

FOREMAN. Earlier that night the kid and his father did have a fight.

FOUR. He's been a violent kid all the way, and while that doesn't prove anything . . .

TEN. Still, you know . . .

EIGHT [*standing*]. I've got a proposition to make. [*FIVE stands and puts his hands on back of his chair. Several jurors glare at him. He sinks his head down a bit, then sits down.*]

I want to call for a vote. I want you eleven men to vote by secret ballot. I'll abstain. If there are still eleven votes for guilty, I won't stand alone. We'll take in a guilty verdict right now.

SEVEN. Okay. Let's do it.

FOREMAN. That sounds fair. Is everyone agreed?

FOUR. I certainly am.

TWELVE. Let's roll it.

ELEVEN [*slowly*]. Perhaps this is best. [*EIGHT walks over to window and stands there for a moment looking out; then turns as FOREMAN passes ballot slips down table to all of them. EIGHT tenses as JURORS begin to write. Then folded ballots are passed back to FOREMAN. He flips through folded ballots, counts them to be sure he has eleven and then he begins to open them, reading verdict each time.*]

FOREMAN. Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. Guilty.

THREE. That's six.

FOREMAN. Please. [*Fumbles with one ballot.*] Six guilty. Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. [*Pauses for a moment at tenth ballot and then reads.*] Not guilty. [*THREE slams his hand down hard on table. EIGHT starts for table, as FOREMAN reads final ballot.*] Guilty.

TEN [*angrily*]. How do you like that!

SEVEN [*standing, snarling*]. Who was it? I think we have a right to know. [*Looks about. No one moves.*]

CURTAIN

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## ACT TWO

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AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is only a second or two later. The JURORS are in the same positions as they were at the end of Act One.*]

THREE [*after brief pause*]. All right! Who did it? What idiot changed his vote?

EIGHT. Is that the way to talk about a man's life? [*Sits at his place again.*]

THREE. Whose life are you talking about? The life of the dead man or the life of a murderer?

SEVEN. I want to know. Who?

THREE. So do I.

ELEVEN. Excuse me. This was a secret ballot.

THREE. No one looked while we did it, but now I want to know.

ELEVEN. A secret ballot; we agreed on that point, no? If the gentleman wants it to remain a secret—

THREE [*standing up angrily*]. What do you mean? There are no secrets in here! I know who it was. [*Turns to FIVE.*] What's the matter with you? You come in here and you vote guilty and then this—[*Nods toward EIGHT.*]—slick preacher starts to tear your heart out with stories about a poor little kid who just couldn't help becoming a murderer. So you change your vote. If that isn't the most sickening—[*FIVE edges away in his chair.*]

FOREMAN. Now hold it. [*SEVEN sits again slowly.*]

FOUR [*to THREE*]. I agree with you that the man is guilty, but let's be fair.

THREE. Hold it? Be fair? That's just what I'm saying. We're trying to put a guilty man into the chair where he belongs—and all of a sudden we're paying attention to fairy tales.

FIVE. Now, just a minute——

THREE [*bending toward FIVE, wagging finger at him*]. Now, you listen to me——

FOREMAN [*rapping on table*]. Let's try to keep this organized, gentlemen.

FOUR. It isn't organized, but let's try to be civilized.

ELEVEN. Please. I would like to say something here. I have always thought that a man was entitled to have unpopular opinions in this country. This is the reason I came here. I wanted to have the right to disagree.

THREE. Do you disagree with us?

ELEVEN. Usually, I would. In this one case I agree with you, but the point I wish to make is that in my own country, I am ashamed to say——

TEN. Oh, now-w-w, what do we have to listen to—the whole history of your country? [*THREE sits again in disgust.*]

FOUR. It's always wise to bear in mind what has happened in other countries, when people aren't allowed to disagree; but we are, so let's stick to the subject.

SEVEN. Yeah, let's stick to the subject. [*To FIVE.*] I want to ask you, what made you change your vote?

THREE. I want to know, too. You haven't told us yet.

FIVE. Why do you think I did change my vote?

SEVEN. Because I do. Now get on with it.

