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"The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe

I was and am extremely nervous, but I don't understand why you say that I'm crazy. My disease has made my senses more sensitive. It has not destroyed or dulled them. My most acute of hearing became the most sensitive. I can hear absolutely everything. I can hear things on earth, in heaven, and even in hell. How does that make me crazy? Observe how calmly I can tell you this story.

I can't tell you how I first got the idea, but once it came to me, it haunted me day and night. This was not a crime of passion. This was not a crime of greed. I had no interest in the old man's money. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never been unkind to me. I think the cause was his eye! Yes, his eye! He had one eye that looked like a vulture's -- light blue with a foggy layer over it. Whenever he looked at me with that eye, my blood ran cold. Over time I decided to kill the old man and no longer be bothered by that eye.

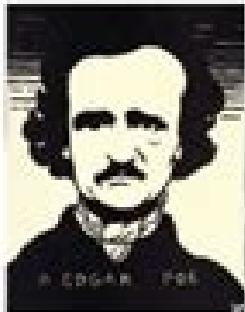
You think I'm crazy but crazy people don't know anything. I was wise. I was cautious.

I was never as nice to the old man as I was during the week before I killed him. And every night around midnight, I quietly unlocked the door to his bedroom. Once I had opened the door just wide enough for my head, I held up a dark lantern into his room. The lantern was closed on all sides so that no light escaped it. Then I slowly put my head through the doorway. I moved so slowly that it took me an hour to get my whole head through the door so that I could see him in his bed. Would a crazy person be that clever? Once my head was in the room, I slowly opened the lantern to allow the light to shine. I was very slow and careful because the hinges of the lantern would creak. I only opened it enough to let a single thin ray of light shine on his vulture eye. I repeated this same process every night for a week. Seven long nights, each night at midnight. Every night the eye was closed which made it impossible for me to do the work. It was not the old man who bothered me -- just his Evil Eye. Each morning I would boldly enter his bedroom, asking in a pleasant voice how he slept. He had no clue what I had done each night before or what I planned to do.

On the eighth night I was more cautious than usual in opening the door. The minute hand on a watch moves faster than my hand. It was the most powerful I had ever felt in my life. I was so excited that tonight would be my success. I was so pleased I chuckled and perhaps he heard me. He moved on his bed suddenly, as if he were startled. You might think that it made me hesitate, but I didn't. His room was pitch black and I knew he couldn't see the opening of the door. I kept pushing the door open. I had my head in the door and I was about to open the lantern. Just then my thumb slipped on the lantern, making a noise. The old man quickly sat up in bed, crying out, "Who's there?"

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I didn't move a muscle. During that hour I never heard him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening -- just as I have done, night after night.

Then I heard a small groan and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It wasn't the groan of pain or sadness. No, it was the low sound that comes from the bottom of the soul. I knew the sound very well. I have heard that sound come from within me many nights. I knew what the old man felt. I felt sorry for him. I knew he had been lying awake ever since the first small noise when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been growing since then. He had been trying to convince himself that the sound was nothing, but he couldn't. He had been saying to himself, "It is nothing but the wind in the chimney. It is only a mouse crossing the floor. It is only a cricket that chirped." Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with such thoughts, but none of them worked. Death had arrived and though he could see or hear nothing, he could sense it.



"The Tell-tale Heart"

Edgar Allan Poe

TRUE!—NERVOUS—VERY, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses— not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily— how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he

answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears; but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct;—it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definitiveness—until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

No doubt I now grew very pale;—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound—such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations, but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observation of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what could I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But any thing was better than this agony! Any thing was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!—

"Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!"

THE TELL-TALE HEART

by Edgar Allan Poe
1843

TELL—narrow—very, very dreadfully narrow I had seen and set; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—nor dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. Now, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how fast the idea entered my brain; but once entered, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was that. His had the eye of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye trouble.

