

ARTHUR MILLER

# A View from the Bridge

*with commentary and notes by*  
STEPHEN MARINO

*Series Editor:* Enoch Brater

METHUEN DRAMA

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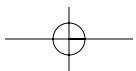
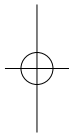
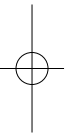
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## Arthur Miller: 1915–2005

- 1915 17 October: Arthur Asher Miller born in New York City, the second of Isidore (Izzy) and Augusta (Gussie) Barnett Miller's three children. His brother Kermit born in 1912, sister Joan 1922.
- 1920– Attends PS 24 in Harlem, then an upper-middle-  
28 class Jewish neighbourhood, where his mother went to the same school. The family lives in an apartment overlooking Central Park on the top floor of a six-storey building at 45 West 110<sup>th</sup> Street, between Lenox and Fifth Avenues. Takes piano lessons, goes to Hebrew school and ice-skates in the park. His Barnett grandparents are nearby on West 118<sup>th</sup> Street. In summers the extended family rents a bungalow in Far Rockaway. Sees his first play in 1923, a melodrama at the Schubert Theatre.
- 1928 His father's successful manufacturing business in the Garment District, the Miltex Coat and Suit Company, with as many as 800 workers, begins to see hard times faced with the looming Depression. The family moves from Manhattan to rural Brooklyn, where they live at 1350 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, near Avenue M, in the same neighbourhood as his mother's two sisters, Annie Newman and Esther Balsam. Miller plants a pear tree in the backyard ('All I knew was cousins'). Celebrates his bar-mitzvah at the Avenue M Temple.
- 1930 Transfers from James Madison High School where he is reassigned to the newly built Abraham Lincoln High School on Ocean Parkway. Plays in the football team and injures his leg in a serious accident that will later excuse him from active military service. Academic record unimpressive, and he fails geometry twice.
- 1931 Early-morning delivery boy for a local bakery before going off to school; forced to stop when his bicycle is stolen. Works for his father during the summer vacation.
- 1933 Graduates from Abraham Lincoln High School and registers for night school at City College. He leaves after two weeks ('I just couldn't stay awake').
- 1933– Earns \$15 a week as a clerk for Chadwick-

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- 34 Delamater, an automobile-parts warehouse in a run-down section of Manhattan that will later become the site for the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. He is the only Jewish employee, and experiences virulent anti-Semitism for the first time.
- 1934 Writes to the Dean of the University of Michigan to appeal against his second rejection and says he has become a 'much more serious fellow' ('I still can't believe they let me in'). Travels by bus to Ann Arbor for the autumn semester, with plans to study journalism because 'Michigan was one of the few places that took writing seriously'. Lives in a rooming house on South Division Street and joins the *Michigan Daily* as reporter and night editor; takes a non-speaking part in a student production of Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII*. Moves to an attic room at 411 North State Street and works part-time in an off-campus laboratory feeding past-prime vegetables to thousands of mice.
- 1936 Writes his first play, *No Villain*, in six days during semester break and receives a Hopwood Award in Drama for \$250 using the pseudonym 'Beyoum'. Changes his major to English.
- 1937 Enrols in Professor Kenneth T. Rowe's playwriting class. Rewrites *No Villain* as *They Too Arise* and receives a major award of \$1,250 from the Theatre Guild's Bureau of New Plays (Thomas Lanier – later Tennessee – Williams was another winner in the same competition). *They Too Arise* is produced by the B'nai Brith Hillel Players in Detroit and at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre in Ann Arbor. Receives a second Hopwood Award for *Honors at Dawn* when Susan Glaspell is one of the judges. Contributes to *The Gargoyle*, the student humour magazine. Drives his college friend Ralph Neaphus east to join the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, but decides not to go with him. Months later Neaphus, twenty-three, was dead.
- 1938 Composes a prison play, *The Great Disobedience*, and revises *They Too Arise* as *The Grass Still Grows*. Graduates from the University of Michigan with a BA in English. Joins the Federal Theater Project in New York to write radio plays and scripts.
- 1939 The Federal Theater Project is shut down by conservative forces in Congress, and Miller goes on relief. Writes *Listen*

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- My Children* and *You're Next* with his friend and fellow Michigan alumnus, Norman Rosten. *William Ireland's Confession* is broadcast on the Columbia Workshop.
- 1940 Marries Mary Grace Slattery, his college sweetheart at the University of Michigan. They move into a small apartment at 62 Montague Street in Brooklyn Heights. Writes *The Golden Years*, a play about Montezuma, Cortez, and the European conquest and corruption of Mexico. *The Pussycat and the Plumber Who Was a Man* airs on CBS Radio. Makes a trip to North Carolina to collect dialect speech for the Folk Division of the Library of Congress.
- 1941 Works as a shipfitter's helper on the night shift at the  
43 Brooklyn Navy Yard repairing battle-scarred war vessels from the North Atlantic fleet. Finishes additional radio plays, including *The Eagle's Nest* and *The Four Freedoms*. Completes *The Half-Bridge*. The one-act *That They May Win* is produced in New York.
- 1944 Daughter Jane is born. Prepares Ferenc Molnar's *The Guardsman* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* for radio adaptation, and continues his own writing for the medium. Tours army camps in preparation for the draft of a screenplay called *The Story of G.I. Joe*, based on news reports written by the popular war correspondent Ernie Pyle (withdraws from the project when his role as author is compromised). Publishes *Situation Normal ...*, a book about this experience that highlights the real challenges returning soldiers encountered on re-entering civilian life. Dedicates the book to his brother, 'Lieutenant Kermit Miller, United States Infantry', a war hero. *The Man Who Had All the Luck* opens on Broadway but closes after six performances, including two previews. The play receives the Theater Guild National Award.
- 1945 Publishes *Focus*, a novel about anti-Semitism and moral blindness set in and around New York. His article 'Should Ezra Pound Be Shot?' appears in *New Masses*.
- 1946 Adapts *Three Men on a Horse* by George Abbott and John C. Holm for radio.
- 1947 *All My Sons* opens in New York and receives the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award; the Donaldson Award and the first Tony Award for best author. His son Robert is born. Moves with his family to a converted carriage house he purchases at 31 Grace Court in Brooklyn Heights. Also buys a new car, a Studebaker, and a

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- farmhouse in Roxbury, Connecticut. Writes the article 'Subsidized Theater' for the *New York Times*.
- 1948 Builds by himself a small studio on his Connecticut property where he writes *Death of a Salesman*. Edward G. Robinson and Burt Lancaster star in the film version of *All My Sons*.
- 1949 *Death of a Salesman*, starring Lee J. Cobb, Arthur Kennedy, Cameron Mitchell and Mildred Dunnock opens at the Morosco Theatre in New York on 10 February. Directed by Elia Kazan with designs by Jo Mielziner, it wins the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, the Donaldson Prize, the Antoinette Perry Award, the Theatre Club Award and the Pulitzer Prize. His essay 'Tragedy and the Common Man' is printed in the *New York Times*. Attends the pro-Soviet Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to chair a panel with Clifford Odets and Dimitri Shostakovich.
- 1950 Adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* produced on Broadway starring Frederic March and Florence Henderson ('I have made no secret of my early love for Ibsen's work'). First sound recording of *Death of a Salesman*. *The Hook*, a film script about graft and corruption in the closed world of longshoremen in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn, fails to reach production after backers yield to pressure from the House Committee on Un-American Activities. *On the Waterfront*, the Budd Schulberg-Elia Kazan collaboration featuring Marlon Brando, changes the setting to Hoboken, New Jersey, but is developed from the same concept, and is released four years later.
- 1951 Meets Marilyn Monroe. Frederic Marsh in the role of Willy Loman for Columbia Pictures in the first film version of *Death of a Salesman*. Joseph Buloff translates the play into Yiddish; his production runs in New York and introduces Miller's play to Buenos Aires.
- 1952 Drives to Salem, Massachusetts, and visits the Historical Society, where he reads documents and researches the material he will use in *The Crucible*. Breaks with Kazan over the director's cooperation with HUAC.
- 1953 *The Crucible* wins the Donaldson Award and the Antoinette Perry Award when it opens in New York at the Martin Beck Theatre. Directs *All My Sons* for the Arden, Delaware, Summer Theatre.



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- 1954 US State Department denies Miller a passport to attend the Belgian premiere of *The Crucible* in Brussels ('I wasn't embarrassed for myself; I was embarrassed for my country'). NBC broadcasts the first radio production of *Death of a Salesman*. Mingei Theater stages first Japanese translation of *Salesman* in Tokyo, where the play is received as a cautionary tale about the 'salaryman'.
- 1955 The one-act version of *A View from the Bridge* opens in New York on a double-bill with *A Memory of Two Mondays*. HUAC pressurises city officials to withdraw permission for Miller to make a film about juvenile delinquency set in New York.
- 1956 Lives in Nevada for six weeks in order to divorce Mary Slattery. Marries Marilyn Monroe. Subpoenaed to appear before HUAC on 21 June, he refuses to name names. Accepts an honorary degree as Doctor of Human Letters from his alma mater, the University of Michigan. Jean-Paul Sartre writes screenplay for French adaptation of *The Crucible*, called *Les Sorcieres de Salem*; the film stars Yves Montand and Simone Signoret. Travels with Monroe to England, where he meets Laurence Olivier, her co-star in *The Prince and the Showgirl*. Peter Brook directs revised two-act version of *A View from the Bridge* in London at the New Watergate Theatre Club, as censors determined it could not be performed in public. 'Once Eddie had been squarely placed in his social context, among his people,' Miller noted, 'the myth-like feeling of the story emerged of itself ... Red Hook is full of Greek tragedies.'
- 1957 Cited for contempt of Congress for refusing to co-operate with HUAC. On the steps of the United States Congress, and with Monroe on his arm, he vows to appeal against the conviction. Monroe buys all members of Congress a year's subscription to *I.F. Stone's Weekly*. First television production of *Death of a Salesman* (ITA, UK). *Arthur Miller's Collected Plays* is published, and his short story, 'The Misfits', appears in *Esquire Magazine*.
- 1958–  
59 The US Court of Appeals overturns his conviction for contempt of Congress. Elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters and receives the Gold Medal for Drama.
- 1961 Miller and Monroe divorce (granted in Mexico on the grounds of 'incompatibility'). *The Misfits*, a black-and-

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- white film directed by John Huston featuring the actress in her first serious dramatic role, is released for wide distribution. Miller calls his scenario 'an eastern western' and bases the plot on his short story of the same name. Co-stars include Clark Gable, Montgomery Clift, Eli Wallach and Thelma Ritter. *The Crucible: An Opera in Four Acts* by Robert Ward and Bernard Stambler is recorded. Sidney Lumet directs a movie version of *A View from the Bridge* with Raf Vallone and Carol Lawrence. Miller's mother, Augusta, dies.
- 1962 Marries Austrian-born Inge Morath, a photographer with Magnum, the agency founded in 1947 by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Marilyn Monroe, aged thirty-six, dies. His daughter, Rebecca Augusta, is born in September. NBC broadcasts an adaptation of *Focus* with James Whitmore and Colleen Dewhurst.
- 1963 Publishes a children's book, *Jane's Blanket*. Returns to Ann Arbor to deliver annual Hopwood Awards lecture, 'On Recognition'.
- 1964 Visits the Mauthausen death camp with Inge Morath and covers the Nazi trials in Frankfurt, Germany, for the *New York Herald Tribune*. Reconciles with Kazan. *Incident at Vichy*, whose through-line is 'It's not your guilt I want, it's your responsibility', opens in New York, as does *After the Fall*. The former is the first of the playwright's works to be banned in the Soviet Union. The latter Miller says 'is not about Marilyn' and that she is 'hardly the play's *raison d'être*'.
- 1965 Elected president of PEN, the international organisation of writers dedicated to fighting all forms of censorship. American premiere of the two-act version of *A View from the Bridge* is performed Off-Broadway. Laurence Olivier's production of *The Crucible*, starring Colin Blakely and Joyce Redman, is staged in London at the Old Vic by the National Theatre. Returns to Ann Arbor, where his daughter Jane is now a student, to participate in the first teach-in in the US concerning the Vietnam conflict.
- 1966 First sound recording of *A View from the Bridge*. In Rome Marcello Mastroianni and Monica Vitti play the parts of Quentin and Maggie in Franco Zeffirelli's Italian production of *After the Fall*. Miller's father, Isidore, dies.
- 1967 *I Don't Need You Any More*, a collection of short stories, is published. Sound recording of *Incident at Vichy*. Television

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- production of *The Crucible* is broadcast on CBS. Visits Moscow and tries to persuade Soviet writers to join PEN. Playwright-in-Residence at the University of Michigan. His son, Daniel, is born in January.
- 1968 *The Price*, which the playwright called ‘a quartet’, ‘the most specific play I’ve ever written’, opens on Broadway. Sound recording of *After the Fall*. Attends the Democratic National Convention in Chicago as a delegate from Roxbury, Connecticut. Leads peace march against the war in South-East Asia with the Reverend Sloan Coffin, Jr, at Yale University in New Haven. *Death of a Salesman* sells its millionth copy.
- 1969 *In Russia*, a collaborative project with text by Miller and photography by Morath, is published. Visits Prague in a show of support for Czech writers; meets Vaclav Havel. Retires as president of PEN.
- 1970 Miller’s works are banned in the Soviet Union, a result of his efforts to free dissident writers. *Fame* and *The Reason Why*, two one-act plays, are produced; the latter is filmed at his home in Connecticut.
- 1971 Television productions of *A Memory of Two Mondays* on PBS and *The Price* on NBC. Sound recording of *An Enemy of the People*. *The Portable Arthur Miller* is published.
- 1972 *The Creation of the World and Other Business* opens at the Schubert Theatre in New York on 30 November. Attends the Democratic National Convention in Miami as a delegate. First sound recording of *The Crucible*.
- 1973 PBS broadcasts Stacy Keach’s television adaptation of *Incident at Vichy*, with Harris Yulin as Leduc. Champions the case of Peter Reilly, an eighteen-year-old falsely convicted of manslaughter for his mother’s murder; four years later, all charges are dismissed. *After the Fall* with Faye Dunaway is televised on NBC. Teaches mini-course at the University of Michigan; students perform early drafts of scenes from *The American Clock*.
- 1974 *Up from Paradise*, musical version of *The Creation of the World and Other Business*, is staged at the Power Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Michigan. With music by Stanley Silverman and cover design by Al Hirschfeld, Miller calls it his ‘heavenly cabaret’.
- 1977 A second collaborative project with Inge Morath, *In the Country*, is published. Petitions the Czech government to

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halt arrests of dissident writers. The *Archbishop's Ceiling* opens at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Miller said he wanted to dramatise 'what happens ... when people know they are ... at all times talking to Power, whether through a bug or a friend who really is an informer'.

- 1978 *The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller* is published. NBC broadcasts the film of *Fame* starring Richard Benjamin. Belgian National Theatre mounts the twenty-fifth anniversary production of *The Crucible*; this time Miller can attend.
- 1979 *Chinese Encounters*, with Inge Morath, is published. Michael Rudman directs a major revival of *Death of a Salesman* at the National Theatre in London, with Warren Mitchell as Willy Loman.
- 1980 *Playing for Time*, the film based on Fania Fenelon's autobiography *The Musicians of Auschwitz*, is broadcast nationally on CBS, with Vanessa Redgrave and Jane Alexander. ('I tried to treat it as a story meaningful to the survivors, by which I mean all of us. I didn't want it to be a mere horror story.') *The American Clock* has its first performance at the Spoleto Festival in South Carolina, then opens in New York with the playwright's sister, Joan Copeland, as Rose Baum, a role based on their mother. Miller sees his play as 'a mural', 'a mosaic', 'a story of America talking to itself ... There's never been a society that hasn't had a clock running on it, and you can't help wondering – How long?'
- 1981 Second volume of *Arthur Miller's Collected Plays* is published. Delivers keynote address on the fiftieth anniversary of the Hopwood Awards Program in Ann Arbor.
- 1982 Two one-act plays that represent 'the colors of memory', *Elegy for a Lady* and *Some Kind of Love Story*, are produced as a double-bill at the Long Wharf Theatre in Connecticut under the title *2 by A.M.*
- 1983 Directs *Death of a Salesman* at the People's Art Theatre in Beijing, part of a cultural exchange to mark the early stage of the opening of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. Ying Ruocheng plays Willy Loman in his own Chinese translation. *I Think About You a Great Deal*, a monologue, appears in *Cross Currents*, University of Michigan.

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- 1984 'Salesman' in Beijing is published. The texts of *Elegy for a Lady* and *Some Kind of Love Story* are printed under a new title, *Two-Way Mirror*. Receives Kennedy Center Honors for lifetime achievement. Reworks the script of *The American Clock* for Peter Wood's London production at the National Theatre.
- 1985 Twenty-five million viewers see Dustin Hoffman play Willy Loman, with John Malkovich as Biff and Kate Reid as Linda in the production of *Death of a Salesman* shown on CBS. Goes to Turkey with Harold Pinter for PEN as an ambassador for freedom of speech. Serves as delegate at a meeting of Soviet and American writers in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he attacks Russian authorities for their continuing anti-Semitism and persecution of *samizdat* writers. *The Archbishop's Ceiling* is produced in the UK by the Bristol Old Vic. Completes adaptation of *Playing for Time* as a stage play.
- 1986 One of fifteen writers and scientists invited to meet Mikhail Gorbachev to discuss Soviet policies. The Royal Shakespeare Company uses a revised script of *The Archbishop's Ceiling* for its London production in the Barbican Pit.
- 1987 Miller publishes *Timebends: A Life*, his autobiography. Characterising it as 'a preemptive strike' against future chroniclers, he discusses his relationship with Marilyn Monroe in public for the first time. *Clara and I Can't Remember Anything* open as a double-bill at Lincoln Center in New York under the title *Danger: Memory!* Broadcasts of *The Golden Years* on BBC Radio and Jack O'Brien's television production of *All My Sons* on PBS. Michael Gambon stars as Eddie Carbone in Alan Ayckbourn's intimate production of *A View from the Bridge* at the National Theatre in London. University of East Anglia names its site for American Studies the Arthur Miller Centre.
- 1988 Publishes 'Waiting for the Teacher', a nineteen-stanza free-verse poem, in *Ha'aretz*, the Tel Aviv-based liberal newspaper, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.
- 1990 *Everybody Wins*, directed by Karel Reisz with Debra Winger and Nick Nolte, is released: 'Through the evolution of the story – a murder that took place before the story

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opens – we will be put through an exercise in experiencing reality and unreality.’ Television production of *An Enemy of the People* on PBS. Josette Simon plays Maggie as a sultry jazz singer in Michael Blakemore’s London revival of *After the Fall* at the National Theatre, where *The Crucible* also joins the season’s repertory in Howard Davies’s production starring Zoë Wannamaker and Tom Wilkinson. Updated version of *The Man Who Had All the Luck* is staged by Paul Unwin in a joint production by the Bristol Old Vic and the Young Vic in London.

- 1991 *The Last Yankee* premieres as a one-act play. *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*, ‘a moral farce’, has its world premiere in London: ‘The play is really a kind of nightmare.’ Television adaptation of *Clara* on the Arts & Entertainment Network. Receives Mellon Bank Award for lifetime achievement in the humanities.
- 1992 *Homely Girl, A Life* is published with artwork by Louise Bourgeois in a Peter Blum edition. Writes satirical op-ed piece for the *New York Times* urging an end to capital punishment in the US.
- 1993 Expanded version of *The Last Yankee* opens at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York. Television version of *The American Clock* on TNT with the playwright’s daughter, Rebecca, in the role of Edie.
- 1994 *Broken Glass*, a work ‘full of ambiguities’ that takes ‘us back to the time when the social contract was being torn up’, has a pre-Broadway run at the Long Wharf Theatre in Connecticut; opens at the Booth Theatre in New York on 24 April. David Thacker’s London production wins the Olivier Award for Best Play.
- 1995 Tributes to the playwright on the occasion of his eightieth birthday are held in England and the US. Receives William Inge Festival Award for Distinguished Achievement in American Theater. *Homely Girl, A Life and Other Stories*, is published. In England the collection appears under the title *Plain Girl*. Darryl V. Jones directs a production of *A View from the Bridge* in Washington, DC, and resets the play in a community of Dominican immigrants. The Arthur Miller Society is founded by Steve Centola.
- 1996 Revised and expanded edition of *The Theater Essays of Arthur Miller* is published. Receives the Edward Albee Last

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- Frontier Playwright Award. Rebecca Miller and Daniel Day-Lewis are married.
- 1997 *The Crucible*, produced by the playwright's son, Robert A. Miller, is released for wide distribution and is nominated for an Academy Award. Revised version of *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* performed at the Williamstown Playhouse in Massachusetts. BBC airs television version of *Broken Glass*, with Margot Leicester and Henry Goodman repeating their roles from the award-winning London production.
- 1998 *Mr Peters' Connections* opens in New York with Peter Falk. Revival of *A View from the Bridge* by the Roundabout Theatre Company wins two Tony Awards. Revised version of *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* on Broadway. Miller is named Distinguished Inaugural Senior Fellow of the American Academy in Berlin.
- 1999 Robert Falls's fiftieth anniversary production of *Death of a Salesman*, featuring Brian Dennehy as Willy Loman, moves from the Goodman Theater in Chicago and opens on Broadway, where it wins the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play. Co-authors the libretto with Arnold Weinstein for William Bolcom's opera of *A View from the Bridge*, which has its world premiere at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.
- 2000 Patrick Stewart reprises his role as Lyman Felt in *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* on Broadway, where *The Price* is also revived (with Harris Yulin). Major eighty-fifth birthday celebrations are organised by Christopher Bigsby at the University of East Anglia and by Enoch Brater at the University of Michigan, where plans are announced to build a new theatre named in his honour; it opens officially on 29 March 2007 ('whoever thought when I was saving \$500 to come to the University of Michigan that it would come to this'). 'Up to a certain point the human being is completely unpredictable. That's what keeps me going ... You live long enough, you don't rust.' *Echoes Down the Corridor*, a collection of essays from 1944 to 2000, is published. Miller and Morath travel to Cuba with William and Rose Styron and meet Fidel Castro and the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez.
- 2001 The previously unproduced one-act *I Think About You a Great Deal*, written for Vaclav Havel, appears in New York. Williamstown Theater Festival revives *The Man Who Had All the Luck*. Laura Dern and William H. Macy

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- star in a film based on the 1945 novel *Focus*. Miller is named the Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities by NEH and receives the John H. Finley Award for Exemplary Service to New York City. His speech 'On Politics and the Art of Acting', is published.
- 2002 Revivals in New York of *The Man Who Had All the Luck* and *The Crucible*, the latter with Liam Neeson as John Proctor. *Resurrection Blues* has its world premiere at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. Miller receives a major international award in Spain, the Premio Principe de Asturias de las Letras. Death of Inge Morath.
- 2003 Awarded the Jerusalem Prize. His brother, Kermit Miller, dies on 17 October. *The Price* is performed at the Tricycle Theatre in London.
- 2004 *Finishing the Picture* opens at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. *After the Fall* revived in New York. Appears on a panel at the University of Michigan with Mark Lamos, who directs students in scenes from Miller's rarely performed plays.
- 2005 Miller dies of heart failure in his Connecticut home on 10 February. Public memorial service is held on 9 May at the Majestic Theatre in New York, with 1,500 in attendance. Asked what he wanted to be remembered for, the playwright said, 'A few good parts for actors.'



## Plot

### *Act One*

The play begins with the narrator, the lawyer Alfieri, directly addressing the audience from his office. His speeches punctuate many of the scenes, and he is also a participant in the action. Alfieri's opening speech directly relates the events that will unfold during the play, set in Brooklyn, to the attitudes of the Italian-Americans and their forebears in Sicily. As narrator, he tells how they consider meeting a priest or a lawyer 'unlucky', associating these figures with impending disasters. He thinks that this attitude lies in 'three thousand years of distrust'. He proclaims that: 'Justice is very important here.' Finally, he explains that in his legal practice he deals mostly with longshoremen and their wives, fathers and grandfathers in compensation cases, evictions and petty squabbles. Yet every few years a case comes along that is different from the petty troubles of these poor people, and as he listens to it, he surmises that some lawyer thousands of years ago heard the same complaint, 'powerless as I, and watched it run its bloody course'. He concludes with 'This one's name was Eddie Carbone, a longshoreman . . .'

The first scene takes place in the Red Hook apartment of Eddie Carbone and his wife, Beatrice, who have raised her niece, Catherine, since she was a child. Catherine is seventeen and on the verge of becoming a woman. Eddie has just come home from work and Catherine greets him excitedly. He notices that she is 'dressed up', in a new skirt and with a different hairdo, and he wants to know where she is going. Catherine has some news for him, but wants to wait for Beatrice to come into the room. Eddie thinks Catherine's skirt is too short and expresses concern that she gives him the 'willies' when she walks 'wavy' down the street. Moreover, he does not like the looks that men give

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her at the candy store and when she wears her new high heels. Eddie's criticism almost brings Catherine to tears; he explains that he promised Catherine's mother on her deathbed that he would be responsible for her. He calls her a 'baby', and admonishes her for waving at a neighbour called Louis out of the apartment window. He tells Catherine that she is getting to be a 'big girl' and cannot be so friendly with men.

He then asks Catherine to call Beatrice from the kitchen because he has news that her cousins – illegal immigrants also known as 'submarines' – have landed in New York harbour. The two men will be staying with the Carbones. Beatrice is overjoyed at their impending arrival; but not expecting them so soon, she worries about feeding them and about the condition of the apartment. Eddie assures her that the men will think they are in a millionaire's house compared to their circumstances in Italy. Eddie teases Beatrice about her generosity. Beatrice is concerned that Eddie will be angry with her if the living situation turns unpleasant, but Eddie cautions that if they all keep quiet about the presence of the illegal relatives, nothing can happen.

Catherine returns to the exciting news that she wanted to tell Eddie at the beginning of the scene. The principal of her school has arranged for her to get a job as a stenographer at a plumbing company. Eddie is reluctant to let her accept because he wants her to finish her secretarial school training. But Catherine explains that the principal advises that she should take the job, and that he will allow her to sit the examination for a certificate at the end of the year because she is the best student in the class. Eddie is still uneasy. He does not like the neighbourhood near the Brooklyn Navy Yard where the company is located and where she will be exposed to unsavoury men like plumbers and sailors. Beatrice explains to Eddie that Catherine is not a baby any longer, saying: 'She's seventeen years old, you gonna keep her in the house all her life?' When Catherine returns to the room, Eddie looks at her with tears in his eyes and tells her she looks 'like a madonna'. He agrees to allow her to work, but warns her: 'Don't trust nobody.'

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Their conversation then returns to the imminent arrival of Beatrice's cousins. Eddie reiterates to Catherine and Beatrice the importance of not speaking about their status as illegal immigrants. He tells them: 'You don't see nothin' and you don't know nothin'.' He warns them that there are 'stool pigeons' all over the neighbourhood who would inform the Immigration Bureau. Eddie and Beatrice both recall an incident that occurred in the neighbourhood years ago. A family had an uncle whom they were hiding in their house and their fourteen-year-old son snitched to Immigration. The boy was punished by his father and five brothers who dragged him down the stairs in their house and spat on him in the street in front of the entire neighbourhood. When Catherine asks what happened to him, Eddie says, 'You'll never see him no more, a guy do a thing like that? How's he gonna show his face?'

Their conversation again returns to Catherine's job when Eddie says, 'So you gonna start Monday, heh, Madonna?' and he is moved to tears as he expresses that he never thought she 'would ever grow up'. When Catherine leaves to get Eddie his cigar, Beatrice and Eddie are alone for a minute and Eddie asks Beatrice if she is 'mad' at him; Beatrice retorts with, 'You're the one is mad.' The scene ends and the lights come up on Alfieri, who describes Eddie as 'a good man as he had to be in a life that was hard and even'; then he announces the arrival of the cousins.

When the two cousins arrive, Catherine is struck by the physical differences between the two brothers. The older, married man, Marco, is dark-complexioned while the younger, unmarried man is light with blond hair. Beatrice and Eddie are interested in the living and working conditions in post-war Sicily, and the men explain the occasional construction and field work they do. Marco is particularly interested in working regularly on the docks so he can send money back to his wife, who will then be able to feed the three children better and buy medicine for the eldest child, who is ill. He eventually wants to return home. Catherine focuses her attention on Rodolpho who, in contrast to his brother, wants to become an American and

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stay for ever. Rodolpho has an exuberant spirit and dreams about returning to Italy as a rich man with a motorcycle. Rodolpho reveals that he is also a singer who took the place of a sick baritone one night and sang to great acclaim in the garden of a local hotel. Marco affectionately mocks the youthful bravado of his brother, but Catherine is enthralled and coaxes Rodolpho to perform his version of the song 'Paper Doll'. Eddie is not happy about the performance and warns that his singing might attract unwanted attention to the illegal submarines. Then he turns to criticise Catherine for wearing high heels, and the scene ends with Eddie sizing up Rodolpho, whom he regards suspiciously.

