Act One

* **Exposition** (introduces background information)   
    
  Summary  
  Alfieri (the narrator) establishes that the play is a tragedy. He introduces the tension between justice and the law in the area (Red Hook) where the play is set. Eddie Carbone is introduce. He is our protagonist (the tragic hero). His relationship with Catherine (his neice who he has rasied after the death of her mother) is seen to be loving but over protective. Eddie’s wife, Beatrice, is expecting the arrival of her two cousins from Italy who are illegal immigrants.
* Alfieri admits sadly that he tends to *‘notice the ruins in things’*. Although he does play some part in the action, it is clear that he was ‘*powerless*’ and that nothing he could have done would have altered the *‘bloody course’*.
* Alfieri is established immediately as the commentator. He reappears throughout the play. He introduces the play, narrates the story in *flashback*, focussing on key scenes, then closes the play. He is in control and the audience trusts him. He is like the chorus in a Greek tragedy, explaining the events on stage to the audience without actually participating in them. Through Alfieri, Miller tells us right from the start what is going to happen: dramatic interest is maintained because we want to find out how.
* Eddie *“You’re walkin’ wavy”*
* Eddie *“You ‘aint all the girls”*Eddie is uncomfortable with Catherine’s growing sexuality. He is over protective of her. For Eddie, Catherine is special. He has worked hard to ensure she gets out of the neighbourhood and will have a better, more secure life financially, that he and Beatrice have had. **Theme of Love**.
* Eddie *“Katie, I promised your mother on her deathbed. I’m responsible for you. You’re a baby, you don’t understand these things”*
* Eddie *“You’re getting to be a big girl now, you gotta keep yourself more, you can’t be so friendly, kid”*Eddie has just warned Catherine to be wary of how she behaves around men. Word choice suggest his protectiveness of her. He uses a pet name (diminative form) which indicates deep affection for her. He is trying to morally justify why he is treating her as much younger than she actually is which suggests she is in need of protection. **Theme of Love/Masculinity/Honour**.
* Eddie *“It’s not wonderful…You can’t take no job”*
* Eddie *“Near the Navy Yard plenty can happen in a block and a half. And a plumbing company! That’s one step over the water front. They’re practically longshoremen”*Eddie raises many objections before finally agreeing to allow Catherine to take the job. This is ambiguous – we know that as a longshoreman Eddie wants better for his niece but we wonder if, perhaps subconsciously, Eddie is warning Catherine against himself. **Theme of Love/Masculinity/Honour**.
* Beatrice *“…(she turns his face to hers) 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 her house all her life?* This is the first sign of tension between Beatrice and Eddie. Beatrice offends Eddie when she challenges him over Catherine alerting the reader to the idea that perhaps Eddie is taking his duties to look after Catherine too far. She uses a rhetorical question to gently remind Eddie that Catherine is growing up. Although he agrees he appears angry with Beatrice who he later harshly reprimands her “strangely and quickly” for knowing nothing about the dangers of going out to work since she has “lived in a house all your [sic] life”. **Theme of Love/Masculinity**
* *Eddie “With your hair that way you look like a Madonna, you know that? You’re the Madonna type”.* Madonna refers to Mary, the mother of Christ. It seems fitting that Eddie is pleased with this aspect of Catherine’s new look most of all because to him it makes her look pure and virginal. **Theme of Love**
* Eddie *“What are you mad at me lately?”   
  Beatrice “Who’s mad? I’m not mad. You’re the one is mad.”*  
  When Eddie speaks affectionately to Catherine, Beatrice is silent - prompts Eddie to ask if she is annoyed. Way Eddie treats Catherine (throughout the play) is like how husband would interact wife. Beatrice must watch/listen - unable to prevent it happening – how will she appear if she behaves otherwise?
* Eddie *Listen, if everybody keeps his mouth shut, nothin’ can happen”*
* Eddie *“You can quicker get back a million dollars that was stole than a word you gave away”*

