked up and the members start arguing and yelling at each other. The room seems to be evenly split. After the chaos goes on for a bit, Ham interrupts.

HAM

QUIET! I am the Guild Master so this contract will be my decision to make. Know that I hear each of your arguments and there is validity on both sides. To find more clarity with this... Princess, may I speak with you alone?

CATARINA

Of course.

Ham and Catarina exit. Brynn and Boon sit down, the air is tense.

BRYNN

I have a bad feeling about this. We will not just simply walk away from killing the *Prince of Cyllonia*.

BOON

We won't walk away. We'll run. And hopefully the Princess will pull through and see us safely hidden.

BRYNN

I hope you're right.

Blackout.

SCENE 4

Stage is blacked out. All of the cast remains in their spots on stage. Ham and Catarina enter and stay off to one side. The only lighting is a spotlight to illustrate they are alone elsewhere.

HAM

Catie, what is going on!? I told you not to ever come to the Guild. The Prince of Cyllonia?! The fuck is happening?!

CATARINA

Father has agreed to terms with the King of Cyllonia for peace. In order to unite Highreach and Cyllonia... the Prince and I are to be married.

HAM

No...

CATARINA

I tried Hammy, I did. He wouldn't listen to me. He-

HAM

Does he know...?

CATARINA

No! Of course not! I would never tell him. If he knew about you... I don't know what he would do. But Ham, you promised to find a way! Here it is! Please... I cannot marry anyone but you.

HAM

You are a princess Catie. This was bound to happen. If not Prince Adam, then some other lord from somewhere else. Your father would never allow a peasant to –

CATARINA

But you won't be a peasant! Not anymore. I can make you a lord.

HAM

What? What are you planning?

CATARINA

If the Prince is murdered, there will most certainly be no more talks of peace. We will go back to war. I can help you and the guild grow in numbers and strength. I will bring you to my father as a mercenary army to see that Highreach emerges victorious. Prove to him your worth, and I will make sure you are awarded with land and title. Lands that we claim from Cyllonia. A place for the Shadowers to make their home. Then, as you will officially be a lord, my father will have no reason to deny your proposal for my hand. Especially if I vouch for it.

Ham is silent. Beat.

HAM

I admit, it's a reasonable plan. But this is all under the unlikely chance that Highreach wins the war. If Cyllonia wins, they will want revenge. They will kill you.

CATARINA

I will die before I marry anyone other than you. So, make sure you win this war. For me.

Long beat.

HAM

I love you.

CATARINA

I love you too.

HAM

I'll go inform the others then.

CATARINA

Ham, wait. You mustn't tell them of our plan, or it will become out of our control.

HAM

I trust them Catie, they need to –

CATARINA

Don't.

Beat.

HAM

Fine. We'll talk more tonight.

CATARINA

Yes, tonight at our usual place. Prince Adam and the King and Queen of Cyllonia will be arriving today for a feast at the palace.

HAM

I see...

CATARINA

As soon as it is all over, I will come to you tonight. I promise.

HAM

If the Prince is going to be in Highreach today, then we should kill him now.

CATARINA

No, wait until they leave Highreach and meet them on the road! It would be much easier to kill him there than in the castle.

HAM

Hmm... True.

CATARINA

Don't worry, Ham. I'm yours. There is nothing you need to worry about. I promise I will find you tonight. Now I've got to go. Thank you for this.

HAM

Always.

Catarina kisses Ham, then they both exit opposite sides of the stage.

Blackout.

SCENE 5

Lights up in the throne room. The dining table is set with exquisite plates and glasses. The King and Queen of Highreach are on their thrones talking and Catarina is standing nearby, anxiously waiting. They are in fine garments of a classical king a queen, all matching with deep purples and blues. Catarina is in a beautiful purple dress and her long blond hair is worn in a fancy updo.

JILLIAN

He's late.

JUSTINIA

I'm sure there's a reason my love, perhaps they had some issues on the road?

JILLIAN

I doubt it. He is just asserting his power over me. The bastard –

JUSTINIA

Your anger towards King Reynard is understandable my love. But if we are to become allies, we must set aside our differences.

JILLIAN

I am aware. But he doesn't have to be –

A servant enters.

SERVANT

My lord. The King and Queen of Cyllonia have arrived.

Catarina suddenly tenses up.

JILLIAN

About time. Bring them in.

The servant exits. Jillian and Justinia stand up awaiting the arrival of their guests. Catarina fidgets with her hair and her dress, making sure everything is perfect. Enter Reynard, Lucy, and Adam. Reynard is in a black tuxedo with short and tight black hair. Lucy is in short dress, that is tightly fit to her slender figure. Adam is extremely attractive. He is in a blue striped suit, no tie. He has a very modern undercut hairstyle.

JILLIAN

Ah, King Reynard! What a pleasure it is to finally meet you face to face.

REYNARD

King Jillian, I assure you the pleasure is all mine. I must say your garments are quite... a statement.

JILLIAN

I would say the same to you. I've never seen anything like it. Come, let us sit!

Everyone begins to take their seats at the table. Before Catarina gets to her seat, Prince Adam stops her.