The next scene begins with brief commentary by the narrator Alfieri, who tells the audience that 'Eddie never expected to have a destiny'. A couple of weeks have passed and trouble has come to the Carbone. The first part of the scene takes place in front of the Carbone apartment where Eddie is standing at the doorway. Beatrice comes along and Eddie is worried because it is after eight o'clock and Catherine and Rodolpho are not yet home from the movies. Although he seems to be concerned about Rodolpho being picked up by the immigration authorities, actually Eddie does not like the romantic relationship that has grown up between Catherine and Rodolpho. He transfers his jealousy into an assault on Rodolpho's masculinity. He tells Beatrice that Rodolpho gives him the 'heebie-jeebies', explaining that he is not the kind of man who should be Catherine's husband. He does not like the fact that Rodolpho sings on the ships, that his blond hair makes him look like a chorus girl, and that other longshoremen call him 'Paper Doll' and 'Canary'. When Eddie expresses frustration that Beatrice apparently does not understand the problem, she explains that she has 'other worries' and asks Eddie when she is 'gonna be a wife again'. Beatrice and Eddie have not slept together in almost three months; Eddie refuses to discuss the issue further, claiming he is worried that Rodolpho is taking Catherine 'for a ride'. Beatrice retreats into the house and Eddie encounters three neighbourhood longshoremen on the

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street who talk about how Marco works like a bull when off-loading ships and Rodolpho's sense of humour.

When Catherine and Rodolpho return home from their date, Eddie's anger, especially with Rodolpho, is apparent. He dismisses Rodolpho so he can talk to Catherine alone. Catherine attempts to explain to Eddie that Rodolpho 'blesses' him, but Eddie counters that Rodolpho does not respect Catherine because, if she were not an orphan, Rodolpho would have to ask the permission of her father to date her. When Catherine explains to Eddie the proper respect which Rodolpho exhibits, Eddie proclaims that Rodolpho is just 'bowin' to his passport', i.e. merely using the ploy of marriage to obtain American citizenship. They take their argument into the apartment where Eddie asks Beatrice to 'straighten' Catherine out, and then he storms out of the apartment. Beatrice explains to Catherine that Eddie would not be satisfied with any beau of Catherine's and that she cannot be taking orders from him any more because she is no longer a girl now but a woman. Beatrice tells her that, 'If you act like a baby, he'll treat you like a baby.' Beatrice displays both awareness and sensitivity to the relationship between Eddie and Catherine. She tells her niece that she should not walk around the apartment in her slip, or sit and watch Eddie shave while he is in his underwear. Beatrice says that she has previously tried to tell her about this inappropriate behaviour, but Catherine now has to realise that she is a grown woman and Eddie is a man.

The next scene begins with brief commentary by Alfieri about a 'passion' which he perceived had moved into Eddie's body. Eddie has come to Alfieri's law office to seek advice about finding legal recourse to stop Catherine's relationship with Rodolpho. Alfieri explains that there is nothing illegal about a girl falling in love with an immigrant, but Eddie's frustration over Rodolpho's spending habits, his masculinity, his high singing voice and his sewing ability is evident. He says, 'The guy ain't right.' When Alfieri explains that the only legal question is the manner in which Marco and Rodolpho entered the country, Eddie explains that he wouldn't do anything about that. Alfieri gently tries

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to explain to Eddie that sometimes there is ‘too much love’ from a father to a daughter or niece – as Alfieri and the audience clearly understand is so in Eddie’s case. Eddie does not completely understand and continues to object to Rodolpho’s stealing Catherine from him. Even when Alfieri is more candid, saying, ‘She can’t marry you, can she?’ Eddie says, ‘What the hell you talkin’ about, marry me?’ After Eddie leaves the office, Alfieri again addresses the audience, explaining that after that meeting with Eddie, he realised the situation would end badly and that he was powerless to prevent it.

The final scene of Act One takes place in the Carbone apartment one evening a short time later. Beatrice and Catherine are clearing the dinner table and Eddie, Marco and Rodolpho are in the living room. Catherine initiates conversation about Marco and Rodolpho’s life in Italy, fishing and sailing. Eddie is in a particularly surly and contradictory mood. When Beatrice enquires of Marco whether his wife is receiving the money he is sending, Eddie takes the opportunity to ask if there are any ‘surprise’ children when the fathers eventually return home. After Marco explains that the women wait, Rodolpho adds that their town is ‘more strict’. Eddie uses this as an opening to tell Rodolpho that the States are not so free – an obvious objection to Rodolpho’s freedom with Catherine and his risking arrest by Immigration. Marco attempts to alleviate Eddie’s concerns. After an awkward silence, Catherine asks Rodolpho to dance to a new record they have bought – ‘Paper Doll’, the same song that Rodolpho sang on the night of his arrival. While Rodolpho and Catherine dance, Beatrice, Eddie and Marco talk about how Rodolpho cooks for the crew on the fishing excursions the men take. To Eddie this is another example – along with the singing and sewing – of Rodolpho’s lack of masculinity. During this scene, Eddie has been twisting his newspaper in frustration as Catherine and Rodolpho continue dancing. Eddie then suggests that Rodolpho and Marco should go to the fights next Saturday night. When the men agree, Eddie offers to teach Rodolpho how to box. He proceeds to show him a few

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punches, ultimately landing a blow that staggers Rodolpho. After this obvious and planned humiliation, Rodolpho initiates the resumption of dancing with Catherine. The previously polite and deferential Marco, now challenges Eddie to pick up a chair by one leg. Eddie attempts this, but is unable to perform the task. Marco then kneels, grasps the leg, picks up the chair and lifts it high, facing Eddie with the chair raised menacingly over his head.

*Act Two*

The second act begins with a brief set-up by Alfieri: it is 23 December, a case of Scotch whisky had 'slipped' while being unloaded on the docks, Beatrice is shopping, Marco is working. Rodolpho had not been hired that day; consequently, he and Catherine are alone in the Carbone apartment.

Clearly upset about the conflict that their relationship is causing and perhaps aroused by Eddie's accusation, Catherine asks Rodolpho if he would consider living in Italy after they marry. Rodolpho absolutely refuses to consider this, explaining to Catherine that there is nothing in Italy for them to go to: 'How can I bring you from a rich country to suffer in a poor country?' He is adamant; he knows that Eddie has raised these doubts in Catherine, and he is insulted. Catherine explains her complicated feelings for Eddie: she feels indebted to him for his goodness in having raised her and she is torn about rejecting him. She reveals considerable awareness of Eddie's needs as a man and husband. But Rodolpho's and Catherine's love is genuine, and Rodolpho convinces her that she must grow and, like a little bird, fly away. They retreat into the bedroom.

At that moment Eddie comes home drunk. When he calls for Beatrice in the apartment, Catherine, followed by Rodolpho, emerges from the bedroom. Eddie is furious and tells Rodolpho to pack his things and leave. When Catherine proclaims her intention to leave as well, Eddie tells her that she is going nowhere. But Catherine proclaims, 'I'm not gonna be a baby any more!' Eddie suddenly

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reaches out to her and kisses her on the mouth. When Rodolpho tries to stop him, Eddie in turn attacks, pinning Rodolpho's arms, laughing and suddenly kissing Rodolpho, humiliating him. Eddie then orders Rodolpho to leave the apartment, threatening to kill him if he ever lays a hand on Catherine again.

The next scene begins with Alfieri's narration about another visit by Eddie to his office a few days after the confrontation in the apartment. Alfieri recalls the fixed look in Eddie's eyes, which he compares to tunnels. Eddie tells Alfieri that Beatrice will be moving Marco and Rodolpho to a room in an upstairs apartment. In discussing Eddie's attack on Rodolpho, Alfieri judges that Rodolpho was just not strong enough to break Eddie's grip on him. However, Eddie insists that Rodolpho did not fight back because the 'guy ain't right'. When Alfieri asks Eddie why he humiliated Rodolpho, Eddie claims that he wanted Catherine to see what Rodolpho really is. But Eddie again asks Alfieri what legal recourse he has to stop the marriage that is soon to take place between his wife's niece and the 'submarine'. Alfieri explains to Eddie that morally and legally he has no rights whatsoever. Alfieri warns him further that the law is nature and 'a river will drown him if he tries to buck it'. Eddie leaves in dismay.

The lights come up on Eddie at a public telephone, making a call to the Immigration Bureau. He reports illegal immigrants living at his address, the same heinous act he scorned earlier in the play.

The next scene is in the Carbone apartment, where Beatrice is taking down Christmas decorations. Eddie enters and discovers that Marco and Rodolpho have already moved to an upstairs apartment. Eddie and Beatrice argue. She regrets that she ever agreed to have her cousins to stay in their apartment, but she wants to know why he humiliated Rodolpho in front of Catherine. Now that they are gone, Eddie asserts command of his home and demands his 'respect' back from Beatrice, especially about references to their sex life. Beatrice tells him that Rodolpho and Catherine plan to marry the next week because her niece is



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concerned about him getting picked up by the immigration authorities; if they marry, he can begin the process of applying for citizenship. Beatrice tells Eddie that despite what has occurred, Catherine would still like his blessing at the wedding.

Catherine comes down from the apartment upstairs as Beatrice attempts a reconciliation between them. However, Eddie is resolute and tries to convince Catherine not to marry; she is equally determined to go ahead with her plans. When Catherine asks Beatrice's permission to take a few pillowcases upstairs, Eddie discovers that there are additional illegal boarders in the apartment where Rodolpho and Marco are now lodged. Eddie panics and, without revealing that he has informed, demands that Catherine move Rodolpho and Marco out of the apartment on the grounds that mixing with other illegals will attract attention. At that moment the immigration officers arrive and both Beatrice and Catherine realise what Eddie has done. As the group of submarines is arrested and brought out on the street in front of the apartment house, Marco lunges for Eddie, accusing him of betraying him and his brother to the authorities. The crowd of neighbours gather one by one and shun Eddie, who screams that Marco is 'gonna take that back'.

The next scene is set in the reception room of a prison where Alfieri serves as legal counsel to Marco and Rodolpho. He will be able to bail out Marco if he promises not to take revenge on Eddie. Alfieri explains that Marco will be deported in any case, but that Rodolpho, because he is going to marry Catherine, can become an American citizen. Marco and Alfieri discuss what 'honorable' action is. Marco explains that in his country Eddie would already be dead for his action; and Alfieri explains that to promise not to kill is not dishonourable. Marco wants to know where the law is that governs the despicable degradation which Eddie has brought upon Marco's blood and kin. Alfieri counters with, 'Only God makes justice.'

The final scene takes place in the Carbone apartment the afternoon of Catherine and Rodolpho's wedding. Beatrice is

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dressed to leave for the nuptials and Eddie tells her not to come back home if she goes. Eddie still wants his 'respect' back and demands that Marco apologise to him before any wedding takes place. Catherine yells at Eddie calling him a rat who belongs in the sewer; Eddie moves to attack her, but Beatrice intervenes, then decides not to attend the wedding. At that moment Rodolpho rushes into the apartment warning that Marco is coming to avenge himself on Eddie. Rodolpho wants Eddie to avoid this confrontation and attempts a reconciliation by kissing his hand and apologising. Eddie rejects his overture because he wants nothing but Marco to give him back his 'name', which he has besmirched in the neighbourhood. Beatrice says to Eddie: 'You want somethin' else, Eddie and you can never have her', finally stating the truth of what has been obvious all along to everyone but Eddie. Eddie is horrified, but at that moment Marco arrives in the street in front of the apartment and calls out Eddie's name. The whole neighbourhood has gathered to witness this final confrontation. Eddie goes out to the street, where Marco calls him an animal as he strikes him and demands that Eddie get down on his knees before him. Eddie pulls a knife on Marco, but in the ensuing struggle, Marco turns the knife on Eddie, mortally wounding him.

The play ends with final commentary by Alfieri, who acknowledges how wrong Eddie was and that his death was useless but inevitable. Nevertheless, he mourns him with 'a certain alarm', searching for the meaning that might be found in the tragedy of his death.

## Commentary

### Literary, historical and social context

*A View from the Bridge* ended a remarkably productive time in Arthur Miller's career when he stood, along with Tennessee Williams, as one of America's most distinguished playwrights. The plays he wrote during this period – *All My Sons* (1947), *Death of Salesman* (1949), *An Enemy of the People* (1950), *The Crucible* (1953), *A View from the Bridge* (one act, 1955) and *A View from the Bridge* (two acts, 1956) – are dramas upon which his lasting critical reputation will undoubtedly be judged. After the London production of *View from the Bridge* in 1956, Miller did not have another original play produced on either the New York or London stages until *After the Fall* in 1964. Miller first wrote *A View from the Bridge* as a one-act play with a companion piece, *A Memory of Two Mondays*, which premiered in New York in 1955. Miller wrote the two-act version in 1956, which premiered in London. Miller considered the two-act play the definitive version, including it in the first edition of his *Collected Plays* in 1957.

*A View from the Bridge* had a long period of gestation. In 1947, after his success with *All My Sons*, Miller became intrigued with writing about the Italian immigrant society of the Brooklyn docks. He had noticed graffiti during his walks across the Brooklyn Bridge that read: 'Dov'è Pete Panto?' which translates from the Italian as: 'Where is Pete Panto?' The message also began appearing on subway stations and on office buildings at the Court Street Civic Center in downtown Brooklyn. Miller learned from newspaper coverage that Pete Panto was a young longshoreman who had challenged the powerful Mafia leadership of the seamen's union and had mysteriously disappeared, effectively ending the threat of an investigation of the union's corruption. Miller was fascinated by the idea of

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writing about the tragic end of this heroic man. He began researching the criminal underworld of the Brooklyn docksides by visiting the piers and attempting to find out the truth behind Panto's fate. However, Miller was stymied by the intimidated silence of the longshoremen, who feared speaking out against their bosses and the hiring traditions transported from their native Sicily.

Nearly deciding to give up his project, Miller unexpectedly received a phone call from Mitch Berenson, a union organiser, and Vinny Longhi, a lawyer, who were attempting to continue Pete Panto's resistance to the longshoremen union's power structure. After Miller offered to write about their plight, they gave him the opportunity to enter the mysterious underbelly of this corrupt world. He learned about the lives and culture of the longshoremen, many of whom he befriended, often visiting their homes in their Red Hook neighbourhood. In 1947 to 1948 Miller even accompanied Longhi on a trip to Sicily where he hoped to solicit support for his cause in an upcoming union election. In Italy Miller absorbed Sicilian society and came to understand the cultural connection between the American immigrants and their native land.

During this time, Longhi told Miller the story of another longshoreman who had informed the Immigration Bureau about two brothers who were related to him and living illegally in his house. In order to break up the relationship between his niece and one of the cousins, the longshoreman had informed the immigration authorities, an action which made him a pariah in his neighbourhood. Local gossip said that he was killed by one of the brothers. In an essay, 'On Social Plays', which Miller wrote as an introduction to the published one-act play, Miller explained that when he first heard the tale in his Brooklyn neighbourhood, he thought he had heard it before as 'some re-enactment of a Greek myth'. To Miller, it seemed the two illegal immigrants set out from Italy as if it were two thousand years ago; he was awed by the destiny of the immigrants and their informer, as though this was almost the work of Fate. Miller fiddled with a screenplay about the story, but then, not quite ready to

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dramatise the tale fully, dropped it after his trip to Sicily and eventually became consumed with writing *Death of a Salesman* in 1948 and with the production of that masterpiece in 1949.

During the run of *Salesman*, Miller wrote a screenplay, *The Hook*, about his experience on the docks, focusing on Pete Panto's doomed attempt to overthrow the Mafia gangsters who ruled the New York waterfront. After he read the script, Elia Kazan, the renowned film and stage director of *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman*, thought the film was a viable project for him to direct. Consequently, in 1951 Miller and Kazan took a trip to Hollywood to obtain the backing from a major studio. The negotiations for the film broke down when the Hollywood producers were reluctant to make a film critical of the unions and demanded unrealistic changes such as depicting the union crooks as communists, which Miller refused to do. The studios also performed background checks on Miller and Kazan – an indication of the coming hysteria about communist just beginning. In Hollywood, Miller also met the starlet Marilyn Monroe for the first time.

After his trip, disappointed at the commercial failure of his rewrite of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (1950), Miller returned to the tale of the Italian longshoreman who had snitched on his relatives, working on the play for several months under the title 'An Italian Tragedy', before abandoning it again. It was not until 1954 that Miller would complete the play.

After his frustration with the critical reception of *The Crucible* in 1953, his controversial play about the Salem Witch Trials, Miller received a phone call from the actor Martin Ritt, who asked him to write a one-act play for a group of actors who had a theatre available for use on Sunday evenings and wanted to act in a play without any commercial restraints. Miller agreed and wrote his one-act *A Memory of Two Mondays*, which is based on his own life – the dramatised recollection of the summer he spent working as a clerk in an auto-parts factory in Manhattan before he attended the University of Michigan. Ritt loved the play,

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and asked Miller if he had another one-act play to begin the evening, a so-called ‘curtain raiser’. Thus, Miller returned to ‘An Italian Tragedy’ which suddenly ‘seemed to fall into place as a one-act with a single rising line of intensity leading inevitably to an explosive climax’ (*Timebends*, 353). Miller realised that his difficulty in dramatising the story of the longshoreman was that he had worried too much over making it a full-length play for the Broadway theatre. He transformed ‘An Italian Tragedy’ into the drama of Eddie Carbone and his niece Catherine, writing the one-act version of what he now called *A View from the Bridge* in ten days. The title refers to the famous Brooklyn Bridge which spans the East River between Manhattan and Brooklyn at the foot of Brooklyn Heights, and not far from the Red Hook neighbourhood. However, when the original theatre for the Sunday performances was no longer available, Kermit Bloomgarden, the producer of *Death of a Salesman*, became enthusiastic about both one-act plays being performed by the same cast, and he offered a fully fledged Broadway production.

Miller originally wanted to dramatisé the story of the informer without embellishment, exactly in ‘its exposed skeleton’ because he did not want to interfere with the ‘myth-like march of the tale’s toward its tragic ending. At this stage in his career, Miller was interested in writing modern American tragedies. For example, a few weeks after the production of *Death of a Salesman* opened, Miller wrote an op-ed piece for the *New York Times* entitled ‘Tragedy and the Common Man’, in which he made the case for Willy Loman as a modern tragic hero. Miller maintained that modern literature does not require characters to be royalty or leaders, as in the tragedies of other eras, and therefore fall from some great height. Rather he insisted: ‘I think that the tragic feeling is evoked when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing – his sense of personal dignity. From Orestes to Hamlet, Medea to Macbeth, the underlying struggle is that of the individual attempting to gain his “rightful” position in his society.’ Thus, Miller argues that a

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lowly man like Willy Loman could be considered a tragic hero. He clearly set his dramatic sights on achieving this in *A View from the Bridge*. Of course, the original attraction to him of Pete Panto's story was that he seemed a modern hero whose demise was a tragedy. Miller had also explored this notion in *The Crucible* with his hero John Proctor, and he aimed at a similar depiction for Eddie Carbone.

At this time in 1955, Miller was also clearly interested in exploring further the themes of betrayal, informing and adultery, which he had illustrated in *The Crucible*. For by the time he was writing the one-act version of *A View from the Bridge*, he had embarked on his affair with Marilyn Monroe, was about to divorce his wife, and was becoming a target of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). In 1950 the United States had begun a period of political and social upheaval that would have a lasting effect on Miller's career and personal life. During this time, Miller witnessed the rise of the Army/McCarthy hearings, conducted by the Wisconsin Senator, Joseph McCarthy, and the establishment of HUAC, which was revived after the Second World War in response to the 'Red Scare' from the Soviet Union and the fall of China to a Communist government. Citizens were called before the committee in order to admit to radical pasts, and its targets were often high-profile celebrities, especially in the entertainment world, whose appearance would guarantee major publicity for the committee. Miller and Kazan had discovered this in Hollywood with their attempt to get *The Hook* made, but during his writing of *The Crucible* and *A View from the Bridge* Miller would see his friends and colleagues – and eventually himself – targeted.

In fact, in April 1952 Miller decided to write *The Crucible* because he saw a 'living connection between myself and Salem, and between Salem and Washington'. Miller had planned an exploratory trip to Salem to research the original court records. Coincidentally, the day before he was to leave for Massachusetts he received a phone call from Elia Kazan who had been subpoenaed by HUAC. Kazan and Miller met in Connecticut where Kazan told Miller that

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he had decided to cooperate and testify about the names of other celebrities he had encountered at Communist Party meetings years earlier. Kazan's decision would cause a breach in his personal and professional relationship with Miller that would last until the next decade, when, in 1964, Kazan directed *After the Fall*. When Miller left Salem, he heard on his car radio a news report of Kazan's testimony before HUAC: he had 'named names'. In the next few months, the playwright Clifford Odets, whose work had had a major influence on Miller, would be called before the committee; he too named names. Lee J. Cobb, the original Willy Loman, was called, and he too succumbed to the power of the committee. Miller was struck by the political forces which cause men to inform on others. This became a central focus in *The Crucible* and one which he also carried over into *A View from the Bridge*.

Miller wanted *A View from the Bridge* to follow very closely the tale Vinny Longhi had told him, trying not to change its original shape. He hoped the audience would feel as he felt when he heard it for the first time – not with sympathy but with wonder. Miller admits that the meaning of Eddie's fate remained a mystery to him during and after writing the one-act play. But he was dissatisfied with the final result. The reviews were mixed and the production consequently had a disappointing run, closing after 149 performances, though Miller won his third Drama Critics' Circle Award. In *Timebends* he acknowledges that personal and professional distractions in his life caused him not to focus fully on writing the play as the Broadway hit which Bloomgarden wanted. Miller was deeply involved in his relationship with Marilyn Monroe at this time and was contemplating the painful divorce from his wife. Moreover, he continued to be distracted by personal attacks on him brought by his political views. In 1954, the American government refused to grant Miller a passport and visa for the European premiere of *The Crucible*, and his break with Kazan over his testimony received wide press coverage. In addition, while casting and rehearsing the one-act *A View from the Bridge*, Miller had been researching and writing a screenplay for the



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New York Youth Board about juvenile delinquents. An investigator from HUAC warned the city administration about being associated with Miller because of his political opinions. In turn, the American Legion and the Catholic War Veterans applied pressure to stop the film because of Miller's 'Communist ties'. The project was stopped.

Miller had the opportunity to revise the play in 1956, a tumultuous year for him: committed to Monroe, he spent six weeks in April in Nevada to establish residency for a 'quickie' divorce. After filing for divorce, Miller had his celebrated hearing before HUAC. Following this, he and Monroe were married in late June, then the famous couple flew to England where Monroe was to star with Laurence Olivier in *The Prince and the Showgirl*, and where Miller revised the play into a two-act for the London production directed by Peter Brook.

The seemingly unlikely marriage between Miller and Monroe caused a media sensation, with headlines like 'Pinko Playwright Weds Sex Goddess'. Miller perceived that his relationship with Monroe would bring needed attention to the HUAC, whose influence had been waning. In May 1956, Miller was subpoenaed, and the hypocrisy of the committee was evident to him when his lawyer told him that the Pennsylvania Representative Francis E. Walter, chairman of the committee, proposed that the hearing could be cancelled if Monroe agreed to be photographed shaking hands with him. In Miller's testimony, he answered cordially the committee's questions about his association with political groups, and gave his opinions on freedom of speech, communist conspiracies, and figures like Elia Kazan and the poet Ezra Pound. At the end of his testimony, Miller was asked about his attendance at a meeting of communist writers a decade earlier. Miller freely admitted his presence, but refused to give the names of others in attendance. The committee already knew the names of attendees; they were concerned with Miller's compliance to their power and his betrayal of friends and colleagues. Miller was warned that he would be in contempt of Congress for refusing to answer, since he had chosen not to

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claim the Fifth Amendment's constitutional protection against self-incrimination. Miller still refused and, therefore, was cited. Eventually he was tried for contempt of Congress and was found guilty on two counts. His sentencing was deferred for an appeal and in 1958 the US Court of Appeals overturned his conviction.

In revising *A View from the Bridge* for the London production, Miller responded to criticism of the sketchiness of the characters in the one-act play. He enlarged the psychological motivations of the principal characters – Eddie Carbone, his wife Beatrice and their niece Catherine – in order to emphasise the social consequences of the play's central action: Eddie's desire for Catherine. The London production received rave reviews and ran for 220 performances; a subsequent production in Paris ran for two years.

### Structure

In addition to the 1955 one-act version of *A View from the Bridge* and the 1956 two-act version which premiered in London, there is also a third version: Miller rewrote the end for the 1957 Paris production because he was advised that a French audience would not accept that Eddie and Catherine could be unaware of the emotions between them. Ostracised by his society, Eddie kills himself.

In the writing and production of the first version of *A View from the Bridge*, Miller decided on the one-act form to 'recreate my own feeling toward this tale – namely wonderment. It is not designed primarily to draw tears or laughter from an audience, but to strike a particular note of astonishment at the way in which, and the reasons for which, a man will endanger and risk and lose his very life' ('On Social Plays', 68). Miller explained that, 'Nothing was permitted which did not advance the progress of Eddie's catastrophe in a most direct way . . . [I felt] that I ought to deliver it onto the stage as fact; that interpretation was inherent in the very existence of the tale in the first place' (*A View from the Bridge*,

Introduction). Thus, the one-act version consists of ten scenes, performed without a break or intermission. Although the play is practically full-length in its running time, when writing it Miller said he ‘did not know how to pull a curtain down anywhere before its end . . . I kept looking for an act curtain, a point of pause, but none ever developed’ (‘On Social Plays’, 65). The New York production used sparse staging to achieve the ‘skeletal’ quality of the mythic story because, as Miller wrote, ‘nothing existed but the purpose of the tale’. Even the character development was limited to advancing the tale, thus restricting the naturalistic acting style that still dominated the American stage.

When writing the two-act version, Miller enlarged the psychological motivations of the principal characters – Eddie, Beatrice and Catherine. He believed Eddie’s action was made more understandable because he no longer concentrated only on the factual events of the tale. With the inclusion of additional dialogue to round out the characterisations of the three principal roles, the expanded version demanded two acts. Miller wrote in the Introduction to the two-act play that

I felt it could now afford to include elements of simple human motivation – specifically the viewpoints of Eddie’s wife, and *her* dilemma in relation to him. This in fact accounts for almost all the added material, which made it necessary to break the play in the middle for an intermission.

Miller decided to end Act One with the dramatic confrontation between Marco and Eddie when the once-compliant Marco shows his awareness of Eddie’s threat to Rodolpho by holding the chair over Eddie’s head. Act Two begins with the explosive scene when Eddie discovers Rodolpho and Catherine in the bedroom.

In revising the play, Miller also tried to show Eddie more closely in relation to the Sicilian-American society. He realised that ‘The mind of Eddie Carbone is not comprehensible apart from its relation to his neighborhood, his fellow workers, his social situation. His self-esteem

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depends upon their estimate of him, and his value is created largely by his fidelity to the code of his culture.’ In this production the set was more realistic. The pay-scale of the London theatre also allowed Miller to have several more actors playing Eddie’s neighbours. Miller explained that in the New York production, there had only been four strategically placed actors to represent Eddie’s community. In London, at least twenty men and women surrounded the main action. Miller ultimately judged that ‘once Eddie had been placed squarely in his social context, among his people, the mythlike feeling of the story emerged of itself, and he could be made more human and less a figure, a force’. Moreover, ‘the importance of his interior psychological dilemma was magnified to the size it would have in life. What had seemed like a mere aberration had now risen to a fatal violation of ancient law.’ Twenty years later, in *Timebends*, Miller commented on how the revised staging also emphasised Eddie’s universal destiny:

The play began on a Red Hook street against the exterior brick wall of a tenement, which soon split open to show a basement apartment and above it a maze of fire escapes winding back and forth across the face of the building in the background. On those fire escapes the neighbors appeared at the end like a chorus, and Eddie could call up to them, to his society and his conscience for their support of his cause. Somehow, the splitting in half of the whole three-story tenement was awesome, and it opened the mind to the size of the mythic story. (431)

In the two-act version, Miller expanded the characterisation of Beatrice by focusing on her relationships with Eddie and Catherine. For example, there are substantial differences between the one-act and two-act versions of the play regarding the nature of Eddie and Beatrice’s sexual relationship. The one-act version downplays Eddie’s impotence, something that is central in the two-act version. The two-act version more vividly portrays Eddie and Beatrice’s sex life when she asks him, ‘When am I going to

be a wife again, Eddie?', which heightens the sexual conflicts of the play. In Act Two, Miller also includes dialogue in which Eddie speaks about his sex life: 'I want my respect, Beatrice, and you know what I am talkin' about . . . What I feel like doin' in the bed and what I don't feel like doin' . . . I don't want no more conversations about that.'

Miller also added a scene in Act One which includes a conversation between Beatrice and Catherine about her relationship with Eddie. Miller portrays Beatrice as aware of both Catherine's and Eddie's complex feelings. She realises much more consciously than Catherine or Eddie does that Catherine is a woman, and Beatrice tries to convey that to her. Beatrice encourages Catherine to leave the house, to marry Rodolpho and for them to find a place of their own. She says, 'You're a woman, that's all, and you got a nice boy, and now the time came when you said good-bye.' When Catherine hesitates, Beatrice is firm: 'Honey . . . you gotta.' Beatrice's action in this additional scene displays her own complicated situation: torn between her devotion to her husband, her own desires as a wife and the responsibility for the girl she has raised as a daughter.

In *A View from the Bridge* Miller created the role of a narrator, the lawyer Alfieri, who functions like a Greek chorus: he is both a character and a commentator. Although his original intention was to use Alfieri to convey his own wonder when he first heard the tale of the longshoreman, he clearly uses Alfieri's speeches to the audience to connect Eddie to what Miller sees as the mythic level of the play: Eddie's larger universal fate and his destiny to enact the tragedy. Alfieri is also crucial in showing the audience the significance of Eddie's actions to himself, his family and his society. Miller's decision to use a narrator in *A View from the Bridge* was perhaps influenced by Thornton Wilder's use of the Stage Manager in *Our Town* in 1938, and Tennessee Williams's successful use of Tom Wingfield as the narrator in *The Glass Menagerie* in 1945. Miller acknowledged the influence that both Wilder and Williams had on the development of his stagecraft in *A View from the Bridge*.