NINE [*quietly*]. There's nothing for him to tell you. He didn't change his vote. I did. [*ALL look at NINE.*]

FIVE [*to THREE*]. I was going to tell you, but you were so sure of yourself.

THREE. Sorry. [*To NINE.*] Okay, now. . . .

NINE. Maybe you'd like to know why.

THREE [*not giving him a chance*]. Let me tell you why that kid's a——

FOREMAN. The man wants to talk. [*THREE subsides.*]

NINE [*to FOREMAN*]. Thank you. [*Points at EIGHT.*] This gentleman chose not to stand alone against us. That's his right. It takes a great deal of courage to stand alone even if you believe in something very strongly. He left the verdict

up to us. He gambled for support and I gave it to him. I want to hear more. The vote is ten to two. [*JURORS TWO and FOUR get up at about same instant and walk to water cooler as TEN speaks.*]

TEN. That's fine. If the speech is over, let's go on. [*FOREMAN gets up, goes to door L, pulls tagged knife from wall and then knocks on door.*]

[*The door is opened by the GUARD. The FOREMAN hands the GUARD the tagged switch knife. The GUARD goes out and the FOREMAN takes the other switch knife, closes it and puts it in the middle of the table. He sits again. The other JURORS talk on, in pantomime, as TWO and FOUR stand by the water cooler.*]

FOUR [*filling cup*]. If there was anything in the kid's favor I'd vote not guilty.

TWO. I don't see what it is.

FOUR [*handing cup to TWO, then drawing drink for himself*]. Neither do I. They're clutching at straws.

TWO. As guilty as they get—that's the kid, I suppose.

FOUR. It's that one juror that's holding out, but he'll come around. He's got to and, fundamentally, he's a very reasonable man.

TWO. I guess so.

FOUR. They haven't come up with one real fact yet to back up a not guilty verdict.

TWO. It's hard, you know.

FOUR. Yes, it is. And what does "guilty beyond a reasonable doubt" really mean?

TWO. What's a reasonable doubt?

FOUR. Exactly. When a life is at stake, what is a reasonable doubt? You've got to have law and order; you've got to draw the line somewhere; if you don't, everyone would start knifing people.

TWO. Not much doubt here.

FOUR. Two men think so. I wonder why. I really wonder why.

TWO. You do hear stories about innocent men who have gone

to jail—or death, sometimes—then years later things turn up.

FOUR. And then on the other hand some killers get turned loose and they go and do it again. They squeeze out on some technicality and kill again. [*Throws his cup into wastebasket, walks back and sits. We then hear THREE say to FIVE.*]

THREE. Look, buddy, now that we've kind of cooled off, why—ah—I was a little excited a minute ago. Well, you know how it is—I didn't mean to get nasty. Nothing personal. [*TWO trails back to his place and sits again.*]

FIVE [*after staring at THREE for a moment*]. Okay.

SEVEN [*to EIGHT*]. Look. Supposing you answer me this. If the kid didn't kill him, who did?

EIGHT. As far as I know, we're supposed to decide whether or not the boy on trial is guilty. We're not concerned with anyone else's motives here.

SEVEN. I suppose, but who else had a motive?

EIGHT. The kid's father was along in years; maybe an old grudge.

NINE. Remember, it is "guilty beyond a reasonable doubt."

This is an important thing to remember.

THREE [*to TEN*]. Everyone's a lawyer. [*To NINE.*] Supposing you explain to us what your reasonable doubts are.

NINE. This is not easy. So far, it's only a feeling I have. A feeling. Perhaps you don't understand.

THREE [*abruptly*]. No. I don't.

TEN. A feeling! What are we gonna do, spend the night talking about your feelings? What about the facts?

THREE. You said a mouthful. [*To NINE.*] Look, the old man heard the kid yell, "I'm gonna kill you." A second later he heard the father's body falling, and he saw the boy running out of the house fifteen seconds after that.

SEVEN. Where's the reasonable doubt in that?

TWELVE. That's right. And let's not forget the woman across the street. She looked into the open window and saw the boy stab his father. She saw it!

THREE. Now, if that's not enough for you—

EIGHT [*quietly firm*]. It's not enough for me.

FOUR. What is enough for you? I'd like to know.

