A View from the Bridge

ACT ONE

ALFIERI You wouldn’t have known it, but something amusing has

just happened. You see how

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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

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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.

LOUIS You working tomorrow?

EDDIE Yeah, there’s another day yet on that ship.

ALFIERI This one’s name was Eddie Carbone, a longshoreman

working the docks from the Brooklyn Bridge to the

breakwater where the open sea begins.

LOUIS I’ll see ya Eddie.

EDDIE See ya Louis.

CATHERINE Hi, Eddie!

EDDIE Where you goin’ all dressed up?

CATHERINE I just got it. You like it?

EDDIE Yeah, it’s nice. And what happened to your hair?

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CATHERINE You like it? I fixed it different. He’s here, Bea!

EDDIE Beautiful. Turn around, lemme see in the back. 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 Wait’ll Bea comes in, I’ll tell you something. Here, sit

down. Hurry up, will you, Bea?

EDDIE What’s goin’ on?

CATHERINE I’ll get you beer, all right?

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

CATHERINE I want to wait till Bea comes in. Guess how much we paid

for the skirt.

EDDIE I think it’s too short, ain’t it?

CATHERINE No! Not when I stand up.

EDDIE Yeah, but you gotta sit down sometimes.

CATHERINE Eddie, it’s the style now. I mean, if you seen 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?!

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EDDIE Catherine, I don’t want to be a pest, but I’m tellin’ you

you’re walkin’ wavey.

CATHERINE I’m walkin’ wavey!?

EDDIE Now don’t aggravate me, Katie, you are walkin’ wavey! 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 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 death bed. 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 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. Hey, Bea, what’re you doin’ in there! Get her

in here, will you? I got news for her.

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CATHERINE What?

EDDIE Her cousins landed.

CATHERINE No! Bea! Your cousins . . . !

BEATRICE What . . . ?

CATHERINE Your cousins got in!

BEATRICE 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 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 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, Bea, 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

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was supposed to take there was some danger . . . What you

cryin’ about?

BEATRICE I’m… I just…I can’t believe it! I didn’t even buy a new

table cloth…

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.

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BEATRICE 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 some place else . . .

EDDIE Now wait a minute. Beatrice! I just don’t want you bein’

pushed around, that’s all. You got too big a heart. 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 . . .

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EDDIE Then what the hell. It’s an honor, Bea. 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 that man would be honored to lend me a

place to sleep.

BEATRICE You see what he is? Mmm! – You’re an angel! God’ll bless

you . . You’ll see, you’ll get a blessing for this!

EDDIE 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.

EDDIE What’s all that about? – Where’s she goin’?

BEATRICE No place. It’s very good news, Eddie. I want you to be

happy.

EDDIE Well, what already?

BEATRICE She’s got a job.

EDDIE What job? – She’s gonna finish school.

CATHERINE Eddie, you won’t believe it . . .

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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 nowhere 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 Where’s the job? What company?

CATHERINE It’s a big plumbing company over Nostrand Avenue.

EDDIE Nostrand Avenue and where?

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CATHERINE It’s some place by the Navy Yard.

BEATRICE Fifty dollars a week, Eddie.

EDDIE Fifty?

CATHERINE I swear.

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

waterfront. 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, Bea, 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.

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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 into practically

the same kind of neighborhood.

BEATRICE Go, Baby, bring in the supper. 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. 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 I know that neighborhood, Bea, I don’t like it.

BEATRICE Listen, if nothin’ happened to her in this neighborhood it

ain’t gonna happen no place else. Look, you gotta get used

to it, she’s no baby no more. Tell her to take it. You hear

me? I don’t understand you; she’s seventeen years old, you

gonna keep her in the house all her life?

EDDIE What kinda remark is that?

BEATRICE 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

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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.

EDDIE With your hair that way you look like a Madonna, you know

that? You’re the Madonna type. You wanna go to work,

heh, Madonna?

CATHERINE Yeah.

EDDIE All right, go to work. Hey hey! Take it easy! What’re you

cryin’ about?

CATHERINE I just … I’m gonna buy all new dishes with my first pay. 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 Why not? – That’s life. And you’ll come visit on Sundays,

then once a month, then Christmas and New Year’s.

CATHERINE No, please!

EDDIE I only ask you one thing – don’t trust nobody. You got a

good

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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 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.

