pho and Catherine have stopped dancing as Marco raises the chair over his head. He is face to face with Eddie, a strained tension gripping his eyes and jaw, his neck stiff, the chair raised like a weapon—and he transforms what might appear like a glare of warning into a smile of triumph, and Eddie's grin vanishes as he absorbs his look, as the curtain falls.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

LIGHT RISES on Alfieri at his desk.

ALFIERI. On the twenty-third of that December a case of Scotch whiskey slipped from a net while being unloaded—as a case of Scotch whiskey is inclined to do on the twenty-third of December on pier 41. There was no snow, but it was cold, his wife was out shopping. Marco was still at work. The boy had not been hired that day; Catherine told me later, that this was the first time they had been alone together in the house. (*LIGHT is rising on Catherine in the apartment. Rodolpho is watching as she arranges a paper pattern, on cloth spread on the table. There are Christmas decorations in the room.*)

CATHERINE. You hungry?

RODOLPHO. Not for anything to eat. I have nearly three hundred dollars. Catherine?

CATHERINE. I heard you.

RODOLPHO. You don't like to talk about it any more?

CATHERINE. Sure, I don't mind talkin' about it.

RODOLPHO. What worries you, Catherine?

CATHERINE. I been wantin' to ask you about something. Could I?

RODOLPHO. All the answers are in my eyes, Catherine. But you don't look in my eyes lately. You're full of secrets. (*She looks at him. She seems withdrawn.*) What is the question?

CATHERINE. Suppose I wanted to live in Italy.

RODOLPHO. (*He smiles at the incongruity.*) You going to marry somebody rich?

CATHERINE. No, I mean live there—you and me.

RODOLPHO. (*His smile is vanishing.*) When?

CATHERINE. Well . . . when we get married.

RODOLPHO. (*Astonished.*) You want to be an Italian?

CATHERINE. No, but I could live there without being Italian. Americans live there.

RODOLPHO. Forever?
CATHERINE. Yeah.
RODOLPHO. (*Crosses to rocker.*) You're fooling.
CATHERINE. (*Follow to* L. C.) No, I mean it.
RODOLPHO. Where do you get such an idea?
CATHERINE. Well, you're always saying it's so beautiful there, with the mountains and the ocean and all the . . .
RODOLPHO. You're fooling me.
CATHERINE. I mean it.
RODOLPHO. (*Crosses to her slowly.*) Catherine, if I ever brought you home with no money, no business, nothing, they would call the priest and the doctor and they would say Rodolpho is crazy.
CATHERINE. I know, but I think we would be happier there.
RODOLPHO. Happier! What would you eat? You can't cook the view!
CATHERINE. Maybe you could be a singer, like in Rome or . . .
RODOLPHO. Rome! Rome is full of singers.
CATHERINE. Well, I could work then.
RODOLPHO. Where?
CATHERINE. God, there must be jobs somewhere!
RODOLPHO. There's nothing! Nothing, nothing, nothing. Now tell me what you're talking about. How can I bring you from a rich country to suffer in a poor country? What are you talking about? (*She searches for words.*) I would be a criminal stealing your face. In two years you would have an old, hungry face. When my brother's babies cry they give them water, water that boiled a bone. Don't you believe that?
CATHERINE. (*Quietly.*) I'm afraid of Eddie here. (*Slight pause.*)
RODOLPHO. (*Steps closer to her.*) We wouldn't live here. Once I am a citizen I could work anywhere and I would find better jobs and we would have a house, Catherine. . . . If I were not afraid to be arrested I would start to be something wonderful here!
CATHERINE. (*Steeling herself.*) Tell me something. I mean just tell me, Rodolpho—Would you still want to do it if it turned out we had to go live in Italy? I mean just if it turned out that way.
RODOLPHO. This is your question or his question?
CATHERINE. I would like to know, Rodolpho. I mean it.
RODOLPHO. To go there with nothing.
CATHERINE. Yeah.
RODOLPHO. No. (*She looks at him wide-eyed.*) No.

CATHERINE. You wouldn't?
RODOLPHO. No; I will not marry you to live in Italy. I want you to be my wife, and I want to be a citizen. Tell him that, or I will. Yes. (*He moves about angrily.*) And tell him also, and tell yourself, please, that I am not a beggar, and you are not a horse, a gift, a favor for a poor immigrant.
CATHERINE. Well, don't get mad!
RODOLPHO. I am furious! (*Crosses to her.*) Do you think I am so desperate? My brother is desperate, not me. You think I would carry on my back the rest of my life a woman I didn't love just to be an American? It's so wonderful? You think we have no tall buildings in Italy? Electric lights? No wide streets? No flags? No automobiles? Only work we don't have. I want to be an American so I can work, that is the only wonder here—work! How can you insult me, Catherine?
CATHERINE. I didn't mean that . . .
RODOLPHO. My heart dies to look at you. Why are you so afraid of him?
CATHERINE. (*She is near tears.*) I don't know!
RODOLPHO. Do you trust me, Catherine? You?
CATHERINE. It's only that I . . . He was good to me, Rodolpho. You don't know him; he was always the sweetest guy to me. Good. He razzes me all the time but he don't mean it. I know. I would . . . just feel ashamed if I made him sad. 'Cause I always dreamt that when I got married he would be happy at the wedding, and laughin' . . . and now he's . . . mad all the time and nasty . . . (*She is weeping.*) Tell him you'd live in Italy—just tell him, and maybe he would start to trust you a little, see? Because I want him to be happy; I mean . . . I like him, Rodolpho . . . and I can't stand it!
RODOLPHO. Oh, Catherine—oh, little girl.
CATHERINE. I love you, Rodolpho, I love you.
RODOLPHO. Then why are you afraid? That he'll spank you?
CATHERINE. Don't, don't laugh at me! I've been here all my life. . . . Every day I saw him when he left in the morning and when he came home at night. You think it's so easy to turn around and say to a man he's nothin' to you no more?
RODOLPHO. I know, but . . .
CATHERINE. You don't know; nobody knows! I'm not a baby,