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**Themes**

In *A View from the Bridge* sexuality, responsibility, betrayal and the law are intertwined with the psychological and social forces operating in the play.

*Sexuality*

The most provocative sexual issues *A View from the Bridge* raises are incest and homosexuality. Eddie's desire for his niece Catherine is at the centre of all the play's action. From the outset his attention to Catherine is depicted as more than fatherly affection. There are a number of intriguing twists to Eddie's desire for Catherine. Catherine is really Beatrice's niece whom Eddie has raised as his own daughter. And the fact that she is not his niece by blood further complicates Eddie's attraction to her. His need to protect her childhood innocence and virginity, first portrayed as fatherly affection, is put into a different light when he becomes enraged by her relationship with Rodolpho. His desire is evident when he reveals his disgust at Rodolpho putting his hands on her. Yet twice in the play Eddie is portrayed as unconscious of his desires. When he goes to see Alfieri for legal advice, the lawyer voices his concern for Eddie's inner turmoil. And at the end of the play Beatrice will similarly confront her husband by forcing him to face the reality he is unwilling or unable to acknowledge.

Catherine's interest in Rodolpho is obvious on the first night of their arrival. When Catherine and Rodolpho begin their relationship, Eddie's paternal concern turns into jealousy, which he uses to attack Rodolpho. Eddie is repulsed by what he perceives to be Rodolpho's effeminate nature, an unfamiliar form of masculinity. Eddie is especially alarmed that Catherine finds Rodolpho sexually attractive. Eddie tries to convince Catherine that Rodolpho is merely using her as a means to achieve American citizenship but his argument is actually a mask for Eddie's own desire for her.

Eddie's conflicted sexual impulses remain one of the most

intriguing aspects of the play. There are substantial differences between the original one-act version of the play and the revised two-act version regarding the nature of Eddie and Beatrice's physical relationship. Although he is unable to perform with Beatrice, he clearly desires Catherine, but at the same time he does not want her virginity violated. Furthermore, Eddie seems to be similarly attracted to Rodolpho, whose masculinity he assaults because he is both confused and repulsed by Rodolpho's behaviour. Nevertheless, Eddie perceives Rodolpho as a sexual threat. Eddie confuses sexual potency with a macho form of masculinity. He discovers that, in addition to singing and sewing, Rodolpho also cooks. Although he is told about the male chefs in European hotels, he does not appreciate a European view of what constitutes masculine behaviour. As a recently assimilated American, Eddie is uneasy about his own immigrant Italian culture. For him, masculinity is only physical strength and he challenges Rodolpho to a boxing match, knowing that he can overpower him.

### *Responsibility*

Miller's plays concern themselves with the issue of characters accepting responsibility for their actions. Joe Keller in *All My Sons*, Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* and John Proctor in *The Crucible* struggle to accept and understand the consequences of their actions on themselves and others. At its core *A View from the Bridge* illustrates the complexity of accepting – or denying – full responsibility for one's actions and the effect this has on oneself, one's family and society. Eddie declares that Catherine 'is my niece and I'm responsible for her'. But Eddie perverts his responsibility to her and in the process violates the codes that bind him to his community. The consequences are tragic.

One of the most shocking aspect of Eddie's failure to fulfil his responsibility is that the play initially depicts him as fully aware of his role as surrogate father to Catherine, husband to Beatrice, willing host to Marco and Rodolpho, and member of his immigrant community. Although Miller was

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intrigued by the events of the story on which he based the play and wanted to illustrate the events as the work of fate, the playwright in Miller wanted to show that human beings are not merely victims of forces beyond their control. His characters determine their own destinies. Most of Eddie's actions are indeed purposeful – his attack on Rodolpho, the passionate kissing of Catherine, the demeaning kiss on Rodolpho's lips, the information he delivers to the Immigration Bureau. His failure is that he is never truly aware of the part he has played in the unfolding of these terrible events. Refusing to accept blame, he displays no guilt and accepts no responsibility, even when the catastrophe he has caused is pointed out to him. In contrast, Beatrice and Rodolpho clearly take full responsibility for the choices they have made.

*Betrayal and Informing*

From the perspective of Eddie's society, informing on Marco and Rodolpho to the immigration authorities is a heinous act. Although Eddie snitches for personal motives – to have Rodolpho deported and therefore eliminated from Catherine's life – he unwittingly commits an act of betrayal not only of his family but also of the larger circle of the immigrant society in which he lives. He makes his telephone call without knowing that Beatrice has arranged to move Marco and Rodolpho to an upstairs neighbour's apartment where other illegal immigrants are housed. His violation of what is in fact taboo becomes public when Marco accuses him before the gathered neighbours. As a result, Eddie becomes obsessed with his reputation. And it is his mania to maintain his dignity before his society that ultimately causes his death.

In *A View from the Bridge* Miller was also interested in exploring further the themes of betrayal and informing that he had previously illustrated in *The Crucible* in his response to McCarthyism and the naming of names before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. However, between writing the one-act version in 1955 and his revisions for the



two-act version, Miller himself experienced the pressure to inform and betray when he, too, was called before HUAC in 1956 to 'name names'. Thus, his depiction of those who would 'call out' others in order to protect themselves is perhaps even more complicated than it is in *The Crucible*. Eddie Carbone is an amalgam of motives, emotions and unreconciled conflicts. Miller structures his play for us to witness and consider its multiple resonances. And as we do so, it is difficult to condemn Eddie without sympathy.

### *Law*

*A View from the Bridge* represents a world in which legal, moral, ethical and social issues are in conflict with one another. Although Alfieri, as a lawyer, provides the interpretation of civil law, from his very first monologue he also shows that such law is not always a cultural precedent followed in the context of a Sicilian neighbourhood in Brooklyn. The law is not always clear nor does it satisfy basic instincts. Alfieri has witnessed men 'justly shot by unjust men'. The longshoremen of the play operate outside technical legality and sometimes consider illegal action 'just' in their code: harbouring illegal aliens is a sanctioned activity; the act of informing is abhorrent, a crime against the clan. Alfieri gives voice to these contradictions to both Eddie and Marco but he is powerless to prevent the law of the tribe from being enacted. As the play moves to its conclusion, we see how moral law is far more persuasive than civil law.

The scenes in Act One and Act Two when Eddie visits Alfieri's office forcefully present the contrast between the social, moral and legal codes that operate in the play. Eddie wants to prevent Catherine and Rodolpho's marriage because 'the guy ain't right'. But Alfieri tells him that 'morally and legally you have no rights'. Eddie fails to understand how Alfieri's explanation of civil law interprets natural law. As a lawyer, Alfieri functions under a code of modern American society which he describes in his very first commentary in the play as 'more civilized'. However, in

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Alfieri's own words, Eddie is not connected to this civilised law; his nature harks back to his roots in the old world. Because Eddie has no legal recourse to stop Catherine and Rodolpho's relationship, he chooses to act according to his own code. Alfieri points out to him that he will drown if he violates the social and moral codes so powerful in his neighbourhood, especially the ethnic code he breaches by reporting Marco and Rodolpho. It is ironic that according to the code operating in Red Hook, Eddie is technically committing a crime by harbouring illegal aliens, but this action is permissible, even sanctioned in the community. Making the phone call to report illegal immigrants, according to civil law, is the proper action; however, the play illustrates that the moral law of the Italian society supersedes civil law – an action which makes Eddie an outcast.

The violation of this ethnic code is enforced in the scene between Alfieri and Marco after his arrest by immigration officials. Marco seeks revenge on Eddie because he has violated the Sicilian code based on loyalty to one's blood and family, and the violation exacts terrible consequences. As Marco says, 'In my country he would be dead now.' Alfieri is reluctant to bail out Marco unless he promises not to exact this revenge: 'To promise not to kill is not dishonourable.' Ironically, Marco has the same difficulty as Eddie in understanding how the civil law conflicts with his moral code:

**Marco** Then what is to be done with such a man?

**Alfieri** Nothing. If he obeys the law, he lives. That's all.

**Marco** (*rises, turns to Alfieri*) The law? All the law is not in a book.

**Alfieri** Yes. In a book. There is no other law.

**Marco** (*his anger rising*) He degraded my brother – my blood. He robbed my children, he mocks my work. I work to come here, mister!

**Alfieri** I know, Marco –

**Marco** There is no law for that? Where is the law for that?

**Alfieri** There is none.

**Marco** (*shaking his head, sitting*) I don't understand this country. (73)

Marco's frustration at the law not punishing Eddie shows how the law is at odds with Marco's sense of justice. Here 'civilised' America undermines the ethnic code of Marco's land, which abhors the violation of 'blood'. For Sicilians this violation must be avenged, offering us another 'view' of how justice has its say in different worlds.

### Language

Miller wrote the one-act version in an intriguing mixture of prose and verse; the expanded two-act version eliminated the verse, but retained the characters speaking in a colloquial idiom that actually disguises Miller's use of metaphor.

Although Miller eliminated the verse lines in rewriting the play, he retained a sophisticated use of poetic language. Very little critical attention has been paid to the language of Miller's dialogue. Throughout his career, Miller was subject to reviews critical of the language of his plays. For example, in a review in the *Nation* of the original production of *Death of a Salesman*, Joseph Wood Krutch criticised the play for 'its failure to go beyond literal meaning and its undistinguished dialogue'. As a language stylist, Miller has been under-appreciated, too often overshadowed by his contemporary, Tennessee Williams, whose major strength as a dramatist for many critics lies in the lyricism of his plays. Because Miller was so often pigeonholed as a social dramatist, most criticism focuses on the cultural relevance of his plays. Most critics are content to regard his dialogue as 'colloquial', judging that Miller used best what Leonard Moss described as 'the common man's language' to reflect the social concerns of his characters. The assumption is that most of Miller's characters speak a realistic prose – a style that by implication seems at first glance antithetical to poetic language. However, Miller created a unique dramatic idiom

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which undoubtedly marks him as a significant stylist nonetheless.

Although Miller works mostly in a form of colloquial prose, there are moments in his plays when the dialogue reaches for something more. He often takes the colloquialisms, clichés and idioms of everyday language and reveals the eloquence it can contain, especially in shifting words from their denotative to connotative meanings. Moreover, he employs the figurative devices of metaphor, symbol and imagery to give poetic significance to prose dialect. In many texts he embeds a series of metaphors – many are extended – which possess particular connotations in the societies in which individual plays are set. Most importantly, such figurative devices serve to support the tragic conflicts of the social themes that are the central focus of Miller's plays.

Indeed, poetic elements pervade the Miller canon. For example, in *All My Sons*, allusions, symbols and images place the themes of sacrifice and redemption in a religious context. In *Death of a Salesman* the extended metaphors of sports and business convey Willy Loman's struggle to achieve the American Dream in a capitalist economic system. In *The Crucible* poetic language illustrates the conflicts polarising the Salem community; images, symbols and metaphors, conceived in series of opposites, signify the Salemites' polarised view of a world of extremes. Heat and cold, white and black, light and dark, soft and hard connote the existence of the ultimate opposites: good and evil. In fact, Miller acknowledged that he was 'up to his neck' in writing many of his early full-length and radio plays in verse. When he graduated from the University of Michigan and started his work with the Federal Theatre Project in 1938, he wrote *The Golden Years*, a verse play about Montezuma. Later he explained that his first drafts for *Death of a Salesman* and all of *The Crucible* were written in verse. Miller regretted his failure to do this in *The American Clock*.

*A View from the Bridge* contains several poetic devices that heighten the conflicts and themes of the play. Consistent with Miller's use of language throughout his work, these poetic devices rely heavily on the tension between literal and

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figurative meanings, and they often include a high level of dramatic irony. Many of Alfieri's speeches to the audience at the beginning and end of scenes use figurative devices. In his opening monologue in Act One, he uses images of the sea and blood to connect the Brooklyn immigrant society to its roots in Sicily – especially Sicily of the past. He uses the sea of New York harbour to make this connection:

But this is Red Hook, not Sicily. This is the slum that faces the bay on the seaward side of Brooklyn Bridge. This is the gullet of New York swallowing the tonnage of the world. And now we are quite civilized, quite American. (4)

Alfieri speaks of a case coming every few years that goes beyond the petty legal squabbles he usually arbitrates, and when he hears this kind of trouble

The flat air in my office suddenly washes in with the green scent of the sea, the dust in this air is blown away and the thought comes that in some Caesar's year, in Calabria perhaps or on the cliff at Syracuse, another lawyer, quite differently dressed, heard the same complaint and sat there as powerless as I, and watched it run its bloody course. (4)

The images of sea and blood in this speech establish a number of parallels between the old and new worlds: the green scent of the sea in New York harbour echoes the Mediterranean sea surrounding Italy. And such images emblematised just how deeply rooted Eddie's fate is in a mythic past.

Alfieri's monologue ends with another sea image that reinforces Eddie's connection to an older world: 'This one's name was Eddie Carbone, a longshoreman working the docks from Brooklyn Bridge to the breakwater where the open sea begins.' Thus, the 'bridge' of the play's title gives us the 'view' for this story. From the Brooklyn Bridge one can see all the docks in Red Hook where Eddie works as a longshoreman. The metaphoric view, however, extends beyond the breakwater – because Eddie's destiny comes

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from Italy across the same luminous sea. The destiny of his ancestors spans a bridge between the old and new worlds. The span here further suggests the bridge of a ship, the lookout from which a ship is commanded as it sails between the two worlds.

Alfieri conveys that Eddie's case must run its 'bloody' course, an image that has a powerful literal and figurative meaning in the play. Miller emphasises this by repeating the narrator's statement a number of times, heightening the figurative use of language through the device of repetition. For Sicilians blood is the unifying factor in society, connecting the individual to his immediate family, as well as to his societal family. Eddie violates such blood relationships: he violates his paternal relation to Catherine; he violates his conjugal relationship with Beatrice; he violates Rodolpho's masculinity; and he fatally violates his immigrant society by informing on 'illegals' to the authorities. Both Marco and Eddie want to avenge their 'blood' and their vengeance operates literally and figuratively. As Marco says to Alfieri, 'He degraded my brother. My blood.'

At the play's climax, the image of blood is particularly effective. Rodolpho tries to make peace with Eddie before Marco comes for revenge, but Eddie refuses because he is furious at Marco for having sullied his name in front of the neighbourhood. When Eddie rebuffs Rodolpho, Beatrice says: 'Only blood is good? He kissed your hand!' Of course, Beatrice refers to the literal shedding of blood, the vendetta which may be avoided only by Eddie, Rodolpho and Marco's rapprochement. However, in the ensuing dialogue blood assumes an additional symbolic meaning:

**Beatrice** You want somethin' else, Eddie, and you can never have her!

**Catherine** (*in horror*) B!

**Eddie** (*shocked, horrified, his fists clenching*) Beatrice!  
*Marco appears outside, walking toward the door from a distant point.*

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**Beatrice** (*crying out, weeping*) The truth is not as bad as blood, Eddie! I'm tellin' you the truth – and tell her goodbye for ever!

**Eddie** (*crying out in agony*) That's what you think of me – that I would have such thoughts? (77)

In this scene Beatrice refers to blood as 'bloodshed'. However, because she juxtaposes blood with the truth of Eddie's desire for Catherine, it assumes a figurative meaning as well. For Eddie's desire for Catherine is a violation of the blood that courses through his relationships with his family. His violation tragically severs the responsibility to his own blood.

The image of 'tunnels' is also significant, and Alfieri uses this more than once. In his commentary at the end of Act One, he describes Eddie's eyes 'like tunnels; my first thought was that he had committed a crime'. As Eddie moves towards his tragic fate, the light of his eyes indicates the tunnel in which he is trapped. Alfieri describes a passion which 'had moved into his body, like a stranger'. Of course, this passion has many meanings for Eddie: his desire for Catherine, his jealousy, his hatred – even attraction – for Rodolpho.

When Eddie returns to Alfieri's office in Act Two, the imagery of a tunnel stresses Eddie's march toward his fate. In his commentary Alfieri says: 'I will never forget how dark the room became when he looked at me; his eyes were like tunnels. I kept wanting to call the police, but nothing had happened.' This is a crucial scene because Alfieri's mention of a possible crime shows how the law works on several levels in the play: natural law, the Sicilian code and civil law. Eddie is about to snitch: the very act at the end of the dark tunnel when his tale has run its bloody course. Eddie's real tragedy is that he does not recognise the tunnel he is walking through.

In addition to the figurative language that Alfieri uses in his speeches, other images, symbols and metaphors are scattered throughout the play. These devices are rooted in the language of Sicilian-American society, a unique idiom

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expressing personal, familial, social, religious and cultural codes dictating an individual's behaviour and with which Eddie is in perilous conflict. Images, symbols and metaphors, among them the Madonna, angels and the innocence of a child appear throughout the play to indicate Eddie's struggle with these moral codes.

Eddie's awareness of Catherine's sexuality is often expressed by the iconic female image of the Madonna, the mother of Jesus. In Act One, Eddie first uses this religious allusion to convey his awe at Catherine's beauty:

With your hair that way you look like a madonna, you know that? You're the madonna type. (*She doesn't look at him, but continues ladling out food onto the plates.*) You wanna go to work, heh, Madonna? (13)

The allusion works on many complicated levels in the text. The Madonna, as the mother of Jesus, possesses a purity, chastity and virginity that contrasts with the immoral sexual attractiveness which Eddie associates with high-heeled shoes and actresses. Eddie would like to preserve Catherine's chastity, which could be threatened by young men if she flaunts her physical beauty by wearing high heels and calling out of windows. In Act One, Eddie repeats his concern for Catherine's chastity when he warns Rodolpho that he does not want her to go to Times Square because 'it's full of tramps over there'. Yet Eddie's wish to keep Catherine's virginity intact is juxtaposed by his physical desire for her, which ironically would destroy her purity. His physical urge is clearly indicated later in the play when he kisses her passionately in Act Two. The Madonna image has powerful religious connections for Italians, which expands Eddie's violation of his cultural codes still further. For not only does Eddie's violation of Catherine, as her surrogate father, border on incest, his violation of her as a Madonna figure is also a grievous sin.

The Madonna image also has powerful psychological connotations in the play. Normally applied to a husband's feelings for his wife, the so-called 'Madonna Complex' operates in an intriguing manner in *A View from the Bridge*.



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Eddie obviously possesses potent feelings for Catherine that resemble the Madonna complex; however, Eddie and Beatrice's marriage bears scrutiny in this vein. Eddie's inability to sleep with Beatrice may be explained easily by the Madonna complex, but his sexual feelings are complicated. Moreover, the Madonna complex maintains that a husband's sexual inadequacy with his wife occurs as a result of her becoming a mother. The one-act and two-act plays offer different versions of this. In the one-act play, Eddie and Beatrice have two children; in the two-act play, references to the children have been cut. This editing has a powerful effect on how we read the images. Because Beatrice and Eddie are childless in the two-act version, they have put all their parental feelings into Catherine. In a sense, this magnifies Eddie's incestuous attraction. And because Eddie is so consumed with Rodolpho's masculinity, his own infertility somehow magnifies his inadequacy, especially for a man from a macho Italian culture.

Another image, used both literally and figuratively, is that of riding. In Act One, Rodolpho romantically and humorously describes how he pushes taxis and horse carriages up the hill in his Italian home town, and how he desires to own a motorcycle so he can become a messenger. Such modes of transport become figurative in the next scene when Eddie and Beatrice await Rodolpho and Catherine's return from a date. Eddie is worried that 'he's takin' her for a ride', a slang term for taking advantage of her that includes significant sexual connotations. Moreover, Beatrice's response, 'All right, that's her ride', is ironic since she senses Eddie's desire for her niece. Eddie's sexual feelings for Catherine are challenged by Rodolpho, and for Catherine to become Rodolpho's, he must take her for the metaphorical ride, not Eddie.

The image of riding continues in the same context later in the play when Eddie tells Catherine his suspicion that Rodolpho is only 'bowin' to his passport'. Eddie describes him as 'a hit-and-run guy, baby; he's got bright lights in his head, Broadway'. With the 'hit-and-run guy' image, Eddie vividly depicts Rodolpho as a driver intent on running down

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Catherine's chastity, then leaving the scene. However, when Catherine denies this, Eddie says, 'He could be picked up any day here and he's back pushin' taxis up the hill.' Ironically Eddie applies the literal meaning to the image, exhibiting how Miller can create significant tension between the denotative and connotative meaning of his words.

Eddie's conversation with Alfieri in his law office in Act One contains many images with various negative and positive connotations about women, all of which connect to indicate Eddie's growing crisis and conflicted feelings towards Catherine and Rodolpho. Early in the play Eddie has made references to actresses, chorus girls, high-heeled shoes, stereotypical blondes and the film star Greta Garbo to describe the types of women he does not want Catherine to emulate because of the way they flaunt their sexuality. His desire to preserve Catherine's chastity is clear from the outset of the play. He does not like Catherine to wear high-heeled shoes because he associates high-heeled shoes with the kind of shoes worn by actresses in the movies and, perhaps, with whores in Sicily. Eddie obviously associates movie actresses with female immorality. The image of shoes reveals his actual concern with the sexual allure they give, and Eddie's desire for Catherine is at the core of this allure. Eddie does not want Catherine desired by other men like some Garbo-esque, screen-star icon. He does not want her to attract sexual attention, as he says, 'You're walkin' wavy.' Eddie attempts to suppress Catherine's budding sexuality; ironically, he not only notices it, but is enticed by it. Yet his physical attraction to her is a violation of one of the supreme moral codes at the centre of this play.

In his attempt to feminise Rodolpho, Eddie describes Rodolpho's blond hair as 'platinum', which echoes his previous descriptions of women. Eddie also says about Rodolpho: 'I mean if you close the paper fast – you could blow him over.' This recalls Rodolpho's rendition of 'Paper Doll' and his previous complaint to Beatrice about the dockworkers' nickname. In emasculating Rodolpho, Eddie figuratively attempts to make him into a paper doll.

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Eddie uses a particularly revealing image when he describes Rodolpho sewing a dress for Catherine: 'I mean he looked so sweet there, like an angel – you could kiss him he was so sweet.' The angel comparison echoes many of the previous images and allusions. Certainly an angel recalls the Madonna image, for an angel typically possesses the same whiteness and purity. Moreover, traditionally angels are often depicted as blonde and sexless. Yet the angel imagery also shows the complicated nature of Eddie's feelings for Rodolpho. Eddie ironically reveals the same attraction to Rodolpho as he does towards Catherine. The angel image connotes the same sanctity as the Madonna image, both of which are juxtaposed with the physical desire, culminating in a kiss. Although he attempts to emasculate Rodolpho, Eddie paradoxically perceives him as a sexual threat, as when he says, 'When I think of that guy layin' his hands on her I could –.' However, Eddie has confused sexuality and masculinity. Blind to his own desires, he merely sees Rodolpho as a criminal: 'He takes and puts his dirty filthy hands on her like a goddam thief.' Eddie's blindness is indicated when Alfieri says, 'She can't marry you, can she?' and he furiously replies, 'What are you talkin' about, marry me! I don't know what the hell you're talkin' about!' Ironically, the initial use of 'angel' in the play is when Beatrice describes Eddie in the very first scene as an 'angel' for agreeing to take her cousins in as illegal boarders.

Finally, the play consistently uses terms like 'baby', 'little girl' and 'big girl' to describe Catherine. In the first scene of the play, Eddie tells Catherine, 'You're a baby, you don't understand these things.' He then says, 'You're gettin' to be a big girl now.' Beatrice repeatedly addresses her niece as 'baby', but argues with Eddie when he is reluctant to allow her to take the secretarial job, saying 'She's no baby no more' – indicating the essence of the conflict. Eddie, almost in tears after giving her permission to work, laments, 'I guess I just never figured on one thing . . . That you would ever grow up.'

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**Characters***Eddie*

Eddie Carbone is one of Arthur Miller's more complicated and puzzling protagonists. After writing the one-act version of the play Miller said that the meaning of Eddie's fate still remained a mystery to him. Concerned about telling the 'myth-like march of the tale' without embellishment, Miller remained unsettled by Eddie's tragedy. In revising the play for its two-act version, Miller thought that the addition of significant psychological and behavioural details, including Beatrice's and Catherine's viewpoints, would render the play not only more human, warmer and less remote, but also provide a 'clearer statement'. Miller noted that the two-act play made it 'more possible now to relate [Eddie's] actions to our own and thus to understand ourselves a little better not only as psychological entities, but as we connect to our fellows and our long past together.'

Eddie's complex personality manifests itself in a series of contradictory actions that violate the codes by which he lives. We are shocked and appalled by much of what he does: his feelings for Catherine are nothing if not incestuous, and his disregard for Beatrice violates their marriage vows. His attack on Rodolpho involves several motives, and his betrayal of the cousins to the immigration authorities is inexcusable.

Yet Alfieri clearly judges that 'he was a good a man as he had to be in a life that was hard and even'. This goodness must be considered in any evaluation of his character. He has raised Catherine, he agrees to put up the 'submarines' who are, after all, Beatrice's cousins not his, just as Catherine is Beatrice's biological niece. He is a decent provider and a hard worker. There is even a reference to Beatrice having taken in relatives after her father's house burned down, causing Eddie to sleep on the floor. He is genuinely moved by the prospect of taking in the 'submarines', even while acknowledging the substantial legal risks this involves.

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All of his actions in the play are motivated by what he believes are the best interests of Catherine. His concern about her safety in a new job and her attractiveness to young men seems initially appropriate and paternal. Nor is he portrayed as intractable: he gives in to Beatrice's and Catherine's pleas and allows her to take the job she is offered. His sense of duty is laudable: he promised Catherine's mother on her deathbed to raise her and he has. All of this kindness is compromised when he is unwilling, indeed unable, to see any other point of view once he sets himself the task of protecting Catherine.

Alfieri describes a passion that 'had moved into his body, like a stranger'. Eddie Carbone is a man in whom passion outweighs reason. He does not understand his desire, even when it is pointed out to him. When Alfieri suspects that Eddie is on the verge of an act of betrayal, he warns him of the consequences: 'You won't have a friend in the world, Eddie! Even those who understand will turn against you . . . Put it out of your mind!' Despite the warning, Eddie makes his fateful telephone call. He doesn't even seem to recognise the impulse that leads to his kissing Rodolpho.

One way to understand Eddie is to see him in the context of his culture. Revising the play for the London version, Miller sought to place Eddie squarely in relation to the cultural codes of his Sicilian-American environment of Red Hook in the mid-1950s. Eddie's world is insular, personal, familial, social and religious. For the transplanted Sicilians, these are the unifying factors that determine their relationship to the docks and the streets of their neighbourhood, even to their own homes. When Eddie crosses these boundaries he is doomed.

Eddie belongs to a long line of Miller characters who want to protect the dignity of their names. In Miller's first Broadway hit *All My Sons* (1947), Joe Keller's pride as a self-made businessman is proclaimed in the sign over his warehouse: Keller and Son. In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman's search for dignity is part of the play's climax: 'I am Willy Loman and you are Biff Loman.' In *The Crucible*, John Proctor refuses to let his signed confession be posted on the

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Salem church door: 'Because it is my name.' In *A View from the Bridge*, Eddie Carbone similarly wants his good name back. Although Alfieri's final monologue mourns him, 'I admit it – with a certain . . . alarm', Miller said that 'Eddie is still not a man to weep over'.

Eddie's situation in the play can be tied to Miller's original intention of telling the tale as a Greek myth, linking the protagonist's story to ancient, even savage, roots. Is not myth and legend our struggle to explain inexplicable dark human desires and instincts? Aristotle tells us to pity and fear, pity out of human compassion and fear because the same fate can happen to all of us. Miller believed that the two-act play made it 'more possible now to relate [Eddie's] actions to our own and thus to understand ourselves a little better not only as psychological entities, but as we connect to our fellows and our long past together'. As a tragic figure Eddie cries out for personal dignity, even though he is in wrongful pursuit of a dignity he has himself never really understood.

*Beatrice*

Beatrice is depicted as the devoted wife of Eddie and mother figure to Catherine. Her genuine goodness and generosity is shown by how she has raised Catherine, her sister's child. Initially in the play, Beatrice's character seems stereotypical: she is concerned about the cooking and the cleanliness of the apartment. She exhibits the appropriate deference to Eddie as husband and man of the house, seeking his permission and approval for Catherine's job and her cousins' stay in the apartment. She genuinely means it when she calls him an angel and proclaims that he will be blessed for his good deeds.

However, this is not to suggest that Beatrice is a flat, one-dimensional character. She has considerable depth and complexity and the ability to respond sensibly to the conflicts that erupt when her cousins arrive. Beatrice is often a mediator. At the beginning of the play she successfully convinces Eddie that Catherine, now seventeen, is no longer

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a child and that he must let her grow up. When Eddie objects to Catherine and Rodolpho's growing relationship, Beatrice tries to persuade him that it is time he let her go. In the final scene of Act One, she is particularly adept at reading the tension between Eddie, Rodolpho and Catherine; she encourages Rodolpho and Catherine to dance, gently probes Marco about his wife, moderates Eddie's scoffing at Rodolpho and questions why Eddie needs to teach Rodolpho to box. In Act Two she makes the arrangements to move Rodolpho and Marco to another apartment.

