

Name _____



Twisted Choices

In *The Tell-Tale Heart*, Edgar Allan Poe explores deep moral and ethical dilemmas. The story raises questions about guilt, responsibility, and the consequences of one's actions. The narrator believes he is justified in his decision to harm the old man, but is he truly in the right?

The narrator insists he is not mad. He believes that his ability to plan carefully and think through each step proves his sanity. However, his

reasoning is flawed. He does not hate the old man; he simply cannot stand his eye. He convinces himself that getting rid of the eye is a logical solution, but is it ever right to harm someone because of personal discomfort? This is the first ethical dilemma in the story.

Even after committing the crime, the narrator feels no guilt at first. He is proud of how cleverly he has hidden the body. But soon, his own conscience begins to betray him. He starts to hear a noise—a soft, steady thumping. He becomes convinced that it is the old man's heart, still beating beneath the floor. The sound grows louder and louder, filling his mind with unbearable panic. But is the sound real, or is it his own guilt taking over?

This leads to another moral question: Can a person truly escape the consequences of their actions? At first, the narrator believes he has succeeded. He speaks with the police confidently, thinking he has outsmarted them. But deep inside, he knows the truth. His own sense of guilt becomes too powerful to ignore. In the end, he confesses, not because he is caught, but because he cannot live with what he has done.

Poe's story suggests that people cannot escape their own conscience. No matter how well someone tries to hide their mistakes, guilt has a way of revealing the truth. *The Tell-Tale Heart* challenges readers to consider important ethical questions: Is it ever right to harm another person? Can guilt be stronger than punishment? And in the end, do we punish ourselves more than anyone else ever could?