Believe me,

Katie, the less you trust, the less you be sorry.

CATHERINE First thing I’ll buy is a rug, heh, Bea?

BEATRICE I don’t mind. 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. 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!

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EDDIE I seen spiders could stop a Buick.

BEATRICE All right, shut up!

EDDIE 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.

CATHERINE He’s bringin’ them ten o’clock, Louis?

EDDIE Around, yeah.

CATHERINE Eddie, suppose somebody asks if they’re livin’ here. 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,

Bea . . . 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

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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 neighorhood

they’re payin’ them every week for information, and you

don’t know who they are. It could be your best friend. You

hear? Like Vinny Bolzano, remember Vinny?

BEATRICE Oh, yeah. God forbid.

EDDIE Tell her about Vinny. You think I’m blowin’ steam here?

Go ahead, tell her. 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.

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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 . . . I never seen him again, did you?

EDDIE Him? You’ll never see him no more, a guy do a thing like

that? – how’s he gonna show his face? Just remember, kid,

you can quicker get back a million dollars that was stole

than a word that you gave away.

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 take 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 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

geta 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 . . .

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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 I’m supposed to, yeah.

EDDIE Well . . . I hope you have good luck. I wish you the best.

You know that, kid.

CATHERINE You sound like I’m goin’ a million miles!

EDDIE I know. I guess I just never figured on one thing.

CATHERINE What?

EDDIE That you would ever grow up. I left a cigar in my other coat,

I think.

CATHERINE Stay there! I’ll get it for you.

ALFIERI He was as good a man as he had to be in a life that was hard

and even.

EDDIE What are you mad at me lately?

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BEATRICE Who’s mad? I’m not mad. You’re the one is mad.

ALFIERI He worked on the piers when there was work, he brought

home his pay and he lived.

CATHERINE Here! I’ll light it for you! Don’t worry about me, Eddie,

heh?

EDDIE Don’t burn yourself. You better go in help her with the

dishes.

CATHERINE I’ll do the dishes, Bea!

ALFIERI And toward ten o’clock of that night, after they had eaten,

the cousins came.

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EDDIE You Marco? Come in, come in!

LOUIS I’ll see you on the pier tomorrow. You’ll go to work.

EDDIE Marco. And you’re ….?

RODOLPHO Yes, Rodolpho.

EDDIE Geez, you got here!

MARCO Are you my cousin?

BEATRICE Beatrice. This is my husband, Eddie. Catherine, my sister

Nancy’s daughter.

MARCO My brother. Rodolpho. I want to tell you now, Eddie – when

you say go, we will go.

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EDDIE Oh, no . . .

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?

CATHERINE Sit down. I’ll get you some soup.

MARCO We ate on the ship. Thank you. Thank you.

BEATRICE Get some coffee. We’ll all have coffee. Come sit down.

CATHERINE How come he’s so dark and you’re so light, Rodolpho?

RODOLPHO I don’t know. A thousand years ago, they say, the Danes

invaded Sicily.

CATHERINE He’s practically blonde!

EDDIE How’s the coffee doin’?

CATHERINE I’m gettin’ it.

EDDIE Yiz have a nice trip?

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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 He says we start to work tomorrow. Is he honest?

EDDIE No. But as long as you owe them money, they’ll get you

plenty of work. Yiz ever work on the piers in Italy?

MARCO Piers? – Ts! – no.

RODOLPHO In our town there are no piers, only the beach, and little

fishing boats.

BEATRICE So what kinda work did yiz do?

MARCO 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. In harvest

time we work in the fields . . . if there is work. Anything.

EDDIE Still bad there, heh?

MARCO Bad, yes.

RODOLPHO 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. 23

BEATRICE You gotta push a taxi?

RODOLPHO 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. 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. Everything in our town,

you gotta push!

BEATRICE How do you like that . . .

EDDIE So what’re you wanna do,

you gonna stay here in this country or you wanna go back?

MARCO 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.

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MARCO Oh. Maybe four, five, six years, I think.

RODOLPHO 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. 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 . . .

EDDIE On the average a whole year? Maybe well, it’s hard to say,

see. Sometimes we lay off, there’s no ships three four

weeks.

MARCO Three, four weeks! – Ts.

EDDIE But I think you could probably – thirty, forty a week, over

the whole twelve months of the year.