Beatrice is perceptive about the complexity of Eddie and Catherine's relationship. She is aware of both Catherine's and Eddie's complex feelings for one another. Her dimension as a character is also evident in the way Miller depicts Beatrice and Eddie's sexual relationship in the two-act play. Beatrice has needs and desires of her own. She needs Catherine out of the household in order to preserve her own marriage. Catherine's sexual maturity coincides with Eddie's apparent impotence. Beatrice wants her husband back as a lover but Eddie's physical attraction to Catherine interferes with Beatrice's sex life.

Ultimately Beatrice chooses to side with her husband when Eddie won't allow her to attend Catherine's wedding. However, in the climactic scene when Catherine tells Eddie that he belongs in the garbage, Beatrice shows enormous awareness of the role they all share in the tragedy, declaring: 'Then we all belong in the garbage. You and me, too. Don't say that. Whatever happened we all done it, and don't you ever forget it, Catherine.' She is the only one who understands the responsibility they all share in the events that unfold.

*Catherine*

Catherine is a character who develops her own strength during the course of the play. In the first scenes, she conveys an innocence that belies her seventeen years. She is compliant and deferential, particularly to Eddie. Yet the

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play begins exactly at the moment when Catherine is coming of age, and she is aware of her budding femininity and womanhood. Her desire to take a secretarial job indicates her search for the independence of adulthood. She is clearly devoted to Eddie, her surrogate father, and still seeks his permission, approval and affirmation in most aspects of her life.

Her change from child to adult is swift. Initially her innocence is evident in her awe at Rodolpho's blond hair and her naïve questions about life in Italy. She is immediately attracted to him but once they establish a serious relationship, she begins her separation from Eddie, the centre of the play's conflict. In the scene when Eddie suggests that Rodolpho is only using her to obtain a passport, she rejects his suggestion: 'I don't believe it and I wish to hell you'd stop it.' The final scene of Act One, when Catherine purposefully and provocatively dances with Rodolpho, is the final physical manifestation of her selfhood as a woman.

The first scene of Act Two is crucial. In Catherine's conversation with Rodolpho she shows a sensitivity to Eddie's needs as a man, and a remarkable perception that Beatrice does not provide for them. Underlying Catherine's speech is the suggestion of sexual awareness. Her own sexual needs will be fulfilled by Rodolpho. Catherine is even complicit in the loss of her virginity; she initiates their lovemaking when she says to Rodolpho 'teach me . . . I don't know anything', underlining also her inexperience. Catherine and Rodolpho's awareness of their own sexuality magnifies even further the shock of Eddie's kiss, which occurs moments later. Just before this occurs, Catherine expresses an awareness of her newly found maturity when she says, 'Eddie, I'm not gonna be a baby any more.' The image of her as a baby contrasts sharply with her physical experience as a woman. Eddie's kiss is therefore dramatic – the physical sign of his struggle to love her as a child/baby and desire her as a woman.



*Rodolpho*

Rodolpho is the younger of the two ‘submarines’ and his role in the play is in contrast to that of his brother Marco in many ways. With no family in Italy to support, he has no responsibilities and has come to indulge himself in the American dream of opportunity. He has the idealism and spirit of youth and sees possibilities in all things. He enjoys life and loves to share his joy with others. The playwright details the generous spirit of this blond Italian: his singing in the hotel in Italy, cooking for the men at sea, singing on the Red Hook docks – all of which Eddie neither appreciates nor understands. Rodolpho proclaims his intention to become an American citizen and return to Italy a rich man. Catherine is immediately attracted to Rodolpho’s *joie de vivre* and he is equally attracted to her. Their young love is genuine – a result of his awe at this new world of New York with its movies, theatres and night life, and her wonder at the cultural difference of Rodolpho’s life in Italy, with its lemons, fountains and old world charm.

Like Catherine, Rodolpho is subject to change. He possesses a seriousness which tempers his natural inclination to be fun-loving, and he exhibits appropriate deference to and respect for Eddie, who has taken him in. The turning point in Rodolpho’s development comes in the final scene of Act One which occurs late one evening after dinner. Eddie questions Marco about the sexual fidelity of wives back in Italy; he does this to emphasise to both Marco and Rodolpho that American girls like Catherine are not sexually ‘easy’. He again complains about Rodolpho’s lack of respect in keeping Catherine out late. Marco initially reinforces Eddie’s position by telling Rodolpho that he must obey his host. When Catherine asks Rodolpho to dance, he agrees to do so only reluctantly, for he fears Eddie’s reaction. Eddie seethes as he watches the couple engage in this most basic of mating rituals. Eddie reacts by coaxing Rodolpho into a boxing match, intended as an aggressive display of his superior physical strength in his own territory. Eddie strikes a staggering blow. The fight ends and Eddie seems satisfied – for the moment. But then a defiant

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Rodolpho immediately turns to Catherine and asks her to dance, a direct challenge to Eddie's authority as well as his perceived physical strength.

Rodolpho's true character emerges in the final scene of the play. Despite the way Eddie has treated him, he warns him that Marco is coming to wreak vengeance. Rodolpho takes responsibility for his wrongdoing, wishes to apologise and even goes so far as to kiss Eddie's hand in deference, proclaiming, 'I have made all our troubles.' Clearly, Rodolpho, steeped in the Italian mores more than Eddie, understands the coming confrontation with Marco can only result in bloodshed.

*Marco*

As opposed to the younger Rodolpho, Marco is the serious, dark and brooding brother. He has come to America because the poor economic conditions of post-war Italy have made it difficult for him to support his wife and three children, one of whom is seriously ill. Marco is grateful and appropriately deferential to Eddie, and he often reminds Rodolpho to display the same respect. Marco's situation is made clear on the first night he arrives. He is moved to tears when he realises that he will immediately find work on the docks and can begin to send money back to his wife right away. He offers his hand in thanks to Eddie. In contrast to the entertainment Rodolpho provides on the piers (according to his fellow longshoremen), Marco works like a bull unloading cargo ships.

Marco is nonetheless a force to be reckoned with, especially when crossed. This is exhibited at the conclusion of Act One when Eddie defeats Rodolpho in the boxing match. Eddie has his own tactic turned on him when Marco challenges him to life one leg of a chair with a single hand and Eddie is unable to do so. By raising the chair over Eddie's head, Marco conveys a threat to Eddie: that he will protect his brother, his blood, should Eddie overstep the line again. His action foreshadows his challenge to Eddie at the end of the play.

*Alfieri*

Miller's plays are full of references to jail, crime and the law. Several of his plays contain lawyers either as major or minor characters. The most notable examples are George Deever in *All My Sons*, Bernard in *Death of a Salesman*, Danforth in *The Crucible*, Quentin in *After the Fall* and Tom Wilson in *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*. In Miller such figures often serve to elevate the moral crisis at the heart of a particular play.

Alfieri in *A View from the Bridge* is the moral arbiter of the law. He plays a dual role, functioning as both narrator and participant in the action. As the narrator of the play, he comments on the action and the audience is meant to view the events through Alfieri's eyes. Alfieri could be said to establish the 'view' to which the play's title refers. His opening monologue indicates that he acts in many ways as a 'bridge': he is a bridge between the old and new worlds, a bridge between the audience and the action, and a bridge between the various characters.

However, this is not meant to suggest that we should make the same judgments as Alfieri does. For he, too, clearly must be seen as a member of the Sicilian-American culture in which he lives. He readily acknowledges the status that his legal profession gives him in the Brooklyn neighbourhood. Unlike Eddie, Beatrice and Catherine, he was born in Italy: he is a genuine immigrant who truly understands the connections between the old and new world. As narrator he signals the importance and dimension of Eddie Carbone's story and he struggles hard to understand Eddie's actions and fate. Eddie is more than a client – for Alfieri he represents something almost larger than life itself.

As a participant in the action of the play, Alfieri is both father-confessor and arbiter of the law. Miller gives him three important scenes: with Eddie in his office in Act One, again with Eddie in his office in Act Two and in the detention centre offering advice to Marco. In his role as a lawyer, Alfieri represents American civil law, but he is also crucial in showing how civil law and its justice conflict with the morals operating in the Sicilian-American society.

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**Productions***American and English stage productions*

The one-act version of *A View from the Bridge* opened on Broadway on 29 September 1955 at the Coronet Theatre (now the Eugene O'Neill Theatre) in a double-bill with *A Memory of Two Mondays*. Directed by Martin Ritt, the cast included Van Heflin as Eddie, Eileen Heckart as Beatrice, Gloria Marlowe as Catherine, Jack Warden as Marco and Richard Davalos as Rodolpho. The set was designed by Boris Aronson and the production ran for 149 performances.

The relatively short run for *A View from the Bridge* was disappointment for Miller, following the equally short run of *The Crucible* in 1953. The reviews were mixed. Brooks Atkinson recognised that the play had enough powerful material for a 'forceful drama', but concluded that it did not quite measure up to the level of tragedy. Despite such reviews, Miller won his third Drama Desk Award.

Miller recognised that he was not fully focused on the production. Distracted by his relationship with Marilyn Monroe and his impending divorce, he remembered that he could not concentrate during the casting calls. He assumed that good actors could play most of the roles; he realised later that some of the actors were miscast. Van Heflin's preoccupation with conveying the mannerisms and speaking in accents of an Italian longshoreman kept him from 'feeling' his part as Eddie. J. Carrol Nash was equally troubled with portraying Alfieri. Miller also recognised that he had not fully explored the roles Eddie, Catherine and Beatrice play and, their parts underwritten, they seemed to appear in an 'academic and irrelevant story of revenge' (*Timebends*, 354).

Miller revised the play into its two-act for the London production where it was first performed at the New Watergate Club at the Comedy Theatre on 11 October 1956. The cast featured Anthony Quayle as Eddie, Mary Ure as Catherine, Megs Jenkins as Beatrice, Brian Bedford as Rodolpho, Ian Bannen as Marco, Richard Harris as

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Louis and Michael Gwynn as Alfieri. The play opened only after some considerable controversy. The Lord Chamberlain refused to grant permission for *A View from the Bridge* to be performed because he considered a homosexual theme to be inappropriate for the public good. The producers came up with the solution of making the audience members of the Comedy Theatre's New Watergate Club as part of their ticket price. The production was therefore considered private and could be performed without any restrictions.

The reviews of the London production were enthusiastic. The *Guardian's* Philip Hope-Wallace called it 'deathly earnest'. Kenneth Tynan declared the play 'just short of being a masterpiece', and he found Peter Brook's production 'uncannily good'. The *Daily Mail's* Cecil Wilson said that the play was 'savage, searing and spellbinding', Quayle giving 'the performance of his life'.

In casting for the London production, Miller was concerned, as he was in New York, with the ability of the actors, this time British, to speak with the deep Sicilian-American accents required for realistic characterisation. Quayle and Ure worked out an accent which Miller described as 'never heard on earth before', but they did convince London audiences that they were speaking Brooklynesse. Under Peter Brooks's direction, *A View from the Bridge* became in Miller's words, 'a heroic play of great emotional force, the working-class characters larger than life, grand and rather strange' (*Timebends*, 431).

The American premiere of the two-act version took place in 1965 in a successful off-Broadway production at the Sheridan Square Playhouse in New York. The play opened on 28 January and ran for 780 performances. Robert Duval starred as Eddie Carbone and Jon Voight played Rodolpho. The show was produced and directed by Ulu Grosbard, and Dustin Hoffman, who played Willy Loman in the 1984 Broadway revival of *Death of a Salesman*, was the assistant director. The play won two Obie Awards, for Distinguished Performance by Duval and Best Direction by Grosbard.

Miller felt that this production 'magically' caught the play's 'spirit'. Duvall said that Eddie Carbone was his

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favourite role and *A View from the Bridge* the 'greatest play': 'People tend to overlook it. It's my Othello – as great a part, to me, as Othello.' The reviews were enthusiastic: 'Robert Duvall realizes the role of Eddie, the longshoreman whose protective love of his niece turns incestuous, more completely, I think, than any actor who's ever played it,' wrote Norman Nadel in the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* (29 January 1965). In the *New York Post* of the same date Richard Watts wrote, 'In the crucial role of the embittered Eddie, Robert Duvall is especially fine in suggesting the attempted sense of fun in a man totally without it.'

The two-act version of *A View from the Bridge* did not have its Broadway premiere until 1983. Directed by Arvin Brown and starring Tony LoBianco as Eddie, the play opened on 3 February 1983 at the Ambassador Theater, where it repeated the 1955 run of the one-act version of 149 performances before closing on 12 June. The reviews were glowing. Frank Rich in the *New York Times* described it as a 'stunning revival . . . a much-needed evening of electric American drama'. He praised 'the shrewd and forceful direction of Arvin Brown and the tumultuous star performance of Tony LoBianco'. The production won the 1983 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play.

In 1987 Alan Ayckbourn directed a major London revival at the National Theatre. The play opened on 12 February 1987 at the Cottesloe, and transferred to the Aldwych Theatre in London's West End on 3 November 1987, closing its year-long run on 20 February 1988.

Michael Gambon's portrayal of Eddie Carbone and Ayckbourn's direction received universal praise among the London critics. 'In any critic's life there are certain red-letter nights. The new production of *A View from the Bridge* at the Cottesloe is empathetically one of them. In the first place it shows Michael Gambon shaking hands with greatness. But Alan Ayckbourn's immaculately detailed production also banishes any doubts about Arthur Miller's play and vindicates its claim to be a modern tragedy' (*Guardian*, 14 February 1987). 'It remains one of the great productions of our time not only because of Michael

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Gambon's towering central performance but because Ayckbourn establishes the vital Miller connection between the tragic hero and the moral laws of the tribal community' (*Guardian*, 5 November 1987). 'It is hard to believe that there ever has been, or perhaps ever will be, a better production of Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*' (*Punch*, 18 November 1987). Gambon won the 1983 Olivier Award for Best Actor.

Another major Broadway revival opened on 14 December 1997 at the Criterion Center Stage Right in a Roundabout Theatre Company production that later transferred to the Neil Simon Theatre. Directed by Michael Mayer, the cast included Anthony LaPaglia as Eddie, Allison Janney as Beatrice, Brittany Murphy as Catherine and Stephen Spinella as Alfieri. The production ran for 239 performances and won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play; LaPaglia won the Tony Award for Best Actor in a Play. The production also received the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Revival of a Play, Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play for Janney, and Outstanding Direction of a Play for Mayer. The reviews were enthusiastic. Ben Brantley in the *New York Times* described the production as a 'first-rate new revival' . . . with a cast that approaches perfection . . . Under Mr Mayer's finely calibrated direction, this production seems to meet every requisite Mr Miller might desire. The correlation with classical tragedy is directly evoked by David Gallo's amphitheatre-inspired set, with curved tiers of steps overlooking the circle where the principal action takes place. The sense of a judgmental community, which Mr Miller insists is central to the play, is vividly embodied by the large ensemble of extras who fill the stage between scenes. And Kenneth Posner's shadowy lighting seems to locate the emotions the characters often don't dare express.'

Another major London revival opened on 5 February 2009 at the Duke of York's Theatre, directed by Lindsay Posner. The production featured Ken Stott as Eddie, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio as Beatrice, Hayley Atwell as Catherine and Harry Lloyd as Rodolpho. It closed on

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16 May 2009. Michael Billington in the *Guardian* described it as a ‘perfectly decent production’ but noted that Posner ‘treats the play as the tragedy of a doomed individual’, rather than ‘a portrait of a community’. He took issue with Christopher Oram’s design, ‘dominated by a massive tenement providing little space for the teeming street life of Red Hook’. Lizzie Loveridge (*Curtain Up*) was, however, more favourably impressed: ‘With the experience of Lindsay Posner and talented actors Ken Stott and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio in the lead roles, there is very little that can go wrong.’ She, too, saw this production as focusing on the tragedy of an individual: ‘Here Eddie Carbone is an isolated figure, head of his own family rather than a member of the wider Italian American community.’ Benedict Nightingale of *The Times* wrote that, ‘Lindsay Posner’s fine revival goes far towards convincing me that Miller was right to believe he’d written a tragedy, complete with a flawed protagonist.’

A much anticipated Broadway revival of *A View from the Bridge* opened on 24 January 2010 at New York’s Cort Theatre, directed by the veteran Gregory Mosher. Tony Award-winner and film star Liev Schreiber returned to the Broadway stage as Eddie, the accomplished Jessica Hecht was cast as Beatrice, and movie star Scarlett Johansson made her Broadway debut as Catherine. The production received universal rave reviews. John Lahr of *The New Yorker* described the production as ‘a singular astonishment: a kind of theatrical lightning bolt that sizzles and startles . . . one of the best productions of [Miller’s] work that I’ve ever seen.’ Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* judged that Schreiber’s conception of Eddie ‘registers changes in emotional temperature with organic physical precision.’ He also noted that Johansson ‘melts into her character so thoroughly that her nimbus of celebrity disappears.’ Joe Dziemianowicz of the *New York Daily News* singled out Hecht as giving a ‘performance of quiet anguish that ultimately erupts into something shattering.’



*Film adaptations*

Luchino Visconti directed a stage version of *A View from the Bridge* in Italy in 1958. At the same time, he was working on his film *Rocco and his Brothers*, shot in 1960 and released the next year. The film is about an impoverished widow and her five sons, who migrate from a small southern Italian village in search of a better life in Milan. Critics at once recognised the strong influence of *A View from the Bridge* on Visconti's film.

A film directly based on *A View from the Bridge*, titled *Vu du pont*, was released in February 1961. The two-year run of the French stage production convinced the producer Paul Graetz that a movie version would be successful in the so-called 'art-house circuit' popular in the United States and Western Europe. Graetz shot the film simultaneously in English and French. He chose an American, Sidney Lumet, to direct. Exterior scenes were filmed on the streets of New York, and interior scenes in a Paris studio. The film featured a notable cast: Raf Vallone, who starred in the Paris stage production, reprised his role as Eddie. Maureen Stapleton, the renowned stage and screen actress, played Beatrice; Carol Lawrence, widely known for her role as Maria in the original Broadway production of *West Side Story*, was Catherine. Miller's friend, Michigan classmate and fellow playwright Norman Rosten wrote the screenplay. The film, however, opened to mixed reviews, some praising Lumet's superb direction and others describing it as bankrupt of vision. Some felt that the film was unclear on whether the events were naturalistic or tragic.

*Opera*

In 1999 an opera of *A View from the Bridge* with music by William Bolcom and libretto by Arnold Weinstein and Arthur Miller premiered at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The gestation for the opera version of *A View from the Bridge* began with Weinstein, who had taught the play in his classes at Columbia University. After Bolcom wrote the music for Miller's play *Broken Glass* in 1994, Weinstein, with

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Miller's approval, encouraged him to make *A View from the Bridge* his next operatic project.

The work was performed in New York at the Metropolitan Opera in 2002. Bolcom made changes for the New York version, most notably adding two new arias, one each for the characters of Eddie and Beatrice. The New York production premiered on 5 December and received strong reviews. Howard Kissel of the *New York Daily News* judged it as 'one of those rare times when opera is great theater'. Anthony Tommasini of the *New York Times* called it an 'involving and significant work'. The New York production was given a total of eight performances and the final performance on 28 December 2002 was broadcast live over the Chevron Texaco Metropolitan Opera International Radio Network to more than 360 stations in the United States and forty countries around the world.

The production was widely praised for its strong performances: Kim Josephson's robust portrayal of Eddie strongly conveyed his tragic downfall; Catherine Malfitano's vocal range was particularly effective in capturing Beatrice's conflict between her niece and her husband; Isabel Bayrakdarian, in her Met debut, convincingly expressed Catherine's growth from girl to woman. Gregory Turay was outstanding as Rodolpho; his tenor voice frequently moved the audience to applause. His performance of 'New York Lights', when Rodolpho sings a paean about his love for New York City in the first act, is one of the more dramatic moments in the opera. The song received particular notice from music critics as a melody that could be attractive to popular music listeners. Bolcom explained that he conceived the piece as a fusion of Broadway melody and early-twentieth-century Neapolitan songs and the lyrics also mix images from Sicily and New York.

The massive set, designed by Santo Loquasto, who had previously designed the sets and costumes for Miller's 1994 play *Broken Glass*, merged the interior and exterior settings without clear delineation. Steel girders and platforms evoked both the docks where Eddie plied his trade as a longshoreman and the Brooklyn Bridge, with its literal and

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figurative importance in the work. Brick and wood suggested the tenement buildings of the Red Hook neighbourhood. Scrim and projection screens on the back walls of the stage showed images of Sicily, Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Red Hook docks. The set provided the necessary space for the production's large chorus. The chorus, of course, fits Miller's grand scheme to place Eddie among his neighbours in the large Sicilian-American community.

In writing the libretto, Miller incorporated a significant amount of the prose poetry belonging to the original one-act version of *View*, adapting lyrical dialogue to the conventions of operatic music. Since its premiere *A View from the Bridge* has become a regular part of the American operatic repertoire, playing at the Washington National Opera in 2007.

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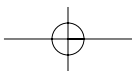
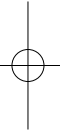
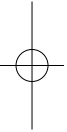
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# **A View from the Bridge**

*A Play in Two Acts*



## **Characters**

**Louis**

**Mike**

**Alfieri**

**Eddie**

**Catherine**

**Beatrice**

**Marco**

**Tony**

**Rodolpho**

**First Immigration Officer**

**Second Immigration Officer**

**Mr Lipari**

**Mrs Lipari**

**Two 'Submarines'**

**Neighbours**



## *Act One*

*The street and house front of a tenement building. The front is skeletal entirely. The main acting area is the living room-dining room of **Eddie's** apartment. It is a worker's flat, clean, sparse, homely. There is a rocker down front; a round dining table at center, with chairs; and a portable phonograph.*

*At back are a bedroom door and an opening to the kitchen; none of these interiors are seen.*

*At the right, forestage, a desk. This is **Mr Alfieri's** law office. There is also a telephone booth. This is not used until the last scenes, so it may be covered or left in view.*

*A stairway leads up to the apartment, and then farther up to the next story, which is not seen.*

*Ramps, representing the street, run upstage and off to right and left.*

*As the curtain rises, **Louis** and **Mike**, longshoremen, are pitching coins against the building at left.*

*A distant foghorn blows.*

*Enter **Alfieri**, a lawyer in his fifties turning gray; he is portly, good-humored, and thoughtful. The two pitchers nod to him as he passes. He crosses the stage to his desk, removes his hat, runs his fingers through his hair, and grinning, speaks to the audience.*

**Alfieri** You wouldn't have known it, but something amusing has just happened. You see how uneasily they nod to me? That's because I am a lawyer. In this neighborhood to meet a lawyer or a priest on the street is unlucky. We're only thought of in connection with disasters, and they'd rather not get too close.

I often think that behind that suspicious little nod of theirs lie three thousand years of distrust. A lawyer means the law, and in Sicily, from where their fathers came, the law has not been a friendly idea since the Greeks were beaten.

I am inclined to notice the ruins in things, perhaps because I was born in Italy . . . I only came here when I was twenty-five.

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In those days, Al Capone, the greatest Carthaginian of all, was learning his trade on these pavements, and Frankie Yale himself was cut precisely in half by a machine gun on the corner of Union Street, two blocks away. Oh, there were many here who were justly shot by unjust men. Justice is very important here.

But this is Red Hook, not Sicily. This is the slum that faces the bay on the seaward side of Brooklyn Bridge. This is the gullet of New York swallowing the tonnage of the world. And now we are quite civilized, quite American. Now we settle for half, and I like it better. I no longer keep a pistol in my filing cabinet.

And my practice is entirely unromantic.

My wife has warned me, so have my friends; they tell me the people in this neighborhood lack elegance, glamour. After all, who have I dealt with in my life? Longshoremen and their wives, and fathers and grandfathers, compensation cases, evictions, family squabbles – the petty troubles of the poor – and yet . . . every few years there is still a case, and as the parties tell me what the trouble is, the flat air in my office suddenly washes in with the green scent of the sea, the dust in this air is blown away and the thought comes that in some Caesar's year, in Calabria perhaps or on the cliff at Syracuse, another lawyer, quite differently dressed, heard the same complaint and sat there as powerless as I, and watched it run its bloody course.

**Eddie** *has appeared and has been pitching coins with the men and is highlighted among them. He is forty – a husky, slightly overweight longshoreman.*

**Alfieri** This one's name was Eddie Carbone, a longshoreman working the docks from Brooklyn Bridge to the breakwater where the open sea begins.

**Alfieri** *walks into darkness.*

**Eddie** *(moving up steps into doorway)* Well, I'll see ya, fellas.

**Catherine** *enters from kitchen, crosses down to window, looks out.*

**Louis** You workin' tomorrow?

## Act One 5

**Eddie** Yeah, there's another day yet on that ship. See ya, Louis.

**Eddie** *goes into the house, as light rises in the apartment.* **Catherine** *is waving to Louis from the window and turns to him.*

**Catherine** Hi, Eddie!

**Eddie** *is pleased and therefore shy about it; he hangs up his cap and jacket.*

**Eddie** Where you goin' all dressed up?

**Catherine** *(running her hands over her skirt)* I just got it. You like it?

**Eddie** Yeah, it's nice. And what happened to your hair?

**Catherine** You like it? I fixed it different. *(Calling to kitchen.)* He's here, B!

**Eddie** Beautiful. Turn around, lemme see in the back. *(She turns for him.)* Oh, if your mother was alive to see you now! She wouldn't believe it.

**Catherine** You like it, huh?

**Eddie** You look like one of them girls that went to college. Where you goin'?

**Catherine** *(taking his arm)* Wait'll B comes in, I'll tell you something. Here, sit down. *(She is walking him to the armchair. Calling offstage.)* Hurry up, will you, B?

**Eddie** *(sitting)* What's goin' on?

**Catherine** I'll get you a beer, all right?

**Eddie** Well, tell me what happened. Come over here, talk to me.

**Catherine** I want to wait till B comes in. *(She sits on her heels beside him.)* Guess how much we paid for the skirt.

**Eddie** I think it's too short, ain't it?

**Catherine** *(standing)* No! not when I stand up.

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**Eddie** Yeah, but you gotta sit down sometimes.

**Catherine** Eddie, it's the style now. (*She walks to show him.*)  
I mean, if you see me walkin' down the street –

**Eddie** Listen, you been givin' me the willies the way you walk down the street, I mean it.

**Catherine** Why?

**Eddie** Catherine, I don't want to be a pest, but I'm tellin' you you're walkin' wavy.

**Catherine** I'm walkin' wavy?

**Eddie** Now don't aggravate me, Katie, you are walkin' wavy! I don't like the looks they're givin' you in the candy store. And with them new high heels on the sidewalk – clack, clack, clack. The heads are turnin' like windmills.

**Catherine** But those guys look at all the girls, you know that.

**Eddie** You ain't 'all the girls'.

**Catherine** (*almost in tears because he disapproves*) What do you want me to do? You want me to –

**Eddie** Now don't get mad, kid.

**Catherine** Well, I don't know what you want from me.

**Eddie** Katie, I promised your mother on her deathbed. I'm responsible for you. You're a baby, you don't understand these things. I mean like when you stand here by the window, wavin' outside.

**Catherine** I was wavin' to Louis!

**Eddie** Listen, I could tell you things about Louis which you wouldn't wave to him no more.

**Catherine** (*trying to joke him out of his warning*) Eddie, I wish there was one guy you couldn't tell me things about!

**Eddie** Catherine, do me a favor, will you? You're gettin' to be a big girl now, you gotta keep yourself more, you can't be

## Act One 7

so friendly, kid. (*Calls.*) Hey, B, what're you doin' in there?  
(*To Catherine.*) Get her in here, will you? I got news for her.

**Catherine** (*starting out*) What?

**Eddie** Her cousins landed.

**Catherine** (*clapping her hands together*) No! (*She turns instantly and starts for the kitchen.*) B! Your cousins!

**Beatrice** *enters, wiping her hands with a towel.*

**Beatrice** (*in the face of Catherine's shout*) What?

**Catherine** Your cousins got in!

**Beatrice** (*astounded, turns to Eddie*) What are you talkin' about? Where?

**Eddie** I was just knockin' off work before and Tony Bereli come over to me; he says the ship is in the North River.

**Beatrice** (*her hands are clasped at her breast; she seems half in fear, half in unutterable joy*) They're all right?

**Eddie** He didn't see them yet, they're still on board. But as soon as they get off he'll meet them. He figures about ten o'clock they'll be here.

**Beatrice** (*sits, almost weak from tension*) And they'll let them off the ship all right? That's fixed, heh?

**Eddie** Sure, they give them regular seamen papers and they walk off with the crew. Don't worry about it, B, there's nothin' to it. Couple of hours they'll be here.

**Beatrice** What happened? They wasn't supposed to be till next Thursday.

**Eddie** I don't know; they put them on any ship they can get them out on. Maybe the other ship they was supposed to take there was some danger – What you cryin' about?

**Beatrice** (*astounded and afraid*) I'm – I just – I can't believe it! I didn't even buy a new table cloth; I was gonna wash the walls –

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**Eddie** Listen, they'll think it's a millionaire's house compared to the way they live. Don't worry about the walls. They'll be thankful. (*To Catherine.*) Whyn't you run down buy a table cloth. Go ahead, here. (*He is reaching into his pocket.*)

**Catherine** There's no stores open now.

**Eddie** (*to Beatrice*) You was gonna put a new cover on the chair.

**Beatrice** I know – well, I thought it was gonna be next week! I was gonna clean the walls, I was gonna wax the floors. (*She stands disturbed.*)

**Catherine** (*pointing upward*) Maybe Mrs Dondero upstairs –

**Beatrice** (*of the table cloth*) No, hers is worse than this one. (*Suddenly.*) My God, I don't even have nothin' to eat for them! (*She starts for the kitchen.*)

**Eddie** (*reaching out and grabbing her arm*) Hey, hey! Take it easy.

**Beatrice** No, I'm just nervous, that's all. (*To Catherine.*) I'll make the fish.

**Eddie** You're savin' their lives, what're you worryin' about the table cloth? They probably didn't see a table cloth in their whole life where they come from.

