

A view from the bridge essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



"A View from the Bridge" by Arthur Miller is a powerful and compelling play in which the main character, Eddie, succumbs to his weakness and loses control of his emotions in a highly emotional scene. The scene is important in the play because it marks the climax to Eddie's secret obsession with his niece Catherine. It increases our understanding of Eddie's controlling nature by showing us the power of his passion and the consequences of abandoning his own values in a community with a strong sense of loyalty and honour.

Miller creates dramatic tension successfully by building the action towards the climactic scene where Eddie kisses both Catherine and Rodolpho, and continuing to develop the action from one crisis to another resulting in a violent yet poignant ending. Miller's characterisation of Eddie and input from narrator, Alfieri, result the audience questioning whether Eddie is a depraved, controlling antagonist or a tragic hero. The kissing scene, which occurs at the beginning of Act Two, is important to the plot of the play because it marks a dramatic climax to Eddie's secret obsessive love for Catherine.

From the beginning of the play there have been hints of Eddie's concealed lust for his niece, for example we see from the beginning that he takes a keen interest in her appearance, "Beautiful. Turn around, lemme see in the back." Here Miller signals to audience evidence of Eddie's growing attraction to Catherine. He is also angry and jealous when Rodolpho and Catherine flirt about sugar and coffee. Eddie's face is "puffed with trouble" as he watches this, emphasised by the lights going down. He then goes on to accuse Rodolpho of being gay to Alfieri, highlighting his increasing desperation to control Catherine.

These dramatic hints of Eddie's inappropriate desires successfully build tension towards an powerful climax in the action. The kissing scene at the beginning of Act Two therefore marks the point where Eddie's feelings can no longer be contained and are finally revealed to the audience in a highly emotional climactic scene. Eddie's inevitable downfall from this point is clear to the audience. The scene itself is highly emotional and full of dramatic tension which shocks and intrigues the audience. Eddie comes home from work drunk at the beginning of Act Two.

He is furious to find that Catherine and Rodolpho's relationship has progressed to a serious level which triggers an emotional and aggressive reaction. Eddie demands that Rodolpho leaves the house. Catherine " trembles with fright" but shows her loyalty to Rodolpho by telling Eddie she will leave too. This causes Eddie to surprisingly reach out and suddenly kiss her - clearly revealing his need to show that Catherine belongs to him. Rodolpho reacts angrily and " flies at him in attack" demonstrating his protective love and respect for Catherine.

The stage directions and dialogue effectively convey the emotionally charged tension of the characters. We, as the audience, feel shocked and sympathise with Catherine who is clearly frightened and Rodolpho who is powerless to stop Eddie. We view Eddie here as a controlling bully who is consumed by his passion. As the scene progresses the dramatic tension builds to a shocking climax as Eddie astonishes the audience even more by kissing Rodolpho too. Eddie seems to do this in an attempt to maintain his dominance and power as he " pins his arms, laughing".

This demonstrated that Eddie needs to be in control and humiliate his rival Rodolpho. However, Catherine is extremely upset and “tears at Eddie’s face” whilst Eddie “laughs mockingly at Rodolpho”. These stage directions create a dramatic tension for the audience through the emotionally charged and desperate actions by the characters in this scene. Eddie wishes to humiliate Rodolpho in an attempt to regain Catherine’s love and respect but fails, showing his desperate need to control a situation which he no longer can contain. Ironically, this pushes Catherine and Rodolpho further together and patriarchal Eddie is unable to cope.

Eddie loses our sympathy here and it is clear to the audience that this character flaw will lead to tragedy. This incident is pivotal to the plot because it marks a turning point where everything changes in the play. Eddie’s stoic wife Beatrice says that Catherine “goes around shakin’” and is unable to sleep. This highlights the traumatic and damaging effect of Eddie’s selfish actions. Despite this, Eddie continues this vendetta against Rodolpho which leads him to betray his own family and community, demonstrating the abandonment of his own beliefs and values.

Alfieri warns Eddie that he “won’t have a friend in the world” if he informs the Immigration Bureau of the cousins’ whereabouts, reminding the audience of the gravity of the Eddie’s actions; however, Eddie is still determined to stop Rodolpho from having his Catherine. By betraying the cousins, Eddie has betrayed himself by losing his own identity, revealing the extent of his obsession. It is clear that Catherine loves Rodolpho, and therefore Eddie’s increasingly doomed attempts will fail. Miller creates a

compelling dramatic tension here in which engages the audience to surmise the tragic ending.

We fully understand the significance of Eddie's actions when his character is finally destroyed because of this internal emotional conflict in a powerful and violent ending. As the action draws to a tragic ending, we see Eddie involved in a dramatic showdown with Marco. Significantly, Eddie dies by his own knife as Marco turns the blade inward, suggesting that Eddie has brought about his own death because of his fatal flaw - his uncontrollable desire for someone he could never have. However, Alfieri comments that he somehow admired Eddie for allowing himself to be "wholly known" suggesting a degree of sympathy for Eddie.

Eddie's feelings were brought to forefront and he suffered the ultimate tragic consequence - for this Alfieri seems to hold some respect. Miller perhaps wished us to consider Eddie's internal conflict and question the extent by which we are controlled by our emotions. Therefore, the kissing scene in Act Two of Arthur Miller's "A View from the Bridge" is a highly emotional scene which triggers the revelation of a dark secret conflict in Eddie Carbone's character which inevitably leads to his tragic end.

Prior to this scene we are given clues about Eddie's feelings which lead to the crisis which forces Eddie on a catastrophic course of action. Miller effectively created this dramatic tension through his skilful use of characterisation, stage direction and plot. Arthur Miller created an intriguing and powerful play which warns against, yet also sympathises with a

character who acts on his darkest desires, as Eddie Carbone did in this memorable scene.