MARCO Dollars.

EDDIE Sure, dollars.

MARCO If we can stay here a few months, Beatrice . . . !

BEATRICE Listen, you’re welcome, Marco . . .

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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 My wife . . . my wife . . . I want to send right away maybe

twenty dollars . . .

EDDIE You could send them something next week already.

MARCO Eduardo . . .

EDDIE Don’t thank me. Listen, what the hell, it’s no skin off me . .

What happened to the coffee?

CATHERINE I got it on. You married too?– No.

RODOLPHO Oh, no . . .

BEATRICE 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.

CATHERINE He’s a real blond!

BEATRICE 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.

CATHERINE A motorcycle!

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RODOLPHO (*crosses down* L *of table*) With a motorcycle in Italy you

will never starve any more.

EDDIE What you do with a motorcycle?

MARCO He dreams, he dreams.

RODOLPHO Why?! 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 sup’m?

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. I am also a singer, though.

EDDIE You mean a regular . . .?

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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 Two months.

BEATRICE Can’t you get a job in that place?

RODOLPHO Andreola got better. He’s a baritone, very strong.

MARCO 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 Nobody ever said it was too loud!

MARCO I say. It was too loud. 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 I never heard anybody say it was too loud . . .

CATHERINE Did you ever hear of jazz?

RODOLPHO Oh, sure! I sing jazz.

CATHERINE You could sing jazz?!

28

RODOLPHO Oh, I sing Napolitan, 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 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 ball again

Say boy….

EDDIE Hey, kid . . .Hey, wait a minute . . .

CATHERINE Leave him finish, it’s beautiful! He’s terrific! It’s terrific,

Rodolpho.

EDDIE Look, kid; you don’t want to be picked up, do ya?

MARCO No – no!

EDDIE 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 They got guys all over the place, Marco. I mean.

MARCO Yes. He’ll be quiet. You’ll be quiet.

EDDIE What’s the high heels for, Garbo?

CATHERINE I figured for tonight . . .

EDDIE Do me a favor, will you? Go ahead.

29

All actresses they want to be around here.

RODOLPHO In Italy too! All the girls.

EDDIE Yeah, heh?

RODOLPHO Yes! Especially when they are so beautiful!

CATHERINE You like sugar?

RODOLPHO Sugar? – yes! I like sugar very much!

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.

30

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 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 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 goodlookin’

fella.

EDDIE He sings on the ships, didja know that?

BEATRICE What do you mean, he sings?

31

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 whacky hair; he’s like a chorus girl or sup’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 sup’m?

EDDIE 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 Balso?

EDDIE 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. I tell you the truth I’m surprised I

have to tell you all this. I mean I’m surprised, Bea.

BEATRICE Listen, you ain’t gonna start nothin’ here.

32

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, Bea, 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.

BEATRICE Yeah, you want me to tell you?

EDDIE 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. Its three months, Eddie.

EDDIE I don’t know, Bea – 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 I can’t. I can’t talk about it.

BEATRICE Well, tell me what . . . 33

EDDIE I got nothin’ to say about it!

I’ll be all right, Bea; just lay off me,

will ya? I’m worried about her.

BEATRICE The girl is gonna be eighteen years old, it’s time already.

EDDIE Bea, 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.

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 alla time.

EDDIE Oh, yeah, they’re doin’ all right.

LOUIS 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?

34

EDDIE Sure.

LOUIS Believe me, Eddie, you got a lotta credit comin’ to you.

EDDIE Aah, they don’t bother me, don’t cost me nutt’n.

LOUIS That older one, boy, he’s a regular bull. I seen him the other

day liftin’ coffee bags over the Matson Line. They leave

him alone he woulda load the whole ship by himself.

EDDIE Yeah, he’s a strong guy, that guy. Their father was a regular

giant, supposed to be.

LOUIS Yeah, you could see. He’s a regular slave. That blond one,

though –he’s got a sense of humor.

EDDIE Yeah. He’s funny –

LOUIS Well, he ain’t exackly funny, but he’s always like makin’

remarks like, y’know? He comes around, everybody’s

laughin’.

EDDIE Yeah, well . . . he’s got a sense of humor.

LOUIS Yeah, I mean, he’s always makin’ like remarks, like,

y’know?

