

into the next room. If you don't, I shall kill you right now, here where you stand!

I took him into a small room nearby and pushed him violently to the floor. He got to his feet shakily, and stood up against the wall. I then closed the door and ordered him to fight. For a second he did not move. Then he silently took out his sword.

It was a short fight. I was wild and excited and felt stronger than I had ever felt before. After only a few seconds I pushed him against the wall and plunged my sword into his body again and again.

At that moment somebody tried to open the door. I ran to check that the door was locked and then ran back towards my enemy. How can I describe what I saw at that moment? During those few seconds when I had turned to the door, the room had become strangely different. There was now a large mirror at the end of the room. I was sure that it had not been there before. As I stepped up to the mirror, I saw myself, walking forward shakily, my face white and covered with blood.

Or so I thought. But I was wrong. It was my enemy, Wilson, who stood before me in his last moments of life. His mask and cloak lay on the floor. His face was now uncovered. And I saw, in terror, that his face was now *my own*!

Then Wilson spoke, but no longer in a whisper, and I thought I heard my own voice speaking as he said:

'You have won, and I have lost. But from this moment you, too, are dead – dead to the world, to Heaven, and to hope! You lived in me – and, in my death, look in my face, which is your own, and see how you have murdered yourself.'

The Tell-Tale Heart

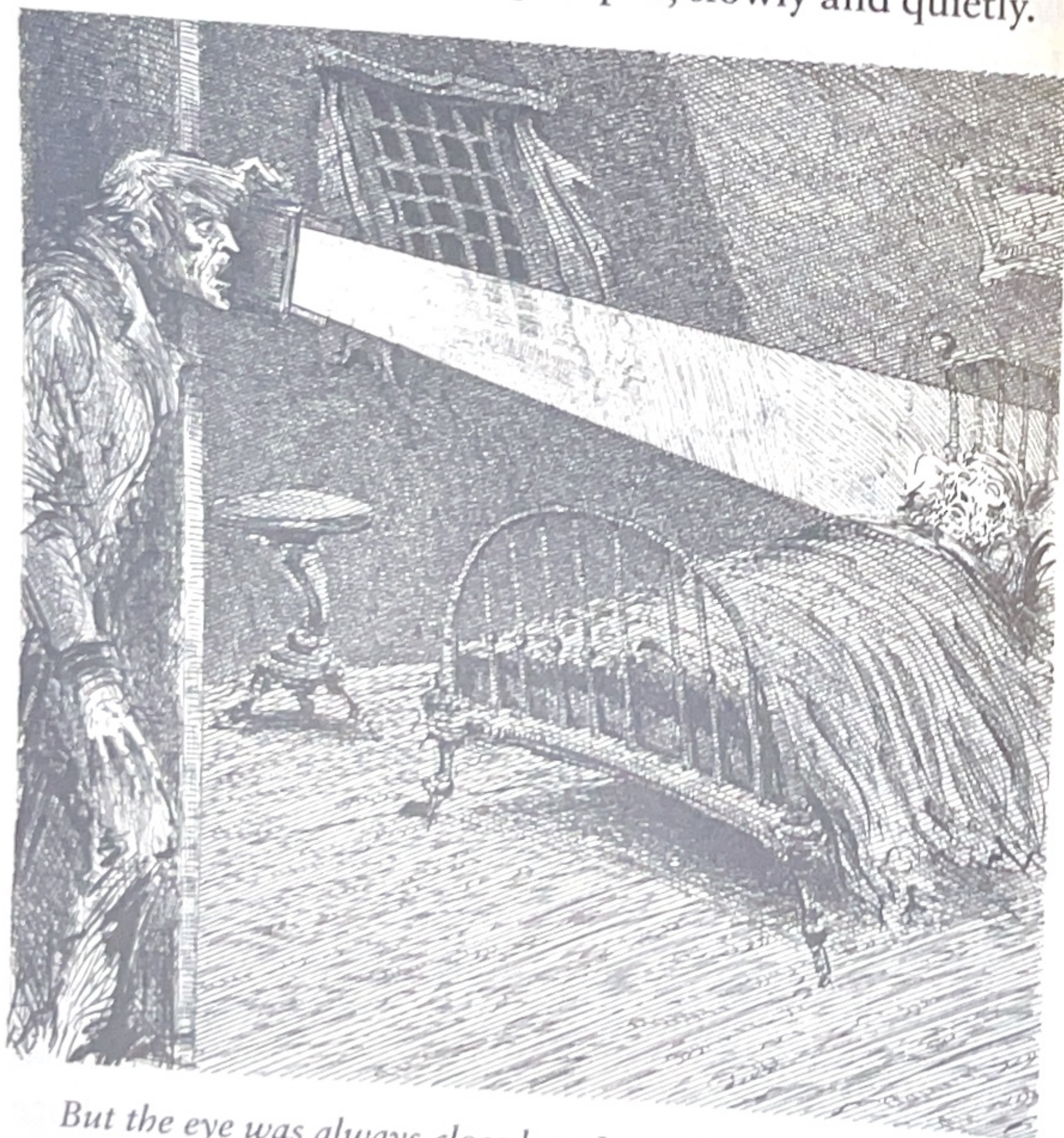
It is true that I had been – and I am – very nervous, but do you really think that I am mad? I could see and hear *more* clearly – not less, because of the disease. My hearing, more than anything, was excellent. I could hear all things, things in this world and things in heaven. I heard many things in hell, too. So how can I be mad? See how clearly and calmly I can tell my story.

