

No Shadow Can Touch

by

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Cast of Characters

<u>ALLY</u> :	35
<u>RICK</u> :	39

Place
Apartment

Time
Any

2.

Setting: The play takes place inside the kitchen of a one bedroom apartment in New York City's Hell's Kitchen. The apartment is small and crowded.

At Rise: The play opens up on Ally and Rick sitting at their kitchen table talking.

RICK: Maybe teaching...

ALLY: You said you hate teaching.

RICK: If it pays the bills.

ALLY: You can't teach.

RICK: I could teach, but I don't want to teach.

ALLY: I mean, it is an honest living...with all your credentials, there's nothing wrong with it.

RICK: I have to take care of us, Ally.

ALLY: Couldn't your manager Martin find you--

RICK: Forget Martin...he's no help to me anymore. Let's face it, I could sing, but I can never dance again. My ankle will never be the same, no matter how hard I train, the pain doesn't improve and I'm not going to end up doped up on pills every night if I were to land a show. I won't last...my accident was the worst thing that ever could have happened to me, Ally. It was like someone put a curse straight through my heart. Things were working out, everything was going the best it had ever gone, I felt unstoppable. Now we have Gregory and what am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to put food on the table for my family? Martin's turned his back on me anyway, he knows I can't dance anymore, Ally! He wants me to become some lounge singer for his friend's new place, I mean come on, is that what I'm being reduced to, after being on Broadway all those years? It's like someone pulled the plug before I ever had a chance to peak and I needed to peak, I wanted to peak, I needed the security for you and Gregory and now I'm left with a few lousy options, if any...why do you just stare at me like that?

ALLY: I'm letting you talk.

RICK: Say something.

ALLY: We're going through a hard time but it won't be forever.

RICK: ...I remember as a kid when my father lost his job, my family was never the same after that.

ALLY: Not everything is dollars and cents.

RICK: It has to be. We have a family now.

ALLY: I can get a job too, you know. My mother can come and help watch Gregory. I can take up some work again somewhere, something part time.

RICK: No freaking way.

ALLY: It will help us.

RICK: I said no! I promised you, I promised you after you were diagnosed that I wasn't gonna let you kill yourself in one of those soul-sucking jobs again! And I'm not going back on my word, Ally. You can do other things in your life but I don't want you wasting your hours in one of them jobs, being treated like dirt, no way, we're not going back there!

ALLY: But plans change.

RICK: I don't want them to change!

(pause.)

Spent my whole life Ally, since I was a little boy, studying, training, busting my ass to be the best I could be...but I became careless, I got too caught up in the moment, I didn't watch where I was going and *crack*, all I heard was that deafening crunch when my foot landed. That sound. That damn sound. I knew it, too. I didn't even care about the pain. I wouldn't even look down at my foot. Everyone came running over to me...the looks on their faces, a combination of fear and joy, because it hadn't happened to them, yet it could have, it could have...by night fall I was already replaced...remember when I got the call? They couldn't even give me a night...and I worked so hard for them...not even a single night...tossed aside like waste. Weeks before a follow up call to see how I was doing...ha...imagine that? Like anyone gave a shit anyway. Why bother calling? Only made things worse for me...

ALLY: We still have savings.

RICK: That's the only thing keeping me calm, but we can't piss through that, either. It will disappear before we know it if we don't fix this fast.

ALLY: What then?

RICK: There isn't anything I won't do for you and our son.

ALLY: Teach?

RICK: I'm planning on seeing Phil.

ALLY: Who Phil?

RICK: My cousin Phil.

ALLY: Are you out of your mind?

RICK: He owes me.

ALLY: And? Why would you want to see him?

RICK: Because he's family and he'll help me out.

ALLY: He's a criminal! Help you out HOW?!

RICK: I knew I shouldn't of said anything. You always overreact.

ALLY: You are not calling him.

RICK: Don't tell me what to do.

ALLY: I said NO!

RICK: Don't tell me what to do Ally.

ALLY: I am telling you what to do because our son won't be any good without a father!

RICK: ...Alright...calm down...just, stop getting so upset Ally, alright? Maybe, maybe I'm not thinking straight, I'm upset, you're upset and we're both stressed out over everything.

ALLY: Don't call him.

RICK: ...Alright, I won't call him, okay?