EDDIE Yeah, I know. But he’s a kid yet, y’know? – he. . . he’s just

a kid, that’s all.

LOUIS I know. You take one look at him – everybody’s happy. I

worked one day with him last week over the Moore-

MacCormack Line, I’m tellin’ you they was all hysterical.

35

EDDIE Why? What’d he do?

LOUIS 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. He’s got a sense of humor.

LOUIS Yeah. Well, we see ya, Eddie.

EDDIE Take it easy.

LOUIS Yeah. See ya. If you wanna come bowlin’ later we’re goin’

Flatbush Avenue.

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

EDDIE Where’d you go?

CATHERINE Paramount. It was with those two guys. y’know? That . . .

EDDIE Brooklyn Paramount?

CATHERINE Sure, the Brooklyn Paramount – I told you we wasn’t goin’

to New York.

36

EDDIE All right, I only asked you. 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 theatres are and the opera.

Since I was a boy I see pictures of those lights.

EDDIE 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 Fountains?

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 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. I’ll

walk by the river before I go to sleep.

CATHERINE Why don’t you talk to him, Eddie? He blesses you, and you

don’t talk to him hardly.

37

EDDIE I bless you and you don’t talk to me.

CATHERINE I don’t talk to you? . . .What do you mean!

EDDIE I don’t see you no more. I come home you’re runnin’

around some place . . .

CATHERINE Well, he wants to see everything, that’s all, so we go . . .

You mad at me?

EDDIE No. 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 Ah, Eddie, sure I am. What’s the matter? You don’t like

him?

EDDIE You like him, Katie?

CATHERINE Yeah. I like him.

EDDIE You like him.

CATHERINE Yeah. What’re you got against him? I don’t understand. He

only blesses you.

EDDIE He don’t bless me, Katie.

CATHERINE He does! You’re like a father to him!

EDDIE Katie.

38

CATHERINE What, Eddie?

EDDIE You gonna marry him?

CATHERINE . . . I don’t know. We just been . . . goin’ around, that’s all.

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 it 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. You

understand what I’m tellin’ you? The guy is lookin’ for his

break, that’s all he’s lookin’ for.

CATHERINE 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

39

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 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 Don’t say that, for God’s sake! – this is the oldest racket in

the country . . .

CATHERINE I don’t believe it!

EDDIE . . . They been pullin’ this since the Immigration Law was

put in! They grab a green kid that don’t know nothin’ and

they . . .

CATHERINE I don’t believe it and I wish to hell you’d stop it!

EDDIE Katie!

40

Why don’t you straighten her out?

BEATRICE When are you going to leave her alone?

EDDIE Bea, the guy is no good!

BEATRICE You going to leave her alone? Or you gonna drive me

crazy?

BEATRICE Listen, Catherine. 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 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 I don’t know, Bea. It just seems wrong if he’s against it so

much.

41

BEATRICE 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 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!

42

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, Bea! . . .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 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 He said you was jealous?

43

BEATRICE No, I’m just sayin’ maybe that’s what he thinks. You think

I’m jealous of you, honey?

CATHERINE No! It’s the first I thought of it.

BEATRICE 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 All right . . . If I can.

BEATRICE Honey . . . you gotta.

CATHERINE Okay.

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 – His

eyes were like tunnels; my first thought was that he had

committed a crime, but soon I saw it was only a passion that

had moved into his body, like a stranger.

44

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 if the only reason 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 A1fieri!

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, when 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?

45

ALFIERI Well? What about it?

EDDIE All right. . . . 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 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 D’ja 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 sup’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?

46

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 sup’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 Alfleri, 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 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 . . . ?

47

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. You know, sometimes

God mixes up the people. We all love somebody, the wife,

the kids . . . everyman’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?

48

EDDIE 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? Let her go. That’s my advice. You did your job, now

it’s her life; wish her luck, and let her go. 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 Well, all right, thanks. Thanks very much.

ALFIERI What are you going to do?

EDDIE 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! 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 But, Eddie, she’s a woman now . . .

49

EDDIE He’s stealing from me!

ALFIERI She wants to get married, Eddie – she can’t marry you, can

she?

EDDIE What’re you talkin’ about, marry me! I don’t know what the

hell you’re talkin’about!

ALFIERI I gave you my advice, Eddie. That’s it.

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 . . . I’ll see you around.