I cannot explain how the idea first came into my head. But once I had thought of the idea, I could not forget it. I had no reason to do it. I was not angry. I loved the old man. He had never hurt me in any way. I didn't want his gold. I think it was his eye! Yes! He had a pale, blue eye, the eye of a vulture. Whenever I looked at it, my blood became cold; and so, very slowly, I decided to kill the old man and escape from the eye for ever.

You are thinking, I know, that I am mad. But madmen are not clever. And see how cleverly I prepared my plan! Every day that week I was so kind to the old man! And every night of that week, at about midnight, I opened his door very, very quietly. First I put my dark lantern through the opening of the door. The lantern was closed, and so no light came out of it, none at all. Then slowly, very slowly, I put my head inside the opening. I took sixty long minutes just to put my head inside. Would a madman have worked so carefully? And when my head was inside the room, I opened the lantern carefully and a thin ray of light fell onto the vulture

eye. But the eye was always closed, so I could not do the work. You see, I did not hate the man; it was only the eye that I hated.

On the eighth night I started opening the door even more carefully. I was feeling calm and strong. There I was, opening his door, and he did not even know that I was there! I almost laughed at the idea. And perhaps, at that moment, he heard me, because he suddenly moved in his bed. But I did not move away. I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, so I continued pushing it open, slowly and quietly.



But the eye was always closed, so I could not do the work.