ADAM

You must be Princess Catarina. I've heard many stories of your resounding beauty and I must say, those stories do you no justice.

Catarina, somewhat surprised by his charm.

CATARINA

Thank you.

Adam pulls out the chair for Catarina as she sits. He takes his seat across from her. The Kings are at each head of the table.

JILLIAN

I've prepared quite the feast for your visit today. I even brought out our finest wine from the cellar. I take it you are hungry from your travels?

Jillian gestures to a servant. Many more servants enter carrying plates of various fancy dishes such as a whole turkey, sliced breads, etc. Servants start pouring wine.

REYNARD

Indeed. We had to take a detour to avoid some fallen trees that were blocking the road. Other than that, we met no resistance.

JILLIAN

Excellent. I –

REYNARD

I must say I am somewhat surprised by your agreement with my proposal for peace, Jillian. I figured you would be a little more... resistant.

JILLIAN

Yes, well, no one is more surprised than myself, I can assure you. But I believe this is best for both our kingdoms. We've been at war for too long Reynard, even I can see what it will cost us if we continue. Allow me to make a toast.

Jillian grabs his glass of wine and holds it up, then everyone else grabs theirs.

To new beginnings, new relationships, and a new era of peace.

EVERYONE

To peace.

Everyone drinks.

ADAM

Father, if I may, I'd like to be excused for a little while and steal a few words with Princess Catarina. Of course, only if that is okay with you, milady.

JILLIAN

Excellent idea! Catarina my dear, perhaps you could show Prince Adam around the gardens? The flowers are especially pretty this time of year. King Reynard and I shouldn't bore you with our talks of business.

CATARINA

Of course, father.

Catarina hesitantly gets up. Prince Adam follows suit. She smiles awkwardly at him and they exit offstage.

REYNARD

She is opposed to the marriage, I assume?

JILLIAN

She has shown... grievances. But given time, she will undoubtedly come to like the boy. He is a strapping young man. You should be proud.

REYNARD

Thank you. I believe they have a bright future ahead of them. Now, shall we begin the negotiations?

JILLIAN

Yes of course. To business.

Blackout

SCENE 6

Lights up on Catarina and Adam strolling the garden.

ADAM

I must say, from what I've seen of Highreach so far, it's not what I expected.

Catarina smiles at him

We've been at war since I was a child, so I always thought of this place as somewhere dark and evil. But being here and seeing you, I could not have been more wrong. You are just and righteous people. Leaders who want the best for their kingdom. Just like us. Highreach and Cyllonia are more similar than I thought.

Catarina nods and smiles. Adam stops walking and looks at Catarina.

Why the silence? Is something troubling you?

CATARINA

No lord, I just... my father taught me that silence was the safest course for a princess.

ADAM

It sounds like both of our fathers could learn the benefits of silence.

Catarina chuckles.

I mean honestly! My father goes on and on about politics and order, and sometimes I just wish he would find time to let all that go. Say what you will about royalty and courtship, but I would give it all up to feel like a family again.

Catarina looks at him.

CATARINA

You too? I thought it was just me. It's been so long since my father talked about anything other than war and battle. I too just want the love of a family again...

Adam grabs Catarina's hands. She is hesitant at first but lets him.

ADAM

Catarina, I know that you are hesitant about this marriage. I know it can be difficult to give yourself to someone you have never met. I too was anxious, but after seeing you... I don't feel that way anymore. I feel lucky.

Adam picks a nearby purple flower and gives it to Catarina

Like this flower, you are elegant and beautiful. I can already see your heart is pure and I know you only want the best for your family. You make me feel excited about the future and what we could create. I want to know you, Catarina. I believe there could be love here if given the chance to explore it.

CATARINA

I...

ADAM

I know you are hesitant, and you have your reasons, so I ask you this. Think about it. Take some time to think what this marriage would mean for our families and for our kingdoms. What future we could create. If you are still unsure, I will not let my father force it. I will refuse the marriage and we shall find peace another way. I do not want this to become a union between our parents, but a union between us. I won't marry you unless you want it too.

Catarina tears up. She reaches for her next words

CATARINA

Your words mean more than you know. I am... surprised by you. I am truly grateful for your kindness. You have made this so much easier than I thought. I will do as you say and take some time to think.

Adam smiles at Catarina, bowing.

ADAM

Of course, princess.

Catarina blushes and grabs his hands, raising him back up to his feet and smiling at him.

CATARINA

Please, call me Catie.

The two hold their smiles and gaze at one another for a beat.

ADAM

Come. We should return to the hall. I am sure our fathers have made *tremendous* progress in their discussion.

Catarina laughs

CATARINA

We shall see.

They exit.

Blackout

SCENE 6.5

Lights up on Ham in the abandoned room where he and Catarina meet in secret. The scene will be Ham waiting, getting more and more anxious as time goes by and Catarina still does not show up. After a while of this, Ham becomes distraught and gives up. He blows out the candles and exits back out the window.

Blackout

SCENE 7

Lights up back at the Shadows warehouse. The members are all engaged in excited conversations about the upcoming contract. Ham sits alone at a table. After a while, Brynn sits down next to him with two mugs of ale.