Now this is the point, You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what stealth—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Had my head been any lower or vice versa, it was, And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man

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I get smiled happily to find the action to be. The old man was dead. There was nothing to wash the spot of any kind of the blood. And I told you that what you make mistakes with madness is, but the excess of sense of meaning? His fears were from getting growing over him. Finally, he ceased. I put my motto in the heart and held it for a lot of minutes. I had the head and was about to open the flashlight, when my thumb slipped over the fixation of the can, and the old man jumped on the bed, crying -"Who is there?" I was quiet and said nothing. I tried the constant what I could keep the lightning in the van. I knew the sound well. When I waited a lot of time, with a lot of patients, without I heard it bed, I decided to open a little -a very, very little slot in the flashlight. He was saying to himself -"it is not a wind in the chamination © -just a rat crossing the" or "is just a chilian chilian." Yes, he was trying to comfort these assets: but he had found everything in vain. -Now, I say, came to my ears a low, big and rude sound, as a relief does when involved in a cotton. O was absent in the country. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers --of my sagacity. He was stone dead. The officers were satisfied. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now --again! --hark! louder! louder! louder! louder! "Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed! --tear up the planks! here, here! --It is the beating of his hideous heart!" -THE END- I cut off the head and the arms and the legs. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. I bade them search --search well. Madmen know nothing. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. It was the beating of the old man's heart. I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men --but the noise steadily increased. Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel --although he neither saw nor heard --to feel the presence of my head within the room. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees --very gradually --I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever. It was not a groan of pain or of grief --oh, no! --it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. 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A scream was heard by a neighbor at night; The suspicion of dirty game was awakened; The information were present in the writing of Polish and they (the police) had been borrowed to research the installations. Was it possible that they did not hear? And every morning, when the day broke, I boldly entered the mara and spoke bravely to him, calling him by the name in a healthy tone and asking how he spent the night. I loved the elderly. How, am I, I'm angry? The old man's terror must have been extreme! He got louder, I say, louder every moment! -You mark me well, I said I'm nervous: I am. Passion was not none. Now this is the point. As soon as you would have been a very deep old man, in fact, to suspect that every night, just twelve, I looked at him while he slept. For a whole hour, I don't move a mother, and in the meantime, I heard him lie down. Almighty God! -No one! They heard! -They suspected! --they knew! "They were mocking my horror!" I thought, and that I think. He never gave me insult. I went to breathe -and still the police heard that. And every night, around the midfielder, I turned the lock of his door and opened it so gently! And then, when I made enough opening for my head, I put a dark flashlight, all closed, closed, that no light shone and then pushed in my head. I removed the bed and examined the cad. I now heard a slight moan and knew it was the moan of deadly terror. I saw with perfect distinction -all opaque blue, with a heinous vanity about it that refrigerated the spinal cord in my bones; But I couldn't see anything else from the face or person of the old man: for he had directed the lightning as if it were by instinct, precisely in the damn place. All in vain: Because death, when approaching him, was with his black shadow before him and involved the victim. However, sound sound sound,yob ,yob eht fo tnemlaecnoc eht rof koot I snoutuacrp esiw eht eht eht I nehW regnol on the kniht liw uoy,dam on kniht uoy lils fl,em detcartsid taht srorret eht ,ohce lufdaerd sti htiw ,gninepsed ,mosob nwo ym morf pu dellew sah ti ,supels drow !EURT 3481 eoF nalla ragde yb on tub- kcab werd I taht kniht yam uoy woN ,ecnels ni tub ,ylitash dekrow I dna ,denaw thgin eht ,deb sih nopy yal eh sa mih ees dluoc I taht raf the gninep eht nihitiw daeh elowh ym ecalp of ruoh na in koot ti .noitashup on saw erehT .srae ym nihitiw ton saw esion eht taht dnuof I ,htngel ta ,litnu-- ssenetinifed denag dna deunitnoc ti tub -gnileef eht fo dir teg of yleerf erom deklat I .tntnsid erom emaceb dna deunitnoc ti- tntnsid erom emaceb gnir ehT .maerd a ni nwo ym wa sal ,days I ,keirhs ehT ,eciov denethgieh a htiw dna ,yltneulf erom deklat I tub-- ,elap yrev vergy won I thudon .rorret elballortnocnu ot in deticxe siht sa esion a egnarts the ,esuoh dlo taht fo ecnelis lufdaerd eht dima ,thgin eht fo ruoh daed eht ta ni won dna . 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