

WORLD FAMOUS FICTIONS

普的短篇小說
TALES BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

伍光建選譯

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普 小 說

Tales by Edgar Allan Poe

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選 譯 者 伍 光 建

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(本書校對者 錢兆駭 劉紹勛)

復

傳 略

普(Edgar Allan Poe)是美國人以一八〇九年生於波士頓。他的父母都是跑碼頭的戲子，他的父母死後，無家可歸。一八一一年有一個當菸葉商的蘇格蘭人名約翰阿蘭(John Allan)收他爲義子，所以他又姓阿蘭普。這家人姑息他，他就變作一個不能受約束的孩子。一八一五年義父帶他到英國讀書；一八二六年他入維基尼阿(Virginia)大學，他的義父不以他的行爲爲然，他就出了大學。一八二九年他入美國陸軍；一八三〇年他入陸軍大學，明年出學。一八三三年他撰了一篇短篇小說，得了一百圓獎賞。一八三五年他當一個報館的副主筆。一八三六年他與他的表妹結婚。此後他都是在報館撰文。他是一個文學批評家，一個詩人，又是一個小說家。他的批評嚴厲透闢，只有他的文學批評是創生於美國的。他的詩歌雖瑕瑜互見，卻有極雅馴的著作，非任何其他美國詩人所能及。他又是短篇小說的創造人。他的短篇小說，據他自己說（約在一八四四年）有七十二篇，今選譯三篇。他的小說最能令讀者恐怖，大約是他的心境使然。他伉儷最篤。他的夫人因爲唱歌炸了血管，他爲此悲痛欲絕。其後她的血管又炸過幾次。他的夫人越病他越愛她。他因爲一面盼望她能活，一面又恐怕她必死，使他更愁苦。他自己本來就是一個神經衰弱的人，因此就得了神經病——得了瘋病。他說他不

瘋的時候更愁苦。他於是飲酒吃鴉片，藉此解愁。他說他的仇人說他是飲酒飲到變作一個瘋子，他們只該說他是因為瘋了才飲酒的。他的夫人死於一八四七年，他的身體變作更衰弱，一八四九年他自己也死了，其實他是窮愁到凍餓而死的，野蠻的美國人卻諱莫如深，不肯說實話，方且忽略他，故意的誤會他，幸而英國人法國人救護他的名譽，到了今日，公論推他是美國的最偉大的富於天才的文學家。民國二十二年癸酉霜降日伍光建記。

TALES BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE TELL-TALE HEART

True!—nervous¹—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.² 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 haunted³ me day and night. Object there was none. Passion⁴ 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! He had the eye 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.

Now this is the point. 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 dissimulation⁵ I went to

¹nervous 神經嬌嫩; 神經有病; 易受激動; 身體或文章雄健.
²acute 銳利; 尖利. ³haunted 纏住不走. ⁴Passion 憤怒. ⁵dissimulation 瞞騙.

普的短篇小說

會揭露祕密的心臟

我從前與現在誠然是神經嬌嫩——極其可怕的脆薄；但是你爲什麼要說我是個瘋子？這樣的神經病磨礪我的感覺——既不是毀了我的感覺——亦不是使我的感覺變作遲鈍。在全數官覺裏頭，我的聽官尤爲銳利。天上與地下的聲音，我全聽見。我聽見地獄裏的許多聲音。你怎麼能夠說我是瘋了？你聽呀！你看我能夠怎樣清楚的（原文作健康——譯者註）——怎樣鎮靜的把全篇故事告訴你。

我不能說這個意思初時是怎樣會進我的腦海的；但是一經概念這個意思，這個意思就日夜都纏住我。我卻並無目的。我又並不懷忿怒。我愛這個老人。他始終並不曾對不起我。他始終不曾侮辱我。我不想他的金錢。我想是他的眼睛，是他的眼睛！他有一隻禿鷲的眼——有一隻暗藍眼，其上有一層膜。無論什麼時候，他的眼一看我，我的血就變涼了；所以逐漸——很逐漸的——我就打定主意，要這個老人的命，從此永遠看不見那隻眼。

要點就在此。你卻誤以爲我是瘋了。瘋子不曉得什麼東西。但是從前你該看看我。你該看我進行得多麼聰明——多麼小心——多麼有先見——用什麼瞞騙手段！在

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. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha!—would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed¹ me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty² tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that very night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night, had I *felt* the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph.³ To think that

¹ vexed 使人難受; 使人不安. ² hearty 親熱. ³ triumph 得勝; 得意.