BRYNN

You look like you could use a drink.

Ham looks at her and chuckles, taking the drink.

HAM

Thank you.

BRYNN

What's up? What's bothering you?

HAM

Nothing, Brynn. I'm fine.

BRYNN

No, you're not. I know when your upset, Ham. You can talk to me.

Ham stares at his mug

HAM

It's nothing.

Long beat as the two stare at their drinks.

BRYNN

I remember you when you first came to me when I was living alone in the streets. Barely surviving off trash and scraps. You gave me a loaf of bread.

Ham chuckles

HAM

I remember. It was as hard as a rock.

Brynn chuckles

BRYNN

Yes, but it was a kindness that no one had shown me since my parents died. You said we could help each other. By taking what other people didn't need for ourselves so that we may survive.

HAM

Yeah, then we tried to steal from Boon. He threatened to tell the guard and have us arrested if we didn't let him join us.

Brynn laughs

BRYNN

And so, the Shadowers were born.

The two laugh together, remembering their beginning.

These people here look up to you Ham. They see a man who has no desire for power or money, but a man who believes in a cause. A man who protects the people he loves. That is why you will

always have the strength to do what is right. To press on when everything starts to look hopeless. It is why these men love you and will follow you wherever you go. As will I.

Ham tears up and holds Brynn's gaze. Brynn puts her hand on Ham's shoulder.

BRYNN

Ham... If there is something you're not telling us, we could mess this up. You can trust me. You know that I always have your back.

HAM

There is something. The reason the princess came to us.

BRYNN

Have you worked with her before?

HAM

No... We... the Princess and I –

Before Ham can finish, Catarina enters wearing the same cloak from before. The room goes silent. Ham and Brynn stand up.

HAM

Princess! What can we do for-

CATARINA

The deal is off.

The room is dead silent for a beat, then all at once the members start yelling and complaining.

I no longer desire death upon the Prince. You will return to me the gold and no attempts shall be made on his life.

HAM

Are you seriously-

CATARINA

Completely. I regret coming to all of you before. I was blind to what was best for the kingdoms.

The yelling and complaining is louder, drowning out Catarina's words.

HAM

Princess, if I could speak to you alone.

CATARINA

That will be unnecessary. My decision is final. But that's not all I'm here for. I am here to give you a chance to leave.

The room quiets down a little.

You have until the end of the day tomorrow to leave Highreach. I will not have a bunch of vermin thieves plague my kingdom in this new era of peace. When I return, if you are all still here, I will have you all taken and executed by order of the King.

The members erupt into angry yelling. Ham goes to the princess.

HAM

Catarina, please. What happened? What about –

CATARINA

I'm sorry, Ham. But this is the way it must be. You were right. A peasant and a princess could never be together.

Ham backs away, shocked. He slumps into a chair.

Now, give me the gold and take this chance to escape. I will not show mercy again. The Shadowers no longer have my protection.

Brynn grabs the bag of gold from under a cabinet and hands it to Catarina. The members gather around Catarina in anger.

BRYNN

Here is your precious gold, whore. Now get out.

Catarina snatches the gold from Brynn. They glare at each other.

CATARINA

Now leave, all of you, and be grateful for the mercy of your future queen.

Catarina exits. The members are pissed. Brynn and Boon go to Ham who is still sitting in shock.

BRYNN

I told you to never get involved with politics. Now we're fucked.

BOON

No. This is my fault. I'm sorry Ham... I shouldn't have tried so hard to convince you.

Ham still sits there, silent.

BRYNN

Ham. I'm sorry, but we've gotta go. The Shadowers can still survive, but we can't stay here.

BOON

I doubt we will be able to go to Cyllonia either. We need to take a ship and head north.

Ham looks at Boon, then at Brynn.

HAM

I am so sorry... this is... this is all my fault. I let myself get... fuck... I am so sorry.

Brynn kneels down in front of Ham

BRYNN

Everything will be okay, Ham. I told you, I will always have your back. Look at it this way, now we don't have to kill anyone.

Suddenly, a hooded man who had been sitting in the back the whole time stands up and yells.

ADAM

Are you sure about that?

The room falls silent as everyone looks at the hooded man. He takes his hood off. No one recognizes him.

BRYNN

Who are you?

ADAM

Unimportant. But you can call me... Roland. You could say that I'm an investor of sorts.

BOON

How did you find this place?

ADAM

Well, I came to Highreach with the King's guard and I explored the city. I happened to find my way here. I must say, this is quite the sticky situation you've found yourself in.

BRYNN

What do you want?

ADAM

Do you really think that the princess is going to let you go? That she is going to let a bunch of rats like yourself leave and infest some other city? No. I believe the princess plans to kill you all anyway.

HAM

She wouldn't. She said she would give us a chance to leave.

ADAM

She also said she was going to give you protection. Look where that ended up. But I can help you.

BOON

And how exactly can you do that?

ADAM

Let's just say I have influence over the Cyllonian guards. They pay me and I deliver my services to them.

BRYNN

Your services?

ADAM

Whores. A man has his needs, wouldn't you say? Why not turn that into a profit?

HAM

So... you run a brothel? How is that going to help us escape?

