

A View From The Bridge

Beatrice

Listen, Catherine. (Catherine halts, turns to her sheepishly.) What are you going to do with yourself?

Catherine

I don't know.

Beatrice

Don't tell me you don't know; you're not a baby any more, what are you going to do with yourself?

Catherine

He won't listen to me...

Beatrice

I don't understand this. He's not your father, Catherine. I don't understand what's going on here.

Catherine

(as one who herself is trying to rationalize a buried impulse.) What am I going to do, just kick him in the face with it?

Beatrice

Look, honey, you wanna get married, or don't you wanna get married? What are you worried about, Katie?

Catherine

(Quietly, trembling.) I don't know, Bea. It just seems wrong if he's against it so much.

Beatrice

(never losing her aroused alarm) Sit down, honey, I want to tell you something. Here, sit down. Was there ever any fella he liked for you? There wasn't, was there?

Catherine

But he says Roldolpho's just after his papers...

Beatrice

Look, he'll say anything; what does he care what he says? If it was a Prince came here for you it would be no different. You know that, don't you?

Catherine

...Yeah, I guess.

Beatrice

so what does that mean?

Catherine

(slowly turns her head to Beatrice.) What.

Beatrice

It means you gotta be your own self more. You still think you're a little girl, honey. But nobody else can make up your mind for you any more, you understand? You gotta give him to understand that he can't give you orders no more.

Catherine

Yeah, but how am I going to do that? He thinks I am a baby...

Beatrice

Because you think you're a baby. I told you fifty times already, you can't act the way you act. You still walk around in front of him in your slip...

Catherine

Well, I forgot...

Beatrice

Well, you can't do it. Or like you sit on the edge of the bathtub talkin' to him when he's shavin' in his underware.

Catherine

When'd I do that?

Beatrice

I seen you in there this morning!

Catherine

Oh... well, I wanted to tell him something and I...

Beatrice

I know, honey. But if you act like a baby and he be treatin' you like a baby. Like when he comes home sometimes you throw yourself at him like when you was twelve years old...

Catherine

Well, I like to see him and I'm happy so I...

Beatrice

Look, I'm not tellin' you what to do, honey, but...

Catherine

No, you could tell me, Bea!... Gee, I'm all mixed up. See, I... he looks so sad now and it hurts me...

Beatrice

Well, look, Katie, if it's goin' to hurt you so much you're gonna end up an old maid here.

Catherine

No!

Beatrice

I'm tellin' you, I'm not makin' a joke. I tried to tell you a couple of times in the last year or so. That's why I was so happy you were going to go out and get work, you wouldn't be here so much, you'd be a little more independent. I mean it. It's wonderful for a whole family to love each other, but you're a grown woman and you're in the same house with a grown man. So you'll act different now, heh?

Catherine

Yeah, I will. I'll remember.

Beatrice

Because it ain't only up to him, Katie, you understand? I told him the same thing already...

Catherine

(Quickly.) What?

Beatrice

That he should let you go. But, you see, if only I tell him, he thinks I'm just bawlin' him out, or maybe I'm jealous or somethin', you know?

Catherine

(Astonished.) He said you were jealous?

Beatrice

No, I'm just sayin' maybe that's what he thinks.(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)