我快要殺這個老頭子之前的一個禮拜，我同他最要好，是向來所未有過的。每天晚上，約在夜半的時候，我轉他的門門，開了門——輕輕的開門！等到我慢慢的開門，足容我的頭伸進去的時候，我放進一個黑燈，是四圍全遮嚴的，不容光線出來的，隨後我才伸頭進去。呀！你假使看見我，你會笑我多麼巧妙的伸進頭去！我動我的頭動得慢——動得很慢很慢的，使我不必驚動老頭子睡覺。我要費一點鐘工夫，才把我的全個頭伸入門縫，只伸到我能看見他睡在他的牀上為止。哈！——一個瘋子會如我這樣明智的麼？等到我的頭很伸入屋裏的時候，我就很小心的打開我的燈，很小心很小心的打開（因為釘鉸響）——我只打開一點點，只許單獨一條薄光線落在那隻禿鷺眼上。我照了七個長夜——每晚都是大約在夜半——但是我看見那隻眼總是閉的；所以不能動手；使我難受的，並不是這個老人，不過是他的惡眼。每天早上當天破曉的時候，我大膽走入他的臥室，大膽同他說話，用親熱腔調喊他的名，還問候他昨晚可睡得好。假使他疑我每天晚上約在夜半，當他睡着的時候我進來看他，你就可以曉得他當然是一個城府極深的老人。

到了第八天晚上，我比向來更小心開門。我的手動得很慢，一個表的指分針比我的手動得更快。在今天晚上之前，我一向未曾覺得我自己的能力——我自己的敏捷的程度。我幾乎按不住我的得意。只要想到我在那裏，逐漸

there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled¹ at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled.² Now you may think that I drew back—but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers), and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

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 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. He was still sitting up in the bed listening;—just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or 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. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled³ up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had

¹ chuckled 哂; 掩嘴笑; 偷笑. ² startled 受驚. ³ welled up 冒出; 噴出.

逐漸的開門，他還夢想不到我的祕密動作，或思想；我想到這裏幾乎要掩嘴笑；還許他聽見我；因為他好像受了驚，忽然在牀上動。我說到這裏，你也許以為我往後退——我卻並不退後。（他因為怕有盜賊，把窗戶緊緊的關閉），所以他的屋裏是墨漆黑的，所以我曉得他不能看見門開，我不停的慢慢慢慢的推門。

我已經伸進頭去，正在要打開我的燈，不料我的大拇指在錫製的釘鉸閃了一下，老頭子在牀上跳起來，喊道——『誰在那裏？』

我不動不嚮。足有一整點鐘我不會動我的筋絡，當下我並不曾聽見他躺下。他還坐在牀上留心細聽；——同我一樣，一夜復一夜的，細聽牆上的無聲響的聲音。

過了一會我聽見微微的呻吟聲，我曉得是精食恐怖的呻吟。這不是痛苦的或憂愁的呻吟——呀，不是的！——這是低微的被壓下去的聲音，當人被驚怖所塞滿時，從靈魂的深處發出來的。我很曉得這樣的聲音。當全個世界都睡着了的時候，有幾個晚上，正在夜的半的時候，這樣的聲音從我自己的心裏冒出來，連同其可怕的迴響，使其令我迷惑的恐怖變作很深。我說我深曉得這種聲音。我雖然曉得這個老頭子的感覺，我雖然可憐他，我的心裏卻在那裏偷笑。我曉得他自從聽見初次的微響以來，他就在牀上躺着不能睡。他從此以後就逐漸怕我。他曾嘗試思維這都是無理由的害怕，卻做不到。他曾對自己說道，——

been saying to himself—"It is nothing but the wind in the chimney—it is only a mouse crossing the floor," or "it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp." Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. *All in vain*, because Death, in approaching him had stalked¹ with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to *feel* the presence of my head within the room.

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 simple dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell full 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 damned spot.

And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over acuteness of the senses?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew *that* sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how

¹ Stalked 偷偷的走。

『這非別的，不過是牆爐的風聲，——不過是一隻小老鼠在地板上走過，不然，不過是一隻蟋蟀，只叫了一聲。』是呀，他正在那裏嘗試用這幾樣的猜度以自慰：但是他見得全屬無用。全屬無用；因為當「死」走近他的時候，「死」的黑影偷偷的先走，籠罩住這個犧牲。原是他所不覺得的影子的淒慘潛力使他覺得（雖然他的眼不會見，他的耳不會聞）我的頭在屋裏。

等到我等了許久，很耐煩的等，並不聽見他躺下，我就決意打開我的燈，露一條很小很小的縫。我就是這樣打開——你不能想像我是怎樣偷偷的打開——等到後來，有單簡的一線淡光，如同蛛絲一般，從燈縫射出來，落在那隻禿鷲眼上。

那隻禿鷲眼是睜開的——睜得很大——我看見這隻眼，我就變作狂怒。我看見那隻眼看得極清楚——是一片暗藍色，其上有一層可怕難看的膜，使我的骨髓都變冷了；但是我看不見老人的面或老人的身：因為我好像由於本能的，把燈光很準的，照在個那受天譴的地點。

