

III PART III

Scenes for Two Men

AMERICAN BUFFALO

by David Mamet

ACT II

Don's Resale Shop—a junkshop. It is Friday, a robbery is being planned. This is the setting and basic situation. The robbery never takes place. But what emerges—through the planning, the waiting, the arguing, the complaining, and the outbursts of physical violence that comprise the actions of this play—is the story of three friends: of their fear of being deceived or left out; of their need to be respected and liked; of their efforts to balance loyalty and self-interest. The writing style captures the essential rhythms and sparseness of a modern urban dialect; yet it goes beyond mere replica to create a tone that is unique and poetic.

The excerpt that follows comes in the second act. It is night, approaching the hour of the robbery.

TEACH: What time is it?

DON: It's midnight.

Pause.

TEACH: I'm going out there now. I'll need the address. *Teach takes out revolver and begins to load it.*

DON: What's that?

TEACH: What?

DON: That.

TEACH: This "gun"?

DON: Yes.

TEACH: What does it look like?

DON: A gun.

TEACH: It *is* a gun.

DON, *rises and crosses to center*: I don't like it.

TEACH: Don't look at it.

DON: I'm serious.

TEACH: So am I.

DON: We don't need a gun, Teach.

TEACH: I pray that we don't, Don.

DON: We don't, tell me why we need a gun.

TEACH: It's not a question do we *need* it . . . *Need* . . . Only that it makes me comfortable, okay? It helps me to relax. So, God forbid, something inevitable occurs and the choice is (and I'm saying "God forbid") it's either him or us.

DON: Who?

TEACH: The guy. I'm saying God forbid the *guy* (or somebody) comes in, he's got a knife . . . a cleaver from one of those magnetic *boards* . . . ?

DON: Yeah?

TEACH: . . . with the two *strips* . . . ?

DON: Yeah?

TEACH: And *whack*, and somebody is bleeding to death. This is all. Merely as a deterrent. *Pause*. All the preparation in the world does not mean *shit*, the path of some crazed lunatic sees you as an invasion of his personal domain. Guys go nuts, Don, you know this. Public *officials* . . . *Ax* murderers . . . all I'm saying, look out for your own.

DON: I don't like the gun.

TEACH: It's a personal thing, Don. A personal thing of mine. A silly personal thing. I just like to have it along. Is this so unreasonable?

DON: I don't want it.

TEACH: I'm not going without it.

DON: Why do you want it?

TEACH: Protection of me and my partner. Protection, deterrence. (We're only going around the fucking *corner* for *christ*'s sake . . .)

DON: I don't want it with.

TEACH: I can't step down on this, Don. I got to have it with. The light of things as they are.

DON: Why?

TEACH: Because of the way *things* are. *He looks out window*. Hold on a second.

DON: Fletcher?

TEACH: Cops.

DON: What are they doing?

TEACH: Cruising.

Pause.

DON: They turn the corner?

TEACH: Hold on. *Pause*. Yes. They have the right idea. Armed to the hilt. Sticks, mace, knives . . . who knows what the fuck they got. They have the right idea. Social customs break down, next thing everybody's lying in the gutter.

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

by Arthur Miller

ACT I

Eddie Carbone is the central character in this modern tragedy, set in the Brooklyn waterfront district. Eddie is a longshoreman, respected by his coworkers, his friends, and his family for his integrity and generosity. He has brought up his dead sister-in-law's child, Catherine, who has turned into a beautiful, vivacious young woman. He shares his apartment with his wife's cousins, two young men who are illegal aliens from Italy, and who have come to New York to earn money for their families back home. And that's where the trouble begins. Catherine, and one of the young men, Rudolpho, fall in love, and for Eddie it ignites a caldron of jealous rage and suspicion that overwhelms all reason. He cannot give Catherine up, but camouflages his feelings (even to himself) in accusations that Rudolpho is "not right," a homosexual, and that he is just marrying Catherine to acquire U.S. citizenship. Eddie searches in vain for a way to end their relationship and finally—violating what amounts to a sacred code of the community—reports the cousins to the immigration authorities. The play ends with Eddie's humiliation and death.