ADAM

The guards are protecting the eastern gate that leads towards Cyllonia since the royal family is here. I can arrange a... get together for them so that the gate is clear for your escape.

HAM

Why would you want to help us escape. What's the catch?

ADAM

Take on a contract with me.

HAM

Alright... I'm listening. What do you want?

ADAM

I want you to kill the Princess of Highreach

The members erupt into loud chatter again.

BOON

DEAL!

HAM

What the fuck is happening...

BRYNN

You've got to be shitting me.

ADAM

Now, hear me out. My business profits best during times of war. As does yours I would assume. It is better for the both of us that the kingdoms stay at war.

BOON

He's got a point there.

BRYNN

Boon, what about what you said earlier? We have been through this! We got out of killing one person just to agree on killing another?!

BOON

Yeah, but there is more on the line this time. It's kill or be killed now. Plus, we can get back at that bitch for betraying us.

Members are all in agreement with the contract. Ham sits silently at the table while inaudible arguments are happening from the members. Suddenly, Ham stands up and whispers.

HAM

We'll do it...

The members fall silent in shock. Brynn is wide-eyed. She goes to Ham.

BRYNN

Ham, are you sure? This could-

HAM

I don't care. Boon is right. It's kill or be killed. I promised I would protect you all. I will not let the Shadowers die. We will kill the whore princess and teach her not to fuck with the Shadowers.

The members cheer. Boon chugs an ale. Adam smiles.

BRYNN

Ham...

Ham grabs Brynn's shoulders.

HAM

Brynn. You brought me back and made me remember what all this means to me. You said you would always have my back, now let me have yours. I must do this. The Shadowers are the only family I got. You helped me see that again.

Brynn blushes, looking at her feet.

BRYNN

Lead the way.

HAM

(To Adam) Now, tell us your plan.

ADAM

Well, I don't want her killed randomly. I need her killed at a specific time and place.

HAM

When?

ADAM

During the royal wedding.

BOON

DEAL!

HAM

What purpose would that serve?

ADAM

I have my reasons, but that's how it must be done.

HAM

That's impossible.

ADAM

You are the Shadowers, are you not? Infiltration is what you do best. I can assure you, I will be there to cause chaos to cover your escape.

HAM

Fine. It shall be done. But what about until then? We have nowhere to hide. We're sitting ducks.

ADAM

I've got that covered as well. I own a few warehouses that I will lend you. But you won't be able to stay there without some kind of alias. You could set up a shop there and play yourselves off as merchants.

HAM

Okay... but we've got nothing to sell.

BOON

I have an idea!

Everyone stops and looks at Boon.

I hope you all like fish.

Blackout

Intermission

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

BOON

FRESHLY CAUGHT FISH FOR SALE AT PRICES THAT WILL MELT YOUR BREECHES!
COD, SALMON, POLLOCK! YOU NAME IT, I'VE GOT IT!

Enter Benny, an upper class merchant wheeling a cart with several baskets of potatoes.

BOON

Woah, woah, woah there good sir! I see you've got a fine cart of potatoes there. What say we make a trade?

BENNY

No.

BOON

Oh, come on! Take a look at my fish! I bet you've never seen such quality anywhere else in this market!

BENNY

They stink.

BOON

Oh, but that is just the fish smell that proves that they are fresh! Here, take a look!

BENNY

(Gagging) By God, that is awful.

BOON

Oh, come now don't be foolish! How about this, I'll make you a deal. I'll give you HALF of my ENTIRE stock for your whole cart of potatoes.

BENNY

Are you mad?

BOON

Of course not! I'd say that's a pretty good deal!

BENNY

No.

BOON

Okay okay okay. How about this, I'll give you two baskets of fish for four baskets of your 'tatos.

BENNY

We're done here.

Benny starts to push his cart away. Boon jumps in front of the cart, blocking it.

BOON

Now, what's the hurry?

BENNY

Get out of the way! I've got to deliver this cart to the palace kitchen for the Princess' wedding.

BOON

Ah, of course! I just *love* weddings. Ooo and cake! I bet the kitchen would absolutely die to have some these fish!

BENNY

Yeah. They'd die alright.

Benny tries to move past Boon again, but Boon continues to block him.

BOON

Ah ah ah! Not so fast sir, we're still in the middle of a trade! I Assure you only the best quality for the best prices. Now, how about this. I could give you say –

BENNY

I don't want your god damn rotten fish you cunt. Now bugger off!

BOON

Oh, now that's not very polite. Why can't we both be gentlemen here?

BENNY

This has got to be a joke. Those fish smell as though they've been rotting out in the sun for days.

Benny picks up a fish. The fish has obviously seen some better days.

Just look at it! It's rotten! Now get out of the way before I call the guards!

BOON

Okay... I confess. They have been set up here for a while, but that does not mean they have lost their freshness and their nutritional value! I'm offering you protein for carbs here! I'm basically losing money on this trade! Hear me out, I'm really pushing it on this one but since you're such a fine bargainer I'll strike you a deal. ONE fish.... For ONE potato.

BENNY

Benny hesitates, obviously frustrated.

Fine. If it will get you to shut up and move away from my cart.

