

精神世界的探秘者

爱伦·坡短篇小说选

The Tell-Tale Heart

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 for ever.

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, 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

泄密的心

对了！神经质，我一直都患有严重的神经质；但是你们为什么要说我疯了呢？我的病并没有摧毁我的感觉，没有使它变得迟钝，反而使它更加敏锐。尤其是听力异常的敏锐。我听得到天上和地下的所有声音。我听到地狱里的许多事情。试想，我怎么会是疯子呢？听吧！我来给你们把事情的来龙去脉讲一讲，看我讲得多么有条有理，心平气和。

不知道这个念头是什么时候钻进我的脑子里的；可是一旦形成，它就日日夜夜地缠着我。说起来没有任何目的，也没有任何冲动的情感。我喜欢那个老头。他从来没有亏待过我，从来没有侮辱过我。我也不贪图他的财富。我想是他的眼睛！对，就是这个！他有一只眼睛很像兀鹰的眼——一只浅蓝色的，上面蒙着一层薄翳的眼睛。每当这目光一落到我身上，我浑身的血液就变得冰凉；因此我渐渐地、很慢很慢地下定了决心，要干掉那个老头，从而永远摆脱那只眼睛。

要害就在这里。你们以为我疯了。疯子什么都不知道。可是你们没看到我是怎么做的。你们没看到我干得多么漂亮！那样的小心谨慎、深谋远虑，那样巧妙的掩饰！在下手的前一个星期中，我对老头比什么时候都好。每晚午夜时分，我悄悄拨动他的门闩，推开门——哦，动作轻极了！然后，当门缝打开到我的头可以伸进去的时候，我先把一只黑灯笼塞进去，灯笼上下封得严严实实，没有一丝光线漏出，然后我把脑袋伸了进去。哦，你要是看到我当时的机灵样，一定会哈哈大笑的！我的动作很慢，慢极了，生怕把老头从睡梦中惊醒。我用了一个钟头的时间才把整个脑袋伸进门缝，使我能看到他躺在床上。哈！——一个疯子会这样聪明吗？然后，当我的头完全伸进屋里之后，我小心地打开灯笼——哦，那么小心——小心（因为铰链

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 had 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 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. 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

会吱呀作响)。只打开那么一点儿，让一丝细细的光线落在那只兀鹰般的眼睛上。就这样我一连去了 7 个晚上，每晚都在午夜时分。可是那只眼睛总是闭着的；这样我就无法干那桩事。因为惹恼我的并不是那个老头，而是他邪恶的眼睛。每天早晨天一亮，我就大胆地走进他的房间，勇敢地和他攀谈，亲热地唤着他的名字，问他晚上睡得可好。所以你瞧，老头要能想到我在每天夜里午夜时分趁他睡着的时候窥视他的话，那他可真是老谋深算了。

第 8 个晚上我开门的时候特别小心。手表的分针都比我的手动得快些。那晚我第一次感觉到了自己的力量有多大，感觉到自己是多么聪明。我几乎无法控制自己的得意。想想吧，我在那儿一点点地推门，而他做梦都想不到我秘密的行动和思想。想到这里我不禁窃笑了起来；床上的他可能听到了我的声音，突然动了一下，像是受了惊。你可能以为我会退缩——可我没有。他的房间漆黑一片，伸手不见五指（百叶窗紧紧地关着，因为怕有强盗），我知道他不会看见门开了，所以我继续稳稳地、稳稳地推动房门。

我把头伸进来了，正要打开灯笼时，我的手指不小心碰动了洋铁栓，老头从床上腾地坐了起来，叫道——“谁在那儿？”

我不吱声，一动不动地站着。整整一个小时我一块肌肉都没动一下，同时也没有听到他躺下。他仍旧坐在床上听着；就像我自己这样，整夜整夜地，听着墙中死神守望者的声音。

不多久我听到了一声轻微的呻吟，我知道这是人在极度恐惧下发出的呻吟。它不是疼痛或悲哀的呻吟。哦，不是的！它是在不堪恐惧的重压时，从灵魂深处发出的低沉而压抑的声音。我很熟悉这种声音。许多夜晚，午夜时分，全世界都在熟睡的时候，它也会从我自己的胸中涌出，带着可怕的回音，加深了那令我不安的恐惧。我说我很了解。我了解老头的感受，并同情他，尽管我在心里偷偷暗笑。我知道自从听到第一声微响，他在床上翻了个身以后，他就一直没有再睡着。他的恐惧在不断地增强。他试图想象它们是毫无根据的，可是无法做到。他对自己说：“那只是烟囱里的风，那只是一只耗子跑过去了”，或“只不过是一只蟋蟀叫了一声”。是的，他试图用这些假设来

