

Tell-Tale Heart

By Edgar Allan Poe

Definitions of PARADOXES

- A paradox is an apparently true statement that leads to a contradiction or a situation that defies truth.
- A Statement that seems self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expresses a possible truth.
- An opinion or statement contrary to commonly accepted opinion

From *The American Heritage New Dictionary of Culture*:

- A statement that seems contradictory or absurd but is actually valid or true. According to one proverbial paradox, we must sometimes be cruel in order to be kind. Another form of paradox is a statement that truly is contradictory and yet follows logically from other statements that do not seem open to objection. If someone says, "I am lying," for example, and we assume that his statement is true, it must be false. The paradox is that the statement "I am lying" is false if it is true.

EXAMPLES of PARADOXES

- Standing is more tiring than walking
- "The silence of midnight...rung in my ears" by Mary Shelley.
- No body goes to that restaurant because it's too crowded.
 - It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.
- I didn't truly live until I was diagnosed with an incurable form of cancer.
 - We must sometimes be cruel to be kind.

READY to Find Paradoxes in “Tell-Tale Heart”?

1. Find two paradoxes or apparent paradoxes in “Tell Tale Heart”. Use direct quotes to show the paradox AND also explain WHY it seems surprising or contradictory. You should be able to find a couple like this early in the story.

Point of View

2. The point of view of this story is: **(circle one)**
 - First person
 - Second person
 - Third Person
 - Omnipotent

Purpose of the Story

3. The purpose of the story is to: **CIRCLE ONE**
 - Inform us about the dangers of not getting treatment for mental illness
 - To entertain us by creating suspense and intrigue
 - To persuade us to take action to help people who are mentally ill

Comprehension Questions – WRITE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES

4. What specifically is it about the old man that troubles the narrator? Why does it trouble him?
5. What does the narrator do every night? Why?
6. How does the narrator feel after he commits the murder? Is he worried about being caught?

7. What does he do to conceal the body?

8. WHY does the killer confess?

Inferences

9. What does the narrator hear at the end? I can think of a couple of possible answers. HOWEVER, it can NOT be what he says he hears since that would be impossible. Give me one possibility.

10. Do you think the narrator is sane or insane? Give evidence for your opinion.