

# A view from the bridge – notes

[Entertainment](#), [Theatre](#)



A View from the Bridge - Notes " Just remember, kid, you can quicker get back a million dollars that was stole than a word that you gave away. " Eddie speaks this quote in Act I, while eating dinner with Beatrice and Catherine. This quote reveals the irony and madness of Eddie's character. In the beginning of the play, Eddie tells the story of a young boy who called immigration on his relatives. Eddie lectures Catherine about how they must tell no one about Marco and Rodolpho, the illegal immigrant cousins the family will be hiding. However, in the end of the play, Eddie obviously calls Immigration on these cousins, just like the boy.

Miller sets up Eddie so vehemently against betrayal that his transition to the betrayer seems illogical. The set-up requires Eddie to undergo a drastic change, if not complete breakdown, within the play to make such a transition. The force of this transition reveals not only his self-destructive madness, but the deepness of his unspoken love for his niece. This quote also reveals that Eddie knows his own fate—he knows what will happen to him, but cannot escape his fate. Much like Alfieri, Eddie watches himself make decisions he knows will not only ruin his reputation in the community, but also possibly kill him.

Eddie may know the consequence of what he does, but remains powerless or too mad to stop it. " 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. " In this quote, found in Act I, Alfieri describes Eddie's appearance at their first meeting, to the audience. Alfieri almost seems to fear Eddie as a paranormal beast, a remnant of the great Greek or Roman tragedy. Alfieri truly believes that Eddie was possessed with, "

passion that has moved into his body, like a stranger," and was unable to control him.

The passion that Alfieri describes is the passion for his niece Catherine. The passion, unreleased and suppressed in his unconscious was a stranger to Eddie's conscious self that actively denied any thoughts of incest or otherwise. This quote also reveals the style of Alfieri. Alfieri tells the tale of Eddie Carbone as if he is a legend. Eddie is described with dramatic and literary descriptions that are unusual in the dramatic form. " Eddie: Then why—Oh, B.! Beatrice: Yes, yes! Eddie: My B.! " This quote occurs at the conclusion of the play and is spoken between Eddie and Beatrice.

As Eddie lies dying in Beatrice's arms, the couple finds some sort of reconciliation and repair of their torn and battered relationship. Beatrice, even under such horrible circumstances, is able to forgive Eddie. Eddie constantly dominates Beatrice throughout the play, but in this tiny moment Eddie needs Beatrice more than she needs him. It is the first time the audience hears that Eddie needs and it is the first time that he honestly needs Beatrice. Beatrice is the tirelessly forgiving character of the play. She is terribly jealous of her niece, who receives more attention from her husband than she does, but still forgives Eddie in the end.

This final scene was one of the major alterations of the revised script of A View from the Bridge. In the original version, Eddie dies at the feet of Catherine. However, because of Beatrice's increased presence in the revised version and downscaling of the relationship between Eddie and Catherine—Eddie must return to Beatrice. Beatrice is the only female who, in the end, needs him. Catherine, now beyond his control, no longer seeks his approval.

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Thus, Eddie is drawn to Beatrice and for the first time he seeks out Beatrice, her forgiveness and love. “ Beatrice: You want somethin' else, Eddie, and you can never have her! ”

This quote, spoken by Beatrice in the conclusion of Act II to Eddie, is the first time that Eddie seems to realize his true feelings for Catherine and recognize his own madness. Until this moment, no one has directly spoken about Eddie's feelings for Catherine. Although they are obviously known by Beatrice and Alfieri, no one has dared to actually tell Eddie what is wrong with him. But even when Eddie realizes his demon, the love for his niece, he is powerless to stop it. Eddie lunges forward and attempts to kill Marco. In this moment of Sicilian revenge, Eddie cannot pull himself back or regain any sense of reason.

Perhaps even the recognition of the sexual taboo makes Eddie even more determined to seek revenge or at least find some sort of success or honor in his death. Eddie does not even have the power to deny Beatrice's claim, but instead follows through his destructive path. This moment may bring Eddie out of his madness enough to lie in Beatrice's arms as he bleeds to death. Once he has recognized his sinful love for Catherine, Eddie seems to find himself once again—which may explain why he is able to reconcile his relationship with Beatrice. “ 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. ” This quote deals

with the central conflict of *A View from the Bridge*: the self will verses the will of the community. The whole man that Alfieri describes in Eddie is the self-interested man. Eddie's actions within the play are completely motivated by his own desires at the expense of others.

Thus, humans must act halfway to preserve the rules of the community and lives of others. The idea that Alfieri suggests, that Eddie acted as a whole person, unrestrained and uninhibited is true. However, Eddie's wholeness was at the expense of his own family and eventually himself. He only escaped restraint because he escaped consideration of other people or the community at large. Eddie's wholeness is a whole interest in his own life. His tragic flaw is this self-interest—a flaw that seems both admirable and alarming to Alfieri. Themes The irrational human animal pic][pic]Eddie loses control of his actions in the play. Driven and possessed by incestuous love for his niece, Eddie resorts to desperate measures to protect his identity and name in the community. Alfieri's commentary often remarks on this theme. Alfieri seems constantly amazed by Eddie's actions and his own reactions to the events of the play. Alfieri sees his own irrational thinking, just as he recognizes Eddie's irrational behavior. Irrationality is also how Alfieri defines acting wholly. The human animal becomes irrational when he acts fully on his instincts—just as Eddie does in the play.