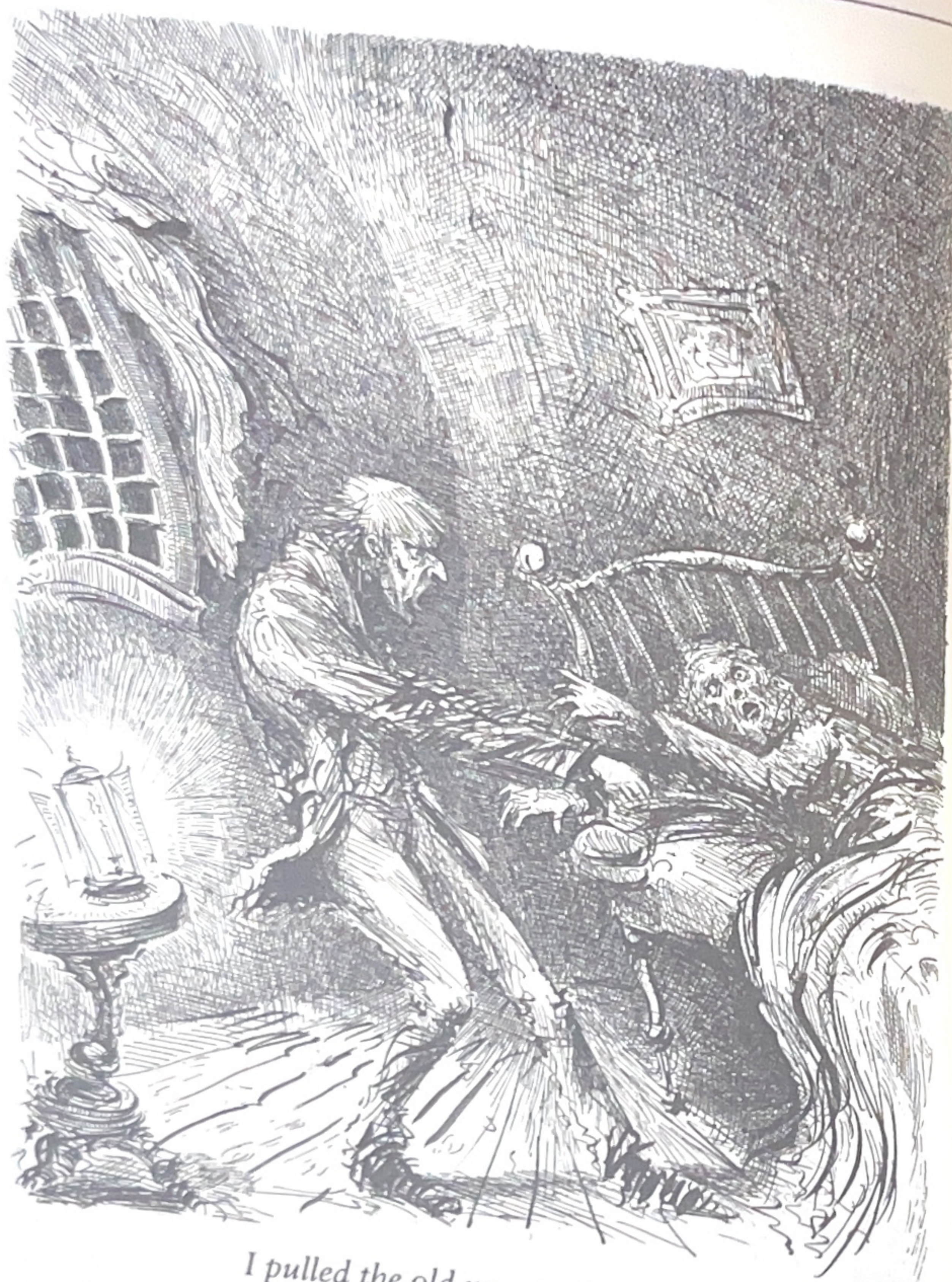
When my head was in the room, I tried to open the lantern but my thumb slipped and I made a noise. Immediately, the man sat up in bed and shouted, 'Who's there?'

I said nothing. For an hour I just stood there, without moving, and he sat in his bed, listening. Then he made a soft noise, a noise which I recognized. It was the noise of terror, the terror of death. I knew the sound because I had made it myself, many times, in the deep of the night, when all the world was asleep. I felt sorry for the old man, but I laughed silently. I knew that he had been awake since the first noise, and his fear had grown and grown. Death had entered his room, and now the shadow of death lay all around him. He could neither see me nor hear me, but he could *feel* my head inside his room.

I opened the lantern a little and a thin ray of light fell on his eye. It was open, and as I looked at it, I became angry. I could see it clearly, a horrible, pale blue eye that turned my blood cold. I could see nothing of the man's face or body, just his eye.

And then I heard a sound. Hadn't I told you that my hearing was excellent? I knew the sound. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It grew louder and quicker. Yes, louder and louder with every minute. The old man's terror must have been very great. And now a new terror came to me – a neighbour might hear the noise of this beating heart! The old man's time had come!