ALFIERI 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.

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CATHERINE You know where they went?

BEATRICE Where?

CATHERINE They went to Africa once. On a fishing boat. It’s true,

Eddie.

EDDIE I didn’t say nothin’.

CATHERINE And I was never even in Staten Island.

EDDIE You didn’t miss nothin’. How long that take you, Marco? –

to get to Africa?

MARCO Oh . . . two days. We go all over –

RODOLPHO Once we went to Yugoslavia.

EDDIE They pay all right on them boats?

MARCO If they catch fish they pay all right.

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.

51

BEATRICE Yeah, but couldn’t they like fish from the beach? You see

them down Coney Island . . .

MARCO Sardines.

EDDIE Sure. How you gonna catch sardines on a hook?

BEATRICE Oh, I didn’t know they’re sardines. They’re sardines!

CATHERINE Yeah, they follow them all over the ocean, Africa,

Yugoslavia . . .

BEATRICE It’s funny, y’know. You never think of it, that sardines are

swimming in the ocean!

CATHERINE I know. It’s like oranges and lemons on a tree. I mean you

ever think of oranges and lemons on a tree?

EDDIE Yeah, I know. It’s funny. I heard that they paint the oranges

to make them look orange.

MARCO Paint?

EDDIE Yeah, I heard that they grow like green . . .

MARCO No, in Italy the oranges are orange.

RODOLPHO Lemons are green.

EDDIE 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 | Your wife is gettin’ the money all right, Marco? | 52 |
| 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 |  |
| BEATRICE | She must be nice. She pretty? I bet, heh? |  |
| MARCO | 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 | 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. |  |
|  |  |  |

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RODOLPHO It’s more strict in our town. It’s not so free.

EDDIE 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. You know what I mean,

Marco? – It ain’t that much different here.

MARCO 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. 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. I mean.

MARCO No, Beatrice, if he does wrong you must tell him. 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 You come home early now.

54

BEATRICE Well, you said the movie ended late, didn’t you?

CATHERINE Yeah.

BEATRICE Well, tell him, honey. The movie ended late.

EDDIE Look, Bea, I’m just sayin’ – he thinks she always stayed out

like that.

MARCO You come home early now, Rodolpho.

RODOLPHO 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’. I mean

suppose he gets hit by a car or something. 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 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! But I understood, Marco,

that you was both comin’ to make a livin’ for your family.

You understand me, don’t you, Marco?

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 Well, that’s all I’m askin’.

55

CATHERINE You wanna dance, Rodolpho?

RODOLPHO No, I . . . I’m tired.

BEATRICE Go ahead, dance, Rodolpho.

CATHERINE Ah, come on. They got a beautiful quartet, these guys.

Come.

EDDIE What’s that, a new record?

CATHERINE It’s the same one. We bought it the other day.

BEATRICE They only bought three records. 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 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?!

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MARCO Sure, very good cook. Rice, pasta, fish, everything.

EDDIE He’s a cook, too! He sings, he cooks . . .

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 Yeah, well, I mean.

EDDIE He’s lucky, believe me. That’s why the waterfront is no

place for him. I mean like me – I can’t cook, I can’t sing, I

can’t make dresses, so I’m on the waterfront. But if I could

cook, if I could sing, if I could make dresses, I wouldn’t be

on the waterfront. . .I would be some place else. I would be

like in a dress store. What do you say, Marco, we go to the

bouts next Saturday night. You never seen a fight, did you?

MARCO Only in the moving pictures . . .

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EDDIE 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 I’ll make some coffee, all right?

EDDIE Go ahead, make some! Make it nice and strong. You wait,

Marco, you see some real fights here. You ever do any

boxing?

MARCO No, I never.

EDDIE 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’n. Come on, Rodolpho, I show you a

couple a passes.

BEATRICE Go ahead, Rodolpho – he’s a good boxer, he could teach you

RODOLPHO Well, I don’t know how to . . .

EDDIE Just put your hands up. Like this, see? That’s right. That’s

very good; keep you’re left up, because you lead with the

left, see, like this . . . See? Now what you gotta do is you

gotta block me, so when I come in like that you . . .

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Hey, that’s very good! 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. ’At’s it. Come on again. For the jaw right

here…Very good!

BEATRICE He’s very good!