Eddie warns his wife and niece to never speak to anyone about the two cousins, Marco and Rodolpho, who are entering America illegally from Italy and intend to stay with the Carbone family and work to save money. Eddie is proud to be helping them but he is worried the Immigration Bureau will find out. Eddie and Beatrice tell Catherine the story of “Vinnie Bolzano” a young boy who “snitched” on his uncle who was staying with his family. As a consequence he was beaten and spat on by his brothers and father and exiled from the community. This story is very significant because it helps us understand Eddie’s disgust at such behavior and the strong moral code of the community with regard to the law and justice. **Theme of Honour/Community/ Masculinity**

* **Complication** (something which disrupts or complicates the current state of affairs)

*Summary  
The cousins arrive and the characters of Marco and Rodolpho are introduced. As they settle in; initial signs of conflict emerging between Eddie and Rodolpho.*

* When the brothers enter the Carbone apartment the stage directions tell us Marco greets Eddie with a *“certain formal stiffness”.* Through his dialogue to Eddie we learn more about Marco’s character: *“when you say go, we will go”.*

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| Through his dialogue to Eddie we learn more about Marco’s character: | *Dialogue -*  *“when you say go, we will go”* | Miller reveals Marco’s characterisation through actions mainly. He looks after his brother and appears to be a “father figure”. He is gentlemanly and shows manners and respect to Eddie which demonstrates that he understands social etiquette. He knows he is indebted to Eddie and Bea – and he wants them to know that he realises this.  It is worth noting that Eddie’s response is in direct contrast to when he was talking to Bea whjen he inferred they would have to “sleep on the floor”. His words to Marco, “we got plenty of room here” show that Eddie has manners - he knows that you make guests feel welcome. Due to the company all conflict with Bea is hidden again. |
| When Eddie tells Marco how much money he can expect to make in America he is overcome:  p.19 - “Marco puts an arm round Rodolfo” - shows the brother bond. Marco shows a sense of relief – feels that journey and sacrifice will be worth it – he will be able to provide for his family thus his sense of duty realised. Marco (his eyes are showing tears) My wife – (to Eddie) My wife - Why is Marco looking to Eddie at this point? Does she feel – or expect - an affinity? Does he think that Eddie will understand this as the other married man and father?  “(near tears)...(He goes to Eddie) Look at Eddie's reaction – he changes subject...why? He is obviously not comfy dealing with emotion – or is it because he doesn't share the depth of feeling Marc is experiencing? p.19 – Catherine answers back to Eddie and continues conversation – note that she is talking to and about Rodolfo.  Conversation continues through Bea – Rodolfo comfortably chats away. Note affection between brothers – there is a real bond - a close understanding. Bea moves to get the coffee – as Eddie wants – but in doing so she allows Catherine and Rodolfo to keep chatting. What should we understand by this?  p.19 Marco : He dreams, he dreams” - Marco is tolerant of R – he has a clear understanding of his brother. There is a difference in the lives they lead but Marco is NOT putting him down.  Look at the exclamation marks when Catherine is speaking. Excited and excitable too – young girl, protective “parents” + cute young guy who is in house and “accepted” by the family. Natural response?p.20 – Marco – voice of reason, sensible, experienced, practical  Note stage directions - “Rodolfo helps Bea set out the coffee things” - How would Eddie view this?  How would the audience in the theatre view this? With your view...how do you regard this?  Look at the difference between Rodolfo's words and Marco's action here. Rodolfo gibbers and M observes...”doubtfully” “regretfully”  Bea laughs - look at how relaxed and natural she is with Rodolfo. At this point in the play she is happy.  Rodolfo - “after getting a nod of permission from Marco...” - starts singing. Mid song Eddie moves away from them all and then stops Rodolfo from singing.  