

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.

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.*

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?

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.

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

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 –

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 Eddie.*) 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.

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.*)

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

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 longshoremen.

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.

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 noplacelse. (*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.

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?

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?

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*

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'?

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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 layoff, 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 –

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, forever! 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.

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. i

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?

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 –

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?

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.

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.

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 layoff me, will ya? I'm worried about her.

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

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 lifin' 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.

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'koow?

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

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 –

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.

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

but theirself! 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?

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

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?

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 (*astounded*) 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 good-bye. 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 –

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?

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 –

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 – ?

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

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,

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.*

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?

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 –

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?

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.

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*

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.

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.*

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.

Rodolpho (*astonished*) You want to be an Italian?

Catherine No, but I could live there without being Italian. Americans live there.

Rodolpho Forever?

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?

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?

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

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 (*clasping 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' nowhere, he's the one.

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' nowhere.

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.

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?

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.**)

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.

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.

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

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 . . . why'n't you go tell her you're sorry? (**Catherine** is seen on the upper

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.

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?

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.

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?

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!

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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!

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

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 good-bye forever!

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

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!

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.