**Beatrice** (*looking into his eyes*) I'm just worried about you, that's all I'm worried.

**Eddie** Listen, as long as they know where they're gonna sleep.

**Beatrice** I told them in the letters. They're sleepin' on the floor.

**Eddie** Beatrice, all I'm worried about is you got such a heart that I'll end up on the floor with you, and they'll be in our bed.

**Beatrice** All right, stop it.

**Eddie** Because as soon as you see a tired relative, I end up on the floor.

## Act One 9

**Beatrice** When did you end up on the floor?

**Eddie** When your father's house burned down I didn't end up on the floor?

**Beatrice** Well, their house burned down!

**Eddie** Yeah, but it didn't keep burnin' for two weeks!

**Beatrice** All right, look, I'll tell them to go someplace else.  
(*She starts into the kitchen.*)

**Eddie** Now wait a minute. Beatrice! (*She halts. He goes to her.*) I just don't want you bein' pushed around, that's all. You got too big a heart. (*He touches her hand.*) What're you so touchy?

**Beatrice** I'm just afraid if it don't turn out good you'll be mad at me.

**Eddie** Listen, if everybody keeps his mouth shut, nothin' can happen. They'll pay for their board.

**Beatrice** Oh, I told them.

**Eddie** Then what the hell. (*Pause. He moves.*) It's an honor, B. I mean it. I was just thinkin' before, comin' home, suppose my father didn't come to this country, and I was starvin' like them over there . . . and I had people in America could keep me a couple of months? The man would be honored to lend me a place to sleep.

**Beatrice** (*there are tears in her eyes. She turns to Catherine*) You see what he is? (*She turns and grabs Eddie's face in her hands.*) Mmm! You're an angel! God'll bless you. (*He is gratefully smiling.*) You'll see, you'll get a blessing for this!

**Eddie** (*laughing*) I'll settle for my own bed.

**Beatrice** Go, baby, set the table.

**Catherine** We didn't tell him about me yet.

**Beatrice** Let him eat first, then we'll tell him. Bring everything in. (*She hurries Catherine out.*)

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**Eddie** (*sitting at the table*) What's all that about? Where's she goin'?

**Beatrice** Noplace. It's very good news, Eddie. I want you to be happy.

**Eddie** What's goin' on?

**Catherine** *enters with plates, forks.*

**Beatrice** She's got a job.

*Pause.* **Eddie** *looks at Catherine, then back to Beatrice.*

**Eddie** What job? She's gonna finish school.

**Catherine** Eddie, you won't believe it –

**Eddie** No – no, you gonna finish school. What kinda job, what do you mean? All of a sudden you –

**Catherine** Listen a minute, it's wonderful.

**Eddie** It's not wonderful. You'll never get nowheres unless you finish school. You can't take no job. Why didn't you ask me before you take a job?

**Beatrice** She's askin' you now, she didn't take nothin' yet.

**Catherine** Listen a minute! I came to school this morning and the principal called me out of the class, see? To go to his office.

**Eddie** Yeah?

**Catherine** So I went in and he says to me he's got my records, y'know? And there's a company wants a girl right away. It ain't exactly a secretary, it's a stenographer first, but pretty soon you get to be secretary. And he says to me that I'm the best student in the whole class –

**Beatrice** You hear that?

**Eddie** Well why not? Sure she's the best.

**Catherine** I'm the best student, he says, and if I want, I should take the job and the end of the year he'll let me take



## Act One 11

the examination and he'll give me the certificate. So I'll save practically a year!

**Eddie** (*strangely nervous*) Where's the job? What company?

**Catherine** It's a big plumbing company over Nostrand Avenue.

**Eddie** Nostrand Avenue and where?

**Catherine** It's someplace by the Navy Yard.

**Beatrice** Fifty dollars a week, Eddie.

**Eddie** (*to Catherine, surprised*) Fifty?

**Catherine** I swear.

*Pause.*

**Eddie** What about all the stuff you wouldn't learn this year, though?

**Catherine** There's nothin' more to learn, Eddie, I just gotta practice from now on. I know all the symbols and I know the keyboard. I'll just get faster, that's all. And when I'm workin' I'll keep gettin' better and better, you see?

**Beatrice** Work is the best practice anyway.

**Eddie** That ain't what I wanted, though.

**Catherine** Why! It's a great big company –

**Eddie** I don't like that neighborhood over there.

**Catherine** It's a block and half from the subway, he says.

**Eddie** Near the Navy Yard plenty can happen in a block and a half. And a plumbin' company! That's one step over the water front. They're practically longshoremens.

**Beatrice** Yeah, but she'll be in the office, Eddie.

**Eddie** I know she'll be in the office, but that ain't what I had in mind.

**Beatrice** Listen, she's gotta go to work sometime.

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**Eddie** Listen, B, she'll be with a lotta plumbers? And sailors up and down the street? So what did she go to school for?

**Catherine** But it's fifty a week, Eddie.

**Eddie** Look, did I ask you for money? I supported you this long I support you a little more. Please, do me a favor, will ya? I want you to be with different kind of people. I want you to be in a nice office. Maybe a lawyer's office someplace in New York in one of them nice buildings. I mean if you're gonna get outa here then get out; don't go practically in the same kind of neighborhood.

*Pause.* **Catherine** *lowers her eyes.*

**Beatrice** Go, baby, bring in the supper. (**Catherine** *goes out.*) Think about it a little bit, Eddie. Please. She's crazy to start work. It's not a little shop, it's a big company. Some day she could be a secretary. They picked her out of the whole class. (*He is silent, staring down at the tablecloth, fingering the pattern.*) What are you worried about? She could take care of herself. She'll get out of the subway and be in the office in two minutes.

**Eddie** (*somehow sickened*) I know that neighborhood, B, I don't like it.

**Beatrice** Listen, if nothin' happened to her in this neighborhood it ain't gonna happen noplac e else. (*She turns his face to her.*) Look, you gotta get used to it, she's no baby no more. Tell her to take it. (*He turns his head away.*) You hear me? (*She is angering.*) I don't understand you; she's seventeen years old, you gonna keep her in the house all her life?

**Eddie** (*insulted*) What kinda remark is that?

**Beatrice** (*with sympathy but insistent force*) Well, I don't understand when it ends. First it was gonna be when she graduated high school, so she graduated high school. Then it was gonna be when she learned stenographer, so she learned stenographer. So what're we gonna wait for now? I mean it, Eddie, sometimes I don't understand you; they picked her out of the whole class, it's an honor for her.

## Act One 13

**Catherine** enters with food, which she silently sets on the table. After a moment of watching her face, **Eddie** breaks into a smile, but it almost seems that tears will form in his eyes.

**Eddie** With your hair that way you look like a madonna, you know that? You're the madonna type. (*She doesn't look at him, but continues ladling out food onto the plates.*) You wanna go to work, heh, Madonna?

**Catherine** (*softly*) Yeah.

**Eddie** (*with a sense of her childhood, her babyhood, and the years*) All right, go to work. (*She looks at him, then rushes and hugs him.*) Hey, hey! Take it easy! (*He holds her face away from him to look at her.*) What're you cryin' about? (*He is affected by her, but smiles his emotion away.*)

**Catherine** (*sitting at her place*) I just – (*Bursting out.*) I'm gonna buy all new dishes with my first pay! (*They laugh warmly.*) I mean it. I'll fix up the whole house! I'll buy a rug!

**Eddie** And then you'll move away.

**Catherine** No, Eddie!

**Eddie** (*grinning*) Why not? That's life. And you'll come visit on Sundays, then once a month, then Christmas and New Year's, finally.

**Catherine** (*grasping his arm to reassure him and to erase the accusation*) No, please!

**Eddie** (*smiling but hurt*) I only ask you one thing – don't trust nobody. You got a good aunt but she's got too big a heart, you learned bad from her. Believe me.

**Beatrice** Be the way you are, Katie, don't listen to him.

**Eddie** (*to Beatrice – strangely and quickly resentful*) You lived in a house all your life, what do you know about it? You never worked in your life.

**Beatrice** She likes people. What's wrong with that?

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**Eddie** Because most people ain't people. She's goin' to work; plumbers; they'll chew her to pieces if she don't watch out. (*To Catherine.*) Believe me, Katie, the less you trust, the less you be sorry.

**Eddie** *crosses himself and the women do the same, and they eat.*

**Catherine** First thing I'll buy is a rug, heh, B?

**Beatrice** I don't mind. (*To Eddie.*) I smelled coffee all day today. You unloadin' coffee today?

**Eddie** Yeah, a Brazil ship.

**Catherine** I smelled it too. It smelled all over the neighborhood.

**Eddie** That's one time, boy, to be a longshoreman is a pleasure. I could work coffee ships twenty hours a day. You go down in the hold, y'know? It's like flowers, that smell. We'll bust a bag tomorrow, I'll bring you some.

**Beatrice** Just be sure there's no spiders in it, will ya? I mean it. (*She directs this to Catherine, rolling her eyes upward.*) I still remember that spider coming out of that bag he brung home. I nearly died.

**Eddie** You call that a spider? You oughta see what comes outa the bananas sometimes.

**Beatrice** Don't talk about it!

**Eddie** I seen spiders could stop a Buick.

**Beatrice** (*clapping her hands over her ears*) All right, shut up!

**Eddie** (*laughing and taking a watch out of his pocket*) Well, who started with spiders?

**Beatrice** All right, I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. Just don't bring none home again. What time is it?

**Eddie** Quarter nine. (*Puts watch back in his pocket.*)

*They continue eating in silence.*

**Catherine** He's bringin' them ten o'clock, Tony?

## Act One 15

**Eddie** Around, yeah. (*He eats.*)

**Catherine** Eddie, suppose somebody asks if they're livin' here. (*He looks at her as though already she had divulged something publicly. Defensively.*) I mean if they ask.

**Eddie** Now look, baby, I can see we're gettin' mixed up again here.

**Catherine** No, I just mean . . . people'll see them goin' in and out.

**Eddie** I don't care who sees them goin' in and out as long as you don't see them goin' in and out. And this goes for you too, B. You don't see nothin' and you don't know nothin'.

**Beatrice** What do you mean? I understand.

**Eddie** You don't understand; you still think you can talk about this to somebody just a little bit. Now lemme say it once and for all, because you're makin' me nervous again, both of you. I don't care if somebody comes in the house and sees them sleepin' on the floor, it never comes out of your mouth who they are or what they're doin' here.

**Beatrice** Yeah, but my mother'll know –

**Eddie** Sure she'll know, but just don't you be the one who told her, that's all. This is the United States government you're playin' with now, this is the Immigration Bureau. If you said it you knew it, if you didn't say it you didn't know it.

**Catherine** Yeah, but Eddie, suppose somebody –

**Eddie** I don't care what question it is. You – don't – know – nothin'. They got stool pigeons all over this neighborhood they're payin' them every week for information, and you don't know who they are. It could be your best friend. You hear? (*To*

**Beatrice.**) Like Vinny Bolzano, remember Vinny?

**Beatrice** Oh, yeah. God forbid.

**Eddie** Tell her about Vinny. (*To Catherine.*) You think I'm blowin' steam here? (*To Beatrice.*) Go ahead, tell her. (*To*

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**Catherine.**) You was a baby then. There was a family lived next door to her mother, he was about sixteen –

**Beatrice** No, he was no more than fourteen, 'cause I was to his confirmation in Saint Agnes. But the family had an uncle that they were hidin' in the house, and he snitched to the Immigration.

**Catherine** The kid snitched?

**Eddie** On his own uncle!

**Catherine** What, was he crazy?

**Eddie** He was crazy after, I tell you that, boy.

**Beatrice** Oh, it was terrible. He had five brothers and the old father. And they grabbed him in the kitchen and pulled him down the stairs – three flights his head was bouncin' like a coconut. And they spit on him in the street, his own father and his brothers. The whole neighborhood was cryin'.

**Catherine** Ts! So what happened to him?

**Beatrice** I think he went away. (*To Eddie.*) I never seen him again, did you?

**Eddie** (*rises during this, taking out his watch*) Him? You'll never see him no more, a guy do a thing like that? How's he gonna show his face? (*To Catherine, as he gets up uneasily.*) Just remember, kid, you can quicker get back a million dollars that was stole than a word that you gave away. (*He is standing now, stretching his back.*)

**Catherine** Okay, I won't say a word to nobody, I swear.

**Eddie** Gonna rain tomorrow. We'll be slidin' all over the decks. Maybe you oughta put something on for them, they be here soon.

**Beatrice** I only got fish, I hate to spoil it if they ate already. I'll wait, it only takes a few minutes; I could broil it.

**Catherine** What happens, Eddie, when that ship pulls out and they ain't on it, though? Don't the captain say nothin'?

## Act One 17

**Eddie** (*slicing an apple with his pocket knife*) Captain's pieced off, what do you mean?

**Catherine** Even the captain?

**Eddie** What's the matter, the captain don't have to live? Captain gets a piece, maybe one of the mates, piece for the guy in Italy who fixed the papers for them, Tony here'll get a little bite . . .

**Beatrice** I just hope they get work here, that's all I hope.

**Eddie** Oh, the Syndicate'll fix jobs for them; till they pay 'em off they'll get them work every day. It's after the pay-off, then they'll have to scramble like the rest of us.

**Beatrice** Well, it be better than they got there.

**Eddie** Oh sure, well, listen. So you gonna start Monday, heh, Madonna?

**Catherine** (*embarrassed*) I'm supposed to, yeah.

**Eddie** *is standing facing the two seated women. First Beatrice smiles, then Catherine, for a powerful emotion is on him, a childish one and a knowing fear, and the tears show in his eyes – and they are shy before the avowal.*

**Eddie** (*sadly smiling, yet somehow proud of her*) Well . . . I hope you have good luck. I wish you the best. You know that, kid.

**Catherine** (*rising, trying to laugh*) You sound like I'm goin' a million miles!

**Eddie** I know. I guess I just never figured on one thing.

**Catherine** (*smiling*) What?

**Eddie** That you would ever grow up. (*He utters a soundless laugh at himself, feeling his breast pocket of his shirt.*) I left a cigar in my other coat, I think. (*He starts for the bedroom.*)

**Catherine** Stay there! I'll get it for you.

*She hurries out. There is a slight pause, and Eddie turns to Beatrice, who has been avoiding his gaze.*

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**Eddie** What are you mad at me lately?

**Beatrice** Who's mad? (*She gets up, clearing the dishes.*) I'm not mad. (*She picks up the dishes and turns to him.*) You're the one is mad. (*She turns and goes into the kitchen as **Catherine** enters from the bedroom with a cigar and a pack of matches.*)

**Catherine** Here! I'll light it for you! (*She strikes a match and holds it to his cigar. He puffs. Quietly.*) Don't worry about me, Eddie, heh?

**Eddie** Don't burn yourself. (*Just in time she blows out the match.*) You better go in help her with the dishes.

**Catherine** (*turns quickly to the table, and, seeing the table cleared, she says, almost guiltily*) Oh! (*She hurries into the kitchen, and as she exits there.*) I'll do the dishes, B!

*Alone, **Eddie** stands looking toward the kitchen for a moment. Then he takes out his watch, glances at it, replaces it in his pocket, sits in the armchair, and stares at the smoke flowing out of his mouth.*

*The lights go down, then come up on **Alfieri**, who has moved onto the forestage.*

**Alfieri** He was as good a man as he had to be in a life that was hard and even. He worked on the piers when there was work, he brought home his pay, and he lived. And toward ten o'clock of that night, after they had eaten, the cousins came.

*The lights fade on **Alfieri** and rise on the street.*

*Enter **Tony**, escorting **Marco** and **Rodolpho**, each with a valise. **Tony** halts, indicates the house. They stand for a moment looking at it.*

**Marco** (*he is a square-built peasant of thirty-two, suspicious, tender, and quiet-voiced*) Thank you.

**Tony** You're on your own now. Just be careful, that's all. Ground floor.

**Marco** Thank you.

**Tony** (*indicating the house*) I'll see you on the pier tomorrow. You'll go to work.



## Act One 19

**Marco** *nods.* **Tony** continues on walking down the street.

**Rodolpho** This will be the first house I ever walked into in America! Imagine! She said they were poor!

**Marco** Ssh! Come. (*They go to door.*)

**Marco** *knocks.* *The lights rise in the room.* **Eddie** goes and opens the door. Enter **Marco** and **Rodolpho**, removing their caps. **Beatrice** and **Catherine** enter from the kitchen. *The lights fade in the street.*

**Eddie** You Marco?

**Marco** Marco.

**Eddie** Come on in! (*He shakes Marco's hand.*)

**Beatrice** Here, take the bags!

**Marco** (*nods, looks to the women and fixes on Beatrice.* *Crosses to Beatrice*) Are you my cousin?

*She nods. He kisses her hand.*

**Beatrice** (*above the table, touching her chest with her hand*) **Beatrice.** This is my husband, Eddie. (*All nod.*) **Catherine**, my sister Nancy's daughter. (*The brothers nod.*)

**Marco** (*indicating Rodolpho*) My brother. **Rodolpho.** (**Rodolpho** *nods.* **Marco** comes with a certain formal stiffness to **Eddie.**) I want to tell you now, Eddie – when you say go, we will go.

**Eddie** Oh, no . . . (*Takes Marco's bag.*)

**Marco** I see it's a small house, but soon, maybe, we can have our own house.

**Eddie** You're welcome, Marco, we got plenty of room here. Katie, give them supper, heh? (*Exits into bedroom with their bags.*)

**Catherine** Come here, sit down. I'll get you some soup.

**Marco** (*as they go to the table*) We ate on the ship. Thank you. (*To Eddie, calling off to bedroom.*) Thank you.

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**Beatrice** Get some coffee. We'll all have coffee. Come sit down.

**Rodolpho** and **Marco** *sit, at the table.*

**Catherine** (*wondrously*) How come he's so dark and you're so light, Rodolpho?

**Rodolpho** (*ready to laugh*) I don't know. A thousand years ago, they say, the Danes invaded Sicily.

**Beatrice** *kisses Rodolpho.* *They laugh as Eddie enters.*

**Catherine** (*to Beatrice*) He's practically blond!

**Eddie** How's the coffee doin'?

**Catherine** (*brought up*) I'm gettin' it. (*She hurries out to kitchen.*)

**Eddie** (*sits on his rocker*) Yiz have a nice trip?

**Marco** The ocean is always rough. But we are good sailors.

**Eddie** No trouble gettin' here?

**Marco** No. The man brought us. Very nice man.

**Rodolpho** (*to Eddie*) He says we start to work tomorrow. Is he honest?

**Eddie** (*laughing*) No. But as long as you owe them money, they'll get you plenty of work. (*To Marco.*) Yiz ever work on the piers in Italy?

**Marco** Piers? Ts! – no.

**Rodolpho** (*smiling at the smallness of his town*) In our town there are no piers, only the beach, and little fishing boats.

**Beatrice** So what kinda work did yiz do?

**Marco** (*shrugging shyly, even embarrassed*) Whatever there is, anything.

**Rodolpho** Sometimes they build a house, or if they fix the bridge – Marco is a mason and I bring him the cement. (*He laughs.*) In harvest time we work in the fields . . . if there is work. Anything.

## Act One 21

**Eddie** Still bad there, heh?

**Marco** Bad, yes.

**Rodolpho** (*laughing*) It's terrible! We stand around all day in the piazza listening to the fountain like birds. Everybody waits only for the train.

**Beatrice** What's on the train?

**Rodolpho** Nothing. But if there are many passengers and you're lucky you make a few lire to push the taxi up the hill.

*Enter Catherine; she listens.*

**Beatrice** You gotta push a taxi?

**Rodolpho** (*laughing*) Oh, sure! It's a feature in our town. The horses in our town are skinnier than goats. So if there are too many passengers we help to push the carriages up to the hotel. (*He laughs.*) In our town the horses are only for show.

**Catherine** Why don't they have automobile taxis?

**Rodolpho** There is one. We push that too. (*They laugh.*) Everything in our town, you gotta push!

**Beatrice** (*to Eddie*) How do you like that!

**Eddie** (*to Marco*) So what're you wanna do, you gonna stay here in this country or you wanna go back?

**Marco** (*surprised*) Go back?

**Eddie** Well, you're married, ain't you?

**Marco** Yes. I have three children.

**Beatrice** Three! I thought only one.

**Marco** Oh, no. I have three now. Four years, five years, six years.

**Beatrice** Ah . . . I bet they're cryin' for you already, heh?

**Marco** What can I do? The older one is sick in his chest. My wife – she feeds them from her own mouth. I tell you the

## 22 A View from the Bridge

truth, if I stay there they will never grow up. They eat the sunshine.

**Beatrice** My God. So how long you want to stay?

**Marco** With your permission, we will stay maybe a –

**Eddie** She don't mean in this house, she means in the country.

**Marco** Oh. Maybe four, five, six years, I think.

**Rodolpho** (*smiling*) He trusts his wife.

**Beatrice** Yeah, but maybe you'll get enough, you'll be able to go back quicker.

**Marco** I hope. I don't know. (*To Eddie.*) I understand it's not so good here either.

**Eddie** Oh, you guys'll be all right – till you pay them off, anyway. After that, you'll have to scramble, that's all. But you'll make better here than you could there.

**Rodolpho** How much? We hear all kinds of figures. How much can a man make? We work hard, we'll work all day, all night –

**Marco** *raises a hand to hush him.*

**Eddie** (*he is coming more and more to address Marco only*) On the average a whole year? Maybe – well, it's hard to say, see. Sometimes we lay off, there's no ships three four weeks.

**Marco** Three, four weeks! – Ts!

**Eddie** But I think you could probably – thirty, forty a week, over the whole twelve months of the year.

**Marco** (*rises, crosses to Eddie*) Dollars.

**Eddie** Sure dollars.

**Marco** *puts an arm round Rodolpho and they laugh.*

**Marco** If we can stay here a few months, Beatrice –

**Beatrice** Listen, you're welcome, Marco –

## Act One 23

**Marco** Because I could send them a little more if I stay here.

**Beatrice** As long as you want, we got plenty a room.

**Marco** (*his eyes are showing tears*) My wife – (*To Eddie.*) My wife – I want to send right away maybe twenty dollars –

**Eddie** You could send them something next week already.

**Marco** (*he is near tears*) Eduardo . . . (*He goes to Eddie, offering his hand.*)

**Eddie** Don't thank me. Listen, what the hell, it's no skin off me. (*To Catherine.*) What happened to the coffee?

**Catherine** I got it on. (*To Rodolpho.*) You married too? No.

**Rodolpho** (*rises*) Oh, no . . .

**Beatrice** (*to Catherine*) I told you he –

**Catherine** I know, I just thought maybe he got married recently.

**Rodolpho** I have no money to get married. I have a nice face, but no money. (*He laughs.*)

**Catherine** (*to Beatrice*) He's a real blond!

**Beatrice** (*to Rodolpho*) You want to stay here too, heh? For good?

**Rodolpho** Me? Yes, for ever! Me, I want to be an American. And then I want to go back to Italy when I am rich, and I will buy a motorcycle. (*He smiles. Marco shakes him affectionately.*)

**Catherine** A motorcycle!

**Rodolpho** With a motorcycle in Italy you will never starve any more.

**Beatrice** I'll get you coffee. (*She exits to the kitchen.*)

**Eddie** What you do with a motorcycle?

**Marco** He dreams, he dreams.

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**Rodolpho** (*to Marco*) Why? (*To Eddie.*) Messages! The rich people in the hotel always need someone who will carry a message. But quickly, and with a great noise. With a blue motorcycle I would station myself in the courtyard of the hotel, and in a little while I would have messages.

**Marco** When you have no wife you have dreams.

**Eddie** Why can't you just walk, or take a trolley or sump'm?

*Enter Beatrice with coffee.*

**Rodolpho** Oh, no, the machine, the machine is necessary. A man comes into a great hotel and says, I am a messenger. Who is this man? He disappears walking, there is no noise, nothing. Maybe he will never come back, maybe he will never deliver the message. But a man who rides up on a great machine, this man is responsible, this man exists. He will be given messages. (*He helps Beatrice set out the coffee things.*) I am also a singer, though.

**Eddie** You mean a regular – ?

**Rodolpho** Oh, yes. One night last year Andreola got sick. Baritone. And I took his place in the garden of the hotel. Three arias I sang without a mistake! Thousand-lire notes they threw from the tables, money was falling like a storm in the treasury. It was magnificent. We lived six months on that night, eh, Marco?

**Marco** *nods doubtfully.*

**Marco** Two months.

**Eddie** *laughs.*

**Beatrice** Can't you get a job in that place?

**Rodolpho** Andreola got better. He's a baritone, very strong.

**Beatrice** *laughs.*

**Marco** (*regretfully, to Beatrice*) He sang too loud.

**Rodolpho** Why too loud?

## Act One 25

**Marco** Too loud. The guests in that hotel are all Englishmen. They don't like too loud.

**Rodolpho** (*to Catherine*) Nobody ever said it was too loud!

**Marco** I say. It was too loud. (*To Beatrice.*) I knew it as soon as he started to sing. Too loud.

**Rodolpho** Then why did they throw so much money?

**Marco** They paid for your courage. The English like courage. But once is enough.

**Rodolpho** (*to all but Marco*) I never heard anybody say it was too loud.

**Catherine** Did you ever hear of jazz?

**Rodolpho** Oh, sure! I *sing* jazz.

**Catherine** (*rises*) You could sing jazz?

**Rodolpho** Oh, I sing Napolidan, jazz, bel canto – I sing 'Paper Doll', you like 'Paper Doll'?

**Catherine** Oh, sure, I'm crazy for 'Paper Doll'. Go ahead, sing it.

**Rodolpho** (*takes his stance after getting a nod of permission from Marco, and with a high tenor voice begins singing*)

'I'll tell you boys it's tough to be alone,  
And it's tough to love a doll that's not your own.  
I'm through with all of them,  
I'll never fall again,  
Hey, boy, what you gonna do?  
I'm gonna buy a paper doll that I can call my own,  
A doll that other fellows cannot steal.'

**Eddie** *rises and moves upstage.*

**Rodolpho**

'And then those flirty, flirty guys  
With their flirty, flirty eyes  
Will have to flirt with dollies that are real –'

**Eddie** Hey, kid – hey, wait a minute –

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**Catherine** (*enthralled*) Leave him finish, it's beautiful!  
(*To Beatrice.*) He's terrific! It's terrific, Rodolpho.

**Eddie** Look, kid; you don't want to be picked up, do ya?

**Marco** No – no! (*He rises.*)

**Eddie** (*indicating the rest of the building*) Because we never had no singers here . . . and all of a sudden there's a singer in the house, y'know what I mean?

**Marco** Yes, yes. You'll be quiet, Rodolpho.

**Eddie** (*he is flushed*) They got guys all over the place, Marco. I mean.

**Marco** Yes. He'll be quiet. (*To Rodolpho.*) You'll be quiet.

**Rodolpho** *nods.*

**Eddie** *has risen, with iron control, even a smile. He moves to Catherine.*

**Eddie** What's the high heels for, Garbo?

**Catherine** I figured for tonight –

**Eddie** Do me a favor, will you? Go ahead.

*Embarrassed now, angered, Catherine goes out into the bedroom.*

**Beatrice** *watches her go and gets up; in passing, she gives Eddie a cold look, restrained only by the strangers, and goes to the table to pour coffee.*

**Eddie** (*striving to laugh, and to Marco, but directed as much to Beatrice*) All actresses they want to be around here.

**Rodolpho** (*happy about it*) In Italy too! All the girls.

**Catherine** *emerges from the bedroom in low-heel shoes, comes to the table. Rodolpho is lifting a cup.*

**Eddie** (*he is sizing up Rodolpho, and there is a concealed suspicion*) Yeah, heh?

**Rodolpho** Yes! (*Laughs, indicating Catherine.*) Especially when they are so beautiful!

**Catherine** You like sugar?



## Act One 27

**Rodolpho** Sugar? Yes! I like sugar very much!

**Eddie** *is downstage, watching as she pours a spoonful of sugar into his cup, his face puffed with trouble, and the room dies.*

*Lights rise on **Alfieri**.*

**Alfieri** Who can ever know what will be discovered? Eddie Carbone had never expected to have a destiny. A man works, raises his family, goes bowling, eats, gets old, and then he dies. Now, as the weeks passed, there was a future, there was a trouble that would not go away.

*The lights fade on **Alfieri**, then rise on **Eddie** standing at the doorway of the house. **Beatrice** enters on the street. She sees **Eddie**, smiles at him. He looks away.*

*She starts to enter the house when **Eddie** speaks.*

**Eddie** It's after eight.

**Beatrice** Well, it's a long show at the Paramount.

**Eddie** They must've seen every picture in Brooklyn by now. He's supposed to stay in the house when he ain't working. He ain't supposed to go advertising himself.

**Beatrice** Well, that's his trouble, what do you care? If they pick him up they pick him up, that's all. Come in the house.

**Eddie** What happened to the stenography? I don't see her practice no more.

**Beatrice** She'll get back to it. She's excited, Eddie.

**Eddie** She tell you anything?

**Beatrice** *(comes to him, now the subject is opened)* What's the matter with you? He's a nice kid, what do you want from him?

**Eddie** That's a nice kid? He gives me the heeby-jeebies.

**Beatrice** *(smiling)* Ah, go on, you're just jealous.

**Eddie** Of *him*? Boy, you don't think much of me.

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**Beatrice** I don't understand you. What's so terrible about him?