Marco comments that when Rodolfo was singing in Italy he was “too loud” and now Eddie picks up on that – and mirrors the sentiment without saying the words – and by not saying the words he is making Marco explain for him and so Rodolfo will listen and act on it – not as daft as he seems!!!!!!  Catherine is “enthralled” - and directs her complimentary comments to Bea – support... but is interrupted by Eddie – who stops the singing.  Marco immediately picks up on the fact that Eddie is stopping the singing so as not to arouse suspicion...but we are not as sure that Eddie's motives are as altruistic as that. Eddie makes a good case for stopping Rodolfo – but in the next stage direction we are told that Eddie is “flushed” - and is appealing to Marco. He keeps asking Marco to acknowledge what he “means”. This suggests that Marco may NOT understand...why keep asking someone if they understand...  Marco tells Rodolfo to be quiet and interestingly the stage directions say that “Rodolfo nods” - simply agreement because his brother says so.  Now look at Eddie - “ with iron control” and he even manages to “smile” and moves to Catherine...  Again he redirects the conversation – this time he shifts the focus and directs it at Catherine - comment about Garbo. He embarrasses Catherine in front of guests – he knows better than that. Notice stage directions – Catherine is actually angered by him. And note also Bea's actions – from being content and even happy she gets up and when going past Eddie she gives him “a cold look” but she continues to be the hostess. Eddie tries to alleviate the obvious tension – and speaks AT Marco but it is clear he is trying to address it also to Bea...  Rodolfo ...oblivious, or even if he is not he is obviously not understanding what has created the tension and being happy go lucky he is trying to get everyone back to a good place. Catherine re-emerges with low shoes on as instructed by Eddie – but there has been a definite change in her. Remember Catherine is neither aware nor reciprocating the feelings that Eddie has for her. Remember also Eddie is not actually aware of them yet.  Stage directions -p.22 - “sizing up Rodolfo...with concealed suspicion...)  Catherine talks only to Rodolfo – and puts sugar in HIS coffee. | *Stage direction/dialogue “–(his eyes are showing tears) My wife – (to Eddie) My wife – I want to send right away maybe twenty dollars”* |  |
| When Eddie inquires how they made money the cousins Marco reveals how difficult it was to find work in Italy. | *Stage direction/dialogue “- (Shrugging shyly, even embarrassed) Whatever there is, anything.”* | Why is Marco embarrassed? Were the jobs not “real man” jobs? Not able to provide for his family – think of family set up... |
|  | *Stage direction/dialogue “- (ready to laugh) I don’t know. A thousand years ago, they say, the Danes invaded Sicily.”* | Stage directions- Rodolfo laughing...p.18 Rodolfo is holding court – everyone is laughing. Bea brings Eddie into the conversation and he changes the topic AGAIN and directs his topic to Marco.  Stage directions p.18  “Marco raises a hand to hush him” - again this makes the relationship clear between these two – Marco is very much in charge, but he allows Rodolfo to be himself. Rodolfo shows Marco the respect he is due and always does what Marco tells him – verbally or non-verbally.  Stage directions – p.18  “Eddie (he is coming more and more to address Marco only) – why? |
|  | *Dialogue - “How much? We hear all kinds of figures…”* | Rodolfo cuts to the chase - “How much?” he wants to know how much money they can make.  Clear difference between Marco and Rodolfo- Marco is working for wife and family, Rodolfo is working for himself. |
|  | *Dialogue - “I want to be an American. And then I want to go back to Italy when I am rich, and I will buy a motor cycle”* |  |
|  | *(to Catherine) Nobody ever said it was too loud!* |  |

1. How are the conditions back in their hometown in Italy contrasted with the conditions in America? Write a PEAEA in the space below.

Marco talks about how difficult life is for them in Italy – it is a HUGE sacrifice to leave wife, children, family and community and travel to unknown country (language?) and rely on relatives you've never met and people you don't know – not easy for person like Marco – sense of pride, to be dependent on others' kindness...

