

From the short story *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe

True! —nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I 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 made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever. (Poe and Kennedy, 2006, 21)

Poe, E.A. and Kennedy, J.G. (2006) *The portable Edgar Allan Poe*. New York: Penguin Books.

1. Why does the narrator claim to be mad?

- a) The narrator is experiencing extreme nervousness.
- b) The narrator hears things from heaven and hell.
- c) The narrator has a disease that has affected their senses.
- d) The narrator is haunted by an idea day and night.

2. What does the narrator find disturbing about the old man?

- a) His gold and wealth.
- b) His insults and wrongdoings.
- c) The vulture-like eye with a film over it.
- d) His calm and healthiness.

3. What did the narrator decide to do to the old man?

- a) Steal his gold.
- b) Seek revenge for past insults.
- c) Rid themselves of the old man's eye forever.
- d) Convince him to give up his wealth.

4. How does the narrator describe their senses?

- a) Destroyed and dulled.

- b) Sharpened and acute.
- c) Mad and unpredictable.
- d) Passionate and intense.

5. What is the narrator's intention in telling the story?

- a) To convince others of their sanity.
- b) To explain their love for the old man.
- c) To seek forgiveness for their actions.
- d) To describe the vulture-like eye in detail.

Answers:

- 1. The narrator has a disease that has affected their senses.
- 2. The vulture-like eye with a film over it.
- 3. Rid themselves of the old man's eye forever.
- 4. Sharpened and acute.
- 5. To convince others of their sanity.