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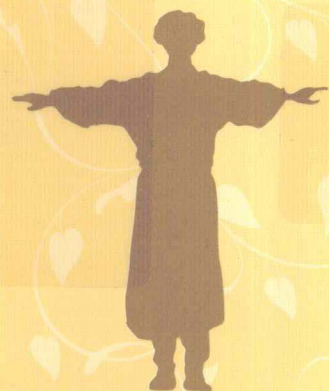


The Tell-Tale Heart

泄密的心

[美] 爱伦·坡 著

王勋 纪飞 等 编译



清华大学出版社



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北 京

内 容 简 介

本书精选了美国著名作家爱伦·坡的短篇小说 14 篇,其中包括《泄密的心》《绝境》《欺骗是一门精准的科学》《陷阱和钟摆》和《厄舍古屋崩溃记》等世界短篇小说文学宝库中的经典名篇。这些短篇小说被翻译成各种文字,影响了一代又一代世界各地的读者,并且被改编成戏剧、电影、电视剧和卡通等。无论作为语言学习的课本,还是作为文学读本,这些经典名篇对当代中国的读者都将产生积极的影响。为了使读者能够了解英文故事概况,进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平,在每篇的开始部分增加了中文导读。同时,为了读者更好地理解故事内容,书中加入了大量插图。

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埃德加·爱伦·坡（Edgar Allan Poe，1809—1849），19 世纪美国著名作家、文学评论家、短篇小说先驱，被誉为世界上侦探小说和科幻小说的鼻祖。

1809 年 1 月 19 日，爱伦·坡出生在美国马萨诸塞州首府波士顿，在他年幼的时候，父亲离家出走，母亲病故，之后被商人约翰·爱伦收养。爱伦·坡的一生非常坎坷，他在养父母那里享受过家庭的温暖，但最后被养父逐出家门；少年时代他接受过良好的教育，但由于各种原因却被弗吉尼亚大学退学；虽然是个天才的作家，但以写作为生的他一生却贫困潦倒。1849 年 10 月 7 日，当他在巴尔的摩为自己的新杂志工作期间，突然昏迷不醒，被送往医院后不久便离开了人世。

在他短暂的一生中，爱伦·坡共写了 70 多篇短篇小说，其中代表作有《莫格街凶杀案》《黑猫》《泄密的心》《欺骗是一门精准的科学》《凹凸山的故事》《眼镜》《红死病的化妆舞会》和《厄舍古屋崩溃记》等。他的小说风格怪异离奇，充满恐怖气氛。他的短篇小说对现代西方文学和电影的发展都产生了重大影响，英国作家柯南的侦探小说《福尔摩斯探案集》，法国作家凡尔纳的科幻小说，以及今天广为流传的种种推理、罪案小说，都深受其影响。除短篇



小说外，文学评论在他的创作中也占有很重要的地位，同时代的作家詹姆斯·罗塞尔·洛威尔把爱伦·坡誉为“最有见识、最富哲理的大无畏评论家”，当代文学评论家埃德蒙·威尔逊也称“爱伦·坡的文学评论确实是美国文坛上空前的杰作”。他一向主张“为艺术而艺术”，他的艺术主张几乎贯穿于他的所有作品中，包括诗歌、短篇小说和论文。在这些作品中，他声称“一切艺术的目的是娱乐，不是真理”。他认为：“在诗歌中只有创造美——超凡绝尘的美才是引起乐趣的正当途径。音乐是诗歌不可缺少的成分，对诗人力求表现超凡绝尘的美尤其重要。而在小说创作方面，艺术家就不妨力图制造惊险、恐怖和强烈情感的效果。而且每篇作品都应该收到一种效果。”他的独创性论文如《写作的哲学》，《诗歌原理》，评论霍桑《古老的故事》的论文，评论朗费罗、柯勒律治、华兹华斯、丁尼生等人的诗歌的论文以及评论狄更斯《老古玩店》的论文等作品都显示了他的精辟见解，至今仍被视为文艺批评的典范之作。

爱伦·坡对美国文学的贡献，可以通过著名作家、评论家萧伯纳对他的评论得到印证，萧伯纳认为：“美国出了两个伟大的作家——爱伦·坡和马克·吐温。”爱伦·坡对世界各国的作家影响巨大，他在美国文学史上、在整个英语国家文学史上，乃至在世界文学史上的地位，都是不容忽视的。