1. What seems to attract Catherine to Rodolpho and what signs are there of this attraction? Answer in PEA form.

Rodolfo: excited and excitable – wide eyed – American Dream. He is always ready to laugh, has a response, chatty and friendly.

Look at Bea with Rodolfo -”Bea kisses Rodolfo” she is so much more relaxed with Rodolfo, motherly, aunty-like

Stage directions – p.17- Catherine (wondrously) – look at how Eddie changes the subject when Catherine is marvelling at Rodolfo's hair.

1. What indications are there that Eddie has taken a dislike to Rodolpho? Why do you think this is? Answer in PEA form

Marco + Rodolfo + Bea sit at table – Eddie sits apart “on his rocker”.

Conversation tends to be between Marco and Eddie - “the men”? Are they equals?

Difference between brothers: Marco answers questions and Rodolfo elaborates.

1. Why do you think Eddie tells Catherine to take off her heels? How do Beatrice and Catherine react to this? Answer in PEA form

**ACTION AND SYMBOLISM.**

The action in this play is made more significant – sometimes because of Eddie and Marco’s limitations as speakers and at other times because some matters cannot be openly discussed.

Therefore, some actions seem minor but are hugely symbolic.

KEY INCIDENTS -

1.Catherine serving food ; giving Eddie a beer; lighting his cigar. What do these tell us about their relationship? How could these actions be understood (misconstrued?)?

2. Vinny Bolzano story.

Represents the community feeling – explain what this is.

3. Rodolfo helping with the table; Rodolfo singing. What are the different interpretations that could be put on these events – positively or negatively viewed?

4. Catherine putting sugar in Rodolfo's coffee. What do we understand by this?

NOTES – PAGE 15-22

Marco – action not words.

He looks after his brother - “father figure”. He is gentlemanly - note how he kisses Beatrice's hand. He shows manners. He shows respect to Eddie - “certain formal stiffness” - shows that he understands social etiquette. Again manners re. “when you say go, we will go” (p.16) knows he is indebted to them – and he wants them to know that he realises this.

Eddie - “we got plenty of room here” - direct contrast to when he was talking to Bea – having to sleep on the floor. This also shows that Eddie has manners – he knows that you make guests feel welcome- all conflict with Bea is hidden again.

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Why is Marco looking to Eddie at this point? Doe she feel – or expect - an affinity? Does he think that Eddie will understand this as the other married man and father?

“(near tears)...(He goes to Eddie)

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NOTES – 22-31.

Alfieri notes that there “was a trouble that wouldn't go away”. Audience have to remember that Alfieri talks with hindsight – he is speaking to us AFTER the events have finished so he can be objective but he has the bigger picture since he has seen the events unfold – and knows why.

Stage directions – p.22 – Eddie is standing on the street outside his apartment. Bea walks up and smiles and Eddie? “he looks away.” How must Bea feel? When Eddie speaks it is clear that Bea knows EXACTLY why Eddie is there. The Eddie seems to be concerned re Rodolfo's safety. Is Bea fooled? Are we? Bea tries to get Eddie to go in the house. Eddie then starts to talk about Catherine's course/job. Reader should note that there are no names used but Bea understands who Eddie is talking about. Why would that be so? What should we realise about the relationship between Eddie and Bea? The Bea knows Eddie better than he knows himself.

Stage directions -(now subject is opened) – Bea now feels able to question Eddie about his obvious dislike for Rodolfo – although he is trying to hide it. Interesting how Bea didn't feel able to bring it up – she had to wait till topic was broached by Eddie – roles in the home/marriage...