SEVEN. How do you like him? It's like talking into a dead 'phone.

FOUR. The woman saw the killing through the windows of a moving elevated train. The train had five cars and she saw it through the windows of the last two cars. She remembers the most insignificant details.

THREE. Well, what have you got to say about that?

EIGHT. I don't know. It doesn't sound right to me.

THREE. Well, supposing you think about it. [*To TWELVE.*]

Lend me your pencil. [*TWELVE hands him a pencil.*] Let's play some tic-tac-toe. [*Draws an X on a piece of paper, then hands pencil and paper to TWELVE.*] We might as well pass the time.

EIGHT. This isn't a game. [*Rises and snatches paper away.*]

THREE [*jumps up.*]

THREE. Now, wait a minute!

EIGHT. This is a man's life.

THREE [*angrily*]. Who do you think you are?

SEVEN [*rising*]. All right, let's take it easy. [*EIGHT sits again.*]

THREE. I've got a good mind to walk around this table and belt him one!

FOREMAN. Now, please. I don't want any fights in here.

THREE. Did you see him? The nerve! The absolute nerve!

TEN. All right. Forget it. It don't mean anything.

SIX. How about sitting down?

THREE. "This isn't a game." Who does he think he is? [*SIX and TEN urge THREE back into his seat. SEVEN sits again, and ALL are seated once more.*]

FOUR [*when quiet is restored*]. Weren't we talking about elevated trains?

EIGHT. Yes, we were.

FOUR. So?

EIGHT. All right. How long does it take an elevated train going at top speed to pass a given point?

FOUR. What has that got to do with anything?

EIGHT. How long would it take? Guess.

FOUR. I wouldn't have the slightest idea.

SEVEN. Neither would I.

NINE. I don't think they mentioned it.

EIGHT [*to FIVE*]. What do you think?

FIVE. About ten or twelve seconds—maybe.

EIGHT. I'd say that was a fair guess. [*Looks about.*] Anyone else?

ELEVEN. I would think about ten seconds, perhaps. . . .

TWO [*reflectively*]. About ten seconds, yes.

FOUR. All right, we're agreed. Ten seconds. [*To EIGHT.*] What are you getting at?

EIGHT. This. An el train passes a given point in ten seconds. That given point is the window of the room in which the killing took place. You can almost reach out of the window of that room and touch the el. Right?

FOREMAN. That's right. I tried it.

FOUR. So?

EIGHT. All right. Now let me ask you this. Did anyone here ever live right next to the el tracks?

FIVE. I've lived close to them.

EIGHT. They make a lot of noise, don't they? [*FIVE nods.*] I've lived right by the el tracks. When your window is open, and the train goes by, the noise is almost unbearable. You can't hear yourself think.

TEN [*impatiently*]. Okay. You can't hear yourself think. Get to the point.

EIGHT. The old man who lived downstairs heard the boy say—

THREE [*interrupting*]. He didn't say it, he screamed it.

EIGHT. The old man heard the boy scream, "I'm going to kill you," and one second later he heard a body fall. [*Slight pause.*] One second. That's the testimony. Right?

TWO. Right.

EIGHT. The woman across the street looked through the win-

dows of the last two cars of the el and saw the body fall. Right?

FOUR. Right.

TWELVE. So?

EIGHT [*slowly*]. The last two cars. [*Slight pause, then repeats.*] The last two cars.

TEN. What are you giving us here?

EIGHT. An el train takes ten seconds to pass a given point, or two seconds per car. That el had been going by the old man's window for at least six seconds and maybe more before the body fell, according to the woman. The old man would have had to hear the boy say, "I'm going to kill you," while the front of the el was roaring past his nose. It's not possible that he could have heard it.

THREE. What do you mean! Sure, he could have heard it.

EIGHT. With an el train going by?

THREE. He said the boy yelled it out.

EIGHT. An el train makes a lot of noise.

THREE. It's enough for me.

FOUR. It's enough for me, too.

NINE. I don't think he could have heard it.

TWO. Maybe the old man didn't hear it. I mean with the el noise. . . .

THREE. What are you people talking about? Are you calling the old man a liar?

EIGHT [*shaking his head*]. Something doesn't fit.

