**Dénouement (the end - in a tragedy we call the ending “the catastrophe” since there are unhappy results for the main characters)**

**Marco and Rodolpho are taken to prison. They are visited by Alfieri and Catherine. Alfieri wants to be able to bail them both out but needs assurance from Marco.** Marco is incensed claiming that in Italy Eddie would *“already be dead”*. Though he has betrayed his family and community Eddie has technically done nothing illegal. Alfieri and Catherine council Marco to defer his own sense of personal justice to the law, Rodolpho especially desires his birther’s presence at his wedding. He cannot promise not to kill Eddie as for him this would dishonorable even though Alfieri tries to make him understand that, *“To promise not to kill is not dishonorable.”* Marco counters that “all the law is not in a book,” and emphasizes how Eddie has dishonored and wronged him. Alfieri tells Marco that *“only God makes justice”* and finally, Marco promises not to harm Eddie. Here we are encouraged to understand that for Marco, to behave according to the law would violate his own sense of justice and honor, which demands that he get revenge on Eddie. Miller makes a clear distinction between the United States and the “Old World” of Italy. In the United States, the law rules while in Italy honour is regained and justice is served through retributive revenge. While Alfieri concedes that the law does not cover all instances of right and wrong, he tries to calm Marco by appealing to God as the only source of real justice.

**The narrative leaps forward to the day of Catherine and Rodolpho’s wedding. Beatrice is getting ready for the wedding and tries to convince Eddie to attend but he refuses to go and forbids her to go.** Catherine loses her temper with Eddie shouting, *“Who the hell do you think you are?”* Here we see that Catherine’s character has changed dramatically. She now does not care at all about Eddie’s opinion and calls him a *“rat who belongs in a sewer”*. Eddie feels that both characters’ independence is a form of disrespect to him. Beatrice however shows sympathy for Eddie and tells Catherine to stop. This too is a reversal – before we observed that Beatrice had to encourage Catherine to stand up for herself and defy Eddie’s authority.

**Rodolpho arrives to warn Eddie that Marco is coming for him, we surmise, to kill him.** Beatrice urges Eddie to leave but he won’t. Referring to his reputation, he says, *“I want my name!”* Beatrice tries to reason with Eddie and asks what if an apology from Marco is what he really wants. He is not interested in Beatrice’s entreaties though she goes so far as to *“([bar] his way to the stairs) What's gonna mean somethin'? Eddie, listen to me. Who could give you your name? Listen to me, I love you, I'm talkin' to you, I love you!”* Beatrice seems determined to force Eddie to see sense. Eddie ignores Rodolofo’s strenuous attempts to reconcile their differences and instead insults him, demanding confrontation with Marco for rightly accusing him of the code of the community. Beatrice’s reaction betrays her feelings about her husband’s reckless behaviour when she asks him, “only blood is good? He kissed your hand!”. Here we see Miller’s evocation of the theme of honour. Even though Rodolpho has given Eddie the highest sign of his respect it is not enough for Eddie now that he knows he has lost Catherine forever. Beatrice loses her temper with Eddie saying, in front of Catherine and Rodolpho, *“You want somethin' else, Eddie, and you can never have her!”* Here we see Beatrice is fed up with Eddie hiding his secret feelings. She exposes Eddie’s fatal flaw to everyone, indicating Eddie’s motivations for his actions were not as hidden as he wished. The audience can only see this as tragic for Beatrice. She clearly knows her husband, whom she loves and serves loyally, does not want her. For the first time, despite his shock and protestation, Eddie seems to realise his true feelings and recognises his own madness. Up to this point they have only referred been to indirectly – no one, not even Alfieri, has dared tell Eddie what is wrong with him. When Eddie realises his demon he is powerless to stop it. His only goal now is to salvage any sense of reputation he is and so Eddie calls Marco a liar when it is, ironically, he who is the real liar.