Eddie can't articulate why he doesn't like Rodolfo - “ he gives me the heeby-jeebies”. This is not an appropriate response! Bea's comment that Eddie is jealous actually refers to the fact that Rodolfo is young, happy and full of life. Eddie moves the conversation on by suggesting that Bea should also dislike him because he is spending a lot of time with Catherine - “going to be her husband?” He wants to shock Bea into agreeing with him. Unfortunately Bea likes Rodolfo and thinks that he is quite a good match for Catherine. Not what Eddie expected. So Eddie takes a new angle. He talks about his singing and then about the colour of his hair... Bea won't listen to his comments and certainly won't “play”. Eddie realises that he is not convincing Bea and this annoys him. So – note stage directions : “She realises that there is a campaign solidified in him.”. He starts to suggest that Rodolfo is homosexual and so shouldn't be allowed to lead Catherine on. He then gets rather annoyed at Bea ans suggests that she never notices anything “everything is great with you.” This enables Bea to respond and start to tell Eddie some home truths. As she starts Eddie sort of realises what is coming and tries to stop the conversation. Bea is honest with Eddie – she wants to get him to explain to her why they haven't had sex in such a long time. Eddie tries to say that it is because Marco and Rodolfo are in the house and their presence has upset him. Bea points out that it has been much longer than that – almost three months. Rather worrying that he hasn't noticed how long it has been. Bea tries to get Eddie to talk about why he has not felt attracted to her. Eddie can't answer. There is a hesitation as if Eddie wants to say something – but whether he is going to try and explain what he feels and can't or won't we don't know. Bea asks him a direct question and Eddie responds with a question – a very common avoidance technique. Eddie does back down a little and asks Bea to be patient with him – he is just worrying about Catherine. This is probably true, but Bea and the audience can read more into this than Eddie is able to. Bea actually takes the opportunity to be very frank with Eddie - “I want you to cut it out now, you hear me?” p.24. This is an interesting role reversal – and shows that length of time they have been married and the role they play in each other's life – at times Bea has to take the upper hand and make the decisions. Eddie concedes but needs to have his own way too – so agrees not to stand outside, but doesn't want to go in the house so goes for a walk.

Louis and Mike chatting to Eddie serve only to wind him up again – but here he feels obliged to defend Rodolfo – family and all that... He can't get Louis or Mike to say anything bad about him, but it does seem as if they are maybe laughing at Rodolfo. Note stage directions – Eddie searchingly...uncomfortably...troubled. It is also interesting that Eddie echoes Bea's words as a response to Mike.

Catherine and Rodolfo return and Eddie tries to head into the apartment before they see him. But Catherine calls him back to tell him about their great night. Note stage directions - “he can't help smiling at the sight of her.” Quite a contrast to his reaction when he saw his wife earlier. Eddie gets annoyed at Catherine and Rodolfo for going into Brooklyn – but Catherine gets annoyed at his remarks and Eddie backs down. Eddie can't be bothered listening to or talking with Rodolfo and asks him to go away to let him talk to Catherine for a minute. This is itself is strange. But Rodolfo keeps chatting – oblivious, possibly trying to get to know Eddie, and Eddie reiterates that he wants to speak to Catherine. Rodolfo finally gets the message and goes off for a walk. Catherine wants Eddie to realise how hard Rodolfo is trying. Does Catherine realise that Eddie doesn't like Rodolfo? Eddie tries to make Catherine see that they don't spend much time together – Catherine won't necessarily be aware of this since she is smitten with Rodolfo. Eddie seems sad and Catherine tries to reassure him – but we realise there is not a lot she can say to actually reassure him...since he isn't sure what type of reassurance he wants... Catherine admits to Eddie how much she likes him – and the blush tells the audience just exactly how she is feeling. She knows that Eddie will be annoyed by this – she is not sure why – but stage directions tell us that she “looks at him for the consequences...”. Here we see Catherine growing up and also the strength of her feeling for Rodolfo. Interestingly Eddie responds “like a lost boy.” Eddie does not know what to do when Catherine admits this. Eddie wants Catherine to explain just how she feels about Rodolfo and so asks if she thinks she might marry him (remember he asked Bea this...). Catherine is confused by Eddie and wants him to tell her why is so against Rodolfo.