爱伦·坡的作品，特别是短篇小说，在全世界产生了巨大的影响，始终拥有大量的读者。本书精选了他的14篇短篇小说，采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。在中文导读中，我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓，也尽可能保留原作的故事主线，希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文故事之前，可以先阅读中文导读，这样有利于了解故事背景，从而加快阅读速度。同时，为了让读者更好地理解故事内容，书中加入了大量插图。我们相信，

该经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者，特别是青少年读者的人文修养是非常有帮助的。

本书主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、赵雪、熊金玉、李丽秀、熊红华、王婷婷、孟宪行、胡国平、李晓红、贡东兴、陈楠、邵舒丽、冯洁、王业伟、徐鑫、王晓旭、周丽萍、熊建国、徐平国、肖洁、王小红等。限于我们的科学、人文素养和英语水平，书中难免会有不当之处，衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



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泄密的心

The Tell-Tale Heart

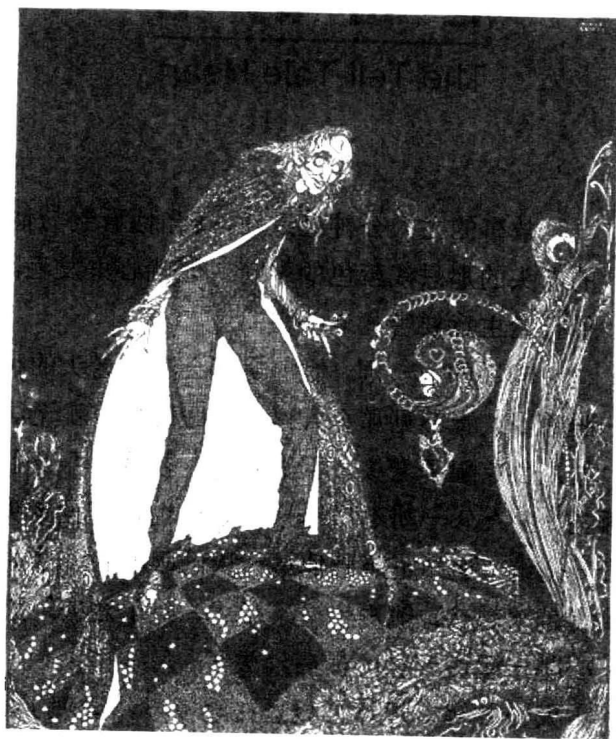


故事的主人公神经过敏，每当他看到与他无冤无仇的老头的那只浅蓝色的眼睛，他就心里发毛。渐渐地，他打定主意要害死老头。

动手的前一周，他每晚都会潜入老头的卧室。老头睡着了，看不见那令人讨厌的眼睛，他就无法下手。第八天晚上，主人公惊醒了老头。屋里很黑，老头看不见主人公，他吓得不敢睡觉。主人公一动不动地站了好久也没听见老头躺下，便把灯罩挑开一道缝，那光正照着他最讨厌的眼睛。同时主人公听见老头的心跳得越来越响，他再也受不了了，扑了过去，把床推翻压住了老头。心跳声慢慢变弱，最后消失了。

而后，主人公肢解了尸体，藏匿在地板下，清理了所有痕迹。

凌晨四点，警察就上门了，说听到了叫声，要求搜查。主人公洋洋得意地搬了把椅子坐在了藏尸体的地板上方，神态自若地和警官聊着天。这时，他听到一阵有节奏的咚咚声，而且越来越响。主人公为了掩饰这声音，不断提高嗓门说话。后来咚咚声大得他只得歇斯底里地咆哮，可还是无法盖过那声音。警察对响声似乎没有察觉。最后，他彻底崩溃了，他对警察吼道：“不要再装蒜了，老



泄密的心



头的心就在这地板下跳呢！”

*T*RUE! — 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! 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 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, 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 vexed 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 hearty tone, and inquiring how he has passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every 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. 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 fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. 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 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. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled 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 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 stalked 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 sense? — 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 steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo 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, 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 neighbour! 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 muffled 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.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye — not even his — could have detected any thing wrong. There was nothing to wash out — no stain of any kind — no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all — ha! ha!

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, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbour during the night; suspicion of foul play 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 led 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 it not. I talked more quickly — more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the

floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men — but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what could I do? I foamed — I raved — I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder — louder — louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! — no, no! They heard! — they suspected! — they knew! — they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now — again! — hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!

“Villains!” I shrieked, “dissemble no more! I admit the deed! — tear up the planks! here, here! — It is the beating of his hideous heart!”