

of his head, motions to Louie to make himself invisible. Louie lies full length on a settee which is at such an angle that the back of it will hide him from almost anywhere in the room, unless someone stood right in front of it. The Dook moves to behind the screen upstage by the bookshelves. Elliott comes in D. L. with a small tray on which are a coffee percolator, a cup and a cream jug. In the other hand is the open book, and he's still reciting. During the following, he crosses to the armchair by the fireplace, and puts the tray down on the side table.)

ELLIOTT. (Reciting.)

But four young Oysters hurried up,

All eager for the treat.

Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,

Their shoes were clean and neat—

(He can't resist a fond look at his brown and whites on this, before continuing.)

And this was odd, because, you know,

They hadn't any feet.

(Elliott chuckles appreciatively and moves unerringly to a wall switch during the following, his eyes always on the book as he recites. He flicks a switch—the main lights go out, but two remain on—one on the side table by his armchair, the other on the table at the head of the settee behind which lies Louie. Reciting.)

Four other Oysters followed them

And yet another four;

And thick and fast they came at last,

And more, and more, and more—

(Elliott has moved to his armchair, and sits down with his nice brown and whites stretched out on a pouf during: Reciting.)

All hopping through the frothy waves,

And scrambling to the shore.

(A little cloud of cigarette smoke arises from behind the settee, illuminated by the table light. Elliott reads on— Reciting.)

The Walrus and the Carpenter

Walked on a mile or so,

And then they rested on a rock

Conveniently low:

(The Dook comes slowly down to the back of Elliott's chair—slightly to the R. side. There is a nostalgic smile on the Dook's face as he stands there listening. Reciting.)

And all the little Oysters stood

And waited in a row.

(There is another little cloud of smoke from the other side of the room. Elliott, smiling, lays the book on his lap and turns to the table to pour himself a cup of coffee. As he does so, he thinks he sees a little cloud of smoke just disappearing over the settee like a miniature atom bomb. This puzzles him momentarily. But he shrugs it off. An optical what have you. He pours the coffee and has a sip. He takes a cigarette from a box on the table and picks up the table lighter. As he settles back and picks up the book, he flicks the lighter as he recites— Reciting.)

"The time has come," the Walrus said,

(No light—we knew that—another flick. Reciting.)

"The time has come," the Walrus said— (Another flick—and another—

The Dook brings a lighter from his pocket, flicks it—it lights immediately—and solicitously leans over the back of Elliott's chair with the flame. Elliott accepts the light with a slight nod of thanks and starts once more— Reciting.)

"The time has come," the Walrus said —

(Elliott breaks off. His eyes pop. The hand with the lighter has gone—but—but—?? Elliott gingerly looks around, right into the Dook's smiling face.)

DOOK. Mr. Nash, I presume? (Elliott swings around.) Awfully sorry to intrude like this.

ELLIOTT. Who are you? What are you doing here? Get out—this instant!

DOOK. Don't let your coffee get cold, old boy. We'll just have a little chat and then you can get back to Alice —

ELLIOTT. I'm going to call the police. (He walks L. towards the phone but runs into Louie holding a knife.)

LOUIE. You heard the Dook. Sit down. (Louie prods Elliott into a highback chair on casters which the Dook has pushed behind him.)

DOOK. That's better.

"The time has come," the Walrus said,

"To tell us all you know:

Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—

And what became of Joe."

(*There is a silence. Elliott looks from one to the other.*) Well? What did become of Joe?

ELLIOTT. Who? I don't know what you're talking about?

DOOK. Oh, come now, my dear Mr. Nash. I'm absolutely certain that your memory is top-hole—

LOUIE. Aw, cut it out, Dook. Get on with it—we ain't not got all night!

DOOK. I deplore that double negative, Louie, but in essence you are perfectly correct. (*To Elliott.*) Where's the body, Mr. Nash?

ELLIOTT. What—what body?

LOUIE. Let me work him over—

DOOK. (*Puts out a restraining hand to Louie.*) Let's be civilized as long as possible. Mr. Nash. Last night Joe paid you a little visit—at nine o'clock precisely. Louie and I were waiting in the car outside. There was a shot from in here—and Joe failed to reappear. Ever since, we have been waiting for Joe's lamentable demise to—er—hit the newsstands. But despite assiduous perusal of every—

LOUIE. For Pete's sakes, Dook. Stop showing off. (*Sticks knife into Elliott.*) Okay, Mister.—Where you hide da body?

ELLIOTT. What body?

DOOK. This is not idle curiosity on our part, Mr. Nash. We need Joe for business reasons. Twenty-five thousand dollars—in his safe deposit box. The key to the safe deposit box, unfortunately, is in Joe's pocket. You begin to understand our predicament. Where's the body, Mr. Nash? (*Elliott looks grimly ahead.*)

The carpenter said nothing but, "Cut us another slice."

"*I wish you were not quite so deaf—I've had to ask you twice.*"

No? Very well! Take over, Louie.

LOUIE. Put your hands behind your back. *Step on it.* I ain't never seen nobody so stupid. (*Elliott does so. Louie ties him to chair.*)

DOOK. You know, Mr. Nash—one shouldn't take the law into one's own hands—no matter what the provocation. Where would civilization be if every man-jack of us picked up a gun and shot it out with his fellow-man? No, Mr. Nash—if you and Joe couldn't see eye to eye, you should have called the police. Well, Mr. Nash? Your last chance.—Where's Joe? No? I should warn you that this

is going to be extremely painful. Better gag him, Louie. The screams always upset me.

LOUIE. Open the mouth.

ELLIOTT. I will not.

LOUIE. Take his shoes off, Dook!

DOOK. (*While doing so.*) I say, old sport. These are nice. Topping. (*Elliott mutters "Brooks Brothers."*) Oh. Brooks Brothers. Ideal for my holiday in Florida. And a perfect fit. How very fortunate. All right, Louie. The knife. Not in here. In there. It'll muffle the screams.

LOUIE. Okay—okay. . . . Lift up your feet. And look, mister, don't get the idea that you're going to the Atlantic City boardwalk 'cause you ain't!

DOOK. By the way, Mr. Nash. One trivial little point. When you've had enough and decide to talk—*nod your head.* Last time we omitted to mention that—oh, it was beastly. There can't be many places one can hide a body. (*Looks out French windows.*) What a charming Gazebo.

LOUIE. All right, wise guy. You gonna talk?

DOOK. By Jove! Louie—come here quickly.

LOUIE. What is it? The cops?

DOOK. Look—out there—the summer house.

LOUIE. So what?

DOOK. It wasn't there last night. I would have seen it from the car.

LOUIE. So what?

DOOK. Louie, when you cased the joint early this morning, what did you tell me you saw?

LOUIE. Dey was pourin' cement out dere. (*Thought hits him.*)

Joe! Out dere under the concrete.

DOOK. Where else, dear boy?

LOUIE. Yeah . . . but how we gonna get him out? (*Dook gets spade from outside.*) That ain't no good. We'll need a pneumatic drill!

DOOK. Oh, come now, Louie. How did you escape from Ohio State Penitentiary? Did the concrete deter you then?

LOUIE. No, sir.

DOOK. And what was your motto?

LOUIE. If I can't go trew—I goes under!