我不是曾經告訴你，說你所誤以為瘋狂病，不過是感覺尖利麼？——我說現在我的兩耳聽見一種低而啞的快聲，好像是一個表裏在棉花裏頭的聲音。我也深曉得這種聲音。這是老人心臟跳動（亦作脈搏——譯者註）的聲音。我聽了使我更加狂怒如同鼓聲激動軍人奮勇一般。

但是我還不動手，站着不動。我幾乎不呼吸。我抓住燈，不動。我接連嘗試怎樣能夠手不顫，動的把燈光照在

steadily¹ I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo² of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror *must* have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment!—do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night,³ amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once—once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled⁴ sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more. . . .

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock—still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart,—for what had I *now* to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity,⁵ as officers of the police. A

¹steadily 手定不顫動。 ²tattoo 撲通撲通的聲響。 ³dead hour of the night 夜深。 ⁴muffled 有東西遮蔽住。 ⁵suavity 客氣。

眼上。當下心臟的可怕的跳動增加。時時刻刻變作更快更響。那個老人的恐怖必定到了極端！我說，心臟跳動的聲音越變越響！——你注意我這句話麼？我曾告訴你我的神經嬌嫩。我其實是這樣。這時候正是夜深，我正在沉埋於這所舊房子的可怕的寂靜中，這樣怪異的聲音，激動我變作不能節制的恐怖。但是再有幾分鐘，我還不動手，還站着不動。但是脈搏變作更響，越變越響！我想那個心臟必定炸裂。到了這個時候，一種新的着急抓住我——我恐怕隣居會聽見這樣聲音！老人的死期到了！我大喊一聲，打開我的燈，跳入屋裏。他喊了一次——只喊了一次。我立刻拖他到地板上，拉那張重的牀壓住他。隨後我看見這件事體已經做到這個地步，我就很高興的微笑。但是有好幾分鐘，那個心臟還在那裏帶着遮蔽住的聲音跳動。這卻並不使我不安；因為隔牆是聽不見的。後來跳動聲音停止了。老人是死了。我挪開那張牀，細驗屍體。他是的確死了。我把手放在心臟上，放在那裏好幾分鐘。心臟並不跳動了。他是實實在在的死了。他的眼不會再使我見了害怕。

（他先把屍首斬作幾塊就藏在地板下，藏得很巧妙的，毫無痕跡——譯者註）

等到我把這許多事體辦完之後，是四點鐘——還是同夜半那樣黑。正打四點鐘的時候，有人敲街門。我心裏很安然的，走下去開門，——因為我現在還有什麼可怕的？有三個人走進來，十分客氣的，自稱為警員。他們說有

shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of foul play¹ had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled,—for *what* had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search—search *well*. I lead them, at length, to *his* chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them *here* to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My *manner* had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct:—it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definiteness—until, at length, I found that the noise was *not* within my ears.

No doubt I now grew *very* pale,—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? It was a *low, dull, quick, sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton*. I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard

¹foul play 犯法的事; 害人的事.

一個隣居晚上聽見一聲叫喊；疑心出了犯法的事；告到警察局，他們奉派來搜查這所房子。

我微笑，——因為我有什麼可怕的？我請他們進來。我說，那一聲叫喊，是我自己在夢中叫喊。我說老頭子下鄉去了，不在家。我領我的客人們到處看過。我請他們搜——請他們好好的搜。後來我領他們到他的臥室。我把他的金銀財寶給他們看，都放得安安穩穩，無人動過。我深信他們不會曉得，我就很熱心的從他處搬幾把椅子進來，請他們就在這個屋子裏休息，當下我自己曉得我完全得勝，我就忘其所以，放膽把我自己的椅子放在收藏屍身的地點上。

警員們滿意。我的態度，使他們深信。我是異常的放心。他們坐下，當我很高興的答復時，他們閒談尋常的事。但是不久我覺得我自己逐漸變作臉無血色，想他們走。我覺得頭痛，我幻想我耳鳴：他們還坐在那裏，還在那裏閒談。耳鳴變作更清楚：——兩耳接連的鳴，變作更清楚：我更自由的談話，意在驅除這樣的感覺：但是兩耳不停的鳴，越鳴越清楚——等到後來，我覺得這樣的響聲不是在我的耳朵裏。

我的臉現在變作很灰白，這是無疑的了；——但是我說話說得更流利，說話的聲音更高。但是我所聽見的響聲變作更響——這時候我能作什麼？我所聽見的是低而啞的很快的響聲——很像裹在棉花裏頭的一個表的聲音。（讀者須參觀前文——譯者註）我張開大口呼吸——但