

Name _____



Fearful Mind

The narrator of *The Tell-Tale Heart* is convinced that he is not mad. He believes he is clever, careful, and in control. But from the very beginning, his paranoia controls his actions, pushing him deeper into fear and obsession.

His fear starts with the old man's eye. He does not hate the old man himself—only the pale blue eye that seems to watch him constantly. The more he thinks about it, the more it haunts him. His mind

twists reality, making him believe that as long as the eye exists, he will never be free. This obsession leads him to plan the old man's murder, convinced that it is the only way to rid himself of the eye's gaze.

For seven nights, he sneaks into the old man's room in complete darkness, watching him sleep. He moves slowly, carefully, taking an entire hour just to push his head inside the door. He believes his patience is proof of his sanity, but his actions suggest otherwise. His paranoia makes him think he is in control, when in reality, his fear is controlling him.

On the eighth night, his paranoia turns to panic. The old man wakes up, sensing something is wrong. The narrator sees the eye staring at him, and suddenly, he hears a low, steady thumping sound. He believes it is the old man's heart, growing louder and louder. The noise fills his mind, drowning out all logic. His fear overwhelms him, and he acts without thinking.

After committing the crime, he feels triumphant. He believes he has won. He hides the body, cleans up every trace, and even chats calmly with the police when they arrive. But then, his paranoia returns. He hears the sound again—thump, thump, thump. It grows louder, pounding in his ears. He becomes convinced that the police must hear it, too. Are they playing a trick on him? Are they watching him, waiting for him to break? His mind spins out of control.

Finally, unable to bear the sound any longer, he confesses. He rips up the floorboards, revealing everything. In the end, it is not the crime that brings his downfall—it is his own fear. His paranoia convinces him that he has been caught, when in reality, no one had suspected a thing.