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 single dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and 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 now 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 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 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 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

安慰自己；可是都没有用，都没用；因为死神在悄悄走近他时，已经把自己的影子投在了他的身上，把他整个笼罩了。正是这无形的影子的悲惨影响使他感到了——尽管他既没有看到也没有听到——感到了房间中我的脑袋的存在。

我非常耐心地等了很长时间，还没有听到他躺下，于是我决定把灯笼打开一条缝，一丝极小极小的缝。我便这么做了，你想象不出我是多么小心翼翼，小心翼翼，终于，缝隙中射出一线微光，细若蛛丝，正好落在那只兀鹰般的眼睛上。

那眼睛睁着，大大地睁着，我凝视着它，不禁火冒三丈。我对它看得一清二楚，灰暗的蓝眼珠，上面还蒙着一层可恶的阴翳，它使我骨髓发凉；可是我看不到老头脸上或身体的其他任何部分，我好像是本能地把光线对准了那个该死的部位。

我不是说过被你们当做疯子的人只是感觉过于敏锐吗？现在，啊，我听到了一种低低的、沉闷而急促的声音，像是一只裹在棉花里的表在响。我对这声音也很熟悉。这是那老头的心跳。它加剧着我的愤怒，就像战鼓激发士兵的勇气一样。即使是这样我仍然克制住了自己，静悄悄地站着，几乎连气都不出。我一动不动地举着灯笼，看自己能使光线在那只眼睛上保持得多稳。与此同时，那可怕的咚咚的心跳声在加剧，它每时每刻越来越快，越来越响。老头一定恐惧到了极点！它越来越响，随着时间的推移，一刻响过一刻！你听仔细了吗？我告诉过你我有些神经质，我确实是这样。半夜三更，在那座静得可怕的老房子里，这样一种奇怪的声音使我产生了无法控制的恐惧。然而，我克制着自己又呆了几分钟没有动。可是那心跳越来越响，越来越响！我觉得那颗心要爆炸了。这时一种新的焦虑攫住了我，这声音会被邻居听到的！老头的死期到了！我一声大叫，扯开灯笼，跳进屋内。他尖叫了一声，只一声。转眼我已把他拖到地上，拖过沉重的被褥压在他身上。然后我开心地微笑起来，这桩事情干完了。可是，那颗心继续沉闷地跳动了许多分钟。不过我并不为此而烦恼，隔着墙，人们是不会听到的。最后它终于停止了。老头死了。我搬开被子对尸体进行检查。没错，他已经死得跟石头一样了。我把手在他的心口上

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 neighbor 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 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 definitiveness—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

放了好久。没有搏动，他死得和石头一样了。他的眼睛再也不会使我心烦了。

如果你认为我疯了，那么等我讲述了我藏匿尸体时的谨慎周全之后，你就不会再这么想了。黑夜在渐渐过去，我急促而无声无息地干着活。首先我把尸体肢解了，把脑袋、胳膊和腿切了下来。

接着我抽出了三块地板，把尸体全部塞入地板中间，然后把地板重新铺好，铺得那样聪明，那样巧妙，任凭谁的眼睛——就连他的眼睛——也看不出任何破绽。没有什么需要冲洗，没有任何污迹，半点血迹也没有。我非常机警，全部都接在一只盆里了——哈！哈！

当我干完时，约莫是 4 点钟的光景，天仍然黑得像半夜一样。正在钟打 4 点的时候，大门上响起了敲门声。我怀着一颗轻松的心去开门，现在我有什么可怕的呢？进来了三个男人，十分和蔼地自我介绍说他们是警官。一个邻居在夜里听到了一声尖叫，因疑心有不轨行为，向警察局报了案，他们（这三个警官）奉命对屋子进行搜查。

我笑了，我有什么可怕的？我欢迎三位先生的来访。我说那声尖叫是我自己在睡梦中发出的。我提到那老头去乡下了。我领着客人视察了整幢房子。我请他们仔细地搜查。最后我把他们带到了他的房间。我让他们看他的财宝，样样安好，纹丝未动。我仗着自信头脑一热，干脆搬来了几把椅子，让他们就在这里歇一歇脚。我得意忘形，把自己的椅子正好搁在了安放死者尸体的那个地方。

警官很满意。我的态度打消了他们的疑心。我泰然自若。他们坐在那儿，我愉快地回答他们的问题，于是他们随便地闲聊起来。可是，没过多久，我感到自己脸色开始发白，希望他们快走。我的头疼了起来，耳朵里有个声音在响；可他们还坐在那里聊着。耳朵里的声音清晰起来了；它继续响着，越来越清晰；我更起劲地说话，试图摆脱这种感觉；可是它仍然在响，而且更清晰了，直到最后，我发现那声音不是在我的耳朵里。

我的脸色现在一定非常苍白；可是我更流利地说话，并且提高了嗓门。然而那声音更响了，我能怎么办呢？那是一种低低的、沉闷而

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 observation 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 any thing was better than this agony! any thing 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!”