BOON

AHA! I *knew* you would come to your senses! Alrighty, let me grab that fish for you.

Boon picks out a fish from one of the baskets and hands it to Benny. This fish is worse than the previous one.

BENNY

For fucks sake! You couldn't at least give me one that isn't rotting off its bones?

BOON

Carefully examining Benny's potato stock and joyfully picking one out.

Well, you didn't specify which fish you wanted so you got the one that I picked!

BENNY

Throwing the fish at Boon

Give me a different fish or give me back my potato.

BOON

Picks up the fish, greatly offended by the treatment of his delicacies. Boon gently rubs off the dirt from the fish and places it back in the fish basket.

Fine then. You can pick a fish from a batch that I caught just yesterday. I stored them inside so I could sell these fish first. This way then.

Boon leads Benny away from the market stall and into a warehouse where two baskets of fish are hidden.

Here. Take your pick. And be careful not to damage the little buggers.

Scoffing, Benny rummages through the basket, picking through the fish.

BENNY

You're right. These fish are actually... quite nice.

Benny turns around with a fish in hand. Boon stands with his chosen potato.

BENNY

Tell you what, I'm willing to make you a new deal. I'm sure the palace would be delighted to have these. How about I give you one basket of potatoes for these two baskets of fish?

BOON

Silence. Boon's face is suddenly serious as tosses and catches the potato in one hand.

Hmm. I've got a counteroffer.

Boon hurls the potato at Benny's face.

BENNY

What the-!

BOON

NOW!

Out of the shadows, Ham and Brynn emerge and tackle Benny. They restrain and gag him.

HAM

Fine work, Boon.

BOON

Thank you, thank you.

Boon bows. Brynn and Ham hoist the two fresh fish baskets onto the cart with the potatoes. They also load one of the baskets full of the rotten fish.

HAM

Alright, I'll take it from here. I've got a wedding to crash.

Blackout

SCENE 2

Scene is now at the front gates of the palace, where two guards stand on patrol. There are other lowlife peasants crowded around wanting to get in, but the guards keep them back. Ham enters, now wearing Benny's clothes. He wheels the cart up to the gate where the guards stop him. The guards are very robotic.

GUARD

Halt! Authorized entry only.

HAM

I am authorized! I bring supplies to the kitchen for tonight's feast.

GUARD

Please wait.

The guard examines Ham's cart of potatoes and fish.

GUARD

You're late.

HAM

My apologies, sir. I ran into some trouble at the market.

GUARD

Supplies verified. Identity unconfirmed. Recalculating. Bypassing security protocols.

Ham looks at the guard confused.

Access granted. You may enter.

The guards open the gate and allows Ham to enter. As Ham exits into the palace, Guard 2 leans over to the other guard.

GUARD 2

You sure it was okay to override the security system like that?

GUARD

I did no such thing. I received authorization directly from Prince Adam.

Blackout

SCENE 3

Lights up, the scene is now the in palace kitchen. Servant cooks are scrambling around the kitchen while the head chef is barking at them. A servant hands the chef a plate of quail. The chef puts his finger in the meat.

CHEF

(Heavy British accent)

For fucks sake. You've got to be joking.

Chef gestures to the servant who just handed him the food.

Come here you. Yeah, you! Come here. ALL of you come here! NOW! QUICKLYYYYY!

The servants scramble to the chef.

Touch that. Just touch it. Touch it right there. Yeah. It's FUCKING RAW! STONE COLD! Fucking useless.

The chef slaps one of the servants with the Quail.

SERVANTS

Sorry, chef.

CHEF

I don't care if you're *sorry*. For the last time, get it together! GO!

The servants scramble back to the kitchen. Ham enters with the cart.

CHEF

There you are! Took your sweet time, didn't you?

HAM

Sorry sir, I –

CHEF

Not sir, it's chef!

HAM

Sorry... chef.

CHEF

I don't want excuses. Just unload the potatoes over there. You three. Come here! Start peeling.

Three of the servants come over and help Ham and Chef unload the baskets. Then they start peeling the potatoes frantically. Chef opens the basket of rotten fish.

CHEF

What the hell is this?

HAM

That's fish, chef.

CHEF

Oh really? Oh... well... thanks for clarifying that because I thought they were FUCKING CHICKENS! OF COURSE THEY'RE FISH!

HAM

I got them off a merchant chef, great price. I figured you could use all the food you could get.

CHEF

Get out of my kitchen! And take this *rot* with you!

HAM

Of course, chef.

(To himself)

This place is fucking weird.

Ham picks up the basket with the rotten fish and heads towards the exit. When the Chef no longer notices him, he exits the other side of the stage into the great hall.

Blackout

SCENE 4

Lights up on the great hall where Adam and Catarina are in the middle of their wedding ceremony. The hall is packed full of gleeful guests wearing exquisite garments. Guest from Cyllonia are dressed in modern day formal attire. All is silent save the occasional "aww" in the crowd. Ham enters from the kitchen with his basket of fish and remains on the outside, as to not draw attention.

When he sees that Prince Adam is the man he had made the contract with, he stops in his tracks, dumfounded. Prince Adam see's Ham from the altar, nodding to him.

