

(She reaches over to Catherine's hand, and with a strained smile . . .) You think I'm jealous of you, honey?

CATHERINE. No! It's the first I thought of it.

BEATRICE. (*With a quiet sad laugh.*) Well, you should have thought of it before . . . but I'm not. We'll be all right. Just give him to understand; you don't have to fight, you're just . . . you're a woman, that's all, and you got a nice boy, and now the time came when you said good-bye. All right?

CATHERINE. (*Strangely moved at the prospect.*) All right. . . . If I can.

BEATRICE. Honey . . . you gotta. (*Catherine, sensing now an imperious demand, turns with some fear, with a discovery to Beatrice. She is at the edge of tears, as though a familiar world had shattered.*)

CATHERINE. Okay. (*LIGHTS OUT on them and UP on Alfieri. LIGHT RISES on Alfieri, seated behind his desk.*)

ALFIERI. It was at this time that he first came to me. I had represented his father in an accident case some years before, and I was acquainted with the family in a casual way. I remember him now as he walked through my doorway — (*Enter Eddie down R. ramp.*) His eyes were like tunnels; my first thought was that he had committed a crime, (*Eddie enters, sits beside the desk, cap in hand, looking out.*) but soon I saw it was only a passion that had moved into his body, like a stranger. (*Alfieri pauses, looks down at his desk, then to Eddie as though he were continuing a conversation with him.*) I don't quite understand what I can do for you. Is there a question of law somewhere?

EDDIE. That's what I want to ask you.

ALFIERI. Because there's nothing illegal about a girl falling in love with an immigrant.

EDDIE. Yeah, but what about if the only reason is to get his papers?

ALFIERI. First of all you don't know that. . . .

EDDIE. I see it in his eyes; he's laughin' at her and he's laughin' at me.

ALFIERI. Eddie, I'm a lawyer; I can only deal in what's provable. You understand that, don't you? Can you prove that?

EDDIE. I know what's in his mind, Mr. Alfieri!

ALFIERI. Eddie, even if you could prove that . . .

EDDIE. Listen. . . . Will you listen to me a minute? My father always said you was a smart man. I want you to listen to me.

ALFIERI. I'm only a lawyer, Eddie. . . .

EDDIE. Will you listen a minute? I'm talkin' about the law. Lemme just bring out what I mean. A man, when he comes into the country illegal, don't it stand to reason he's gonna take every penny and put it in the sock? Because they don't know from one day to another, right?

ALFIERI. All right.

EDDIE. He's spendin'. Records he buys now. Shoes. Jackets. Y'understand me? This guy ain't worried. This guy is *here*. So it must be that he's got it all laid out in his mind already—he's stayin'. Right?

ALFIERI. Well? What about it?

EDDIE. All right. (*He glances at Alfieri, then down to the floor.*)

. . . I'm talking to you confidential, ain't I?

ALFIERI. Certainly.

EDDIE. I mean it don't go no place but here. Because I don't like to say this about anybody. Even my wife I didn't exactly say this.

ALFIERI. What is it?

EDDIE. (*Takes a breath and throws a glance back over both shoulders.*) The guy ain't right, Mr. Alfieri.

ALFIERI. What do you mean?

EDDIE. I mean he ain't right.

ALFIERI. I don't get you.

EDDIE. (*He shifts to another position in the chair.*) Dja ever get a look at him?

ALFIERI. Not that I know of, no.

EDDIE. He's a blond guy. Like . . . platinum. You know what I mean?

ALFIERI. No.

EDDIE. I mean if you close the paper fast . . . you could blow him over.

ALFIERI. Well, that doesn't mean . . .

EDDIE. Wait a minute, I'm tellin' you sup'm. He sings, see. Which is . . . I mean it's all right, but sometimes he hits a note, see . . .

I turn around. I mean—high—you know what I mean?

ALFIERI. Well, that's a tenor.

EDDIE. I know a tenor, Mr. Alfieri. This ain't no tenor. I mean

if you came in the house and you didn't know who was singin', you wouldn't be lookin' for him, you be lookin' for her.

ALFIERI. Yes, but that's not . . .

EDDIE. I'm tellin' you sup'm, wait a minute; please, Mr. Alfieri. I'm tryin' to bring out my thoughts here. Couple of nights ago my niece brings out a dress which it's too small for her, because she shot up like a light this last year. He takes the dress, lays it on the table, he cuts it up; one-two-three, he makes a new dress. I mean he looked so sweet there, like an angel—you could kiss him he was so sweet.

ALFIERI. Now look, Eddie . . .

EDDIE. Mr. Alfieri, they're laughin' at him on the piers. I'm ashamed. Paper Doll they call him. Blondie now. His brother thinks it's because he's got a sense of humor, see—which he's got—but that ain't what they're laughin'. Which they're not goin' to come out with it because they know he's my relative, which they have to see me if they make a crack, y'know? But I know what they're laughin' at, and when I think of that guy layin' his hands on her I could . . . I mean it's eatin' me out, Mr. Alfieri, because I struggled for that girl. And now he comes in my house and . . .

ALFIERI. Eddie, look—I have my own children. I understand you. But the law is very specific. The law does not . . .

EDDIE. (*With a fuller flow of indignation.*) You mean to tell me that there's no law that a guy which he ain't right can go to work and marry a girl and . . . ?

ALFIERI. You have no recourse in the law, Eddie.

EDDIE. Yeah, but if he ain't right, Mr. Alfieri, you mean to tell me . . .

ALFIERI. There is nothing you can do, Eddie, believe me.

EDDIE. Nothin'.

ALFIERI. Nothing at all. There's only one legal question here.

EDDIE. What?

ALFIERI. The manner in which they entered the country. But I don't think you want to do anything about that, do you?

EDDIE. You mean . . . ?

ALFIERI. Well, they entered illegally . . .

EDDIE. Oh, Jesus, no, I wouldn't do nothin' about that, I mean . . .

ALFIERI. All right, then, let me talk now, eh?