Eddie claims it is because Rodolfo doesn't respect her. This is an integral part of the community and of a person's place in their community. You have to be respected , you have to show appropriate respect. You do not show disrespect. It has far reaching consequences and it is instilled in the younger generations...

We get the feeling that Eddie is grasping for reasons. Catherine totally disagrees with Eddie and says so. So Eddie moves the idea of him having no respect for Catherine to a rather harsh suggestion. Eddie tells Catherine that Rodolfo is not actually interested in her but in the fact that if she marries him he can apply for American citizenship. This suggests that Rodolfo is a cunning, manipulative user. This is a real kick in the teeth for Catherine. It is incredibly hurtful because it belittles what Catherine and Rodolfo feel for each other and suggests that Rodolfo is using her callously. It also suggests that Catherine is too young/naive/innocent/stupid to realise this. What is Eddie hoping to achieve by this? Do you think he has thought it out? Note p.28 – Eddie gets into his stride with this idea – most he has spoken in the whole play so far. Eddie gets worried when Catherine admits that Rodolfo has said that he loves her ( has the relationship moved on more than Eddie realised ?– not sexually more importantly emotionally). Catherine is not willing to listen any more and runs into the house – her place of refuge and security. Remember Bea is in the house and is aware of what Eddie has been doing (standing waiting for them, making remarks about Rodolfo...).

Note stage directions when Eddie enters the house: “makes an awkward gesture of eroded command”. Eddie is uncomfortable with Bea as a witness. Bea is incredibly angry at Eddie but is trying to keep it hidden / under control in front of Catherine. Bea realises how upset Catherine is and doesn't want to make it worse. Eddie's insistence on making Catherine dislike Rodolfo is making Bea actually angry and she can't hide it any longer. “You going to leave her alone? Or you gonna drive me crazy?” Eddie tries “to retain his dignity” but can't. He doesn't know what to do...so leaves.

Audience should remember that Catherine is unaware of the reason Eddie and Bea are fighting – and is probably unaware of why Bea is so angry at Eddie's words. I would guess she presumes Bea is taking her side – they are very close.

With Eddie gone and tensions high Bea grabs the opportunity to have an open discussion with Catherine – woman to woman. Bea starts off hinting towards the topic but it is clear that Catherine is not picking up on the hints quick enough. Bea is being kind but is frustrated – Catherine is either not understanding or not wanting to understand what Bea COULD be saying. Bea gets Catherine to sit down – a calmer but serious atmosphere. Bea reminds Catherine that Eddie has not ever acknowledged anyone as good enough for her. p.29. Catherine has obviously been aware of this – but has had a different perspective on the why – a natural view. Bea is trying to make sure that Catherine knows that it is OK to stand up to Eddie – but she is also trying to teach Catherine that she has to take a stand against Eddie. Bea has to be honest but this is a tricky call – she wants her niece to understand without her having to be too graphic and Bea actually loves Eddie so she wants this situation to go before it gets worse. If it is not openly discussed but understood then Bea believes things (ie her relationship with Eddie, with Catherine and Eddie and Catherine's relationship) could go back to normal. Nothing has happened yet so nothing has to be fixed, but Bea is aware that potentials have to be stopped.

**VFB – 31-35.**

Important scene where we see Eddie struggling with his dilemma and his conscience. We also see Alfieri trying to give Eddie legal and personal advice. It is not Alfieri's place to give Eddie personal advice but since he is of the community he feels that he should – but it is not given directly, merely suggested.