I know a lot more than people think I know. Beatrice says to be a woman, but . . .

RODOLPHO. Yes.

CATHERINE. Then why don't she be a woman?! If I was a wife I would make a man happy instead of goin' at him all the time. I can tell a block away when he's blue in his mind and just wants to talk to somebody quiet and nice. . . . I can tell when he's hungry or wants a beer before he even says anything. I know when his feet hurt him, I mean I *know* him and now I'm supposed to turn around and make a stranger out of him? I don't know why I have to do that, I mean. . . .

RODOLPHO. Catherine. If I take in my hands a little bird. And she grows and wishes to fly. But I will not let her out of my hands because I love her so much, is that right for me to do? I don't say you must hate him; but anyway you must go, mustn't you? Catherine?

CATHERINE. (*Softly.*) Hold me.

RODOLPHO. (*He clasps her to him.*) Oh, my little girl.

CATHERINE. Teach me. (*She is weeping.*) I don't know anything, teach me, Rodolpho, hold me.

RODOLPHO. There's nobody here now. Come inside. Come. (*He is leading her toward the bedrooms.*) And don't cry any more. (*LIGHT rises on the street. In a moment Eddie appears. He is unsteady, drunk. He mounts the stairs. He enters the apartment, looks around, takes out a bottle from one pocket, puts it on the table. Then another bottle from another pocket, and a third from an inside pocket. He sees the pattern and cloth, goes over to it, and touches it, and turns toward upstage.*)

EDDIE. Beatrice? (*He goes to the open kitchen door and looks in.*) Beatrice? Beatrice? (*Catherine enters from bedroom; under his gaze she adjusts her dress.*)

CATHERINE. You got home early.

EDDIE. Knocked off for Christmas early. (*Indicating the pattern.*) Rodolpho makin' you a dress?

CATHERINE. No. I'm makin' a blouse. (*Rodolpho appears in the bedroom doorway. Eddie sees him and his arm jerks slightly in shock. Rodolpho nods to him testingly.*)

RODOLPHO. Beatrice went to buy presents for her mother. (*Pause.*)

EDDIE. Pack it up. Go ahead. Get your stuff and get outa here.

(*Catherine walks toward the bedroom, and Eddie grabs her arm.*) Where you goin'?

CATHERINE. (*She is trembling with fright.*) I think I have to get out of here, Eddie.

EDDIE. No, you ain't goin' nowheres, he's the one.

CATHERINE. I think I can't stay here no more. (*She frees her arm, steps back toward the bedroom.*) I'm sorry, Eddie. (*She sees the tears in her eyes.*) Well, don't cry. I'll be around the neighborhood; I'll see you. I just can't stay here no more. You know I can't. (*Her sobs of pity and love for him break her composure.*) Don't you know I can't? You know that, don't you? (*She goes to him.*) Wish me luck. (*She clasps her hands prayerfully.*) Oh, Eddie, don't be like that!

EDDIE. You ain't goin' nowheres.

CATHERINE. Eddie, I'm not gonna be a baby any more! You . . . (*He reaches out suddenly, draws her to him and as she strives to free herself he kisses her on the mouth.*)

RODOLPHO. Don't! (*He pulls on Eddie's arm.*) Stop that! Have respect for her!

EDDIE. (*Spun round by Rodolpho.*) You want something?

RODOLPHO. Yes! She'll be my wife. That is what I want. My wife!

EDDIE. But what're you gonna be!

RODOLPHO. I show you what I be!

CATHERINE. Wait outside; don't argue with him . . . !

EDDIE. Come on, show me! What're you gonna be! Show me!

RODOLPHO. (*With tears of rage.*) Don't say that to me! (*Rodolpho flies at him in attack, Eddie pins his arms, laughing, and suddenly kisses him.*)

CATHERINE. Eddie! Let go, ya hear me! I'll kill you! Leggo of him! (*She tears at Eddie's face and Eddie releases Rodolpho, and Eddie staggers, tears rolling down his face as he laughs mockingly at Rodolpho. She is staring at him in horror, her breasts heaving. Rodolpho is rigid—they are like animals that have torn at one another and broken up without a decision, each waiting for the other's mood.*)

EDDIE. (*To Catherine.*) You see?! (*To Rodolpho.*) I give you till tomorrow, kid. Get outa here. Alone. You hear me? Alone. (*He sprawls on a chair and leans over the table.*)