HAM

No fucking way...

ADAM

And I vow to honor you and respect you. I swear on my crown that I will love you unconditionally.

CATARINA

I'm so happy that today I not only become yours, but I become Cyllonia's. I want to make promises to you that I will always keep. I vow to never stop holding your hand. To give you all the love that I possess. I swear to respect your authority and judgement as King and to never betray your trust. I promise to give you an heir that will one day make you a proud father. I vow to create an unbreakable union between us and our two kingdoms. You have shown me the light and I will never lose sight of you. I love you.

Ham watches in disgust. He is no longer saddened by his loss of Catarina. He now possesses a deep hatred of her.

ARCHBISHOP

It is in the presence of God as our witness that we now hear the sacred vows of ceremony. Catarina, do you take Adam to be your husband? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and protect him? Forsaking all others, do you vow to be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

CATARINA

I do.

ARCHBISHOP

And Adam, will you take Catarina to be your wife? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and –

ADAM

I do.

ARCHBISHOP

Ah. Yes. Very well. Prince Adam, you may now kiss your bride.

(The Prince and Princess kiss. Ham scoffs)

Lords and Ladies, it is my honor to present to you, Prince Adam and Princess Catarina of Cyllonia!

The audience erupts into cheers and applause. Cue joyful ballroom music as various couples take to centerstage for dancing. The prince and princess join the dancing. Ham stands silently on the edge, disgusted by the performance. Prince Adam breaks away from Catarina. He dances with various women, slowly making his way to Ham.

ADAM

Hammy boy, there you are. I was beginning to think you wouldn't show up.

HAM

You played us the whole time.

ADAM

Ah yes, sorry about that. A necessary evil. Though, owning a brothel does sound like a good idea now.

HAM

Why do all of you keep lying?

ADAM

Would you really have agreed to our contract if you knew who I was?

Ham stays silent.

Thought so. So, here's what you need to do.

Adam and Ham whisper in unheard conversation as the music picks up in volume. Adam returns to the dance floor and rejoins Catarina. Suddenly, a woman grabs Ham by the arm and pulls him out onto the floor. Ham dances clumsily but holds his own. The dancing should last a few beats until the Prince and Princess return to the stage and sit on their thrones next to their parents. Soon after, various nobles make their way up to the altar, presenting wedding gifts. Ham returns to his basket and makes his way towards them.

ADAM

AHA! What a glorious day this is. My love, you have made me the happiest man in the Kingdom. Dare I say, in the whole world!

CATARINA

It is my greatest honor to see you so, Adam.

Ham is next in line to give gifts. He pulls up his hood and approaches the Prince and Princess.

HAM

(altering his voice)

My Lord, my Lady. I bring you a gift from the people outside who were unable to attend the ceremony. We pray it serves you well.

Ham sets the basket down in front of the Prince.

CATARINA

You are too kind. We will surely... What is that smell?

The Princess opens the basket revealing the rotten fish.

Good heavens, what is this?

HAM

Fish, Princess!

CATARINA

Well I can see that. I – God, that stinks! Get that out of my sight before I have the guards take you.

HAM

Milady, the better fish are at the bottom.

Ham reaches into the basket and pulls out a loaded crossbow and aims it at the Princess. Ham drops his hood and resumes his normal voice.

Hello, Catie. Miss me?

CATARINA

Ham...

Before anyone can react, Ham fires the arrow directly into Catarina's forehead. The crowd erupts into shock, confusion, and fear. King Jillian and Queen Justinia scream in horror.

JILLIAN

NO! CATARINA!

Justinia screams as Jillian runs to Catarina's body. Amidst the chaos, Ham sprints out of the great hall. The guards give chase but quickly get trampled and lost in the crowd. King Reynard and Queen Lucy approach.

NO! *(To Reynard)* YOU! YOU DID THIS! THIS IS TREASON! GUARDS! GUARDS! TO ARMS!

None of the guards react. Jillian realizes there are no Highreach guards, only Cyllonian guards.

No...NO! This was a setup... you-

REYNARD

Guards. Take the false King and Queen to the cells.

JILLIAN

NO! NO! YOU WILL NOT TAKE ME!

Jillian draws his sword and tries to fend off the Cyllonian guards until he is outnumbered and overrun. The guards restrain him on his knees. Reynard walks up to Adam and pats him on the shoulder.

REYNARD

Well done my boy. *(To Jillian)* Really Jillian? After all these years and being so close to crushing you, you really think I would simply settle for peace? You are more of a fool than I thought. Now, Highreach is mine and I didn't have to waste a single man to get it.

(Reynard kneels down and gets inches away from Jillian)

You see that dream of yours, is now my reality.

Jillian spits on Reynard

JILLIAN

FUCK YOU!

REYNARD

Take them.

The guards drag the King and Queen of Highreach offstage.

Blackout

SCENE 5

Lights up on the fish warehouse where all the members are celebrating and drinking ale. Boon is sloshed again as he makes his way around various groups.

BOON

Ahhhhh! Brynnnnnn!

BRYNN

Hi, Boon.