I opened the lantern fully and ran into the room. He shouted once – but only once because I pulled him to the floor and pulled the heavy bed over him. For many minutes the heart continued to beat, but then it stopped. The old



I pulled the old man to the floor.

man was dead. I put my hand on his heart and held it there for many minutes. There was no life in him at all. Now his eye would not trouble me again.

Perhaps you are still thinking that I am mad. You will not, when I tell you of the clever way I hid the body. First,

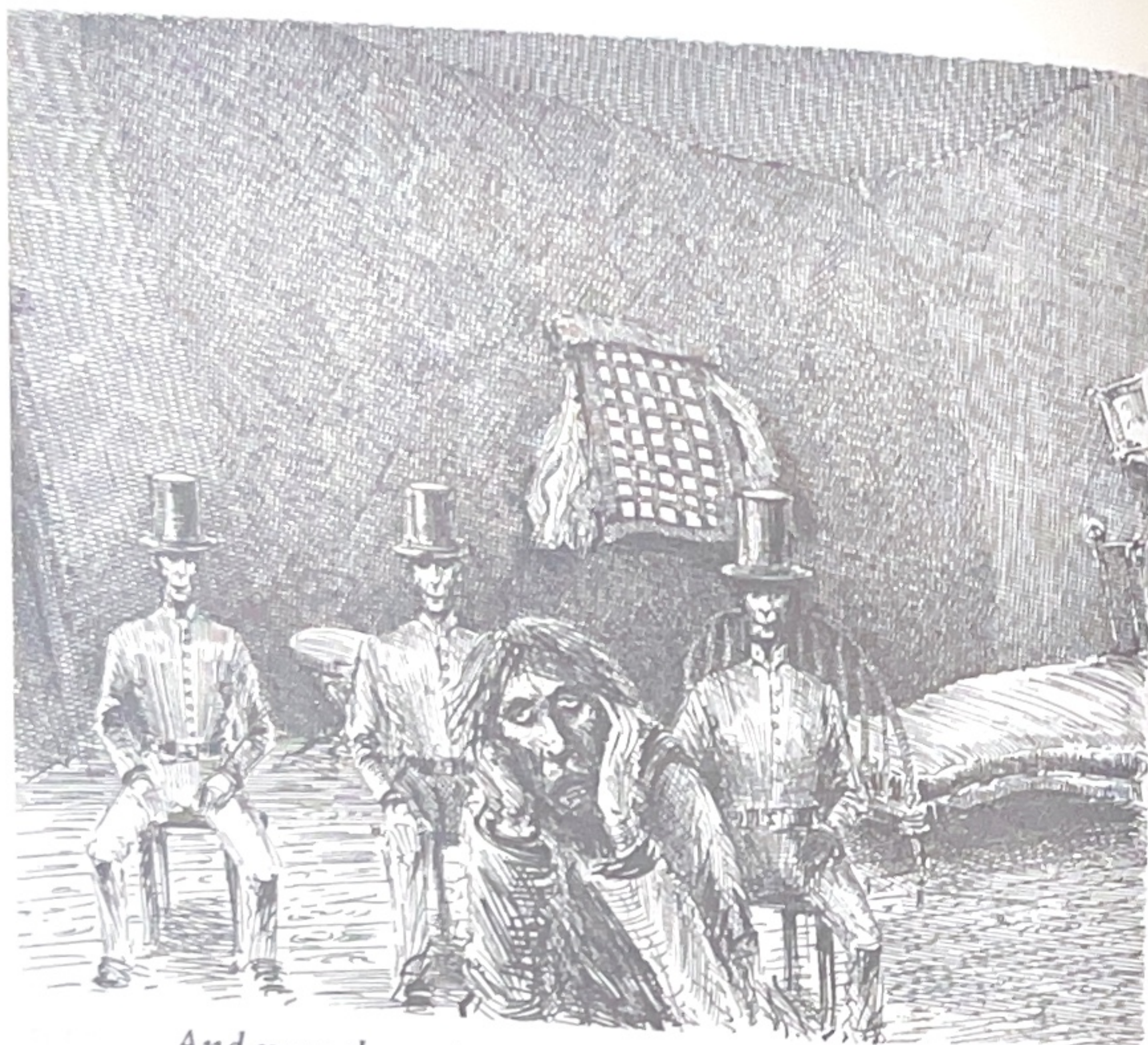
I cut it into pieces. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs. I then took up three boards from the wooden floor, and hid the body underneath. Finally, I replaced the wooden boards with great care. Now no human eye – not even *his* – would see anything wrong. There was nothing to see – not even any blood. A bowl had caught it all – ha! ha!