**Eddie** You mean it's all right with you? That's gonna be her husband?

**Beatrice** Why? He's a nice fella, hard workin', he's a good-lookin' fella.

**Eddie** He sings on the ships, didja know that?

**Beatrice** What do you mean, he sings?

**Eddie** Just what I said, he sings. Right on the deck, all of a sudden, a whole song comes out of his mouth – with motions. You know what they're callin' him now? Paper Doll they're callin' him, Canary. He's like a weird. He comes out on the pier, one-two-three, it's a regular free show.

**Beatrice** Well, he's a kid; he don't know how to behave himself yet.

**Eddie** And with that wacky hair; he's like a chorus girl or sump'm.

**Beatrice** So he's blond, so –

**Eddie** I just hope that's his regular hair, that's all I hope.

**Beatrice** You crazy or sump'm? (*She tries to turn him to her.*)

**Eddie** (*he keeps his head turned away*) What's so crazy? I don't like his whole way.

**Beatrice** Listen, you never seen a blond guy in your life? What about Whitey Balsa?

**Eddie** (*turning to her victoriously*) Sure, but Whitey don't sing; he don't do like that on the ships.

**Beatrice** Well, maybe that's the way they do in Italy.

**Eddie** Then why don't his brother sing? Marco goes around like a man; nobody kids Marco. (*He moves from her, halts. She realizes there is a campaign solidified in him.*) I tell you the truth I'm surprised I have to tell you all this. I mean I'm surprised, B.

## Act One 29

**Beatrice** (*she goes to him with purpose now*) Listen, you ain't gonna start nothin' here.

**Eddie** I ain't startin' nothin', but I ain't gonna stand around lookin' at that. For that character I didn't bring her up. I swear, B, I'm surprised at you; I sit there waitin' for you to wake up but everything is great with you.

**Beatrice** No, everything ain't great with me.

**Eddie** No?

**Beatrice** No. But I got other worries.

**Eddie** Yeah. (*He is already weakening.*)

**Beatrice** Yeah, you want me to tell you?

**Eddie** (*in retreat*) Why? What worries you got?

**Beatrice** When am I gonna be a wife again, Eddie?

**Eddie** I ain't been feelin' good. They bother me since they came.

**Beatrice** It's almost three months you don't feel good; they're only here a couple of weeks. It's three months, Eddie.

**Eddie** I don't know, B. I don't want to talk about it.

**Beatrice** What's the matter, Eddie, you don't like me, heh?

**Eddie** What do you mean, I don't like you? I said I don't feel good, that's all.

**Beatrice** Well, tell me, am I doing something wrong? Talk to me.

**Eddie** (*pause. He can't speak, then*) I can't. I can't talk about it.

**Beatrice** Well tell me what –

**Eddie** I got nothin' to say about it!

*She stands for a moment; he is looking off; she turns to go into the house.*

I'll be all right, B; just lay off me, will ya? I'm worried about her.

**Beatrice** The girl is gonna be eighteen years old, it's time already.

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**Eddie** B, he's taking her for a ride!

**Beatrice** All right, that's her ride. What're you gonna stand over her till she's forty? Eddie, I want you to cut it out now, you hear me? I don't like it! Now come in the house.

**Eddie** I want to take a walk, I'll be in right away.

**Beatrice** They ain't goin' to come any quicker if you stand in the street. It ain't nice, Eddie.

**Eddie** I'll be in right away. Go ahead. *(He walks off.)*

*She goes into the house. Eddie glances up the street, sees Louis and Mike coming, and sits on an iron railing. Louis and Mike enter.*

**Louis** Wanna go bowlin' tonight?

**Eddie** I'm too tired. Goin' to sleep.

**Louis** How's your two submarines?

**Eddie** They're okay.

**Louis** I see they're gettin' work allatime.

**Eddie** Oh yeah, they're doin' all right.

**Mike** That's what we oughta do. We oughta leave the country and come in under the water. Then we get work.

**Eddie** You ain't kiddin'.

**Louis** Well, what the hell. Y'know?

**Eddie** Sure.

**Louis** *(sits on railing beside Eddie)* Believe me, Eddie, you got a lotta credit comin' to you.

**Eddie** Aah, they don't bother me, don't cost me nutt'n.

**Mike** That older one, boy, he's a regular bull. I seen him the other day liftin' coffee bags over the Matson Line. They leave him alone he woulda load the whole ship by himself.

**Eddie** Yeah, he's a strong guy, that guy. Their father was a regular giant, supposed to be.

## Act One 31

**Louis** Yeah, you could see. He's a regular slave.

**Mike** (*grinning*) That blond one, though – (**Eddie** *looks at him.*) He's got a sense of humor. (**Louis** *snickers.*)

**Eddie** (*searchingly*) Yeah. He's funny –

**Mike** (*starting to laugh*) Well he ain't exackly funny, but he's always like makin' remarks like, y'know? He comes around, everybody's laughin'. (**Louis** *laughs.*)

**Eddie** (*uncomfortably, grinning*) Yeah, well . . . he's got a sense of humor.

**Mike** (*laughing*) Yeah, I mean, he's always makin' like remarks, like, y'know?

**Eddie** Yeah, I know. But he's a kid yet, y'know? He – he's just a kid, that's all.

**Mike** (*getting hysterical with Louis*) I know. You take one look at him – everybody's happy. (**Louis** *laughs.*) I worked one day with him last week over the Moore-MacCormack Line, I'm tellin' you they was all hysterical. (**Louis** *and he explode in laughter.*)

**Eddie** Why? What'd he do?

**Mike** I don't know . . . he was just humorous. You never can remember what he says, y'know? But it's the way he says it. I mean he gives you a look sometimes and you start laughin'!

**Eddie** Yeah. (*Troubled.*) He's got a sense of humor.

**Mike** (*gasping*) Yeah.

**Louis** (*rising*) Well, we see ya, Eddie.

**Eddie** Take it easy.

**Louis** Yeah. See ya.

**Mike** If you wanna come bowlin' later we're goin' Flatbush Avenue.

*Laughing, they move to exit, meeting Rodolpho and Catherine entering on the street. Their laughter rises as they see Rodolpho, who*

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*does not understand but joins in.* **Eddie** moves to enter the house as **Louis** and **Mike** exit. **Catherine** stops him at the door.

**Catherine** Hey, Eddie – what a picture we saw! Did we laugh!

**Eddie** (*he can't help smiling at sight of her*) Where'd you go?

**Catherine** Paramount. It was with those two guys, y'know? That –

**Eddie** Brooklyn Paramount?

**Catherine** (*with an edge of anger, embarrassed before Rodolpho*) Sure, the Brooklyn Paramount. I told you we wasn't goin' to New York.

**Eddie** (*retreating before the threat of her anger*) All right, I only asked you. (*To Rodolpho.*) I just don't want her hangin' around Times Square, see? It's full of tramps over there.

**Rodolpho** I would like to go to Broadway once, Eddie. I would like to walk with her once where the theaters are and the opera. Since I was a boy I see pictures of those lights.

**Eddie** (*his little patience waning*) I want to talk to her a minute, Rodolpho. Go inside, will you?

**Rodolpho** Eddie, we only walk together in the streets. She teaches me.

**Catherine** You know what he can't get over? That there's no fountains in Brooklyn!

**Eddie** (*smiling unwillingly*) Fountains? (**Rodolpho** *smiles at his own naivety.*)

**Catherine** In Italy he says, every town's got fountains, and they meet there. And you know what? They got oranges on the trees where he comes from, and lemons. Imagine – on the trees? I mean it's interesting. But he's crazy for New York.

**Rodolpho** (*attempting familiarity*) Eddie, why can't we go once to Broadway – ?

**Eddie** Look, I gotta tell her something –

## Act One 33

**Rodolpho** Maybe you can come too. I want to see all those lights. (*He sees no response in Eddie's face. He glances at Catherine.*) I'll walk by the river before I go to sleep. (*He walks off down the street.*)

**Catherine** Why don't you talk to him, Eddie? He blesses you, and you don't talk to him hardly.

**Eddie** (*enveloping her with his eyes*) I bless you and you don't talk to me. (*He tries to smile.*)

**Catherine** I don't talk to you? (*She hits his arm.*) What do you mean?

**Eddie** I don't see you no more. I come home you're runnin' around someplace –

**Catherine** Well, he wants to see everything, that's all, so we go . . . You mad at me?

**Eddie** No. (*He moves from her, smiling sadly.*) It's just I used to come home, you was always there. Now, I turn around, you're a big girl. I don't know how to talk to you.

**Catherine** Why?

**Eddie** I don't know, you're runnin', you're runnin', Katie. I don't think you listening any more to me.

**Catherine** (*going to him*) Ah, Eddie, sure I am. What's the matter? You don't like him?

*Slight pause.*

**Eddie** (*turns to her*) You like him, Katie?

**Catherine** (*with a blush but holding her ground*) Yeah. I like him.

**Eddie** (*his smile goes*) You like him.

**Catherine** (*looking down*) Yeah. (*Now she looks at him for the consequences, smiling but tense. He looks at her like a lost boy.*) What're you got against him? I don't understand. He only blesses you.

**Eddie** (*turns away*) He don't bless me, Katie.

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**Catherine** He does! You're like a father to him!

**Eddie** (*turns to her*) Katie.

**Catherine** What, Eddie?

**Eddie** You gonna marry him?

**Catherine** I don't know. We just been . . . goin' around, that's all. (*Turns to him.*) What're you got against him, Eddie? Please, tell me. What?

**Eddie** He don't respect you.

**Catherine** Why?

**Eddie** Katie . . . if you wasn't an orphan, wouldn't he ask your father's permission before he run around with you like this?

**Catherine** Oh, well, he didn't think you'd mind.

**Eddie** He knows I mind, but it don't bother him if I mind, don't you see that?

**Catherine** No, Eddie, he's got all kinds of respect for me. And you too! We walk across the street he takes my arm – he almost bows to me! You got him all wrong, Eddie; I mean it, you –

**Eddie** Katie, he's only bowin' to his passport.

**Catherine** His passport!

**Eddie** That's right. He marries you he's got the right to be an American citizen. That's what's goin' on here. (*She is puzzled and surprised.*) You understand what I'm tellin' you? The guy is lookin' for his break, that's all he's lookin' for.

**Catherine** (*pained*) Oh, no, Eddie, I don't think so.

**Eddie** You don't think so! Katie, you're gonna make me cry here. Is that a workin' man? What does he do with his first money? A snappy new jacket he buys, records, a pointy pair new shoes and his brother's kids are starvin' over there with tuberculosis? That's a hit-and-run guy, baby; he's got bright lights in his head, Broadway. Them guys don't think of nobody



## Act One 35

but theirselves! You marry him and the next time you see him it'll be for divorce!

**Catherine** (*steps toward him*) Eddie, he never said a word about his papers or –

**Eddie** You mean he's supposed to tell you that?

**Catherine** I don't think he's even thinking about it.

**Eddie** What's better for him to think about! He could be picked up any day here and he's back pushin' taxis up the hill!

**Catherine** No, I don't believe it.

**Eddie** Katie, don't break my heart, listen to me.

**Catherine** I don't want to hear it.

**Eddie** Katie, listen . . .

**Catherine** He loves me!

**Eddie** (*with deep alarm*) Don't say that, for God's sake! This is the oldest racket in the country –

**Catherine** (*desperately, as though he had made his imprint*) I don't believe it! (*She rushes to the house.*)

**Eddie** (*following her*) They been pullin' this since the Immigration Law was put in! They grab a green kid that don't know nothin' and they –

**Catherine** (*sobbing*) I don't believe it and I wish to hell you'd stop it!

**Eddie** Katie!

*They enter the apartment. The lights in the living room have risen and Beatrice is there. She looks past the sobbing Catherine at Eddie, who in the presence of his wife, makes an awkward gesture of eroded command, indicating Catherine.*

**Eddie** Why don't you straighten her out?

**Beatrice** (*inwardly angered at his flowing emotion, which in itself alarms her*) When are you going to leave her alone?

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**Eddie** B, the guy is no good!

**Beatrice** (*suddenly, with open fright and fury*) You going to leave her alone? Or you gonna drive me crazy? (*He turns, striving to retain his dignity, but nevertheless in guilt walks out of the house, into the street and away. Catherine starts into a bedroom.*) Listen, Catherine. (*Catherine halts, turns to her sheepishly.*) What are you going to do with yourself?

**Catherine** I don't know.

**Beatrice** Don't tell me you don't know; you're not a baby any more, what are you going to do with yourself?

**Catherine** He won't listen to me.

**Beatrice** I don't understand this. He's not your father, Catherine. I don't understand what's going on here.

**Catherine** (*as one who herself is trying to rationalize a buried impulse*) What am I going to do, just kick him in the face with it?

**Beatrice** Look, honey, you wanna get married, or don't you wanna get married? What are you worried about, Katie?

**Catherine** (*quietly, trembling*) I don't know, B. It just seems wrong if he's against it so much.

**Beatrice** (*never losing her aroused alarm*) Sit down, honey, I want to tell you something. Here, sit down. Was there ever any fella he liked for you? There wasn't, was there?

**Catherine** But he says Rodolpho's just after his papers.

**Beatrice** Look, he'll say anything. What does he care what he says? If it was a prince came here for you it would be no different. You know that, don't you?

**Catherine** Yeah, I guess.

**Beatrice** So what does that mean?

**Catherine** (*slowly turns her head to Beatrice*) What?

**Beatrice** It means you gotta be your own self more. You still think you're a little girl, honey. But nobody else can make

## Act One 37

up your mind for you any more, you understand? You gotta give him to understand that he can't give you orders no more.

**Catherine** Yeah, but how am I going to do that? He thinks I'm a baby.

**Beatrice** Because *you* think you're a baby. I told you fifty times already, you can't act the way you act. You still walk around in front of him in your slip –

**Catherine** Well I forgot.

**Beatrice** Well you can't do it. Or like you sit on the edge of the bathtub talkin' to him when he's shavin' in his underwear.

**Catherine** When'd I do that?

**Beatrice** I seen you in there this morning.

**Catherine** Oh . . . well, I wanted to tell him something and I –

**Beatrice** I know, honey. But if you act like a baby and he be treatin' you like a baby. Like when he comes home sometimes you throw yourself at him like when you was twelve years old.

**Catherine** Well I like to see him and I'm happy so I –

**Beatrice** Look, I'm not tellin' you what to do, honey, but –

**Catherine** No, you could tell me, B! Gee, I'm all mixed up. See, I – He looks so sad now and it hurts me.

**Beatrice** Well look Katie, if it's goin' to hurt you so much you're gonna end up an old maid here.

**Catherine** No!

**Beatrice** I'm tellin' you, I'm not makin' a joke. I tried to tell you a couple of times in the last year or so. That's why I was so happy you were going to go out and get work, you wouldn't be here so much, you'd be a little more independent. I mean it. It's wonderful for a whole family to love each other, but you're a grown woman and you're in the same house with a grown man. So you'll act different now, heh?

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**Catherine** Yeah, I will. I'll remember.

**Beatrice** Because it ain't only up to him, Katie, you understand? I told him the same thing already.

**Catherine** (*quickly*) What?

**Beatrice** That he should let you go. But, you see, if only I tell him, he thinks I'm just bawlin' him out, or maybe I'm jealous or somethin', you know?

**Catherine** (*astonished*) He said you was jealous?

**Beatrice** No, I'm just sayin' maybe that's what he thinks. (*She reaches over to Catherine's hand; with a strained smile.*) You think I'm jealous of you, honey?

**Catherine** No! It's the first I thought of it.

**Beatrice** (*with a quiet sad laugh*) Well you should have thought of it before . . . but I'm not. We'll be all right. Just give him to understand; you don't have to fight, you're just – You're a woman, that's all, and you got a nice boy, and now the time came when you said goodbye. All right?

**Catherine** (*strangely moved at the prospect*) All right . . . If I can.

**Beatrice** Honey . . . you gotta.

**Catherine**, *sensing now an imperious demand, turns with some fear, with a discovery, to Beatrice. She is at the edge of tears, as though a familiar world had shattered.*

**Catherine** Okay.

*Lights out on them and up on Alfieri, seated behind his desk.*

**Alfieri** It was at this time that he first came to me. I had represented his father in an accident case some years before, and I was acquainted with the family in a casual way. I remember him now as he walked through my doorway –

*Enter Eddie down right ramp.*

**Alfieri** His eyes were like tunnels; my first thought was that he had committed a crime –

## Act One 39

**Eddie** *sits besides the desk, cap in hand, looking out.*

**Alfieri** – but soon I saw it was only a passion that had moved into his body, like a stranger. (**Alfieri** *pauses, looks down at his desk, then to Eddie as though he were continuing a conversation with him.*) I don't quite understand what I can do for you. Is there a question of law somewhere?

**Eddie** That's what I want to ask you.

**Alfieri** Because there's nothing illegal about a girl falling in love with an immigrant.

**Eddie** Yeah, but what about it if the only reason for it is to get his papers?

**Alfieri** First of all you don't know that.

**Eddie** I see it in his eyes; he's laughin' at her and he's laughin' at me.

**Alfieri** Eddie, I'm a lawyer. I can only deal in what's provable. You understand that, don't you? Can you prove that?

**Eddie** I know what's in his mind, Mr Alfieri!

**Alfieri** Eddie, even if you could prove that –

**Eddie** Listen . . . will you listen to me a minute? My father always said you was a smart man. I want you to listen to me.

**Alfieri** I'm only a lawyer, Eddie.

**Eddie** Will you listen a minute? I'm talkin' about the law. Lemme just bring out what I mean. A man, which he comes into the country illegal, don't it stand to reason he's gonna take every penny and put it in the sock? Because they don't know from one day to another, right?

**Alfieri** All right.

**Eddie** He's spendin'. Records he buys now. Shoes. Jackets. Y'understand me? This guy ain't worried. This guy is *here*. So it must be that he's got it all laid out in his mind already – he's stayin'. Right?

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**Alfieri** Well? What about it?

**Eddie** All right. (*He glances at Alfieri, then down to the floor.*)  
I'm talking to you confidential, ain't I?

**Alfieri** Certainly.

**Eddie** I mean it don't go no place but here. Because I don't like to say this about anybody. Even my wife I didn't exactly say this.

**Alfieri** What is it?

**Eddie** (*takes a breath and glances briefly over each shoulder*) The guy ain't right, Mr Alfieri.

**Alfieri** What do you mean?

**Eddie** I mean he ain't right.

**Alfieri** I don't get you.

**Eddie** (*shifts to another position in the chair*) Dja ever get a look at him?

**Alfieri** Not that I know of, no.

**Eddie** He's a blond guy. Like . . . platinum. You know what I mean?

**Alfieri** No.

**Eddie** I mean if you close the paper fast – you could blow him over.

**Alfieri** Well that doesn't mean –

**Eddie** Wait a minute, I'm tellin' you sump'm. He sings, see. Which is – I mean it's all right, but sometimes he hits a note, see. I turn around. I mean – high. You know what I mean?

**Alfieri** Well, that's a tenor.

**Eddie** I know a tenor, Mr Alfieri. This ain't no tenor. I mean if you came in the house and you didn't know who was singin', you wouldn't be lookin' for him you be lookin' for her.

**Alfieri** Yes, but that's not –

## Act One 41

**Eddie** I'm tellin' you sump'm, wait a minute. Please, Mr Alfieri. I'm tryin' to bring out my thoughts here. Couple of nights ago my niece brings out a dress which it's too small for her, because she shot up like a light this last year. He takes the dress, lays it on the table, he cuts it up; one-two-three, he makes a new dress. I mean he looked so sweet there, like an angel – you could kiss him he was so sweet.

**Alfieri** Now look, Eddie –

**Eddie** Mr Alfieri, they're laughin' at him on the piers. I'm ashamed. Paper Doll they call him. Blondie now. His brother thinks it's because he's got a sense of humor, see – which he's got – but that ain't what they're laughin'. Which they're not goin' to come out with it because they know he's my relative, which they have to see me if they make a crack, y'know? But I know what they're laughin' at, and when I think of that guy layin' his hands on her I could – I mean it's eatin' me out, Mr Alfieri, because I struggled for that girl. And now he comes in my house and –

**Alfieri** Eddie, look – I have my own children. I understand you. But the law is very specific. The law does not . . .

**Eddie** (*with a fuller flow of indignation*) You mean to tell me that there's no law that a guy which he ain't right can go to work and marry a girl and – ?

**Alfieri** You have no recourse in the law, Eddie.

**Eddie** Yeah, but if he ain't right, Mr Alfieri, you mean to tell me –

**Alfieri** There is nothing you can do, Eddie, believe me.

**Eddie** Nothin'.

**Alfieri** Nothing at all. There's only one legal question here.

**Eddie** What?

**Alfieri** The manner in which they entered the country. But I don't think you want to do anything about that, do you?

**Eddie** You mean – ?

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**Alfieri** Well, they entered illegally.

**Eddie** Oh, Jesus, no, I wouldn't do nothin' about that, I mean –

**Alfieri** All right, then, let me talk now, eh?

**Eddie** Mr Alfieri, I can't believe what you tell me. I mean there must be some kinda law which –

**Alfieri** Eddie, I want you to listen to me. (*Pause.*) You know, sometimes God mixes up the people. We all love somebody, the wife, the kids – every man's got somebody that he loves, heh? But sometimes . . . there's too much. You know? There's too much, and it goes where it mustn't. A man works hard, he brings up a child, sometimes it's a niece, sometimes even a daughter, and he never realizes it, but through the years – there is too much love for the daughter, there is too much love for the niece. Do you understand what I'm saying to you?

**Eddie** (*sardonically*) What do you mean, I shouldn't look out for her good?

**Alfieri** Yes, but these things have to end, Eddie, that's all. The child has to grow up and go away, and the man has to learn to forget. Because after all, Eddie – what other way can it end? (*Pause.*) Let her go. That's my advice. You did your job, now it's her life; wish her luck, and let her go. (*Pause.*) Will you do that? Because there's no law, Eddie; make up your mind to it; the law is not interested in this.

**Eddie** You mean to tell me, even if he's a punk? If he's –

**Alfieri** There's nothing you can do.

**Eddie** *stands.*

**Eddie** Well, all right, thanks. Thanks very much.

**Alfieri** What are you going to do?

**Eddie** (*with a helpless but ironic gesture*) What can I do? I'm a patsy, what can a patsy do? I worked like a dog twenty years so a punk could have her, so that's what I done. I mean, in the worst times, in the worst, when there wasn't a ship comin' in



## Act One 43

the harbor, I didn't stand around lookin' for relief – I hustled. When there was empty piers in Brooklyn I went to Hoboken, Staten Island, the West Side, Jersey, all over – because I made a promise. I took out of my own mouth to give to her. I took out of my wife's mouth. I walked hungry plenty days in this city! (*It begins to break through.*) And now I gotta sit in my own house and look at a son-of-a-bitch punk like that – which he came out of nowhere! I give him my house to sleep! I take the blankets off my bed for him, and he takes and puts his dirty filthy hands on her like a goddam thief!

**Alfieri** (*rising*) But, Eddie, she's a woman now.

**Eddie** He's stealing from me!

**Alfieri** She wants to get married, Eddie. She can't marry you, can she?

**Eddie** (*furiously*) What're you talkin' about, marry me! I don't know what the hell you're talkin' about!

*Pause.*

**Alfieri** I gave you my advice, Eddie. That's it.

**Eddie** *gathers himself. A pause.*

**Eddie** Well, thanks. Thanks very much. It just – it's breakin' my heart, y'know. I –

**Alfieri** I understand. Put it out of your mind. Can you do that?

**Eddie** I'm – (*He feels the threat of sobs, and with a helpless wave.*) I'll see you around. (*He goes out up the right ramp.*)

**Alfieri** (*sits on desk*) There are times when you want to spread an alarm, but nothing has happened. I knew, I knew then and there – I could have finished the whole story that afternoon. It wasn't as though there was a mystery to unravel. I could see every step coming, step after step, like a dark figure walking down a hall toward a certain door. I knew where he was heading for, I knew where he was going to end. And I sat here many afternoons asking myself why, being an intelligent man,

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I was so powerless to stop it. I even went to a certain old lady in the neighborhood, a very wise old woman, and I told her, and she only nodded, and said, 'Pray for him . . .' And so I – waited here.

*As lights go out on **Alfieri**, they rise in the apartment where all are finishing dinner. **Beatrice** and **Catherine** are clearing the table.*

**Catherine** You know where they went?

**Beatrice** Where?

**Catherine** They went to Africa once. On a fishing boat. (**Eddie** glances at her.) It's true, Eddie.

**Beatrice** *exits into the kitchen with dishes.*

**Eddie** I didn't say nothin'. (*He goes to his rocker, picks up a newspaper.*)

**Catherine** And I was never even in Staten Island.

**Eddie** (*sitting with the paper*) You didn't miss nothin'. (*Pause. Catherine takes dishes out.*) How long that take you, Marco – to get to Africa?

**Marco** (*rising*) Oh . . . two days. We go all over.

**Rodolpho** (*rising*) Once we went to Yugoslavia.

**Eddie** (*to Marco*) They pay all right on them boats?

**Beatrice** *enters. She and Rodolpho stack the remaining dishes.*

**Marco** If they catch fish they pay all right. (*Sits on a stool.*)

**Rodolpho** They're family boats, though. And nobody in our family owned one. So we only worked when one of the families was sick.

**Beatrice** Y'know, Marco, what I don't understand – there's an ocean full of fish and yiz are all starvin'.

**Eddie** They gotta have boats, nets, you need money.

**Catherine** *enters.*

## Act One 45

**Beatrice** Yeah, but couldn't they like fish from the beach? You see them down Coney Island –

**Marco** Sardines.

**Eddie** Sure. (*Laughing*) How you gonna catch sardines on a hook?

**Beatrice** Oh, I didn't know they're sardines. (*To Catherine.*) They're sardines!

**Catherine** Yeah, they follow them all over the ocean, Africa, Yugoslavia . . . (*She sits and begins to look through a movie magazine. Rodolpho joins her.*)

**Beatrice** (*to Eddie*) It's funny, y'know. You never think of it, that sardines are swimming in the ocean! (*She exits to kitchen with dishes.*)

**Catherine** I know. It's like oranges and lemons on a tree. (*To Eddie.*) I mean you ever think of oranges and lemons on a tree?

**Eddie** Yeah, I know. It's funny. (*To Marco.*) I heard that they paint the oranges to make them look orange.

**Beatrice** *enters.*

**Marco** (*he has been reading a letter*) Paint?

**Eddie** Yeah, I heard that they grow like green.

**Marco** No, in Italy the oranges are orange.

**Rodolpho** Lemons are green.

**Eddie** (*resenting his instruction*) I know lemons are green, for Christ's sake, you see them in the store they're green sometimes. I said oranges they paint, I didn't say nothin' about lemons.

**Beatrice** (*sitting; diverting their attention*) Your wife is gettin' the money all right, Marco?

**Marco** Oh, yes. She bought medicine for my boy.

**Beatrice** That's wonderful. You feel better, heh?

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**Marco** Oh, yes! But I'm lonesome.

**Beatrice** I just hope you ain't gonna do like some of them around here. They're here twenty-five years, some men, and they didn't get enough together to go back twice.

**Marco** Oh, I know. We have many families in our town, the children never saw the father. But I will go home. Three, four years, I think.

**Beatrice** Maybe you should keep more here. Because maybe she thinks it comes so easy you'll never get ahead of yourself.

**Marco** Oh, no, she saves. I send everything. My wife is very lonesome. (*He smiles shyly.*)

**Beatrice** She must be nice. She pretty? I bet, heh?

**Marco** (*blushing*) No, but she understand everything.

**Rodolpho** Oh, he's got a clever wife!

**Eddie** I betcha there's plenty surprises sometimes when those guys get back there, heh?

**Marco** Surprises?

**Eddie** (*laughing*) I mean, you know – they count the kids and there's a couple extra than when they left?

**Marco** No – no . . . The women wait, Eddie. Most. Most. Very few surprises.

**Rodolpho** It's more strict in our town. (**Eddie** *looks at him now.*) It's not so free.

**Eddie** (*rises, paces up and down*) It ain't so free here either, Rodolpho, like you think. I seen greenhorns sometimes get in trouble that way – they think just because a girl don't go around with a shawl over her head that she ain't strict, y'know? Girl don't have to wear black dress to be strict. Know what I mean?

**Rodolpho** Well, I always have respect –

## Act One 47

**Eddie** I know, but in your town you wouldn't just drag off some girl without permission, I mean. (*He turns.*) You know what I mean, Marco? It ain't that much different here.

**Marco** (*cautiously*) Yes.

**Beatrice** Well, he didn't exactly drag her off though, Eddie.

**Eddie** I know, but I seen some of them get the wrong idea sometimes. (*To Rodolpho.*) I mean it might be a little more free here but it's just as strict.

**Rodolpho** I have respect for her, Eddie. I do anything wrong?

**Eddie** Look, kid, I ain't her father, I'm only her uncle –

**Beatrice** Well then, be an uncle then. (**Eddie** *looks at her, aware of her criticizing force.*) I mean.

**Marco** No, Beatrice, if he does wrong you must tell him. (*To Eddie.*) What does he do wrong?

**Eddie** Well, Marco, till he came here she was never out on the street twelve o'clock at night.

**Marco** (*to Rodolpho*) You come home early now.

**Beatrice** (*to Catherine*) Well, you said the movie ended late, didn't you?

**Catherine** Yeah.

**Beatrice** Well, tell him, honey. (*To Eddie.*) The movie ended late.

**Eddie** Look, B, I'm just sayin' – he thinks she always stayed out like that.

**Marco** You come home early now, Rodolpho.

**Rodolpho** (*embarrassed*) All right, sure. But I can't stay in the house all the time, Eddie.

**Eddie** Look, kid, I'm not only talkin' about her. The more you run around like that the more chance you're takin'. (*To*

**Beatrice.**) I mean suppose he gets hit by a car or something. (*To Marco.*) Where's his papers, who is he? Know what I mean?

