

Name _____



Echoing Fear

The narrator of *The Tell-Tale Heart* believes he has committed the perfect crime. He has hidden all evidence, acted calmly in front of the police, and convinced himself that he is too clever to be caught. But something unexpected happens—he begins to hear a sound.

At first, it is quiet. A soft, steady thumping, almost like a drumbeat. He tells himself it is nothing, just his

imagination. But as time passes, the sound grows louder. Thump. Thump. Thump. He tries to ignore it, but it will not stop. Soon, it fills the room. It echoes in his mind.

The narrator believes the sound is the old man's heart, still beating beneath the floorboards where he has hidden the body. But how can that be? The old man is gone. The police officers, sitting and chatting, do not react. They do not hear it. Only the narrator hears the sound, and it is driving him mad.

The thumping grows unbearable. He feels dizzy, hot, and out of control. He looks at the officers, convinced they must hear it, too. Are they playing a cruel trick on him? Are they secretly laughing at him? The narrator cannot take it any longer. The sound will not stop! Finally, in a moment of panic, he screams and confesses everything, pulling up the floorboards to reveal his crime.

The heartbeat is not real—it is a symbol of his guilt. His own mind, filled with fear and paranoia, creates the noise. The more he tries to silence it, the louder it grows. In the end, his guilt becomes so overwhelming that he cannot escape it.

This is the true horror of *The Tell-Tale Heart*. It is not the crime itself that destroys the narrator, but his own mind. He believes he is in control, but his guilt and paranoia take over, leading him to confess. The beating heart is not just a sound—it is a reminder that he cannot escape the truth.