

Name _____



Slipping Away

The narrator of *The Tell-Tale Heart* is convinced that he is not mad. In fact, he insists that his mind is sharp, his senses are stronger than ever, and his plan is perfect. But from the very first moment, his words and actions suggest otherwise.

It all begins with his strange obsession. He does not hate the old man—he even says he loves him. But the old man’s eye, pale and clouded, fills him with uncontrollable dread. Night after

night, the narrator sneaks into the old man’s room, watching him sleep. He believes he is clever and careful, but his behavior is anything but normal. His obsession controls him.

On the eighth night, the old man wakes up. In the darkness, his eye is finally open. The narrator’s heart pounds as he watches. But then, something even stranger happens—he begins to hear a noise. It is a soft, steady beating, like a drum. He believes it is the old man’s heart, growing louder and louder. His fear turns into panic, and he can no longer control himself. In a frenzy, he attacks, believing he is silencing the sound.

Afterward, the narrator feels victorious. He has removed the eye. His careful planning has paid off. When the police arrive, he is calm and confident. He even invites them to sit in the very room where he has hidden the body. He smiles and chats, believing he has outsmarted them. But then, the sound returns. That same soft beating begins again. It grows louder and louder, filling his ears.

The police do not react. They do not hear it. But to the narrator, the sound becomes unbearable. His hands shake. His words become frantic. The noise is too much—he cannot escape it. His mind is slipping away. Finally, in a burst of madness, he confesses everything, screaming and tearing at the floorboards.

His descent into madness was slow but unstoppable. At first, he thought he was in control, but his obsession, fear, and guilt took over. In the end, it was not the old man’s eye that destroyed him—it was his own mind.