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**Beatrice** Yeah, but who is he in the daytime, though? It's the same chance in the daytime.

**Eddie** (*holding back a voice full of anger*) Yeah, but he don't have to go lookin' for it, Beatrice. If he's here to work, then he should work; if he's here for a good time then he could fool around! (*To Marco.*) But I understood, Marco, that you was both comin' to make a livin' for your family. You understand me, don't you, Marco? (*He goes to his rocker.*)

**Marco** I beg your pardon, Eddie.

**Eddie** I mean, that's what I understood in the first place, see.

**Marco** Yes. That's why we came.

**Eddie** (*sits on his rocker*) Well, that's all I'm askin'.

**Eddie** *reads his paper. There is a pause, an awkwardness. Now*

**Catherine** *gets up and puts a record on the phonograph – 'Paper Doll'.*

**Catherine** (*flushed with revolt*) You wanna dance, Rodolpho?

**Eddie** *freezes.*

**Rodolpho** (*in deference to Eddie*) No, I – I'm tired.

**Beatrice** Go ahead, dance, Rodolpho.

**Catherine** Ah, come on. They got a beautiful quartet, these guys. Come.

*She has taken his hand and he stiffly rises, feeling Eddie's eyes on his back. and they dance.*

**Eddie** (*to Catherine*) What's that, a new record?

**Catherine** It's the same one. We bought it the other day.

**Beatrice** (*to Eddie*) They only bought three records. (*She watches them dance; Eddie turns his head away. Marco just sits there, waiting. Now Beatrice turns to Eddie.*) Must be nice to go all over in one of them fishin' boats. I would like that myself. See all them other countries?

**Eddie** Yeah.

## Act One 49

**Beatrice** (to **Marco**) But the women don't go along, I bet.

**Marco** No, not on the boats. Hard work.

**Beatrice** What're you got, a regular kitchen and everything?

**Marco** Yes, we eat very good on the boats – especially when Rodolpho comes along; everybody gets fat.

**Beatrice** Oh, he cooks?

**Marco** Sure, very good cook. Rice, pasta, fish, everything.

**Eddie** *lowers his paper.*

**Eddie** He's a cook, too! (*Looking at Rodolpho.*) He sings, he cooks . . .

**Rodolpho** *smiles thankfully.*

**Beatrice** Well it's good, he could always make a living.

**Eddie** It's wonderful. He sings, he cooks, he could make dresses . . .

**Catherine** They get some high pay, them guys. The head chefs in all the big hotels are men. You read about them.

**Eddie** That's what I'm sayin'.

**Catherine** and **Rodolpho** *continue dancing.*

**Catherine** Yeah, well, I mean.

**Eddie** (to **Beatrice**) He's lucky, believe me. (*Slight pause. He looks away, then back to Beatrice.*) That's why the water front is no place for him. (*They stop dancing. Rodolpho turns off phonograph.*) I mean like me – I can't cook, I can't sing, I can't make dresses, so I'm on the water front. But if I could cook, if I could sing, if I could make dresses, I wouldn't be on the water front. (*He has been unconsciously twisting the newspaper into a tight roll. They are all regarding him now; he senses he is exposing the issue and he is driven on.*) I would be someplace else. I would be like in a dress store. (*He has bent the rolled paper and it suddenly tears in two. He suddenly gets up and pulls his pants up over his belly and goes*

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to **Marco**.) What do you, say, Marco, we go to the bouts next Saturday night. You never seen a fight, did you?

**Marco** (*uneasily*) Only in the moving pictures.

**Eddie** (*going to Rodolpho*) I'll treat yiz. What do you say, Danish? You wanna come along? I'll buy the tickets.

**Rodolpho** Sure. I like to go.

**Catherine** (*goes to Eddie; nervously happy now*) I'll make some coffee, all right?

**Eddie** Go ahead, make some! Make it nice and strong. (*Mystified, she smiles and exits to kitchen. He is weirdly elated, rubbing his fists into his palms. He strides to Marco.*) You wait, Marco, you see some real fights here. You ever do any boxing?

**Marco** No, I never.

**Eddie** (*to Rodolpho*) Betcha you have done some, heh?

**Rodolpho** No.

**Eddie** Well, come on, I'll teach you.

**Beatrice** What's he got to learn that for?

**Eddie** Ya can't tell, one a these days somebody's liable to step on his foot or sump'm. Come on, Rodolpho, I show you a couple a passes. (*He stands below table.*)

**Beatrice** Go ahead, Rodolpho. He's a good boxer, he could teach you.

**Rodolpho** (*embarrassed*) Well, I don't know how to – (*He moves down to Eddie.*)

**Eddie** Just put your hands up. Like this, see? That's right. That's very good, keep your left up, because you lead with the left, see, like this. (*He gently moves his left into Rodolpho's face.*) See? Now what you gotta do is you gotta block me, so when I come in like that you – (**Rodolpho** *parries his left.*) Hey, that's very good! (**Rodolpho** *laughs.*) All right, now come into me. Come on.



## Act One 51

**Rodolpho** I don't want to hit you, Eddie.

**Eddie** Don't pity me, come on. Throw it, I'll show you how to block it. (**Rodolpho jabs at him, laughing. The others join.**) 'At's it. Come on again. For the jaw right here. (**Rodolpho jabs with more assurance.**) Very good!

**Beatrice (to Marco)** He's very good!

**Eddie crosses directly upstage of Rodolpho.**

**Eddie** Sure, he's great! Come on, kid, put sump'm behind it, you can't hurt me. (**Rodolpho, more seriously, jabs at Eddie's jaw and grazes it.**) Attaboy.

**Catherine comes from the kitchen, watches.**

**Eddie** Now I'm gonna hit you, so block me, see?

**Catherine (with beginning alarm)** What are they doin'?

*They are lightly boxing now.*

**Beatrice (she senses only the comradeship in it now)** He's teachin' him; he's very good!

**Eddie** Sure, he's terrific! Look at him go! (**Rodolpho lands a blow.**) 'At's it! Now, watch out, here I come, Danish! (*He feints with his left hand and lands with his right. It mildly staggers Rodolpho.* **Marco rises.**)

**Catherine (rushing to Rodolpho)** Eddie!

**Eddie** Why? I didn't hurt him. Did I hurt you, kid? (*He rubs the back of his hand across his mouth.*)

**Rodolpho** No, no, he didn't hurt me. (*To Eddie with a certain gleam and a smile.*) I was only surprised.

**Beatrice (pulling Eddie down into the rocker)** That's enough, Eddie; he did pretty good though.

**Eddie** Yeah. (*Rubbing his fists together.*) He could be very good, Marco. I'll teach him again.

**Marco nods at him dubiously.**

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**Rodolpho** Dance, Catherine. Come. (*He takes her hand; they go to phonograph and start it. It plays 'Paper Doll'.*)

**Rodolpho** takes her in his arms. They dance. **Eddie** in thought sits in his chair, and **Marco** takes a chair, places it in front of **Eddie**, and looks down at it. **Beatrice** and **Eddie** watch him.

**Marco** Can you lift this chair?

**Eddie** What do you mean?

**Marco** From here. (*He gets on one knee with one hand behind his back, and grasps the bottom of one of the chair legs but does not raise it.*)

**Eddie** Sure, why not? (*He comes to the chair, kneels, grasps the leg, raises the chair one inch, but it leans over to the floor.*) Gee, that's hard, I never knew that. (*He tries again, and again fails.*) It's on an angle, that's why, heh?

**Marco** Here. (*He kneels, grasps, and with strain slowly raises the chair higher and higher, getting to his feet now. Rodolpho and Catherine have stopped dancing as Marco raises the chair over his head.*)

**Marco** is face to face with **Eddie**, a strained tension gripping his eyes and jaw, his neck stiff, the chair raised like a weapon over **Eddie**'s head – and he transforms what might appear like a glare of warning into a smile of triumph, and **Eddie**'s grin vanishes as he absorbs his look.

*Curtain.*

## *Act Two*

*Light rises on **Alfieri** at his desk.*

**Alfieri** On the twenty-third of that December a case of Scotch whisky slipped from a net while being unloaded – as a case of Scotch whisky is inclined to do on the twenty-third of December on Pier Forty-one. There was no snow, but it was cold, his wife was out shopping. Marco was still at work. The boy had not been hired that day; Catherine told me later that this was the first time they had been alone together in the house.

*Light is rising on **Catherine** in the apartment. **Rodolpho** is watching as she arranges a paper pattern on cloth spread on the table.*

**Catherine** You hungry?

**Rodolpho** Not for anything to eat. (*Pause.*) I have nearly three hundred dollars. Catherine?

**Catherine** I heard you.

**Rodolpho** You don't like to talk about it any more?

**Catherine** Sure, I don't mind talkin' about it.

**Rodolpho** What worries you, Catherine?

**Catherine** I been wantin' to ask you about something. Could I?

**Rodolpho** All the answers are in my eyes, Catherine. But you don't look in my eyes lately. You're full of secrets. (*She looks at him. She seems withdrawn.*) What is the question?

**Catherine** Suppose I wanted to live in Italy.

**Rodolpho** (*smiling at the incongruity*) You going to marry somebody rich?

**Catherine** No, I mean live there – you and me.

**Rodolpho** (*his smile vanishing*) When?

**Catherine** Well . . . when we get married.

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**Rodolpho** (*astounded*) You want to be an Italian?

**Catherine** No, but I could live there without being Italian. Americans live there.

**Rodolpho** For ever?

**Catherine** Yeah.

**Rodolpho** (*crosses to rocker*) You're fooling.

**Catherine** No, I mean it.

**Rodolpho** Where do you get such an idea?

**Catherine** Well, you're always saying it's so beautiful there, with the mountains and the ocean and all the –

**Rodolpho** You're fooling me.

**Catherine** I mean it.

**Rodolpho** (*goes to her slowly*) Catherine, if I ever brought you home with no money, no business, nothing, they would call the priest and the doctor and they would say Rodolpho is crazy.

**Catherine** I know, but I think we would be happier there.

**Rodolpho** Happier! What would you eat? You can't cook the view!

**Catherine** Maybe you could be a singer, like in Rome or –

**Rodolpho** Rome! Rome is full of singers.

**Catherine** Well, I could work then.

**Rodolpho** Where?

**Catherine** God, there must be jobs somewhere!

**Rodolpho** There's nothing! Nothing, nothing, nothing. Now tell me what you're talking about. How can I bring you from a rich country to suffer in a poor country? What are you talking about? (*She searches for words.*) I would be a criminal stealing your face. In two years you would have an old, hungry face. When my brother's babies cry they give them water, water that boiled a bone. Don't you believe that?

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**Catherine** (*quietly*) I'm afraid of Eddie here.

*Slight pause.*

**Rodolpho** (*steps closer to her*) We wouldn't live here. Once I am a citizen I could work anywhere and I would find better jobs and we would have a house, Catherine. If I were not afraid to be arrested I would start to be something wonderful here!

**Catherine** (*steeling herself*) Tell me something. I mean just tell me, Rodolpho – would you still want to do it if it turned out we had to go live in Italy? I mean just if it turned out that way.

**Rodolpho** This is your question or his question?

**Catherine** I would like to know, Rodolpho. I mean it.

**Rodolpho** To go there with nothing.

**Catherine** Yeah.

**Rodolpho** No. (*She looks at him wide-eyed.*) No.

**Catherine** You wouldn't?

**Rodolpho** No; I will not marry you to live in Italy. I want you to be my wife, and I want to be a citizen. Tell him that, or I will. Yes. (*He moves about angrily.*) And tell him also, and tell yourself, please, that I am not a beggar, and you are not a horse, a gift, a favor for a poor immigrant.

**Catherine** Well, don't get mad!

**Rodolpho** I am furious! (*Goes to her.*) Do you think I am so desperate? My brother is desperate, not me. You think I would carry on my back the rest of my life a woman I didn't love just to be an American? It's so wonderful? You think we have no tall buildings in Italy? Electric lights? No wide streets? No flags? No automobiles? Only work we don't have. I want to be an American so I can work, that is the only wonder here – work! How can you insult me, Catherine?

**Catherine** I didn't mean that –

**Rodolpho** My heart dies to look at you. Why are you so afraid of him?

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**Catherine** (*near tears*) I don't know!

**Rodolpho** Do you trust me, Catherine? You?

**Catherine** It's only that I – He was good to me, Rodolpho. You don't know him; he was always the sweetest guy to me. Good. He razzes me all the time but he don't mean it. I know. I would just feel ashamed if I made him sad. 'Cause I always dreamt that when I got married he would be happy at the wedding, and laughin' – and now he's – mad all the time and nasty – (*She is weeping.*) Tell him you'd live in Italy – just tell him, and maybe he would start to trust you a little, see? Because I want him to be happy; I mean – I like him, Rodolpho – and I can't stand it!

**Rodolpho** Oh, Catherine – oh, little girl.

**Catherine** I love you, Rodolpho, I love you.

**Rodolpho** Then why are you afraid? That he'll spank you?

**Catherine** Don't, don't laugh at me! I've been here all my life . . . Every day I saw him when he left in the morning and when he came home at night. You think it's so easy to turn around and say to a man he's nothin' to you no more?

**Rodolpho** I know, but –

**Catherine** You don't know; nobody knows! I'm not a baby, I know a lot more than people think I know. Beatrice says to be a woman, but –

**Rodolpho** Yes.

**Catherine** Then why don't she be a woman? If I was a wife I would make a man happy instead of goin' at him all the time. I can tell a block away when he's blue in his mind and just wants to talk to somebody quiet and nice . . . I can tell when he's hungry or wants a beer before he even says anything. I know when his feet hurt him, I mean I *know* him and now I'm supposed to turn around and make a stranger out of him? I don't know why I have to do that, I mean.

**Rodolpho** Catherine. If I take in my hands a little bird. And she grows and wishes to fly. But I will not let her out of

## Act Two 57

my hands because I love her so much, is that right for me to do? I don't say you must hate him; but anyway you must go, mustn't you? Catherine?

**Catherine** (*softly*) Hold me.

**Rodolpho** (*clashing her to him*) Oh, my little girl.

**Catherine** Teach me. (*She is weeping.*) I don't know anything, teach me, Rodolpho, hold me.

**Rodolpho** There's nobody here now. Come inside. Come. (*He is leading her toward the bedrooms.*) And don't cry any more.

*Light rises on the street. In a moment Eddie appears. He is unsteady, drunk. He mounts the stairs. He enters the apartment, looks around, takes out a bottle from one pocket, puts it on the table. Then another bottle from another pocket, and a third from an inside pocket. He sees the pattern and cloth, goes over to it and touches it, and turns toward upstage.*

**Eddie** Beatrice? (*He goes to the open kitchen door and looks in.*)  
Beatrice? Beatrice?

**Catherine** *enters from bedroom; under his gaze she adjusts her dress.*

**Catherine** You got home early.

**Eddie** Knocked off for Christmas early. (*Indicating the pattern.*)  
Rodolpho makin' you a dress?

**Catherine** No. I'm makin' a blouse.

**Rodolpho** *appears in the bedroom doorway. Eddie sees him and his arm jerks slightly in shock. Rodolpho nods to him testingly.*

**Rodolpho** Beatrice went to buy presents for her mother.

*Pause.*

**Eddie** Pack it up. Go ahead. Get your stuff and get outa here. (**Catherine** *instantly turns and walks toward the bedroom, and Eddie grabs her arm.*) Where you goin'?

**Catherine** (*trembling with fright*) I think I have to get out of here, Eddie.

**Eddie** No, you ain't goin' nowheres, he's the one.

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**Catherine** I think I can't stay here no more. (*She frees her arm, steps back toward the bedroom.*) I'm sorry, Eddie. (*She sees the tears in his eyes.*) Well, don't cry. I'll be around the neighborhood; I'll see you. I just can't stay here no more. You know I can't. (*Her sobs of pity and love for him break her composure.*) Don't you know I can't? You know that, don't you? (*She goes to him.*) Wish me luck. (*She clasps her hands prayerfully.*) Oh, Eddie, don't be like that!

**Eddie** You ain't goin' nowheres.

**Catherine** Eddie, I'm not gonna be a baby any more! You –  
*He reaches out suddenly, draws her to him, and as she strives to free herself he kisses her on the mouth.*

**Rodolpho** Don't! (*He pulls on Eddie's arm.*) Stop that! Have respect for her!

**Eddie** (*spun round by Rodolpho*) You want something?

**Rodolpho** Yes! She'll be my wife. That is what I want. My wife!

**Eddie** But what're you gonna be?

**Rodolpho** I show you what I be!

**Catherine** Wait outside; don't argue with him!

**Eddie** Come on, show me! What're you gonna be? Show me!

**Rodolpho** (*with tears of rage*) Don't say that to me!

**Rodolpho** *flies at him in attack. Eddie pins his arms, laughing, and suddenly kisses him.*

**Catherine** Eddie! Let go, ya hear me! I'll kill you! Leggo of him!

*She tears at Eddie's face and Eddie releases Rodolpho. Eddie stands there with tears rolling down his face as he laughs mockingly at Rodolpho. She is staring at him in horror. Rodolpho is rigid. They are like animals that have torn at one another and broken up without a decision, each waiting for the other's mood.*

**Eddie** (*to Catherine*) You see? (*To Rodolpho.*) I give you till tomorrow, kid. Get outa here. Alone. You hear me? Alone.



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**Catherine** I'm going with him, Eddie. (*She starts toward Rodolpho.*)

**Eddie** (*indicating Rodolpho with his head*) Not with that. (*She halts, frightened. He sits, still panting for breath, and they watch him helplessly as he leans toward them over the table.*) Don't make me do nuttin', Catherine. Watch your step, submarine. By rights they oughta throw you back in the water. But I got pity for you. (*He moves unsteadily toward the door, always facing Rodolpho.*) Just get outa here and don't lay another hand on her unless you wanna go out feet first. (*He goes out of the apartment.*)

*The lights go down, as they rise on Alfieri.*

**Alfieri** On December twenty-seventh I saw him next. I normally go home well before six, but that day I sat around looking out my window at the bay, and when I saw him walking through my doorway, I knew why I had waited. And if I seem to tell this like a dream, it was that way. Several moments arrived in the course of the two talks we had when it occurred to me how – almost transfixed I had come to feel. I had lost my strength somewhere. (**Eddie** enters, removing his cap, sits in the chair, looks thoughtfully out.) I looked in his eyes more than I listened – in fact, I can hardly remember the conversation. But I will never forget how dark the room became when he looked at me; his eyes were like tunnels. I kept wanting to call the police, but nothing had happened. Nothing at all had really happened. (*He breaks off and looks down at the desk. Then he turns to Eddie.*) So in other words, he won't leave?

**Eddie** My wife is talkin' about renting a room upstairs for them. An old lady on the top floor is got an empty room.

**Alfieri** What does Marco say?

**Eddie** He just sits there. Marco don't say much.

**Alfieri** I guess they didn't tell him, heh? What happened?

**Eddie** I don't know; Marco don't say much.

**Alfieri** What does your wife say?

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**Eddie** (*unwilling to pursue this*) Nobody's talkin' much in the house. So what about that?

**Alfieri** But you didn't prove anything about him. It sounds like he just wasn't strong enough to break your grip.

**Eddie** I'm tellin' you I know – he ain't right. Somebody that don't want it can break it. Even a mouse, if you catch a teeny mouse and you hold it in your hand, that mouse can give you the right kind of fight. He didn't give me the right kind of fight, I know it, Mr Alfieri, the guy ain't right.

**Alfieri** What did you do that for, Eddie?

**Eddie** To show her what he is! So she would see, once and for all! Her mother'll turn over in the grave! (*He gathers himself almost peremptorily.*) So what do I gotta do now? Tell me what to do.

**Alfieri** She actually said she's marrying him?

**Eddie** She told me, yeah. So what do I do?

*Slight pause.*

**Alfieri** This is my last word, Eddie, take it or not, that's your business. Morally and legally you have no rights, you cannot stop it; she is a free agent.

**Eddie** (*angering*) Didn't you hear what I told you?

**Alfieri** (*with a tougher tone*) I heard what you told me, and I'm telling you what the answer is. I'm not only telling you now, I'm warning you – the law is nature. The law is only a word for what has a right to happen. When the law is wrong it's because it's unnatural, but in this case it is natural and a river will drown you if you buck it now. Let her go. And bless her. (*A phone booth begins to glow on the opposite side of the stage; a faint, lonely blue.* **Eddie** stands up, jaws clenched.) Somebody had to come for her, Eddie, sooner or later. (**Eddie** starts turning to go and **Alfieri** rises with new anxiety.) You won't have a friend in the world, Eddie! Even those who understand will turn against you, even the ones who feel the same will despise you! (**Eddie** moves off.)

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Put it out of your mind! Eddie! (*He follows into the darkness, calling desperately.*)

**Eddie** *is gone. The phone is glowing in light now. Light is out on Alfieri. Eddie has at the same time appeared beside the phone.*

**Eddie** Give me the number of the Immigration Bureau. Thanks. (*He dials.*) I want to report something. Illegal immigrants. Two of them. That's right. Four-forty-one Saxon Street, Brooklyn, yeah. Ground floor. Heh? (*With greater difficulty.*) I'm just around the neighborhood, that's all. Heh?

*Evidently he is being questioned further, and he slowly hangs up. He leaves the phone just as Louis and Mike come down the street.*

**Louis** Go bowlin', Eddie?

**Eddie** No, I'm due home.

**Louis** Well, take it easy.

**Eddie** I'll see yiz.

*They leave him, exiting right, and he watches them go. He glances about, then goes up into the house. The lights go on in the apartment. Beatrice is taking down Christmas decorations and packing them in a box.*

**Eddie** Where is everybody? (**Beatrice** *does not answer.*) I says where is everybody?

**Beatrice** (*looking up at him, wearied with it, and concealing a fear of him*) I decided to move them upstairs with Mrs Dondero.

**Eddie** Oh, they're all moved up there already?

**Beatrice** Yeah.

**Eddie** Where's Catherine? She up there?

**Beatrice** Only to bring pillow cases.

**Eddie** She ain't movin' in with them.

**Beatrice** Look, I'm sick and tired of it. I'm sick and tired of it!

**Eddie** All right, all right, take it easy.

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**Beatrice** I don't wanna hear no more about it, you understand? Nothin'!

**Eddie** What're you blowin' off about? Who brought them in here?

**Beatrice** All right, I'm sorry; I wish I'd a drop dead before I told them to come. In the ground I wish I was.

**Eddie** Don't drop dead, just keep in mind who brought them in here, that's all. (*He moves about restlessly.*) I mean I got a couple of rights here. (*He moves, wanting to beat down her evident disapproval of him.*) This is my house here not their house.

**Beatrice** What do you want from me? They're moved out; what do you want now?

**Eddie** I want my respect!

**Beatrice** So I moved them out, what more do you want? You got your house now, you got your respect.

**Eddie** (*he moves about biting his lip*) I don't like the way you talk to me, Beatrice.

**Beatrice** I'm just tellin' you I done what you want!

**Eddie** I don't like it! The way you talk to me and the way you look at me. This is my house. And she is my niece and I'm responsible for her.

**Beatrice** So that's why you done that to him?

**Eddie** I done what to him?

**Beatrice** What you done to him in front of her; you know what I'm talkin' about. She goes around shakin' all the time, she can't go to sleep! That's what you call responsible for her?

**Eddie** (*quietly*) The guy ain't right, Beatrice. (*She is silent.*) Did you hear what I said?

**Beatrice** Look, I'm finished with it. That's all. (*She resumes her work.*)

**Eddie** (*helping her to pack the tinsel*) I'm gonna have it out with you one of these days, Beatrice.

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**Beatrice** Nothin' to have out with me, it's all settled. Now we gonna be like it never happened, that's all.

**Eddie** I want my respect, Beatrice, and you know what I'm talkin' about.

**Beatrice** What?

*Pause.*

**Eddie** (*finally his resolution hardens*) What I feel like doin' in the bed and what I don't feel like doin'. I don't want no –

**Beatrice** When'd I say anything about that?

**Eddie** You said, you said, I ain't deaf. I don't want no more conversations about that, Beatrice. I do what I feel like doin' or what I don't feel like doin'.

**Beatrice** Okay.

*Pause.*

**Eddie** You used to be different, Beatrice. You had a whole different way.

**Beatrice** *I'm* no different.

**Eddie** You didn't used to jump me all the time about everything. The last year or two I come in the house I don't know what's gonna hit me. It's a shootin' gallery in here and I'm the pigeon.

**Beatrice** Okay, okay.

**Eddie** Don't tell me okay, okay, I'm tellin' you the truth. A wife is supposed to believe the husband. If I tell you that guy ain't right don't tell me he is right.

**Beatrice** But how do you know?

**Eddie** Because I know. I don't go around makin' accusations. He give me the heeby-jeebies the first minute I seen him. And I don't like you sayin' I don't want her marryin' anybody. I broke my back payin' her stenography lessons so she could go out and meet a better class of people. Would I do that if I didn't

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want her to get married? Sometimes you talk like I was a crazy man or sump'm.

**Beatrice** But she likes him.

**Eddie** Beatrice, she's a baby, how is she gonna know what she likes?

**Beatrice** Well, you kept her a baby, you wouldn't let her go out. I told you a hundred times.

*Pause.*

**Eddie** All right. Let her go out, then.

**Beatrice** She don't wanna go out now. It's too late, Eddie.

*Pause.*

**Eddie** Suppose I told her to go out. Suppose I –

**Beatrice** They're going to get married next week, Eddie.

**Eddie** (*his head jerks around to her*) She said that?

**Beatrice** Eddie, if you want my advice, go to her and tell her good luck. I think maybe now that you had it out you learned better.

**Eddie** What's the hurry next week?

**Beatrice** Well, she's been worried about him bein' picked up; this way he could start to be a citizen. She loves him, Eddie. (*He gets up, moves about uneasily, restlessly.*) Why don't you give her a good word? Because I still think she would like you to be a friend, y'know? (*He is standing, looking at the floor.*) I mean like if you told her you'd go to the wedding.

**Eddie** She asked you that?

**Beatrice** I know she would like it. I'd like to make a party here for her. I mean there oughta be some kinda send-off. Heh? I mean she'll have trouble enough in her life, let's start it off happy. What do you say? 'Cause in her heart she still loves you, Eddie. I know it. (*He presses his fingers against his eyes.*) What're you, cryin'? (*She goes to him, holds his face.*) Go . . . whyn't you go tell her you're sorry? (**Catherine** *is seen on the upper*

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*landing of the stairway, and they hear her descending.)* There . . . she's comin' down. Come on, shake hands with her.

**Eddie** *(moving with suppressed suddenness)* No, I can't, I can't talk to her.

**Beatrice** Eddie, give her a break; a wedding should be happy!

**Eddie** I'm goin', I'm goin' for a walk.

*He goes upstage for his jacket. Catherine enters and starts for the bedroom door.*

**Beatrice** Katie? . . . Eddie, don't go, wait a minute. *(She embraces Eddie's arm with warmth.)* Ask him, Katie. Come on, honey.

**Eddie** It's all right, I'm — *(He starts to go and she holds him.)*

**Beatrice** No, she wants to ask you. Come on, Katie, ask him. We'll have a party! What're we gonna do, hate each other? Come on!

**Catherine** I'm gonna get married, Eddie. So if you wanna come, the wedding be on Saturday.

*Pause.*

**Eddie** Okay. I only wanted the best for you, Katie. I hope you know that.

**Catherine** Okay. *(She starts out again.)*

**Eddie** Catherine? *(She turns to him.)* I was just tellin' Beatrice . . . if you wanna go out, like . . . I mean I realize maybe I kept you home too much. Because he's the first guy you ever knew, y'know? I mean now that you got a job, you might meet some fellas, and you get a different idea, y'know? I mean you could always come back to him, you're still only kids, the both of yiz. What's the hurry? Maybe you'll get around a little bit, you grow up a little more, maybe you'll see different in a couple of months. I mean you be surprised, it don't have to be him.

**Catherine** No, we made it up already.

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**Eddie** (*with increasing anxiety*) Katie, wait a minute.

**Catherine** No, I made up my mind.

**Eddie** But you never knew no other fella, Katie! How could you make up your mind?

**Catherine** 'Cause I did. I don't want nobody else.

**Eddie** But, Katie, suppose he gets picked up.

**Catherine** That's why we gonna do it right away. Soon as we finish the wedding he's goin' right over and start to be a citizen. I made up my mind, Eddie. I'm sorry. (*To Beatrice.*) Could I take two more pillow cases for the other guys?

**Beatrice** Sure, go ahead. Only don't let her forget where they came from.

**Catherine** *goes into a bedroom.*

**Eddie** She's got other boarders up there?

**Beatrice** Yeah, there's two guys that just came over.

**Eddie** What do you mean, came over?

**Beatrice** From Italy. Lipari the butcher – his nephew. They come from Bari, they just got here yesterday. I didn't even know till Marco and Rodolpho moved up there before. (*Catherine enters, going toward exit with two pillow cases.*) It'll be nice, they could all talk together.

**Eddie** Catherine! (*She halts near the exit door. He takes in*

**Beatrice too.**) What're you, got no brains? You put them up there with two other submarines?

**Catherine** Why?

**Eddie** (*in a driving fright and anger*) Why! How do you know they're not trackin' these guys? They'll come up for them and find Marco and Rodolpho! Get them out of the house!