FIVE. Well, it stands to reason—

THREE. You're crazy! Why would he lie? What's he got to gain?

NINE. Attention . . . maybe.

THREE. You keep coming up with these bright sayings. Why don't you send one in to a newspaper? They pay two dollars.

EIGHT [*hard, to THREE*]. What does that have to do with a man's life? [*Then, to NINE.*] Why might the old man have lied? You have a right to be heard.

NINE [*after moment's hesitation*]. It's just that I looked at him for a very long time. The seam of his jacket was split

under his arm. Did you notice that? He was a very old man with a torn jacket, and he carried two canes. [*Gets up, moves R and leans against wall.*] I think I know him better than anyone here. This is a quiet, frightened, insignificant man who has been nothing all his life—who has never had recognition—his name in the newspapers. Nobody knows him after seventy-five years. This is a very sad thing. A man like this needs to be recognized—to be questioned, and listened to, and quoted just once. This is very important. . . .

TWELVE. And you're trying to tell us he lied about a thing like this just so he could be important?

NINE. No, he wouldn't really lie. But perhaps he'd make himself believe that he heard those words and recognized the boy's face.

THREE. Well—[*Loud and brassy.*]—that's the most fantastic story I've ever heard. How can you make up a thing like that?

NINE [*doggedly*]. I'm not making it up.

THREE. You must be making it up. People don't lie about things like that.

NINE. He made himself believe he told the truth.

THREE. What do you know about it?

NINE [*low but firm*]. I speak from experience.

SEVEN. What!

NINE. I am the same man.

FOUR. I think we all understand now. Thank you. [*NINE moves slowly back to table and sits.*]

THREE [*as NINE sits*]. If you want to admit you're a liar, it's all right by me.

EIGHT. Now, that is too much!

THREE. He's a liar. He just told us so.

EIGHT. He did not say he was a liar; he was explaining.

THREE [*to NINE*]. Didn't you admit that you're a liar?

EIGHT [*to THREE*]. Please—he was explaining the circumstances so that we could understand why the old man might have lied. There is a difference.

THREE. A liar is a liar, that's all there is to it.

EIGHT. Please—have some compassion.

FOREMAN. Gentlemen, please, we have our job and our duty here.

FOUR. I think they've covered it.

EIGHT. I hope we have.

FOREMAN [*to EIGHT*]. All right. Is there anything else? [*TWO holds up a box of cough drops and speaks to FOREMAN.*]

TWO. Cough drop?

FOREMAN [*waving it aside*]. No, thank you.

TWO [*hesitantly*]. Anybody—want a cough—drop? [*Offers box around.*]

FOREMAN [*sharply*]. Come on. Let's get on with it.

EIGHT. I'll take one. [*TWO hands him box.*] Thank you. [*Takes one and returns box.*] Now—there's something else I'd like to point out here. I think we proved that the old man couldn't have heard the boy say, "I'm going to kill you."

THREE. Well, I disagree.

FOUR [*to THREE*]. Let's hear him through, anyway.

EIGHT. But supposing the old man really did hear the boy say "I'm going to kill you." This phrase—how many times has each of you used it? Probably hundreds. "If you do that once more, Junior, I'm going to murder you." "Come on, Rocky, kill him!" We say it every day. This doesn't mean that we're really going to kill someone.

FOUR. Don't the circumstances alter that somewhat?

TWELVE. The old man was murdered.

THREE. One thing more. The phrase was "I'm going to kill you." And the kid screamed it out at the top of his lungs.

FOUR. That's the way I understand it.

THREE. Now don't try and tell me he didn't mean it. Anybody says a thing like that the way he said it—they mean it.

TEN. And how they mean it!

EIGHT. Well, let me ask you this. Do you really think the boy would shout out a thing like that so the whole neighborhood would hear it? I don't think so. He's much too bright for that.

TEN [*exploding*]. Bright! He's a common ignorant slob. He don't even speak good English!

ELEVEN [*slowly*]. He *doesn't* even speak good English.

FOUR. The boy is clever enough. [FOUR's line is spoken as TEN rises and glowers at ELEVEN. There is a momentary pause. TEN sits again as FIVE gets up and looks around. He is nervous.]