急促的声音，很像一只裹在棉花里的表发出的声音。我喘息着，然而警官们没听到它。我更快地说话，我激烈地说话；可那声音在不断地增强。我站起来，打着激烈的手势，提高了调门为一些小事而争论，可那声音在不断地增强。他们为什么还不走？我迈着沉重的步子在地板上走来走去，仿佛被他们的话所激怒，可那声音在不断地增强。哦，上帝啊！我能怎么办呢？我口吐白沫，我胡言乱语，我发誓诅咒！我挥舞着我坐的那把椅子，把它在地板上碾动，可是那声音高过了这一切，而且不断地增强着。它越来越响，越来越响，越来越响！那几个人仍然愉快地聊着，而且微笑着。他们会不会没有听见？万能的上帝！——不，不可能！他们听到了！——他们怀疑了！——他们知道了！——他们在讥笑着我的恐惧！——我这样想，现在也还这样想。可是什么都比这种痛苦要强！什么都比这种嘲笑要好受些！我再也受不了这种虚伪的微笑了！我感到必须要大声尖叫，或者死掉！——来了——又来了！——听啊！越来越响！越来越响！越来越响！越来越响！——

“坏家伙们！”我尖叫道，“别装了！我招认！——撬开地板！——这儿，就是这儿！——是他那颗该死的心在跳！”

The Fall of the House of Usher

Son coeur est un luth suspendu;
Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne.

—*De Béranger*

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium—the bitter lapse into everyday life—the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there *are* combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient

厄歇尔府的倒塌

你的心是敏感的弦琴；
轻轻一触便发出幽鸣。

——德·贝朗热

在那年秋季的一天，整个白天愁云惨雾，死气沉沉，听不见一点声音，黑压压的乌云低悬在空中。我独自骑着马，穿过一片特别阴郁肃杀的乡村，最后当黄昏渐至，夜幕四合的时候，终于看见了那座忧郁的厄歇尔府邸。我不知道究竟是怎么回事，但我第一眼看见那所房子，就有一种感伤之情在心头弥漫，令我无法忍受。我说无法忍受，是因为当人们目睹自然界最荒凉萧条、阴沉恐怖的景象时，通常会产生一种因诗意而欣慰的情愫，而此刻我的感伤却没有因这种情愫而得到丝毫解脱。我凝望眼前的这副景象，凝望那座孤零零的房屋，以及周围纯朴的地貌风景；凝望那惨白凄凉的墙壁；凝望那像眼睛一样惆怅失神的窗户；凝望那几排薰衣草；凝望那几棵枯树的白色树干；内心感到万念俱灰，我只能把这种心境比作瘾君子服用鸦片后大梦初醒、陷入庸常生活后的痛苦以及脱去伪装面纱时的恐惧，除此之外没有任何尘世的情怀能够比拟。这是一种冷彻骨髓的感觉，是一种越陷越深的感觉，是一种心灵深处的厌憎，是一种从未体验过的恐怖意识，无论怎样百般地刺激想象力，都无法体会到任何崇高之感。是什么——我凝神静思——是什么使得我在凝视厄歇尔府邸时感到如此忧郁惆怅？这是一个无法破译的谜；而且我在沉思时无法抓住那些正在向我逼近的阴暗朦胧的幻觉。我不得不勉强聊以自慰地这么判定：肯定是一些十分简单的自然物体结合在一起，对我们构成了如此强烈的震撼力，而对这种力量的分析则超出了我们的理解深度。我思忖道，

to modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country—a letter from him—which, in its wildly importunate nature, had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness—of a mental disorder which oppressed him—and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said—it was the apparent *heart* that went with his request—which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested, of late, in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognizable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other—it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission, from sire to son, of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title

只要把这副景象中的特殊物体稍作调整，把画面的细节略加修改，就足以改变甚至消灭它那令人无限忧伤的特性；为了把我的这一思想付诸实施，我勒住缰绳使马慢下步子，来到一个漆黑可怖的山中小湖的陡峭岸边。这个小湖坐落在寓所旁边，闪耀着宁静的光泽；我朝下面望去，却猛地打了一个寒噤，我看到灰色的薰衣草、模样狰狞的树干和眼睛般空洞的窗户在水中扭曲的倒影，比刚才更感到毛骨悚然。

