

Name _____



Shifting Reality

The narrator of *The Tell-Tale Heart* believes he is completely sane. He insists that his careful planning, sharp senses, and ability to remain calm prove his mind is clear. But as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that his version of reality is very different from what is actually happening.

His obsession begins with the old man's eye. He does not hate the old man himself, only his pale, cloudy eye. He believes it watches him, making him feel

exposed and powerless. Night after night, he sneaks into the old man's room, convinced that he is in control. In his mind, his slow, careful movements are signs of intelligence, not madness. But in reality, creeping into someone's room every night is not a sign of a healthy mind.

On the eighth night, the old man wakes up. In the darkness, the narrator sees the eye staring at him. At that moment, he believes he hears the old man's heart beating, growing louder and louder. Panic takes over. The sound becomes unbearable, and he finally acts. But was the heartbeat real? Or was it his imagination?

After hiding the body, the narrator feels triumphant. He is convinced he has outsmarted everyone. When the police arrive, he remains calm and friendly, even inviting them to sit in the very room where the old man lies hidden. He believes his confidence proves he is sane.

But then, he hears it again—that steady thumping. He is sure it is the heartbeat, growing louder. The police do not react. They continue talking and smiling, unaware of the noise that fills his mind. As the sound grows, he becomes more nervous. He starts talking faster, his words stumbling over each other.

Finally, unable to take it anymore, he confesses. He tears up the floorboards, revealing everything. The police never heard a thing.

The narrator thought he was in control, but his perception of reality was completely different from the truth. The heartbeat was never real—only a reflection of his guilt and paranoia. In the end, his mind tricked him into revealing the very thing he worked so hard to hide.