FIVE. I'd like to change my vote to not guilty. [THREE slams his fist into his hand, then walks to window and does it again.]

FOREMAN. Are you sure?

FIVE. Yes. I'm sure.

FOREMAN. The vote is nine to three in favor of guilty.

FOUR [to FIVE]. I'd like to know why you've changed your vote.

FIVE. I think there's a doubt.

THREE [*turning abruptly from window, snarling*]. Where? What is the doubt?

FIVE. There's the knife. . . .

SEVEN [*slamming his hand down on table*]. Oh, fine!

TEN. He—[*Motioning at EIGHT*].—he talked you into believing a fairy tale.

FOUR [to FIVE]. Go on. Give us the reasons.

FIVE. The old man, too. Maybe he didn't lie, but then just *maybe* he did. Maybe the old man doesn't like the kid.

SEVEN. Well, if that isn't the end.

FIVE. I believe that there is reasonable doubt. [*Sits again*.]

SEVEN. What are you basing it on? Stories that this guy—[*Indicates EIGHT*].—made up! He ought to write for *Amazing Detective Monthly*. He'd make a fortune. Listen, the kid had a lawyer, didn't he? Why didn't his lawyer bring up all these points?

FIVE. Lawyers can't think of everything.

SEVEN. Oh, brother! [To EIGHT.] You sit in here and pull stories out of thin air. Now we're supposed to believe that the old man didn't get out of bed, run to the door and see the kid beat it downstairs fifteen seconds after the killing.

FOUR. That's the testimony, I believe.

SEVEN. And the old man swore to this—yes—he swore to this only so he could be important. [*Looks over at NINE*.]

FIVE. Did the old man say he *ran* to the door?

SEVEN. Ran. Walked. What's the difference? He got there.

FIVE. I don't remember what he said. But I don't see how he could run.

FOUR. He said he *went*. I remember it now. He *went* from his bedroom to the front door. That's enough, isn't it?

EIGHT. Where was his bedroom, again?

TEN [*disinterested*]. Down the hall somewhere.

EIGHT [*mad*]. Down the hall! Are we to send a man off to die because it's down the hall *somewhere*?

TEN. I thought you remembered everything. Don't you remember that?

EIGHT. No, I don't.

NINE. I don't remember, either.

EIGHT. Mr. Foreman, I'd like to take a look at the diagram of the apartment.

SEVEN. Why don't we have them run the trial over just so you can get everything straight?

EIGHT. The bedroom is down the hall somewhere. Do you *know*—do you know exactly where it is? Please. A man's life is at stake. Do you *know*?

SEVEN. Well, ah . . .

EIGHT. Mr. Foreman.

FOREMAN [*rising*]. I heard you. [*Goes to door L and knocks on door*.]

[*During the ensuing dialogue the GUARD opens the door L. The FOREMAN whispers to him. The GUARD nods and then closes the door*.]

THREE [*stepping away from window, moving a few steps toward EIGHT*]. All right. What's this one for? How come you're the only one in the room who wants to see exhibits all the time?

FIVE. I want to see this one, too.

NINE. So do I.

THREE. And I want to stop wasting time.

FOUR. Are we going to start wading through all that nonsense about where the body was found?

EIGHT. We're not. We're going to find out how a man who's had two strokes in the past three years and who walks with a pair of canes could get to his front door in fifteen seconds.

THREE. He said twenty seconds.

TWO. He said fifteen.

THREE. How does he know how long fifteen seconds is? You can't judge that kind of thing.

NINE. He said fifteen. He was very positive about it.

THREE [*angrily*]. He's an old man. You saw that. Half the time he was confused. How could he be positive about—anything? [*Looks around sheepishly, unable to cover his blunder.*] Well, ah—you know.

EIGHT. No, I don't know. Maybe you know.

[*The door L opens and the GUARD walks in carrying a large pen-and-ink diagram of the apartment done on heavy drawing board stock. It is a railroad flat. A bedroom faces the el tracks. Behind it is a series of rooms off a long hall. In the front bedroom there is a mark where the body was found. At the back of the apartment we see the entrance into the apartment hall from the building hall. We see a flight of stairs in the building hall. The diagram is clearly labeled, and included in the information on it are the various dimensions of the various rooms. The GUARD gives the diagram to the FOREMAN, who has remained by the door L.*]

GUARD. Is this what you wanted?