BOON

‘as Ham come back yet? (*Hiccup*) ‘e shou be ‘ere by now.

BRYNN

No. He said he wanted to be alone for a bit. But he will be back later, don’t worry.

BOON

Mahrry me Brynn. Mokay?

BRYNN

No, Boon. Sorry.

BOON

Awhhh... well... okay. Soot yaself.

Boon stumbles off to another group who cheer and hug him. After a while Adam enters. The room quiets down.

ADAM

Ah! A celebration! Good! You should be celebrating! That was truly a job well done.

BRYNN

We’ve done what you’ve asked. So, pay us now and leave.

ADAM

Yes, of course. Payment. You see, well, there has been a change of plans. GUARDS!

Suddenly, an overwhelming amount of guards bust in with weapons drawn

Take these rats to the dungeon.

BRYNN

WHAT?! NO!!

ADAM

Oh, come on! Can you all really be so daft? You think it would be that easy? That I would just let you get away and do as you please? Naahhh. Guards, seize them!

The members resist but are outnumbered and overpowered by the guards.

BRYNN

FUCK YOU! FUCK! YOU! YOU'RE ALL JUST FUCKING LIARS! I KNEW WE NEVER SHOULD'VE TRUSTED YOU!

BOON

...Pop goes the 'easal.

Everyone is dragged offstage but Brynn.

ADAM

Grr you're a feisty one. Say, where is Hammy boy?

BRYNN

UP YOUR ASS YOU SHIT!

ADAM

Ooo how menacing. Well, no matter. His job is done. I'll be satisfied knowing he's suffering a fate worse than death. A life full of misery and regret, knowing that I'm the man that killed both of his little whores. Take her. They will all be executed tomorrow with the false King and Queen.

Adam and the guards exit, dragging Brynn behind them. Long beat on the stage where nothing happens. Ham enters.

HAM

Hello? Guys? Brynn? Boon?

Ham walks around examining the mess. He sees the wreckage caused from the fight and finds Brynn's knife on the ground.

Of course he did. Of COURSE HE DID!

Ham grabs a nearby mug and throws it against the wall, shattering it. He then runs offstage.

Blackout.

SCENE 6

Lights up on the jail room. One cell contains the Shadows and the other holds Jillian and Justinia. The stage is dark, but a spotlight is lit on the Shadows cell where Brynn is trying to pick the lock with a woodchip. The woodchip breaks.

BRYNN

Ugh!

BOON

Brynn, calm down.

BRYNN

Calm down? *Calm down*? How can I be calm after this?!

BOON

Ham will come for us. Trust me.

BRYNN

You so sure about that? He lied to us, Boon. About the Princess. You heard what Adam said!

BOON

Yeah, I know. But that doesn't mean he will abandon us.

BRYNN

I should've seen it. The way he looked at her, the way he tensed up when she was around...

BOON

Brynn, he wasn't obligated to tell us about her. His love life is his own business.

BRYNN

But we tell each other *everything*! It would've been nice to know before...

BOON

Before he agreed to kill Prince Adam? Yeah, I know. He was blinded by love.

BRYNN

Yeah, because you can tell she totally loved him. She betrayed him in an instant for that prince of bullshit.

BOON

Ham was in the wrong, Brynn. That much is clear. But in the end, he tried to do what was best for the guild. For us. He was about to tell you, wasn't he? About Catarina? Before Adam showed up.

BRYNN

Yeah...

BOON

You love him, don't you?

Brynn is silent.

Jealous much?

Brynn hits Boon on the side of the head.

BRYNN

I'm not jealous! I just... I just wish he was honest with us.

BOON

You should have been honest with him.

Brynn goes silent. The spotlight on their cell fades out, switching over to Jillian and Justinia's cell. Justinia is crying.

JILLIAN

I'm so sorry my love... this is all my fault. I should've have known it was a trap.

JUSTINIA

Don't blame yourself Jillian... neither of us saw this coming. We both wanted the fighting to stop. We wanted.... We wanted the best for our family. For Catarina.

Justinia falls onto Jillian's lap, weeping. He strokes her hair and he too begins to cry. The spotlight for both cells lights back up. On the floor is a sewer grate, that quietly pops open. Ham peeks his head through. Boon sees him and taps Brynn, pointing at him. Ham puts his finger in front of his lips then gestures towards the guard. Boon nods in understanding, and Ham retreats into the grate.

BOON

Hey guard. Guard!

The guard does not respond.

Hey fatass! I'm talking to you.

The snaps toward Boon.

Yeah, you! You look familiar. I think I know you, or... someone related to you. Hmm. AH! YES! Your mother! I knew your mother! She was one of the whores I humped at the tavern the other night. Yes, a *rowdy* one she was.

The guard scowls.

I must say, she was a screamer too. Not the prettiest of ladies, but she got the job done, nonetheless.

The guard storms towards Boon's cage.

GUARD

My mother is NOT a whore!

BOON

Oh. I'm so sorry. You didn't know? She didn't tell you? Hmm. I mean I'd be ashamed too if I were-

The guard slams the cage.

GUARD

Shut up before I rip out your tongue!