EDDIE *Sure*, he’s great! Come on, kid, put sump’n behind it, you

can’t hurt me. Attaboy. Now I’m gonna hit you, so block

me, see?

CATHERINE What are they doin’?

BEATRICE He’s teachin’ him; he’s very good!

EDDIE Sure, he’s terrific! Look at him go! ’At’s it! Now, watch

out, here I come, Danish!

CATHERINE Eddie!

EDDIE Why? I didn’t hurt him. Did I hurt you, kid?

RODOLPHO No, no, he didn’t hurt me. I was only surprised.

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BEATRICE That’s enough, Eddie; he did pretty good, though.

EDDIE Yeah. He could be very good, Marco. I’ll teach him again

RODOLPHO Dance, Catherine. Come.

MARCO Can you lift this chair?

EDDIE What do you mean?

MARCO From here.

EDDIE Sure, why not? Gee, that’s hard, I never knew that. It’s on

an angle, that’s why, heh?

MARCO Here.

60

ALFIERI On the twenty-third of that December a case of Scotch

whiskey slipped from a net while being unloaded – as a case

of Scotch whiskey is inclined to do on the twenty-third of

December on pier 41. 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.

CATHERINE You hungry?

RODOLPHO Not for anything to eat. 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. What is the

question?

CATHERINE Suppose I wanted to live in Italy.

RODOLPHO You going to marry somebody rich?

61

CATHERINE No, I mean live there – you and me.

RODOLPHO When?

CATHERINE Well . . . when we get married.

RODOLPHO You want to be an Italian?

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

live there.

RODOLPHO Forever?

CATHERINE Yeah.

RODOLPHO 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 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.

62

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? 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 I’m afraid of Eddie here.

RODOLPHO 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 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. *No*.

CATHERINE You wouldn’t?

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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.

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! 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 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. . .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!

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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 Hold me.

RODOLPHO Oh, my little girl.

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CATHERINE Teach me. *I* don’t know anything, teach me, Rodolpho, hold

me.

RODOLPHO There’s nobody here now. Come inside. Come. And don’t

cry any more.

EDDIE Beatrice? Beatrice? Beatrice?

CATHERINE You got home early.

EDDIE Knocked off for Christmas early. Rodolpho makin’ you a

dress?

CATHERINE No. I’m makin’ a blouse.

RODOLPHO Beatrice went to buy presents for her mother.

EDDIE Pack it up. Go ahead. Get your stuff and get outa here.

Where you goin’?

CATHERINE I think I have to get out of here, Eddie.

EDDIE No, you ain’t goin’ nowheres, he’s the one.

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CATHERINE I think I can’t stay here no more. I’m sorry, Eddie. 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. Don’t you

know I can’t? You know that, don’t you? Wish me luck. Oh,

Eddie, don’t be like that!

EDDIE You ain’t goin’ nowheres.

CATHERINE Eddie, I’m not gonna be a baby any more! You. . .

RODOLPHO Don’t! Stop that! Have respect for her!

EDDIE 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 Don’t say that to me!

CATHERINE Eddie! Let go, ya hear me! I’ll kill you! Leggo of him!

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EDDIE You see?! I give you till tomorrow, kid. Get outs here.

Alone. You hear me? Alone

CATHERINE I’m goin’ with him, Eddie.

EDDIE Not with that. 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. Just get outa here and

don’t lay another hand on her unless you wanna go out feet

first.

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. I looked in his eyes more than I

listened – in fact, I can hardly remember the conversation.

But I will never

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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. .

. 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 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 . . .

69

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?

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 Didn’t you hear what I told you?

ALFIERI 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.

Somebody had to come for her, Eddie, sooner or later. 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! Put it out of your mind! Eddie!

EDDIE Give me the number of the Immigration Bureau. I want to

report something. Illegal immigrants. Two of them. That’s

right. 441 Saxon Street, Brooklyn, yeah. Ground floor. Heh?

I’m just around

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the neighborhood, that’s all.

LOUIS Go bowlin’, Eddie?

EDDIE No, I’m due home.

LOUIS Well, take it easy.

EDDIE I’ll see yiz. Where is everybody? I says where is

everybody?

BEATRICE 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?

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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. I mean I got a couple of rights here. 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 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 The guy ain’t right, Beatrice. Did you hear what I said?

BEATRICE Look, I’m finished with it. That’s all.