ALLY: Did you already call him Ricky?

RICK: No, no I didn't call him.

ALLY: Promise me?

RICK: I promise you.

ALLY: On our son.

RICK: Ally, I didn't freaking call him.

ALLY: Good. Don't. I hate Phil.

RICK: Why do you hate my cousin?

ALLY: You know why. I don't want you having anything to do with him for the rest of your life.

RICK: I wasn't thinking right.

ALLY: You promise?

RICK: Promise what?

ALLY: Promise me you won't ever have anything to do with him for as long as you live.

RICK: I promise.

ALLY: This isn't the end of the world. We've been through tough times before, haven't we? We'll figure something out.

RICK: It's not that...I feel like my life's been flushed down the toilet.

ALLY: Don't talk that way.

RICK: But it's true, isn't it?

ALLY: No, it's not.

RICK: It is! I gave my life to dancing and singing and now I'm a cripple! I can barely walk right without agony. Soon I'll need a cane, then a wheelchair and...my worst nightmare.

ALLY: You had your time.

RICK: What the hell does that mean?

ALLY: You were already feeling a half-step behind...weren't you?

RICK: I could still keep up just fine.

ALLY: Rick...you told me not long before your accident that you were running out of gas, didn't you?

RICK: But I could still get the job done.

ALLY: Yes, but you...honey, please don't get mad at me, you know I love you so much, but the truth is that you were at the beginning stages of confronting your mortality.

RICK: You put that so nicely, how can I get mad at you?

ALLY: I know this is everything to you.

RICK: Can I tell you something?

ALLY: Mm-hmm.

RICK: ...This is hard for me...I wasn't sure at first but I've had loads of time to play things over in my mind repeatedly...

ALLY: Yeah...

RICK: On the day of the accident, I sort of knew it was coming. I'm not saying it was premeditated, no...but I felt so, I don't know Ally, I felt tired, more tired than I ever felt in all my years and it wasn't the kind of tired where I knew I'd bounce back after a good nights rest, this was ME. I was tired all over, inside and out...

RICK (CONT'D): only thing left was my mind and I refused to give in to it, which to be honest, was where I went wrong. I pushed myself too hard, I was angry at myself for feeling the way I felt, and the worst thing that could have happened, happened. It was all my fault. I forced myself to reach my demise faster than I should have and I'm angry that I didn't back off myself and calculate. Calculate how much longer I could have stayed in the game, to buy myself enough time to make a smooth transfer to something that would hold my integrity intact and I failed, I failed you and my son and it's driving me crazy. Look where I put us.

ALLY: You did what you did cause you felt it was best and I don't blame you one bit.

RICK: But I should have known better. I'm stupid. I ruined my whole life.

ALLY: No, you didn't.

RICK: Everything I've always been, everything leading up to that moment and I chose wrong. There is no doubt in my mind that I chose wrong. So what does that make me? After everything, my entire life, what does that make me to become the cause of my own drama? I failed when it counted most.

ALLY: Stop saying that! I don't want you saying that anymore. You are not a failure. You are a good man, Rick.

RICK: A good man? Look where that's gotten me.

ALLY: Nothing will cripple you more than your own mind. Look what it's already doing to you. If you don't get a handle on it now, what will you become later in your life. Bitter? Angry at the world? When I was sick, it was easy for me to blame the world, to blame others for my misfortune but I knew it would kill me if I did. I chose a different way, I chose to be there instead, for you and Gregory, I know you needed me, more than I needed you. Come on now, you're better than this, Rick. You can't allow your pride to eat away at you when it needs to know that what you did was the right thing in the end...yes, things are bad, you won't dance again, but Rick you weren't going to be able to dance forever, you've told me so many times...yes, it came sooner than later and yes it was because you pushed yourself too far, but so what? You can't look back on your life and look down on yourself, you've lived a good life, you have so much to be proud of and there's so much yet ahead of you if you give yourself the chance...we'll do this together, you aren't alone anymore...this is our life, you, me and Gregory. We need you Rick. We need you to rise above this obstacle and find a new balance in your life. You can. You will. Won't you? Won't you do it? Won't you prove to yourself that you are even more powerful than you've already shown? Take pride in knowing that what you did came from love, not regret...it came from love.

RICK kisses ALLY.

END OF PLAY