

How effectively does
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to enhance the ...

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How effectively does Arthur Miller build the play up dramatically to enhance the power of its tragic ending? Arthur Miller's 'A View from the Bridge' is a play set in 1950's Brooklyn, New York. Brooklyn had a large immigrant community, mainly Italians, who would come to the USA to pursue the 'American Dream', although they would often start off as longshoremen, shifting cargo off of ships. The idea of an 'American Dream' is romanticised among the immigrants in Miller's play, being the reason for Marco and Rodolpho's journey there. The two submarines (slang for illegal immigrants that have come from 'under the water') quickly stir the peace in the Carbone family, with Rodolpho growing closer to Catherine (a naïve 17 year old stenographer), and thus distancing himself from Eddie (the play's protagonist, who would eventually meet his demise at the hands of his own fatal flaws). The various conflicts, stage directions and layers of meaning in language are concepts that shall be explored in this essay. The character's in 'A View from the Bridge' are complex and deep enough to be explored as dramatic devices themselves. Firstly, we have Eddie Carbone, our protagonist of the play. Eddie is a middle-aged, hardworking second-generation Italian immigrant, intent on keeping his family, Beatrice and Catherine, fed and clothed. Eddie is seen as the alpha male in the play until the entrance of Marco, and as such he exerts a certain control, or ownership, over his 'daughter' Catherine. Eddie's relationship with Catherine is the main reason for the tragedy in the play, whether it be seen as over-protective or flirtatious. Then, we have Catherine herself, who is the orphaned daughter of Nancy, and niece of Eddie and Beatrice. She is the leading female of the play, and at the core of the many arguments between Eddie and the others.

She is seemingly oblivious to the nature of the relationship between her and Eddie, considering it as purely platonic, while Beatrice seems to be the only other character that acknowledges some sexual tension between the two. Beatrice is the homely housewife in the Carbone family, keen to impress her two cousins, Marco and Rodolpho, upon their arrival at the house. She frets over the state of her house, and worries that she '[hasn't] even [bought] a new tablecloth!' which is to the contrary of Eddie's opinion which is 'suppose my father didn't come to this country... I would be honoured to be lent a place to sleep.' Marco and Rodolpho are the pair of 'submarines' from Italy. They are almost complete opposites of each other, with Marco being the masculine man of few words, who is tied down to his family back in Italy, while Rodolpho is an effeminate, outspoken free spirit. The only tie that binds is that they are brothers, family, which is an unspoken vow that is meant to remain forever unbroken. However, this is not the case, as late in the play Eddie calls the HUAC on Rodolpho and Marco in an effort to separate Rodolpho and Beatrice, but ends up deporting the immigrants of Mr and Mrs Lipari as well. 'A View from the Bridge' contains many dramatic devices; one of the most prominent and recurring devices are Alfieri's monologues. Alfieri plays, in the Greek tragedy sense, the narrator of the play, and a third party in the book, at least until he advises Eddie directly. Alfieri, in his earliest speech, says 'This one's name was Eddie Carbone...' This almost immediately introduces Alfieri as a narrator, as he has taken the job of setting the scene and introducing other characters. Secondly, the audience can deduce the play is a tragedy, simply from the word 'was', which makes it obvious that Eddie Carbone is a closed case. One could interpret this to

mean a happy ending, however, Miller's pause afterwards (in the form of an ellipsis) convinces the audience that this wasn't the way things were meant to go, that he is still considering the choices he had through the course of the play, which is told almost as a flashback of Alfieri's. Eddie is frequently the subject of Alfieri's narratives. Alfieri is always capable of providing the audience with a 'reality check' of sorts. Some scenes in the play proceed very quickly, usually preceding Alfieri's appearance, in which he would explain in greater detail what has happened, usually through his sympathy for Eddie. There is also a sense of friction and aggravation between Beatrice and Catherine. The two are constantly vying for Eddie's love, whether it be romantic or otherwise. At one point, Eddie is having a discussion with Catherine regarding Beatrice, which prompts Catherine to proclaim 'Then why don't she be a woman? If I was a wife, I would make a man happy.' showing that she believes she could 'replace' Beatrice in the relationship. With all these elements combined together, it is not hard to see that Miller is expertly able to amplify the tragedy at the end of the play due to his language and directions to build further tension. Biblio: 'A View From The Bridge' by Arthur Miller