BOON

Ooo tongue play! Your mother was into that too! You see she-

The guard draws his sword and goes to stab Boon through the cell door. Ham emerges from the sewer grate and stabs the guard from behind.

BOON

About time!

HAM

Come on, lets get you out of here.

Ham takes the keys off the Guard and unlocks the cell door. The members all exit into the sewer grate until it is only Boon and Brynn left. Ham stops them.

HAM

I'm sorry guys... for everything. I lied to you. The princess and I were-

BRYNN

We know.

HAM

You know?

BOON

Yeaaaaah... Adam kind of mentioned it before he sacked us.

HAM

He knew too? Well... I'm sorry. I should have told you. I wasn't there for you... I let my judgment get clouded and I was selfish and-

BRYNN

Yeah. Ham. You were. You were being a dumb little shit. But it's okay. You're here now. You tried to be honest with us in the end. We understand. Just don't keep things from us again.

HAM

I won't. I promise. You two mean everything to me. I'll never risk hurting you again.

BOON

This is all very touching, but we need to get out of here.

HAM

No. There's something I need to do first.

BRYNN

What? What could you possibly need to-

HAM

I'm going to fulfill our first contract. I'm going to kill Adam.

BRYNN

Ham! Why? For revenge? There's no point! This is our chance to escape.

HAM

I need to prove that no one fucks with the Shadowers. *No one*. No one breaks contracts with us without paying the price.

BOON

Ooo I'm going to make that into a song.

BRYNN

Fine, but I'm coming with you.

HAM

No. I need to do this alone. I got us into this mess, let me end it. I'm not risking your life again.

BRYNN

But-

HAM

Please, Brynn. I need to do this.

Long beat. Brynn suddenly kisses Ham.

BOON

(Whistling) Ooooookay, that's my cue. Good luck buddy.

Boon exits into the sewer grate.

HAM

What was that for?

BRYNN

Promise me you will come back to us.

HAM

... I promise.

Brynn exits into the sewer grate. Ham looks down after them, then walks towards the staircase that leads into the castle. He stops at the cell with the King and the Queen.

HAM

I can free you, if you want.

JILLIAN

You... you were the assassin.

HAM

Yeah... sorry about that.

JILLIAN

I should be angry. I should want to kill you.

HAM

You... don't?

JILLIAN

No. I no longer have the strength. I just want to see God now. I want to see my Catarina. I want my family again. I no longer have a reason to live in this world.

HAM

There is always a reason to live. If not for you, then for her.

Ham gestures towards Justinia.

I am going to kill Prince Adam. If you change your mind, I'll leave this here.

Ham tosses Jillian the key to his cell, then exits towards the staircase.

Blackout

SCENE 7

Lights up in Adams room. Adam is asleep on his bed. Ham is sitting in front of the fireplace, stoking the fire. The flames are small. Adam suddenly wakes up and rolls over, seeing Ham. He jumps up in shock.

ADAM

Ham! What are... How did... Guards!

(Ham remains silent and continues stroking the fire.)

GUARDS! GUARDS! INTRUDER!

HAM

I'm sorry, Adam. That won't work. Your guards are dead and there's no one around to hear you.

ADAM

You... what do you want?

HAM

Tell me Adam, are you all like this? Royalty, nobles, and everyone else your fancy castles? Lying, deceiving, killing. Betrayal. Is it all just a game to you?

ADAM

It's politics. You wouldn't understand.

HAM

Ah.... Because I'm a peasant, right? Of course. You are correct though. The ways of politics are foreign to me. But I am beginning to understand one thing. You see, the Shadows were built upon rules against killing, but now that I see what it does. The kind of fear and power it creates. I was misguided from the beginning. So, I have you to thank for opening my eyes.

ADAM

What are you going on about?

HAM

The Shadowers. We are no longer a thieves guild, Adam. No. We are assassins now. Thanks to you. There is so much more power in that. So much more satisfaction.

Ham pulls out the metal poker from the fire, blazing red on the tip from the heat. Adam collapses onto his bed.

ADAM

Stop-

HAM

I came up here to kill you, *Prince*.

Ham walks towards Adam with the poker.

ADAM

You can't. No... please... I beg you! I'll give you anything you want!

HAM

Oh, Adam... You shouldn't beg. It doesn't suit you.

Adam weeps like a child.

ADAM

I am sorry Ham, please! I won't do anything to you or the Shadowers ever again. I swear-

HAM

I know you won't. No one will.

ADAM

I'll do anything! *Please!*

Ham lowers the poker. Adam relaxes slightly.

HAM

Hmm. I've decided... I'm not going to kill you.

ADAM

You... you're not...?

HAM

Naahh. Because honestly, I should be *thanking* you. You opened my eyes to my true path. So instead, I'll settle for taking yours.

Ham thrusts the poker into Adams eyes, searing them out. Adam screams in bloodcurdling agony. Ham throws the poker clattering onto the ground.

Suffer in a world of darkness like you deserve.

Ham goes to exit, then stops at the door. Adam is still screaming and grabbing his face. Ham turns around.

Make sure you tell your shit father and whore of a mother about me. Make sure you tell everyone. *No one. Fucks. With. The Shadows.*

Ham exits.

Blackout

End