When I finished, it was four o'clock and it was still dark. There was a knock at the front door. Calmly, because I knew I had nothing to fear, I opened the door. Three policemen came in. They had come because a neighbour had reported a loud shout coming from the house.

I welcomed the policemen and asked them to come in. I explained that it was I who had shouted, in a dream. The old man, I said, was away in the country. I took them round the house and asked them to search it well. Then I took them to the old man's room and showed them all his things. I brought chairs into the room and invited them to sit down and rest a while. Calmly, I put my own chair on the place where I had hidden his body.

The policemen seemed happy. They could see from the way I spoke that all was well. They continued talking, but I began to get tired. My head ached, and there was a ringing noise in my ears. I wanted the men to go away, but they continued to talk. The ringing became louder and clearer. And then I realized that the noise was *not* in my ears.

I became very pale, and started talking more loudly. But the noise became louder too. What could I do? It was a low, soft sound, like the sound made by a watch when it is covered in cotton. I spoke more loudly. The noise became louder too. Why, oh why, didn't the men go away? I walked up



And now the noise was louder, louder, LOUDER!

and down the room. I became angry, I argued, I threw the chair onto the floor. But the noise continued to grow louder, louder than every noise I made. And the men went on talking and smiling. Was it possible that they hadn't heard the terrible noise? No! no! They heard! *They knew!* They were only pretending that they hadn't heard the noise! I was sure of this – I still am – and I hated their smiling faces. I felt that I must scream or die! And now, again, the noise was louder, louder, louder!

'Stop!' I shouted. 'Stop pretending that you cannot hear it! Yes, I did it! Pull up the floorboards here! here, here! – it is the beating of his horrible heart!'

GLOSSARY

- advice what you say to help people
 alcohol liquid in drinks like beer and whisky that can make people drunk
 anger the feeling when you are angry
 axe a tool for cutting trees and wood
 basket a kind of strong bag
 believe to think that something is true or right
 board (n) a long thin flat piece of wood
 brick a small hard block which is used for building walls
 candle a round stick of wax which gives light when it burns
 cellar a room in the ground under a house
 chest the front part of the top of the body
 chime the sound of a bell in a clock
 cloak (n) a wide loose coat without sleeves
 coffin the box in which a dead person is put
 crack (n) a thin hole where something is broken; (v) to break open
 cruel not kind; bringing pain or trouble to someone
 double the stakes in gambling, to play for twice the amount of money
 dragon a big dangerous animal with fire in its mouth, which lives only in stories
 evil very bad, very wrong
 gambling playing games of chance (e.g. cards, roulette) for money
 gate a 'door' in a wall outside
 gloom a feeling of deep sadness and hopelessness
 hang to kill someone by holding him above the ground with a rope around his neck

- heaven the home of God, where many people believe they will go when they die
- hell the place where bad people go when they die
- horrible making you very frightened
- horror a feeling of great fear or dislike
- huge very big
- imagination making pictures in your mind
- imagine to have a picture of something in your mind
- lantern a light in a closed glass box
- mad with a sick mind
- mask a cover that is put over the face to hide it
- masked ball a big party for dancing, where all the people wear masks
- masque an old kind of play in the theatre with music and dancing
- mind (*n*) the part of you that thinks, feels and remembers
- nervous afraid, worried
- outlined showing the line or shape of something
- paint (*v*) to make a picture using different colours and a brush
- pale with little colour in the face
- passage a narrow way in a building which leads to other rooms
- plaster something soft and wet which is put over bricks and which hardens to make the wall flat and straight
- pleasure a strong feeling of enjoyment
- plunge to push something in hard and suddenly
- ray a thin line of light
- rope very thick strong string
- servant somebody who works in another person's house
- sleeve the part of a shirt, coat, etc. that covers the arm
- slip (*v*) to move suddenly by accident, and fall or almost fall
- socket (eye socket) the hole in the head where the eye is
- sword a very long sharp knife, used for fighting