FOREMAN. That's right. Thank you.

GUARD. Sure, that's my job. [*Nods and goes out L, closing and locking door as he goes. EIGHT rises and starts toward FOREMAN.*]

FOREMAN. You want this?

EIGHT. Yes, please. [*FOREMAN nods. EIGHT takes diagram and crosses U R. He takes chair from U R corner and brings it*

R C, *half facing table. He sets diagram up on chair so that all can see it. EIGHT looks it over. Several JURORS get up to see it better. FOREMAN comes over to look. THREE, TEN and SEVEN, however, barely bother to look at it. THREE sits abruptly again at table.*]

SEVEN [*to TEN*]. Do me a favor. [*Slumps in chair.*] Wake me up when this is over.

TEN. I looked at that diagram for two hours; enough is enough.

FOUR. Some of us are interested. Go ahead.

EIGHT. All right. This is the apartment in which the killing took place. The old man's apartment is directly beneath it, and exactly the same. [*Pointing.*] Here are the el tracks. The bedroom. Another bedroom. Living room. Bathroom. Kitchen. And this is the hall. Here's the front door to the apartment, and here are the steps. [*Points to front bedroom and then to front door.*] Now, the old man was in bed in this room. He says he got up, went out into the hall, down the hall to the front door and opened it and looked out just in time to see the boy racing down the stairs. Am I right?

FOUR. That's the story.

SEVEN. That's what happened!

EIGHT. Fifteen seconds after he heard the body fall.

ELEVEN. Correct. [*FOREMAN and other JURORS who have come over to look at diagram now drift back to table and sit again.*]

EIGHT [*still by diagram at R C*]. His bed was at the window. [*Looking closer.*] It's twelve feet from his bed to the bedroom door. The length of the hall is forty-three feet six inches. He had to get up out of bed, get his canes, walk twelve feet, open the bedroom door, walk forty-three feet and open the front door—all in fifteen seconds. Do you think this possible?

TEN. You know it's possible.

FOUR. I don't see why not.

THREE. He would have been in a hurry. He did hear the scream.

ELEVEN. He can only walk very slowly. They had to help him into the witness chair.

THREE. You make it sound like a long walk. It's not. [EIGHT goes D L and takes two chairs. He crosses D R, near water cooler, and puts them together to indicate a bed.]

NINE. For an old man who uses canes it's a long walk.

THREE [to EIGHT]. What are you doing?

EIGHT. I want to try this thing. Let's see how long it took him. I'm going to pace off twelve feet—the length of the bedroom. [Begins to do so, pacing from D R, across stage, toward D C.]

THREE. You're crazy! You can't re-create a thing like that.

ELEVEN. Perhaps if we could see it—this is an important point.

THREE [angrily]. It's a ridiculous waste of time!

SIX. Let him do it.

FOUR. I can't see any harm in it. Foolish, but go ahead.

EIGHT. Hand me a chair, please. [NINE pushes chair from right end of table to EIGHT and then sits again.] All right. [Places chair at point he has paced off.] This is the bedroom door. How far would you say it is from here to the door of this room?

SIX [as ALL look]. I'd say it was twenty feet. [Several JURORS, excluding THREE, SEVEN and TEN, rise and stand near their places, watching.]

TWO. Just about.

EIGHT. Twenty feet is close enough. All right, from here to the door and back is about forty feet. It's shorter than the length of the hall the old man had to move through. Wouldn't you say that?

NINE. A few feet, maybe.

TEN. Look, this is absolutely insane. What makes you think you can do this?

FOREMAN. We can't stop him.

EIGHT. Do you mind if I try it? According to you, it'll only take fifteen seconds. We can spare that. [Walks over to two chairs and lies down on them.] Who's got a watch with a second hand?

TWO. I have. [Indicates wrist watch.]

EIGHT. When you want me to start, stamp your foot. That'll be the body falling.

TWO. We'll time you from there.