Alfieri proposes that humans must act as a half, or restrain some of our instinctual needs or wants for reason. Nonetheless, Alfieri still admires the irrational—the unleashed human spirit that reacts as it will. Allegiance to community law There is great conflict between community and American law in the play. The community abides by Sicilian-American customs protects

illegal immigrants within their homes, values respect and family, is hard working and know the shipping culture, has strong associations with names, believes in trust and wants revenge when a member has been wronged.

Some of these values, however, come in conflict with those of the American system of justice. Eddie Carbone chooses to turn against his community and abide by the state laws. He loses the respect of his community and friends—the name and personal identity he treasures. Eddie Carbone, with a stronger allegiance to the community, reverts back to another custom of Sicilian-Americans: revenge. Not only is Eddie pulled back to the values of his community, but the final victor of the play is symbolic of community values—the Italian, Marco. Thus, the small community is stronger than American law.

**Motifs Homosexuality** Although specifically articulated, homosexuality or what makes a man "not right" is a persistent theme of the novel. Eddie obviously identifies Rodolpho as homosexual because Rodolpho sings, cooks and sews a dress for Catherine. Eddie also questions Rodolpho because he does not like to work and has bleach blonde hair that makes him look more feminine. Eddie gives Rodolpho several tests of his masculinity. In the first he teaches Rodolpho how to box and the second, more blatantly, Eddie kisses Rodolpho on the lips.

Many critics think that this kiss is a sign of Eddie's own suppressed homosexual feelings, an easy parallel with his kiss with Catherine. Miller seems to take no stand either way, and the sexuality of Rodolpho or Eddie is unclear. However, the stereotypes of the gay man and societal implications of being gay are obvious. Louis and Mike, when talking about Rodolpho, clearly think there is something wrong with him and Eddie speaks directly to

Alfieri about the specific things that bother him about Rodolpho. Womanhood  
The idea of what makes a woman or what defines a woman is very prevalent  
in the text.

Catherine and Beatrice talk specifically about the terms in their conversation  
in Act I. Beatrice thinks Catherine needs to grow up and become a woman.  
To do this she needs to decide by herself whether she wants to marry  
Rodolpho. She needs to stop walking around the house in her slip in front of  
Eddie, and not sit on the edge of the tub while Eddie shaves his beard. In  
essence, being a woman means reserve and modesty in front of men, and  
independently making decisions. The idea of independence or separation  
from Eddie is coupled with the decision to find another male to attach to, a  
husband.

Catherine's attempt at womanhood is deciding to marry Rodolpho and follow  
his rules rather than Eddie's. Community Community is a powerful context  
for the play; it dictates very specific norms and rules for the family that  
controls the actions of the characters. All of the characters are forced to  
reconcile between American culture and the Italian community culture that  
surrounds. The cultural and moral difference between the two provides one  
of the great conflicts in the play. The tight community around them also  
creates great tension in the Carbone family because they are constantly  
being watched.

The neighbors knew when Marco and Rodolpho arrived, saw Marco spit in  
Eddie's face and Eddie die by Marco's hand. The community is the watcher;  
the group controls and monitors the behavior of every member. Although  
Eddie takes a substantial turn away from the community by calling the  
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Immigration Bureau, he still needs acceptance and spends his last moments fighting Marco for his good name in the community. Symbols High Heels [pic] [pic]For Catherine, high heels are representative of womanhood, flirtation and sexiness.

She has just started wearing high heels around the community and to school and obviously enjoys the attention she gets from men. They are also symbolic as a rite-of-passage to womanhood. As Eddie strongly disapproves of her wearing them, Catherine purposefully rebels against her uncle every time she puts them on. The high heels give her sexual power over men—they look, stare and gawk at her beauty. Eddie thinks the heels are threatening for the same reasons Catherine loves them. Eddie is fearful that, if she looks attractive, some man will ask her out and she will leave the house.

Eddie has a powerful reaction when she wears the high heels, as if she must take them off so they do not arouse him or anyone else. Brooklyn Bridge The Brooklyn Bridge is symbolic of a pathway of opportunity to Manhattan and also the linkage between American and Italian cultures. The bridge, which is very close to the Red Hook community, is a constant reminder of American opportunity and industry. From the bridge, one can see the community below and, like the title of the book, one can see the entire community and seek greater abstract meaning from his viewpoint.

Alfieri is symbolic of the person on the bridge looking down upon the Red Hook community or, perhaps, he is the bridge himself, allowing the people to cross into Manhattan and modern, intellectual American culture. Alfieri attempts to unite the American laws with Italian cultural practices and <https://assignbuster.com/a-view-from-the-bridge-notes/>



negotiate a place in between the two. Alfieri, narrating the story from the present looking back to the past, has the same vantage point as one looking from the bridge. After some time passes, he is able to process the events and see the greater societal and moral implications it has for the community as a whole. Italy

The origin of the majority of the people in the Red Hook community, Italy represents homeland, origin and culture. What the country means to characters greatly varies. Catherine associates Italy with mystery, romance and beauty. Rodolpho, on the other hand, is actually from Italy, and thinks it is a place with little opportunity that he would like to escape from. All of the characters, as much as love the benefit of living in the U. S. , still strongly hold to Italian traditions and identify it as home. Italy is the basis of the cultural traditions in Red Hook and unites the community in common social practices and religion.