The conversation starts after Eddie has spoken to Alfieri about his problem. Alfieri is trying to explain how there is nothing illegal in a young man falling in love with a young woman. Eddie keeps asking questions and in doing so shifts the focus of his questions. Eddie tries to get Alfieri to understand that Rodolfo must be planning on staying because he is not saving his money. Alfieri tries to reason with Eddie to make him see that noting he is talking about is against the law. Eddie won't accept that there isn't some way he can stop Rodolfo being with Catherine. Eddie then hints that Rodolfo is homosexual. He cites Rodolfo having blonde hair, being able to sing and being able to sew as proof. Alfieri tries to reason with Eddie but is clear that Eddie is not open to listening to reason. Alfieri points out that there is no need for a lawyer because there are no legal rules being broken. Eddie continues. It is now very clear to Alfieri that Eddie is not so much against Rodolfo and against Rodolfo being with Catherine. Alfieri tries to gently explain the problem to Eddie because he also understands that Eddie hasn't worked this out.

In order to clarify the situation Alfieri mentions Rodolfo's illegal immigrant status. Alfieri knows that that is a line that no one in the community will cross. He is the representative of the American Justice system, but has a clear understanding of the Italian community justice system – so turns a blind eye to this. No one says it, no one acknowledge it so there is nothing he has to deal with. He mentions it to shock Eddie and stop him in his tracks.

Alfieri tries to get Eddie to see that maybe his feelings for Catherine go beyond the normal concern a father / uncle has for their daughter/niece. Eddie gets flustered by this. Has he realised yet? If so he's not admitting it.

“wish her luck and let her go... there's no law interested in this.”

“And now I gotta sit in my own house and look at the son-of-a-bitch punk like that...he puts his filthy hands on her like a goddam thief!” Strong language = strength of feeling.

“She can't marry you, can she?” Alfieri is pointing out the patently obvious to get Eddie to realise just how ridiculous he has become. This comment serves only to anger Eddie. He is frustrated and angry because he is like a coiled spring and he has no understanding of why, and no release/outlet. “It's breaking my heart y'know”

Alfieri is left with a sense of hopelessness – he is unable to do anything because nothing has happened, but he realises that this is just the start of the trouble. Interestingly he turns to a woman in the community for advice. There is no solution available in the American system, since no real crimes have been committed – except one which is the only one Eddie won't do anything about.

“There are times when you want to spread an alarm, but nothing has happened...I was powerless to stop it.”

This scene clarifies several points – the extent of Eddie's obsession/feelings, Alfieri's dilemma being stuck between 2 cultures, and the almost inevitability of the future events...something has to happen.

Read 36-42.

Note that Eddie just talks to Marco. “B and Rodolfo stack the remaining dishes.” How would this be viewed by the different characters? R and c sit together in the living room. Should indicate to the audience how their relationship is changing – so much more comfortable with each other – sure of each other.

Eddie is prepared to chat to Marco but resents Rodolfo speaking to him, in fact correcting him. Does Eddie feel this is undermining him? Disrespectful? Or does he just want to pick a fight with him?

B is aware of the tension so “diverts their attention” – steers the conversation away from controversial topics – or potential fights.

B and Marco have an easy conversation about Marco’s wife – and here we see a sensitive, gentle and honest side to Marco. Look at stage directions – “blushing” “shyly”. Eddie wades in with an inappropriate remark – innuendo. Not well received. Rodolfo defends his brother’s honour and his wife’s. Marco is not pleased. This angers Eddie (did he feel it was a man to man joke?) – and he directs his anger at Rodolfo. He suggests that Rodolfo doesn’t understand proper codes of conduct - he suggests Rodolfo is treating the family with disrespect. B defends both Catherine and Rodolfo. Marco supports Eddie’s request for them to come home at an earlier time since this sounds reasonable.