**For Eddie, the only way to regain his respect is to fight with Marco in front of his community – even to the death.** We know Eddie means for it to be a fight to the death since it is he who, rather unheroically, brings a knife to the fight. This is a dishonourable way to fight shown through the dialogue of Eddie’s neighbour Louis who exclaims in surprise and “rushes forwards” when Eddie produces the knife but then retreats when, in his madness, he seems prepared to turn on Louis. When Eddie finally lunges forward in an attempt to kill Marco, we know he will be the one to die. Miller has created such a feeling of inevitability throughout the entire play leading up to this moment. Eddie’s language becomes hyperbolic, rhetorical and grandiose, *“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?”* Eddie’s words here seem like a performance, and indeed they are for Miller he and Marco conduct this scene in front of the Red Hook community. Here Miller suggests that a man who is prepared to fight unfairly despite being the person who is guilty of a betrayal and a man who is not prepared to face the truth about himself.

**Ultimately Marco ends up committing murder to carry out his own idea of justice.** Eddie's own knife is turned against him and he dies is in some ways a metaphor for his fall in the play, as it is he himself who has caused his own fall. Miller evokes the idea of the importance of honour and justice - for Marco and the community this comes in the form of revenge. It is however somewhat redeeming that in the throes of death Eddie calls not for Catherine, who despite her recent outburst, still clearly has love and concern for Eddie shown when she says I never meant to do anything bad to you” but for his loyal wife Beatrice:

*“Eddie: Then why—Oh, B.!*

*Beatrice: Yes, yes!*

*Eddie: My B.!”*

In end the couple find some sort of reconciliation and repair their broken relationship. We understand that Beatrice, despite everything, remains loyal to Eddie and is able to forgive him. Throughout the play Miller shows us that Eddie constantly dominates Beatrice however in this tiny moment, Eddie needs her more than she needs him. Beatrice’s increased presence and the downscaling of Eddie and Catherine’s relationship gives Eddie some redemption here - Eddie must die in her arms as she is the only female who needs him. He is drawn to Beatrice to seek forgiveness and love. Thus, Miller creates a greater sense of loss and wastage at end of his tragedy.

**Alfieri’s closing speech in which he talks directly to the audience, reflecting on the story and reinforcing the main themes of the play makes clear the theme of law and justice.** He implies that we must compromise some of our needs and desires if only in order to to preserve the rules of a community and harmony in the lives of others:

*“Most of the time we settle for half and I like it better. 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 And yet, it is better to settle for half, it must be! And so I mourn him—I admit it—with a certain alarm.”*

The ‘whole man’ that Alfieri describes in Eddie is the self-interested man whose actions were completely motivated by his own desires at expense of others. Eddie’s tragic flaw of self-interest seems both admirable and alarming to Alfieri who tried to help Eddie but could not.

Overall

Alfieri

**Alfieri as choric figure:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Evidence** | **Explanation** |
| **Provides background and context** | *This is the gullet of New York, swallowing the tonnage of the world. And now we are quite civilised, quite American. Now we settle for half, and I like it better. I no longer keep a pistol in my filing cabinet.* | Red Hook as popular immigrant community-hides individuals well. Migration of Italian immigrants had to change passionate ways to adapt to American culture, creating safer but less vibrant lifestyle |
| **Comments on themes** | *Who can ever know what will be discovered? Eddie Carbone had never expected to have a destiny.* | theme of fate-E destined to fulfil prophecy because of his fatal flaw-pride/passion for C |
| **Moral compass** | *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 is unnatural, but in this case it is natural and a river will drown you if you buck it now.* | justice and law-A sees it as moral and controlled by the community-going against community values for sake of the law is dangerous |
| **Predicts future events - almost omniscient role** | *I could see every step coming, step after step like a dark figure walking down a hall towards a certain door. I knew where he was heading for, I knew where he was going to end.* | A hinting that E will meet an unfortunate end if he continues to be led by his fatal flaw-ominous language typical of Greek tragedy |

Eddie  
A tragic hero must possess the following qualities:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tragic hero trait** | **Eddie** |
| Flaw or error of judgment | Desire for Catherine |
| Reversal of fortune brought about because of the hero’s error of judgement | Loses status in house when picking on R; community shuns him when he snitches to Immigration Bureau |
| Discovery or recognition that the reversal was brought about by the hero’s own actions | No-Eddie continues to blame M and R for his problems, even as he is dying; HOWEVER calls for B rather than C in dying moments |
| Excessive pride | Dominant masculine figure, feels undermined by C falling in love with R |
| Fate must be greater than deserved | Justice vs law-in eyes of community, shunned, ‘community justice’ at hands of M; in eyes of law, has done the ‘right’ thing |