- tears (*n*) drops of water that come from the eye when you cry
- terror very great fear
- throw to move your arm quickly to send something through the air
- vault a room under the ground of an old house or church
- violet (*adj*) a bluish-purple colour
- vulture a large bird that eats dead animals
- weak not strong
- whisper (*n*) the sound of a voice speaking very softly and quietly
- wine an alcoholic drink made from grapes (small green or purple fruit)

ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

- 1 Read the back cover and the introduction on the first page of the book. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?
 - 1 These stories are about real people and real places.
 - 2 These stories are about strange things that happen in the mind.
 - 3 After Lady Madeleine's death, her brother feels sad but peaceful.
 - 4 The people at Prince Prospero's ball are having fun, not thinking about death.
 - 5 These stories are good to read when you are feeling ill, unhappy or frightened.

- 2 Here are the titles of the five stories. Which of the five things below belongs to each story? Can you guess?
an axe / a blue eye / a strange book / a large black clock / a game of cards

The Fall of the House of Usher	_____
The Black Cat	_____
The Masque of the Red Death	_____
William Wilson	_____
The Tell-Tale Heart	_____

ACTIVITIES

While Reading

Read *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Choose the best question-word for these questions, and then answer them.

Who / Where / What / Why

- 1 ... did Roderick Usher write to the narrator?
- 2 ... was becoming weaker and thinner each day?
- 3 ... did they put the Lady Madeleine's coffin?
- 4 ... did the narrator walk around the room during the storm?
- 5 ... did the narrator do to make Usher calmer?
- 6 ... did Usher realize from the sounds that he had heard?
- 7 ... stood outside the door of the narrator's room?
- 8 ... happened to the House of Usher?

Read *The Black Cat*. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Rewrite the false ones with the correct information.

- 1 The narrator liked animals more than people.
- 2 Pluto the dog was the narrator's favourite animal.
- 3 When Pluto bit the narrator, he cut one of its legs off.
- 4 The shape of a cat appeared on the bedroom wall.
- 5 The new cat looked the same as Pluto in every way.
- 6 The narrator killed his wife with an axe.
- 7 After he killed his wife, the narrator slept badly.
- 8 The police found the living woman and the dead cat together behind the wall.

Read *The Masque of the Red Death*. Then answer these questions.

- 1 Who was *not* afraid of the Red Death?
- 2 Who did Prince Prospero invite to his castle?
- 3 Why could nobody enter or escape from the castle?
- 4 What were the colours of the seven rooms in the castle?
- 5 What was against the wall in the last room?
- 6 What did people notice while the clock was chiming midnight?
- 7 What was the stranger wearing?
- 8 How did the Prince feel when he saw the stranger?
- 9 Why didn't anyone want to touch the stranger?
- 10 What happened when the stranger turned and looked at the Prince?
- 11 What was inside the stranger's clothes and mask?
- 12 What was left in the castle when the clock stopped chiming?

Read *William Wilson*. Then match these halves of sentences to make a paragraph of seven sentences.

- 1 The narrator had to leave Oxford for Europe . . .
- 2 But in every city that he visited . . .
- 3 When he had evil plans, . . .
- 4 At first the narrator obeyed Wilson's orders, . . .
- 5 This made him feel brave and strong . . .
- 6 At last, at a party in Rome, the narrator took his sword . . .
- 7 But when he looked at his enemy's face, . . .

- 8 the other Wilson stopped them.
- 9 because everyone knew that he was a cheat at cards.
- 10 he saw that it was the same as his own.
- 11 and he thought that he could break away from his enemy.
- 12 the other William Wilson appeared.
- 13 and killed the other man.
- 14 but then he began drinking heavily.