Marco responses to Eddie are very guarded from now on. Marco will show Eddie respect when respect is due, but is wary of how the conversation is going. Marco is very level-headed and considered – he listens and observes before he acts. Stage directions: “cautiously”

Bea is still aware of the underlying tension – always just under the surface – and does all she can to keep conversation ticking over, with everyone involved and away from controversial topics. She is not oblivious to the tension she is subtly trying to restore harmony. Eddie can’t let go of the tension he is feeling. He starts appealing to both b and Marco to understand his point of view and support him. He ignores Rodolfo even though he is talking about Rodolfo. Note the repetition of him checking that Marco “understands”. Marco at one point gets Eddie to clarify what he is saying. This is done in a very controlled and calm manner – “I beg your pardon, Eddie”. Still waters run deep. Note Catherine’s rebellion – but interestingly Rodolfo’s refusal to upset Eddie. Has Rodolfo picked up on his brother’s mood – or on the atmosphere in the house?

B encourages the two young ones to dance – again to change the mood – and involves the other two in conversation. Eddie is monosyllabic. Marco is much more polite. He has no problem with Bea. Eddie becomes involved in the conversation again when he finds out the Rodolfo can cook. P.39. Rodolfo thinks that he is winning Eddie over with his talents – Eddie thinks it is further proof that Rodolfo is homosexual. Eddie becomes quite animated – and Rodolfo and Catherine misinterpret his words. Eddie is mocking Rodolfo. Rodolfo and Catherine are now comfortable to be dancing together – they think the tension has gone. Then Eddie starts talking p.40. Note the difference between his actions and his words. As he talks everyone slowly stops what they are doing to watch him. There is an underlying violence which is coming to the fore and everyone – except Eddie? – is aware of it. Eddie is trying to explain how unmanly Rodolfo is …and get others to agree. Then turns to Marco – the real man – to invite him to go and watch a boxing match. He then invites Rodolfo. Marco is still very guarded. Eddie suggests a fight with Rodolfo – just for “fun”. Is he trying to humiliate Rodolfo in front of everyone? Is he trying to prove that Eddie is a “real” man and Rodolfo isn’t? Catherine is unsure of what is happening so goes to make coffee – even in this Eddie can’t help but have a dig at Rodolfo “make it nice and strong”. Bea is also unsure but gives Eddie the benefit of the doubt – it is possible he in his own way is trying to make it up to Rodolfo and be involved with him.

This is a tense scene – note Marco’s involvement – he observes but doesn’t speak at all on p.41.Eddie tells Rodolfo not to “pity” him – he is encouraging Rodolfo to hit him…why?

Catherine comes in to see them fighting and gets upset – Bea seems caught in the moment – is she so sure Eddie won’t hurt Rodolfo?

Eddie punches Rodolfo harder than is necessary, Catherine shouts at Eddie and runs to Rodolfo. Bea makes Eddie stop by physically pulling him away. Eddie feels a sense of pride – he did what he set out to do – humiliate and put Rodolfo in his place. Physical outlet for inner conflict? Rodolfo and Catherine dance again – Rodolfo feels he has pleased Eddie by trying to fight and “taking it on the chin”!!! Mistaken. Catherine and Rodolfo do not see Marco moving at first. Marco sets Eddie a challenge. Note how Marco does not show Eddie how to do it. Look how many times Eddie tries and fails to lift chair. And look at how he blames other things for his failure to do so.

Marco lifts the chair – with great control. Rodolfo will understand what Marco ids doing. Eddie comes to understand what Marco is doing. Eddie has crossed a line with Marco and Marco is warning him to go no further because he is not a match physically for Marco. Look at the use of similes. Marco is letting Eddie know that he better back off and leave Rodolfo alone. He is explaining to Eddie in terms of physical feats – since he has watched and seen how Eddie rates people. Eddie is left totally deflated. The rest of the room will also have seen Marco win over Eddie, and Eddie lose.

**GROUP WORK – ACT ONE ONLY.**

7 GROUPS:

EDDIE CATHERINE BEATRICE MARCO

RODOLFO CONFLICT JUSTICE/COMMUNITY

* **Climax** (the turning point, which changes the protagonist’s fate)
* **Falling action** (the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist unravels, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist)
* **Catastrophe** (the ending, the conclusion)