EDDIE 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?

EDDIE 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.

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

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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’n.

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.

EDDIE All right . . . let her go out then.

BEATRICE She don’t wanna go out now. It’s too late, Eddie.

EDDIE Suppose I told her to go out. Suppose I . . .

BEATRICE They’re going to get married next week, Eddie.

EDDIE 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.

Why don’t you give her a good word? Because I still think

she would like you to be a friend, y’know? I mean like if

you told her you’d go to the wedding.

74

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. What’re you cryin’? Go . . . whyn’t

you go tell her you’re sorry? There . . . she’s comin’ down.

Come on, shake hands with her.

EDDIE 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.

BEATRICE Katie? . . . Eddie, don’t go, wait a minute. Ask him, Katie.

Come on, honey.

EDDIE It’s all right, I’m . . .

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’ll be on Saturday.

EDDIE Okay. I only wanted the best for you, Katie. I hope you

know that.

CATHERINE Okay.

75

EDDIE Catherine? I was just tellin’ Beatrice . . . if you wanna go

out, like . . .erent 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 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. Could I take two more

pillowcases for the other guys?

BEATRICE Sure, go ahead. Only don’t let her forget where they came

from.

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?

76

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. It’ll be nice,

they could all talk together.

EDDIE Catherine, What’re you, got no brains?

You put them up there with two other submarines?

CATHERINE Why?

EDDIE 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.

CATHERINE How’m I gonna find a place tonight?

77

EDDIE Will you stop arguin’ with me and get them out?! You think

I’m always tryin’ to fool you or sump’n? What’s the matter

with you, don’t you believe I could think of your good? Did

I ever ask sump’n 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 –

ALFIERI *A knock on the door. They all stand motionless. Another*

*knock.*

EDDIE Go up the fire escape, get them out over the back fence.

ALFIERI *Catherine stands motionless.*

OFFICER Immigration! Open up in there!

EDDIE Go, go. Hurry up!

ALFIERI *She stands a moment staring at him.*

EDDIE Well, what’re you lookin’ at!!

OFFICER Open up!

EDDIE Who’s that there?

OFFICER Immigration, open up.

ALFIERI *Knock repeated*

78

EDDIE All right, take it easy, take it easy.

ALFIERI *The officer steps inside.*

EDDIE What’s all this?

OFFICER Where are they?

EDDIE Where’s who?

OFFICER Come on, come on, where are they?

EDDIE Who? We got nobody here. What’s the matter with you?

OFFICER This is 441, isn’t it?

EDDIE That’s right.

ALFIERI *Eddie turns to Beatrice. She looks at him now and sees his*

*terror.*

BEATRICE Oh, Jesus, Eddie.

EDDIE What’s the matter with you?

79

BEATRICE Oh, my God, my God.

EDDIE What’re you, accusin’ me?

BEATRICE My God, what did you do!

ALFIERI *We see the Officer descending with Marco. Behind him*

*Rodolpho, and Catherine*

CATHERINE What do yiz want from them? They work, that’s all. They’re

boarders upstairs, they work on the piers.

ALFIERI *Beatrice to Officer.*

BEATRICE Ah, Mister, what – do you want from them, who do they

hurt?

ALFIERI *Catherine pointing to Rodolpho.*

CATHERINE They ain’t no submarines, he was born in Philadelphia.

OFFICER Step aside, lady . . .

CATHERINE What do you mean? You can’t just come in a house and . . .

OFFICER All right, take it easy.

What street were you born in Philadelphia?

80

CATHERINE What do you mean, what street? Could you tell me what

street you were born?

OFFICER Sure. Four blocks away, 111 Union Street. Let’s go, fellas.

CATHERINE No, you can’t! Now, get outa here . . .!

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.

ALFIERI *Officer to Rodolpho and Marco.*

OFFICER Andiamo, Andiamo, let’s go.

ALIFERL *Rodolpho and Marco start. Marco hangs back.*

BEATRICE Who’re they hurtin’, for God’s sake, what do you want from

them?

They’re starvin’ over there, what you want!

81

ALFIERI *Marco breaks from the group and spits in Eddie’s face.*

EDDIE Oh, you mother’s . . . !

ALFIERI *The officer quickly intercedes and pushes Eddie from Marco.*

OFFICER Cut it out!

