

THE TELL-TALE HEART

A Dramatic Reading

by
Edgar Allen Poe



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

**www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com**

CAUTION: Wetmore Declamation Bureau material is protected by United States copyright law and conventions. None of our material may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means-electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other-without prior permission. No trademark, copyright or other notice may be removed or changed. All rights reserved. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

THE TELL-TALE HEART
A Dramatic Reading

Edgar Allen Poe

True!--nervous--very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say I am mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily--how calmly--I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object, there was none. Passion, there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture--a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees--very gradually--I make up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded, with what caution, with what foresight, with what dissimulation, I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it--oh, so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly--very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in the bed, crying out: "Who's there?"

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief--Oh, no! It was the low, stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little--a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it--you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily,--until at length a single ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell upon the vulture eye.

It was open--wide, wide open--and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness--all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person, for I had directed the ray, as if by instinct, precisely upon the spot.

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---