EIGHT [lying down on two chairs]. Let's say he keeps his canes right at his bedside. Right?

FOUR. Right!

EIGHT. Okay. I'm ready.

TWO [explaining]. I'm waiting for the hand to get to sixty.

[ALL watch carefully; then TWO stamps his foot, loudly.

EIGHT begins to get up. Slowly, he swings his legs over edges of chairs, reaches for imaginary canes and struggles to his feet. TWO stares at his watch. EIGHT walks as a crippled old man would walk now. He goes toward chair which is serving as bedroom door. He gets to it and pretends to open it.]

TEN [shouting]. Speed it up. He walked twice as fast as that.

[EIGHT, not having stopped for this outburst, begins to walk simulated forty-foot hallway, to door L and back to chair.]

ELEVEN. This is, I think, even more quickly than the old man walked in the courtroom.

THREE. No, it isn't.

EIGHT. If you think I should go faster, I will.

FOUR. Speed it up a little. [EIGHT speeds up his pace slightly.

He reaches door L and turns now, heading back, hobbling as an old man would hobble, bent over his imaginary canes. ALL watch him tensely. He hobbles back to chair, which also serves as front door. He stops there and pretends to unlock door. Then he pretends to push it open.]

EIGHT [loudly]. Stop.

TWO [his eyes glued to watch]. Right.

EIGHT. What's the time?

TWO. Fifteen—twenty—thirty—thirty-five—thirty-nine seconds, exactly. [Moves toward EIGHT. Other JURORS now move in toward EIGHT, also.]

THREE. That can't be!

ELEVEN. Thirty-nine seconds!



FOUR. Now, that's interesting.

SEVEN [*looking at JURORS*]. Hey, now—you know. . . .

NINE. What do you think of that!

ELEVEN [*nodding*]. Thirty-nine seconds. Thirty-nine.

FOUR. And the old cripple swore, on his oath, that it was fifteen.

ELEVEN [*pointing to EIGHT*]. He may have been a little bit off on the speed that the old cripple moved at—but twenty-four seconds off . . . well, now, you know . . .

FOREMAN. Far be it from me to call anyone a liar, and even allowing for quite a difference in speed between the old man and you . . . [*Motions at EIGHT.*] Why, still, there's quite a—

FOUR. Quite a discrepancy.

EIGHT. It's my guess that the old man was trying to get to the door, heard someone racing down the stairs and *assumed* that it was the boy.

SIX. I think that's possible.

THREE [*infuriated*]. Assumed? Now, listen to me, you people. I've seen all kinds of dishonesty in my day—but this little display takes the cake.

EIGHT. What dishonesty?

THREE [*to FOUR*]. Tell him! [*FOUR turns away D R and sits silently in one of the two chairs there. THREE looks at him and then he strides to EIGHT.*] You come in here with your heart bleeding all over the floor about slum kids and injustice and you make up these wild stories, and you've got some soft-hearted old ladies listening to you. Well, I'm not. I'm getting real sick of you. [*To ALL.*] What's the matter with you people? This kid is guilty! He's got to burn! We're letting him slip through our fingers.

EIGHT [*calmly*]. Our fingers. Are you his executioner?

THREE [*raging*]. I'm one of 'em!

EIGHT. Perhaps you'd like to pull the switch.

THREE [*shouting*]. For this kid? You bet I'd like to pull the switch!

EIGHT [*shaking his head sadly*]. I'm sorry for you.

THREE [*shouting*]. Don't start with me!

EIGHT. What it must feel like to want to pull the switch!

THREE. Shut up!

EIGHT. You're a sadist. . . .

THREE [*louder*]. Shut up!

EIGHT [*his voice strong*]. You want to see this boy die because you personally want it—not because of the facts. [*Spits out words.*] You are a beast. You disgust me.

THREE [*shouting*]. Shut up! [*Lunges at EIGHT, but is caught by two of the JURORS and is held. He struggles as EIGHT watches calmly. Then he screams.*] Let me go! I'll kill him! I'll kill him!

EIGHT [*softly*]. You don't really mean you'll kill me, do you? [*THREE stops struggling now and stares at EIGHT, and all the JURORS watch in silence, as:*]

CURTAIN