EDDIE I’ll kill you for that, you son of a bitch!

OFFICER Hey! Stay in here now, don’t come out, don’t bother him. You hear

me? – don’t come out, fella.

ALFIERI *For an instant there is silence.*

EDDIE I don’t forget that, Marco! You hear what I’m sayin’?! That’s the

thanks I get? – which I took the blankets off my bed for yiz? You

gonna apologize to me, Marco!

ALFIERI *Marco points back at Eddie.*

MARCO That one! I accuse that one!

OFFICER Come on!

MARCO That one! He killed my children! That one stole the food from my

children.

ALFIERI *Marco is gone*.

EDDIE He’s crazy! I give them the blankets off my bed. Six months I kept

them like my own brothers! For Christ’s sake, I kept them, I give them

the blankets off my bed!

ALFIERI *Eddie turns to Louis.*

EDDIE Louis! LOUIS!

ALFIERI *Louis barely turns, then walks off.*

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!

ALFIERI *There is a pause of darkness before the lights rise, on the reception*

*room of a prison.*

82

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.

CATHERINE 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 I have no chance?

ALFIERI 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 Well – we did something.

83

RODOLPHO Marco, tell the man.

MARCO What will I tell him? He knows such a promise is

dishonorable.

ALFIERI To promise not to kill is not dishonorable.

MARCO No?

ALFIERI No.

MARCO Then what is done with such a man?

ALFIERI Nothing. If he obeys the law, he lives. That’s all.

MARCO The law? All the law is not in a book.

ALFIERI Yes, in a book. There is no other law.

MARCO 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 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 All right.

84

ALFIERI You won’t touch him. This is your promise.

MARCO Maybe he wants to apologize to me . . .

ALFIERI This is not God, Marco. You hear? Only God makes justice.

MARCO All right.

ALFIERI Good! Catherine, Rodolpho, Marco, let us go.

CATHERINE I’ll get Beatrice and meet you at the church.

BEATRICE I’ll be back in about an hour, Eddie.

ALFIERI Only God, Marco.

BEATRICE All right?

EDDIE 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.

85

BEATRICE Why! What do you want?

EDDIE I want my respect. Didn’t you ever hear of that? From my

wife?

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 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 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!

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 Don’t you call him that!

CATHERINE What’re you scared of? He’s a rat! He belongs in the sewer!

BEATRICE Stop it!

86

CATHERINE He bites people when they sleep! He comes when nobody’s

lookin’ and poisons decent people – in the garbage he

belongs!

BEATRICE No, Eddie! Eddie! 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. Now go, go to

your wedding, Katie, I’ll stay home. Go. God bless you,

God bless your children . . .

RODOLPHO Eddie?

EDDIE Who said you could come in here? Get outa here!

RODOLPHO Marco is coming, Eddie. He’s praying in the church.

You understand? Catherine, I think it is better we go. Come

with me.

CATHERINE Eddie, go away, please.

BEATRICE Eddie . . . let’s go some place. Come. You and me. 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 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?

87

Which he said I killed his children! Where you been?!

RODOLPHO It is my fault, Eddie. Everything. I wish to apologize. It was

wrong that I do not ask your permission. I kiss your hand.

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 . . .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 –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!

88

EDDIE What he does don’t mean nothin’ to nobody! Come on!

BEATRICE 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 Bea!

EDDIE Beatrice!

BEATRICE The truth is not as bad as blood, Eddie! I’m tellin’ you the

truth – tell her good-bye forever!

EDDIE That’s what you think of me? That I would have such

thoughts?

MARCO Eddie Carbone!

EDDIE Yeah, Marco! Eddie Carbone. Eddie Carbone. Eddie

Carbone.

89

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 Maybe he come to apologize to me. Heh, Marco? For what

you said about me in front of the neighborhood? 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! Wipin’

the neighborhood with my name like a dirty rag! I want my

name, Marco . . .now gimme my name and we go together

to the wedding.

BEATRICE/

CATHERINE 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! Come on, liar, you

know what you done!

MARCO Animal! You go on your knees to me!

LOUIS Eddie, for Christ’s sake!

90

EDDIE You lied about me, Marco. Now say it. Come on now, say

it!

MARCO Anima-a-a-1!

EDDIE Bea!

BEATRICE Yes, yes!

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.