尽管如此，我还是建议自己在这座阴郁的房子里逗留几个星期。房子的主人罗德里克·厄歇尔曾经是我儿童时代的一个玩伴，我们已经有许多年没有见面了。不过，最近他有一封信寄给千里迢迢之外的我，其中以迫切的、不近情理的口吻，叫我务必亲自给他答复。信的手稿显示他的心情焦虑不安。写信人说到严重的身体疾病，说到一种令他忧虑的精神失常，还说到想见我一面的迫切愿望，因为我是他最亲、实际上也是惟一知心的朋友，他希望通过和我轻松愉快的交往，能够多少减轻他的疾病。他就是用这种口吻说到这些和其他许多事情，他显然是以一片真心向我提出请求的，不允许我有半点迟疑。于是，我立刻服从了这一我仍然认为非常蹊跷的召唤。

尽管我们童年时代是十分亲密的玩伴，其实我对这位朋友了解甚少。他一向不爱说话，沉默寡言是他的习惯。不过，我知道他的渊源悠久的家族，多年以来一直因性情极为敏感而闻名，在久远的过去，这种敏感曾经通过许多杰出的艺术作品得到展现，而最近，这种敏感又通过不断慷慨而又谦逊的乐善好施得以体现，此外还有对复杂的音乐科学的全身心的热爱，这甚至超过对传统的、一目了然的的美的羡慕。我还了解到这样一个惊人的事实，厄歇尔家族尽管多少年来深孚众望，但其根基上从未生长出常青不朽的枝蔓；也就是说，整个家庭代代一脉单传，除了十分个别、十分暂时的例外，总是人丁不旺。我一边思绪如潮地想着这座府邸的特色是与厄歇尔的家族特征完全相符的，想着在多少个漫长的世纪里，房屋可能对人产生的影响，一边同时想到，就是这种不足，这种也许属于次要问题的缺憾，以及由此产生的父亲将遗产和姓氏不偏不倚地传给儿子的做法，最终使得两者合

of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the "House of Usher"—an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment—that of looking down within the tarn—had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition—for why should I not so term it?—served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy—a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity—an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and

而为一，把房屋原来的名字变成了“厄歇尔府”这个古怪而双关的称呼。这一称呼在使用它的庄户人看来，似乎既包含家族，又包含着家族宅屋的意思。

前面已经说过，我那多少有点孩子气的试验——在山中小湖边往下俯瞰——的惟一结果反倒是加深了最初的那种奇特印象。毫无疑问，我越是意识到迷信思想——为什么不能用这个词呢？——在我心中迅速泛滥，越是反而加速了它的泛滥。这就是基于恐怖的一切情感的荒谬法则，我很久以前就知道。也许正是仅仅由于这个原因，当我再次将目光从水中倒影中抬起，转而凝望宅屋本身时，心里便产生了一种奇特的幻想，这幻想是如此荒诞不经，我之所以提到它，只是为了说明当时困扰我的情感是多么鲜明强烈。我努力调动我的想象力，使自己真的相信，在这整个宅屋和领地上，笼罩着一种它们及毗邻地区所特有的气氛，这种气氛和空中的大气没有任何相似之处，它是从枯朽的古树、灰暗的墙壁和寂寞的小湖中散发出来的，是一种瘟疫般有害的、神秘诡谲的雾气，沉闷，迟滞，若隐若现，是一种沉甸甸的铅灰色。

我摆脱精神上那种如梦似幻的感觉，更加专注地审视那座宅屋的真实面貌。它最主要特点似乎就在于极其古老。无数个岁月的风吹日晒使它剥蚀退色。房子外部长满细小的菌类，像错综复杂的网一样，从屋檐上悬挂下来。然而，这一切绝不能算特别破败凋敝。砖石结构的每一部分都完好无损；它各个部分依然十分协调，但每块石头已渐渐碎裂，这之间似乎存在某种狂乱的、自相矛盾的东西。这不由使我想起华而不实的老式木结构建筑，在漫长的岁月里，某个被人忽视的拱顶由于长年不通风，正在渐渐腐烂。不过，这座房屋除了外表有大面积的破败以外，整体结构丝毫没有动摇欲坠之感。也许，某个一丝不苟的观察者会发现一道几乎不易察觉的裂缝，从正面的屋顶延伸下来，蜿蜒曲折地贯穿整个墙壁，最后隐入小湖的死水中。

我注意到了这些，便骑马穿过一条短短的堤道，来到宅屋前。一位等在那里的仆人把马接了过去，我则跨入门厅哥特式的拱廊。一个男仆迈着鬼鬼祟祟的步子，一言不发地领我穿过许多黑暗而曲折的甬