

# The Walrus and the Carpenter

Lewis Carroll

The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might:  
He did his very best to make  
The billows<sup>1</sup> smooth and bright—  
5 And this was odd, because it was  
The middle of the night. **A**

The moon was shining sulkily,<sup>2</sup>  
Because she thought the sun  
Had got no business to be there  
10 After the day was done—  
“It’s very rude of him,” she said,  
“To come and spoil the fun!”

The sea was wet as wet could be,  
The sands were dry as dry.  
15 You could not see a cloud because  
No cloud was in the sky:  
No birds were flying overhead—  
There were no birds to fly. **B**

## ANALYZE VISUALS

How would you describe the **setting** in this illustration?

### **A** VISUALIZE

Reread lines 1–6. What words help you to visualize the scene?

### **B** NARRATIVE POETRY

What have you learned so far about the time, place, and weather conditions of the **setting**? Record details in your graphic organizer.

1. **billows**: large waves.

2. **sulkily**: in a gloomy, pouting way.



The Walrus and the Carpenter  
20        Were walking close at hand:  
They wept like anything to see  
      Such quantities of sand:  
“If this were only cleared away,”  
      They said, “it *would* be grand!” **C**

25    “If seven maids with seven mops  
      Swept it for half a year,  
Do you suppose,” the Walrus said,  
      “*That they could get it clear?*”  
“I doubt it,” said the Carpenter,  
30        And shed a bitter tear.

      “O Oysters, come and walk with us!”  
      The Walrus did beseech.<sup>3</sup>  
      “A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,  
      Along the briny<sup>4</sup> beach:  
35 We cannot do with more than four,  
      To give a hand to each.”

      The eldest Oyster looked at him,  
      But never a word he said:  
      The eldest Oyster winked his eye,  
40        And shook his heavy head—  
      Meaning to say he did not choose  
      To leave the oyster-bed.

      But four young Oysters hurried up,  
      All eager for the treat:  
45 Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,  
      Their shoes were clean and neat—  
      And this was odd, because, you know,  
      They hadn’t any feet.

**C NARRATIVE POETRY**

What **characters** have you met? Note them in your graphic organizer. Add new characters as they are introduced in the poem.



3. **beseech**: to beg anxiously.

4. **briny**: containing a fair amount of salt.



Four other Oysters followed them,  
50 And yet another four;  
And thick and fast they came at last,  
And more, and more, and more—  
All hopping through the frothy waves,  
And scrambling to the shore.

55 The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Walked on a mile or so,  
And then they rested on a rock  
Conveniently low:  
And all the little Oysters stood  
60 And waited in a row. **D**

“The time has come,” the Walrus said,  
“To talk of many things:  
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—  
Of cabbages—and kings—  
65 And why the sea is boiling hot—  
And whether pigs have wings.”

“But wait a bit,” the Oysters cried,  
“Before we have our chat;  
For some of us are out of breath,  
70 And all of us are fat!”  
“No hurry!” said the Carpenter.  
They thanked him much for that.

“A loaf of bread,” the Walrus said,  
“Is what we chiefly need:  
75 Pepper and vinegar besides  
Are very good indeed—  
Now, if you’re ready, Oysters dear,  
We can begin to feed.” **E**

**D VISUALIZE**

Reread lines 55–60. Tell what you see in your mind. Why might it be important that the rock is “conveniently low”?

**E NARRATIVE POETRY**

What’s happening at this point in the poem? Note the **plot events** in your graphic organizer.

“But not on us!” the Oysters cried,  
80 Turning a little blue.  
“After such kindness, that would be  
A dismal<sup>5</sup> thing to do!”  
“The night is fine,” the Walrus said.  
“Do you admire the view?” **F**

85 “It was so kind of you to come!  
And you are very nice!”  
The Carpenter said nothing but  
“Cut us another slice.  
I wish you were not quite so deaf—  
90 I’ve had to ask you twice!”

“It seems a shame,” the Walrus said,  
“To play them such a trick.  
After we’ve brought them out so far,  
And made them trot so quick!”  
95 The Carpenter said nothing but  
“The butter’s spread too thick!”

“I weep for you,” the Walrus said:  
“I deeply sympathize.”  
With sobs and tears he sorted out  
100 Those of the largest size,  
Holding his pocket-handkerchief  
Before his streaming eyes. **G**

“O Oysters,” said the Carpenter,  
“You’ve had a pleasant run!”  
105 Shall we be trotting home again?”  
But answer came there none—  
And this was scarcely odd, because  
They’d eaten every one.

**F NARRATIVE POETRY**

The **climax** of a plot is the turning point. What do the Oysters finally figure out in lines 79–80?

**G VISUALIZE**

Picture in your mind the Walrus crying while sorting the Oysters. What details in the poem help you to do so?



5. **dismal**: particularly bad; dreadful.