**Beatrice** But they been here so long already –

**Eddie** How do you know what enemies Lipari's got? Which they'd love to stab him in the back?



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**Catherine** Well what'll I do with them?

**Eddie** The neighborhood is full of rooms. Can't you stand to live a couple of blocks away from him? Get them out of the house!

**Catherine** Well maybe tomorrow night I'll –

**Eddie** Not tomorrow, do it now. Catherine, you never mix yourself with somebody else's family! These guys get picked up, Lipari's liable to blame you or me and we got his whole family on our head. They got a temper, that family.

*Two men in overcoats appear outside, start into the house.*

**Catherine** How'm I gonna find a place tonight?

**Eddie** Will you stop arguin' with me and get them out! You think I'm always tryin' to fool you or sump'm? What's the matter with you, don't you believe I could think of your good? Did I ever ask sump'm for myself? You think I got no feelin's? I never told you nothin' in my life that wasn't for your good. Nothin'! And look at the way you talk to me! Like I was an enemy! Like I – *(A knock on the door. His head swerves. They all stand motionless. Another knock. Eddie, in a whisper, pointing upstage.)* Go up the fire escape, get them out over the back fence.

**Catherine** *stands motionless, uncomprehending.*

**First Officer** *(in the hall)* Immigration! Open up in there!

**Eddie** Go, go. Hurry up! *(She stands a moment staring at him in a realized horror.)* Well, what're you lookin' at!

**First Officer** Open up!

**Eddie** *(calling toward door)* Who's that there?

**First Officer** Immigration, open up.

**Eddie** *turns, looks at Beatrice. She sits. Then he looks at*

**Catherine.** *With a sob of fury Catherine streaks into a bedroom.*

*Knock is repeated.*

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**Eddie** All right, take it easy, take it easy. (*He goes and opens the door. The Officer steps inside.*) What's all this?

**First Officer** Where are they?

**Second Officer** *sweeps past and, glancing about, goes into the kitchen.*

**Eddie** Where's who?

**First Officer** Come on, come on, where are they? (*He hurries into the bedrooms.*)

**Eddie** Who? We got nobody here. (*He looks at Beatrice, who turns her head away. Pugnaciously, furious, he steps toward Beatrice.*) What's the matter with you?

**First Officer** *enters from the bedroom, calls to the kitchen.*

**First Officer** Dominick?

*Enter Second Officer from kitchen.*

**Second Officer** Maybe it's a different apartment.

**First Officer** There's only two more floors up there. I'll take the front, you go up the fire escape. I'll let you in. Watch your step up there.

**Second Officer** Okay, right, Charley. (**First Officer** *goes out apartment door and runs up the stairs.*) This is Four-forty-one, isn't it?

**Eddie** That's right.

**Second Officer** *goes out into the kitchen.*

**Eddie** *turns to Beatrice. She looks at him now and sees his terror.*

**Beatrice** (*weakened with fear*) Oh, Jesus, Eddie.

**Eddie** What's the matter with you?

**Beatrice** (*pressing her palms against her face*) Oh, my God, my God . . .

**Eddie** What're you, accusin' me?

**Beatrice** (*her final thrust is to turn toward him instead of running from him*) My God, what did you do?

## Act Two 69

*Many steps on the outer stair draw his attention. We see the **First Officer** descending, with **Marco**, behind him **Rodolpho**, and **Catherine** and the two strange immigrants, followed by **Second Officer**. **Beatrice** hurries to door.*

**Catherine** (*backing down stairs, fighting with **First Officer**; as they appear on the stairs*) What do yiz want from them? They work, that's all. They're boarders upstairs, they work on the piers.

**Beatrice** (*to **First Officer***) Ah, Mister, what do you want from them, who do they hurt?

**Catherine** (*pointing to **Rodolpho***) They ain't no submarines, he was born in Philadelphia.

**First Officer** Step aside, lady.

**Catherine** What do you mean? You can't just come in a house and –

**First Officer** All right, take it easy. (*To **Rodolpho**.*) What street were you born in Philadelphia?

**Catherine** What do you mean, what street? Could you tell me what street you were born?

**First Officer** Sure. Four blocks away, One-eleven Union Street. Let's go fellas.

**Catherine** (*fending him off **Rodolpho***) No, you can't! Now, get outa here!

**First Officer** Look, girlie, if they're all right they'll be out tomorrow. If they're illegal they go back where they came from. If you want, get yourself a lawyer, although I'm tellin' you now you're wasting your money. Let's get them in the car, Dom. (*To the men.*) Andiamo, andiamo, let's go.

*The men start, but **Marco** hangs back.*

**Beatrice** (*from doorway*) Who're they hurtin', for God's sake, what do you want from them? They're starvin' over there, what do you want! Marco!

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**Marco** suddenly breaks from the group and dashes into the room and faces **Eddie**; **Beatrice** and **First Officer** rush in as **Marco** spits into **Eddie**'s face.

**Catherine** runs into hallway and throws herself into **Rodolpho**'s arms. **Eddie**, with an enraged cry, lunges for **Marco**.

**Eddie** Oh, you mother's – !

**First Officer** quickly intercedes and pushes **Eddie** from **Marco**, who stands there accusingly.

**First Officer** (between them, pushing **Eddie** from **Marco**) Cut it out!

**Eddie** (over the **First Officer**'s shoulder, to **Marco**) I'll kill you for that, you son of a bitch!

**First Officer** Hey! (Shakes him.) Stay in here now, don't come out, don't bother him. You hear me? Don't come out, fella.

For an instant there is silence. Then **First Officer** turns and takes **Marco**'s arm and then gives a last, informative look at **Eddie**. As he and **Marco** are going out into the hall. **Eddie** erupts.

**Eddie** I don't forget that, Marco! You hear what I'm sayin'?

Out in the hall, **First Officer** and **Marco** go down the stairs. Now, in the street, **Louis**, **Mike**, and several neighbors including the butcher, **Lipari** – a stout, intense, middle-aged man – are gathering around the stoop.

**Lipari**, the butcher, walks over to the two strange men and kisses them. His wife, keening, goes and kisses their hands. **Eddie** is emerging from the house shouting after **Marco**. **Beatrice** is trying to restrain him.

**Eddie** That's the thanks I get? Which I took the blankets off my bed for yiz? You gonna apologize to me, Marco! *Marco!*

**First Officer** (in the doorway with **Marco**) All right, lady, let them go. Get in the car, fellas, it's right over there.

**Rodolpho** is almost carrying the sobbing **Catherine** off up the street, left.

## Act Two 71

**Catherine** He was born in Philadelphia! What do you want from him?

**First Officer** Step aside, lady, come on now . . .

*The **Second Officer** has moved off with the two strange men.*

**Marco**, taking advantage of the **First Officer**'s being occupied with **Catherine**, suddenly frees himself and points back at **Eddie**.

**Marco** That one! I accuse that one!

**Eddie** brushes **Beatrice** aside and rushes out to the stoop.

**First Officer** (*grabbing him and moving him quickly off up the left street*) Come on!

**Marco** (*as he is taken off, pointing back at **Eddie***) That one! He killed my children! That one stole the food from my children!

**Marco** is gone. *The crowd has turned to **Eddie**.*

**Eddie** (*to **Lipari** and wife*) He's crazy! I give them the blankets off my bed. Six months I kept them like my own brothers!

**Lipari**, the butcher, turns and starts up left with his arm around his wife.

**Eddie** **Lipari**! (*He follows **Lipari** up left.*) For Christ's sake, I kept them, I give them the blankets off my bed!

**Lipari** and wife exit. **Eddie** turns and starts crossing down right to **Louis** and **Mike**.

**Eddie** Louis! *Louis!*

**Louis** barely turns, then walks off and exits down right with **Mike**. Only **Beatrice** is left on the stoop. **Catherine** now returns, blank-eyed, from offstage and the car. **Eddie** calls after **Louis** and **Mike**.

**Eddie** He's gonna take that back. He's gonna take that back or I'll kill him! You hear me? I'll kill him! I'll kill him! (*He exits up street calling.*)

*There is a pause of darkness before the lights rise, on the reception room of a prison. **Marco** is seated; **Alfieri**, **Catherine**, and **Rodolpho** standing.*

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**Alfieri** I'm waiting, Marco, what do you say?

**Rodolpho** Marco never hurt anybody.

**Alfieri** I can bail you out until your hearing comes up. But I'm not going to do it, you understand me? Unless I have your promise. You're an honorable man, I will believe your promise. Now what do you say?

**Marco** In my country he would be dead now. He would not live this long.

**Alfieri** All right, Rodolpho – you come with me now.

**Rodolpho** No! Please, mister. Marco – promise the man. Please, I want you to watch the wedding. How can I be married and you're in here? Please, you're not going to do anything; you know you're not.

**Marco** *is silent.*

**Catherine** (*kneeling left of Marco*) Marco, don't you understand? He can't bail you out if you're gonna do something bad. To hell with Eddie. Nobody is gonna talk to him again if he lives to a hundred. Everybody knows you spit in his face, that's enough, isn't it? Give me the satisfaction – I want you at the wedding. You got a wife and kids, Marco. You could be workin' till the hearing comes up, instead of layin' around here.

**Marco** (*to Alfieri*) I have no chance?

**Alfieri** (*crosses to behind Marco*) No, Marco. You're going back. The hearing is a formality, that's all.

**Marco** But him? There is a chance, eh?

**Alfieri** When she marries him he can start to become an American. They permit that, if the wife is born here.

**Marco** (*looking at Rodolpho*) Well – we did something. (*He lays a palm on Rodolpho's arm and Rodolpho covers it.*)

**Rodolpho** Marco, tell the man.

## Act Two 73

**Marco** (*pulling his hand away*) What will I tell him? He knows such a promise is dishonorable.

**Alfieri** To promise not to kill is not dishonorable.

**Marco** (*looking at Alfieri*) No?

**Alfieri** No.

**Marco** (*gesturing with his head – this is a new idea*) Then what is done with such a man?

**Alfieri** Nothing. If he obeys the law, he lives. That's all.

**Marco** (*rises, turns to Alfieri*) The law? All the law is not in a book.

**Alfieri** Yes. In a book. There is no other law.

**Marco** (*his anger rising*) He degraded my brother. My blood. He robbed my children, he mocks my work. I work to come here, mister!

**Alfieri** I know, Marco –

**Marco** There is no law for that? Where is the law for that?

**Alfieri** There is none.

**Marco** (*shaking his head, sitting*) I don't understand this country.

**Alfieri** Well? What is your answer? You have five or six weeks you could work. Or else you sit here. What do you say to me?

**Marco** (*lowers his eyes. It almost seems he is ashamed*) All right.

**Alfieri** You won't touch him. This is your promise.

*Slight pause.*

**Marco** Maybe he wants to apologize to me.

**Marco** *is staring away.* **Alfieri** *takes one of his hands.*

**Alfieri** This is not God, Marco. You hear? Only God makes justice.

**Marco** All right.

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**Alfieri** (*nodding, not with assurance*) Good! Catherine, Rodolpho, Marco, let us go.

**Catherine** *kisses Rodolpho and Marco, then kisses Alfieri's hand.*

**Catherine** I'll get Beatrice and meet you at the church. (*She leaves quickly.*)

**Marco** *rises. Rodolpho suddenly embraces him. Marco pats him on the back and Rodolpho exits after Catherine. Marco faces Alfieri.*

**Alfieri** Only God, Marco.

**Marco** *turns and walks out. Alfieri with a certain processional tread leaves the stage. The lights dim out.*

*The lights rise in the apartment. Eddie is alone in the rocker, rocking back and forth in little surges. Pause. Now Beatrice emerges from a bedroom. She is in her best clothes, wearing a hat.*

**Beatrice** (*with fear, going to Eddie*) I'll be back in about an hour, Eddie. All right?

**Eddie** (*quietly, almost inaudibly, as though drained*) What, have I been talkin' to myself?

**Beatrice** Eddie, for God's sake, it's her wedding.

**Eddie** Didn't you hear what I told you? You walk out that door to that wedding you ain't comin' back here, Beatrice.

**Beatrice** Why! What do you want?

**Eddie** I want my respect. Didn't you ever hear of that? From my wife?

**Catherine** *enters from bedroom.*

**Catherine** It's after three; we're supposed to be there already, Beatrice. The priest won't wait.

**Beatrice** Eddie. It's her wedding. There'll be nobody there from her family. For my sister let me go. I'm goin' for my sister.



## Act Two 75

**Eddie** (*as though hurt*) Look, I been arguin' with you all day already, Beatrice, and I said what I'm gonna say. He's gonna come here and apologize to me or nobody from this house is goin' into that church today. Now if that's more to you than I am, then go. But don't come back. You be on my side or on their side, that's all.

**Catherine** (*suddenly*) Who the hell do you think you are?

**Beatrice** Sssh!

**Catherine** You got no more right to tell nobody nothin'! Nobody! The rest of your life, nobody!

**Beatrice** Shut up, Katie! (*She turns Catherine around.*)

**Catherine** You're gonna come with me!

**Beatrice** I can't, Katie, I can't . . .

**Catherine** How can you listen to him? This rat!

**Beatrice** (*shaking Catherine*) Don't you call him that!

**Catherine** (*clearing from Beatrice*) What're you scared of? He's a rat! He belongs in the sewer!

**Beatrice** Stop it!

**Catherine** (*weeping*) He bites people when they sleep! He comes when nobody's lookin' and poisons decent people. In the garbage he belongs!

**Eddie** *seems about to pick up the table and fling it at her.*

**Beatrice** No, Eddie! Eddie! (*To Catherine.*) Then we all belong in the garbage. You, and me too. Don't say that. Whatever happened we all done it, and don't you ever forget it, Catherine. (*She goes to Catherine.*) Now go, go to your wedding, Katie, I'll stay home. Go. God bless you, God bless your children.

*Enter Rodolpho.*

**Rodolpho** Eddie?

**Eddie** Who said you could come in here? Get outa here!

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**Rodolpho** Marco is coming, Eddie. (*Pause. Beatrice raises her hands in terror.*) He's praying in the church. You understand? (*Pause. Rodolpho advances into the room.*) Catherine, I think it is better we go. Come with me.

**Catherine** Eddie, go away please.

**Beatrice** (*quietly*) Eddie. Let's go someplace. Come. You and me. (*He has not moved.*) I don't want you to be here when he comes. I'll get your coat.

**Eddie** Where? Where am I goin'? This is my house.

**Beatrice** (*crying out*) What's the use of it! He's crazy now, you know the way they get, what good is it! You got nothin' against Marco, you always liked Marco!

**Eddie** I got nothin' against Marco? Which he called me a rat in front of the whole neighborhood? Which he said I killed his children! Where you been?

**Rodolpho** (*quite suddenly, stepping up to Eddie*) It is my fault, Eddie. Everything. I wish to apologize. It was wrong that I do not ask your permission. I kiss your hand. (*He reaches for Eddie's hand, but Eddie snaps it away from him.*)

**Beatrice** Eddie, he's apologizing!

**Rodolpho** I have made all our troubles. But you have insult me too. Maybe God understand why you did that to me. Maybe you did not mean to insult me at all –

**Beatrice** Listen to him! Eddie, listen what he's tellin' you!

**Rodolpho** I think, maybe when Marco comes, if we can tell him we are comrades now, and we have no more argument between us. Then maybe Marco will not –

**Eddie** Now, listen –

**Catherine** Eddie, give him a chance!

**Beatrice** What do you want! Eddie, what do you want!

**Eddie** I want my name! He didn't take my name; he's only a punk. Marco's got my name – (*To Rodolpho.*) and you can

## Act Two 77

run tell him, kid, that he's gonna give it back to me in front of this neighborhood, or we have it out. (*Hoisting up his pants.*) Come on, where is he? Take me to him.

**Beatrice** Eddie, listen –

**Eddie** I heard enough! Come on, let's go!

**Beatrice** Only blood is good? He kissed your hand!

**Eddie** What he does don't mean nothin' to nobody! (*To Rodolpho.*) Come on!

**Beatrice** (*barring his way to the stairs*) What's gonna mean somethin'? Eddie, listen to me. Who could give you your name? Listen to me, I love you, I'm talkin' to you, I love you; if Marco'll kiss your hand outside, if he goes on his knees, what is he got to give you? That's not what you want.

**Eddie** Don't bother me!

**Beatrice** You want somethin' else, Eddie, and you can never have her!

**Catherine** (*in horror*) B!

**Eddie** (*shocked, horrified, his fists clenching*) Beatrice!

**Marco** *appears outside, walking toward the door from a distant point.*

**Beatrice** (*crying out, weeping*) The truth is not as bad as blood, Eddie! I'm tellin' you the truth – tell her goodbye for ever!

**Eddie** (*crying out in agony*) That's what you think of me – that I would have such thoughts? (*His fists clench his head as though it will burst.*)

**Marco** (*calling near the door outside*) Eddie Carbone!

**Eddie** *swerves about; all stand transfixed for an instant.*

*People appear outside.*

**Eddie** (*as though flinging his challenge*) Yeah, Marco! Eddie Carbone. Eddie Carbone. Eddie Carbone. (*He goes up the stairs*)

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*and emerges from the apartment. **Rodolpho** streaks up and out past him and runs to **Marco**.)*

**Rodolpho** No, Marco, please! Eddie, please, he has children! You will kill a family!

**Beatrice** Go in the house! Eddie, go in the house!

**Eddie** *(he gradually comes to address the people)* Maybe he come to apologize to me. Heh, Marco? For what you said about me in front of the neighborhood? *(He is incensing himself and little bits of laughter even escape him as his eyes are murderous and he cracks his knuckles in his hands with a strange sort of relaxation.)* He knows that ain't right. To do like that? To a man? Which I put my roof over their head and my food in their mouth? Like in the Bible? Strangers I never seen in my whole life? To come out of the water and grab a girl for a passport? To go and take from your own family like from the stable – and never a word to me? And now accusations in the bargain! *(Directly to **Marco**.)* Wipin' the neighborhood with my name like a dirty rag! I want my name, Marco. *(He is moving now, carefully, toward **Marco**.)* Now gimme my name and we go together to the wedding.

**Beatrice and Catherine** *(keening)* Eddie! Eddie, don't! Eddie!

**Eddie** No, Marco knows what's right from wrong. Tell the people, Marco, tell them what a liar you are! *(He has his arms spread and **Marco** is spreading his.)* Come on, liar, you know what you done! *(He lunges for **Marco** as a great hushed shout goes up from the people.)*

**Marco** strikes **Eddie** beside the neck.

**Marco** Animal! You go on your knees to me!

**Eddie** *goes down with the blow and **Marco** starts to raise a foot to stomp him when **Eddie** springs a knife into his hand and **Marco** steps back. **Louis** rushes in toward **Eddie**.*

**Louis** Eddie, for Christ's sake!

**Eddie** *raises the knife and **Louis** halts and steps back.*

**Eddie** You lied about me, Marco. Now say it. Come on now, say it!

## Act Two 79

**Marco** Anima-a-a-!

**Eddie** lunges with the knife. **Marco** grabs his arm, turning the blade inward and pressing it home as the women and **Louis** and **Mike** rush in and separate them, and **Eddie**, the knife still in his hand, falls to his knees before **Marco**. The two women support him for a moment, calling his name again and again.

**Catherine** Eddie, I never meant to do nothing bad to you.

**Eddie** Then why – Oh, B!

**Beatrice** Yes, yes!

**Eddie** My B!

*He dies in her arms, and **Beatrice** covers him with her body.*

**Alfieri**, who is in the crowd, turns out to the audience. *The lights have gone down, leaving him in a glow, while behind him the dull prayers of the people and the keening of the women continue.*

**Alfieri** Most of the time now we settle for half and I like it better. But the truth is holy, and even as I know how wrong he was, and his death useless, I tremble, for I confess that something perversely pure calls to me from his memory – not purely good, but himself purely, for he allowed himself to be wholly known and for that I think I will love him more than all my sensible clients. And yet, it is better to settle for half, it must be! And so I mourn him – I admit it – with a certain . . . alarm.

*Curtain.*

## Notes

*page*

- 3 *a tenement building*: tenement buildings are of inferior quality and located in poor neighbourhoods, typically overcrowded and inhabited by the working class. *A View from the Bridge* is set in the Brooklyn neighbourhood called Red Hook, in the New York harbour south of the Brooklyn Bridge. The type of tenement building in Red Hook usually contained six to eight family units in three- or four-storey structures.
- 3 *longshoremen*: dockworkers who load and unload cargo from ships. Many New York longshoremen were Italian immigrants.
- 3 *pitching coins*: a game played against the wall of a building and the pavement.
- 4 *Al Capone, the greatest Carthagian of them all; Frankie Yale*: Al Capone was one of America's best-known Mafia gangsters of the 1920s. Although he is associated with the city of Chicago, he was born in Brooklyn and he began his criminal career in New York. He became part of the notorious Five Points gang in Manhattan and worked in the gangster Frankie Yale's Coney Island club, the Harvard Inn, as a bouncer and bartender. While working at the Inn, Capone received his famous facial scars and the nickname 'Scarface' when he insulted a patron and was attacked by her brother. Alfieri calls Al Capone 'The greatest Carthagian of all' and he means this to be ironic. Carthage was the ancient city located in present-day Tunisia. In the first and second centuries BC, it was the centre of a great civilisation that fought several wars against Rome. Hannibal was a Carthaginian. Sicily, because of its proximity to North Africa, was often dominated by the

Carthaginians. Miller compares Carthage's challenges to the Roman Empire to Mafia gangsters like Capone challenging American civil authority.

- 4 *in some Caesar's year*: under some Roman emperor.
- 4 *Calabria . . . Syracuse*: Calabria, an impoverished area in southern Italy, was a source of mass migration to the United States. Syracuse, a city on the south-east coast of Sicily, was an important Greek colony and a centre of great theatrical activity.
- 6 *I promised your mother on her deathbed*: Catherine is the daughter of Nancy, Beatrice's sister. The play is unclear about how she died, but Eddie and Beatrice have raised Catherine since she was a baby.
- 7 *North River*: another name for the Hudson River on the west of Manhattan.
- 7 *That's fixed*: Beatrice means this as 'set' or 'determined', but the term also has the connotation of meaning as arranged through illegal activity as 'putting the fix in'.
- 10 *stenographer*: a boss dictated letters to a stenographer, who wrote them down in shorthand and would then type them up. The stenographer had fewer duties and responsibilities than a secretary.
- 11 *Navy Yard*: the Brooklyn Navy Yard was the famous shipbuilding yard located on the East River. Arthur Miller worked there during the Second World War before his successful career as a playwright.
- 13 *Madonna*: Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Eddie's description of Catherine as a Madonna has many significant meanings (see 'Language' in Commentary).
- 14 *We'll bust a bag tomorrow*. Eddie means that a sack of coffee will 'accidentally' get damaged while being unloaded from the ship, enabling him to bring home some of its contents.
- 14 *Buick*: an American automobile characterised by its large size.
- 16 *The kid snitched?*: slang for informing. The story about Vinny Bolzano, who informed to immigration authorities, foreshadows Eddie's action.
- 17 *Captain's pieced off*: slang term for an illegal payment to keep silent.

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- 17 *the Syndicate*: another term for organised crime such as the Mafia. Illegal immigrants like Marco and Rodolpho must work off the price the Syndicate paid for smuggling them into the country.
- 20 *Danes invaded Sicily*: Sicily, located at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, has been one of the most invaded lands in Europe. The Viking invasions of Sicily occurred during the Middle Ages. This is often used as an explanation for the physical appearance of blond, blue-eyed Sicilians.
- 22 *He trusts his wife*: A reference to the sexual fidelity of Italian women. Later in Act One, Eddie implies otherwise.
- 22 *I understand it's not too good here, either*: A reference to the economic conditions and the availability of work in America
- 25 *Napolitan*: popular Neapolitan songs. *Bel canto*, literally 'beautiful singing', was a style of singing much favoured in mid-nineteenth-century Italy; it emphasised beauty of tone in the delivery of highly florid music.
- 25 *Paper Doll*: the famous hit song by the Mills Brothers.
- 26 *Garbo*: the Hollywood movie star Greta Garbo.
- 27 *Paramount*: at the time in which the play is set, New York had two movie theatres named the Paramount, one in downtown Brooklyn and one in Manhattan.
- 28 *sump'm*: something.
- 29 *When am I gonna be a wife again?:* Beatrice and Eddie have not had sexual relations in three months.
- 30 *submarines*: slang for illegal immigrants who have arrived by ship, implying the stealthlike way they have arrived in America.
- 30 *Matson Line . . . Moore-MacCormack Line*: names of shipping companies.
- 32 *Times Square*: the famous entertainment centre of New York, where Broadway meets Seventh Avenue just north of 42nd Street. Tramps in this instance are prostitutes.
- 32 *Broadway*: the main thoroughfare through Times Square; it is the generic name for theatre district in New York.
- 34 *if you wasn't an orphan, wouldn't he ask your father's permission before he run around with you like this?:* Eddie makes a number of references to the promise he made to Catherine's mother on her deathbed. Note that no mention is made in



- the play to Catherine's father. Patriarchal authority remained strong in the 1950s Sicilian-American culture depicted by Miller, and Eddie assumes this role.
- 34 *Katie, he's only bowin' to his passport*: Eddie insists that Rodolpho only wants to obtain American citizenship, which would be easier for him to achieve if he married an American citizen.
- 41 *I mean he looked so sweet there, like an angel – you could kiss him he was so sweet*: this line foreshadows the kiss Eddie delivers in Act Two.
- 41 *There's only one legal question here . . . The manner in which they entered the country. But I don't think you want to do anything about that, do you?*: this foreshadows Eddie's snitching to the immigration authorities, the very act he abhorred earlier in the play.
- 45 *Coney Island*: the famous amusement park and beach in Brooklyn.
- 46 *I betcha there's plenty surprises sometimes when those guys get back there, heh?*: Eddie insinuates that many Italian wives are unfaithful to their husbands; consequently, upon his return, a husband may find a child not fathered by him
- 50 *Danish*: Eddie calls Rodolpho by this name to bring attention again to his unusual blond hair.
- 55 *This is your question or his question?*: Rodolpho is aware of the doubts which Eddie has placed in Catherine's mind.
- 56 *razzes*: criticises with the intention of annoying someone.
- 66 *Bari*: a city on the Adriatic coast in southern Italy.
- 69 *Andiamo*: 'let's go' in Italian.
- 70 *Marco spits into Eddie's face* in Italian culture a particularly insulting act.
- 71 *That one! I accuse that one!* Marco's public accusation humiliates Eddie in front of his neighbours, causing him to be ostracised.
- 72 *In my country he would be dead now*: Marco seeks the vengeance on Eddie that would be exacted in Italy.
- 73 *The law? All the law is not in a book*: Marco is frustrated that civil law in America provides no justice for him against Eddie, just as earlier Eddie was frustrated that the law could not help him stop Rodolpho and Catherine's relationship.

## Questions for Further Study

- 1 Discuss Catherine's growing awareness of herself as a woman. Do you think she recognises Eddie's desire for her?
- 2 How important are Alfieri's roles as lawyer and narrator?
- 3 Is Eddie a tragic hero? Do we sympathise with him at the play's end?
- 4 When Miller first heard the tale upon which he based *A View from the Bridge*, he thought it was 'some re-enactment of a Greek myth'. To Miller, the events seemed almost the work of fate. Could Eddie have prevented his fate?
- 5 Discuss why Alfieri uses the words 'a passion which had moved into Eddie's body'.
- 6 Rodolpho refuses to go to Italy when he and Catherine marry. Does this give credence to Eddie's claim that Rodolpho is 'bowin' to his passport'?
- 7 What does the play suggest about immigration issues and illegal aliens?
- 8 Discuss whether Marco wants to exact justice or revenge on Eddie.
- 9 Why does Eddie knowingly inform to the immigration authorities when Alfieri has told him the consequences of such an action?
- 10 Analyse Eddie's apparent lack of awareness of his desire for Catherine.
- 11 Discuss Eddie's violation of the codes of his society.
- 12 Explain Eddie's state of mind in wanting his name back. How does he expect to retain his honour in front of his neighbours when he has knowingly informed?
- 13 How does civil law operate in the play? How does social law operate in the play?
- 14 The play ends with Eddie crying out, 'My B'. Discuss Beatrice's devotion to Eddie.

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- 15 Discuss the characters in the play who take responsibility for their actions.
- 16 Analyse Miller's use of symbolic and metaphorical language in the dialogue.
- 17 Why is the stage presence of the neighbours in the Red Hook community so important to the effect of the play?
- 18 At the end of the play, Alfieri tells the audience that he mourns Eddie with a 'certain alarm'. Arthur Miller said that Eddie is 'not a man to weep over'. How do you ultimately judge Eddie? What do his actions suggest about the human condition?
- 19 Discuss how the casting of the play with additional actors affects the production and ultimately the meaning of the play in performance.
- 20 In the 1956 production of *A View from the Bridge*, the set was more realistic than the skeletal set of the original New York production. Other recent productions of the play have used a scrim of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Brooklyn Navy Yard as backgrounds. Discuss how the set of a particular production can affect the performance of *A View from the Bridge*. How would you design a set for the play?
- 21 There is significant argument about the meaning of Eddie kissing both Catherine and Rodolpho in Act Two. As a director, how would you block this scene?
- 22 At the climax of the play, Marco comes to take revenge on Eddie, but it is Eddie who springs the knife on Marco. How does the staging of this scene affect the audience's perception of Eddie's tragedy?

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