Herby He

An important factor that affects Eddie’s understanding of his father is his age3. As Eddie grows older, the way he felt about his father changes from childhood admiration to teenage hatred and middle age understanding.

Eddie’s father has been treating Eddie wickedly ever since infancy. Eddie’s father always neglects Eddie even if Eddie tries his best to attract his attention. The only rule for Eddie is not to disturb him, and every time Eddie crosses the line, he will punish Eddie violently. Sometimes when Eddie’s father is drunk, he will hit Eddie forcibly until his mother awakens. Even being treated brutally, as a child as that age, “Eddie privately adored his old man, because sons will adore their fathers through even the worst behavior. It is how they learn devotion.”As an immature kid, it’s Eddie’s nature to admire his father. This devotion has nothing to do with father’s inappropriate actions nor Eddie’s temporarily complicated feelings, and it’s a subconscious affection that sons at a young age will have. Kids at this age cannot judge or forms a comprehensive idea or feeling such as hatred independently, so they primarily rely on parents for support. As a result, no matter what Eddie felt when his father hit him, he still depends on his father. At this stage, Eddie has sole admiration for his father, and this admiration is exhibited through his actions: Eddie won a fight to gain approval from his father, tries to help his father with maintenance problems for attention, intentionally leaves his finger uncleaned for father’s satisfaction.

When Eddie gets older, this reasonless admiration becomes hatred. As a teen, Eddie can view his childhood trauma rationally and make a decision. When Eddie was just a kid, he’s overwhelming devotion may coat the innate hatred that he’s supposed to have. When he thinks back as a teen, it’s apparent that he will form hatred after being abused since his affection for his father doesn’t exist anymore. The more time Eddie spends recalling childhood memories, the more Eddie hates his father. Eddie at this time doesn’t understand why his father, an ordinary guy who works at the pier for his whole life, treats him so harsh. Because Eddie already has a bad impression and bias toward his father, any minor conflict will only add to the hatred. Ever since Eddie fight back with his father, he views his father as a solely awful and useless. When Eddie’s father suggests Eddie to take the job at the pier, Eddie mockingly laughed, implying that Eddie despite his father’s job. Eddie refuses to listen to any suggestion from his father, and even after he died, Eddie still didn’t forgive him.

When Eddie gets even older, to his middle age, the hatred still exists, but now that feeling is gradually diminishing, especially after he followed the track of his father. Though he hated his father and initially refused to work at the pier, Eddie eventually ended up doing the same job as his father--maintenance at the pier. Eddie now has a similar daily routine and lifestyle as his father. He thinks about the “maintenance load today: broken mirror in the Fun House; new fenders for the bumper cars. Glue; need order more glue” every morning, and devote all his time to the pier. Realizing the importance of his father’s job, Eddie now understands his father more and view him not as much of a loser as he used to think his father is.