Read *The Tell-Tale Heart*. Here are some untrue sentences about it. Change them into true sentences.

- 1 Because of his disease the narrator had terrible hearing.
- 2 The old man had once hurt the narrator in some way.
- 3 The narrator decided to kill the old man because of his gold.
- 4 The narrator took thirty minutes to put his head inside the old man's room.
- 5 The old man could see and hear the narrator in his room.
- 6 The narrator felt sorry when he saw the old man's eye.
- 7 The narrator pulled a heavy table on top of the old man.
- 8 He hid the old man's dead body behind the wall.
- 9 The policemen came to the house because a neighbour had seen a strange man there.
- 10 The narrator told the police that the old man was away in hospital.
- 11 When the narrator spoke more loudly, the noise in the room became quieter.
- 12 The noise in the room was the old man's watch.

ACTIVITIES

After Reading

- 1 Imagine that the narrator in *The Fall of the House of Usher* wrote to his wife during his visit. Use the linking words below to complete his letter.

although / and / but / but / since / so / when / which / who

Dear Sarah

I have been here for a week now. Usher was pleased to see me, _____ he has changed so much since our last meeting. He has a strange disease, _____ makes him very thin, pale and nervous. _____ I arrived, we have spent a lot of time together. I try to help him, _____ his sadness is too deep, _____ sometimes I am frightened by his fantastic ideas.

Two days ago Usher's sister Madeleine died, _____ I must stay here a little longer. _____ I hate this house of gloom and madness, I must help my friend, _____ needs me very much. _____ he feels stronger, I will leave this terrible place for ever. With love, Nathaniel

- 2 The policemen who found the black cat wrote a report about their visit to the house. Put these sentences in order, joining the parts where necessary, in order to make their report.
- 1 He knocked on one of the cellar walls with his stick, ...
 - 2 the owner took us down to the cellar.
 - 3 and on top of her head there was a black cat with one eye.

ACTIVITIES: *After Reading*

- 4 so we got ready to leave.
- 5 On the 7th July we went to 51 Baker Street.
- 6 The cat was making the terrible sound that we had heard.
- 7 and suddenly we heard a sound from behind the wall.
- 8 Soon we found the dead body of a woman, ...
- 9 After we had searched the rooms upstairs, ...
- 10 We found nothing unusual there ...
- 11 but then it became a loud and terrible scream.
- 12 Then the owner began to tell us how well built the house was.
- 13 We began to pull the wall down.
- 14 At first it was a soft cry, ...

- 3 Imagine that Prince Prospero, in *The Masque of the Red Death*, speaks to the stranger just before he dies. Complete their conversation. (Use as many words as you like.)

PRINCE: _____?

STRANGER: You know who I am.

PRINCE: How _____? The gates _____.

STRANGER: I do not need a key to pass through a locked gate.

PRINCE: _____ at once! Or I _____.

STRANGER: I will not leave. And your sword cannot hurt me.

PRINCE: But what _____?

STRANGER: I have many names, but tonight I am called the

Red Death.

PRINCE: Why _____?

STRANGER: Because, Prince Prospero, it is time for you to die.

4 Who, or what, was the other William Wilson? Which of these answers do you think is the best explanation?

- 1 a real person – who happens to look just like the narrator
- 2 a different part of the narrator's own mind
- 3 somebody that the narrator imagines, in a waking dream
- 4 the good side of the narrator's character
- 5 a kind of ghost

5 Here are four passages from Wilson's diary. Complete them with the words below (use each word once), and then say who wrote each passage – the 'good' or the 'bad' Wilson.

cards, caught, cheat, cheating, clever, destroy, enough, evil, gambler, make, mine, pleasure, secret, should, sleeve, stop, stupid, thief, where, wife

1 I no longer play cards. I am known to be a _____, which is no better than a _____. Once, when I tried to win a lot of money by _____, I was _____ and told to leave Oxford at once. But the man that I tried to _____ was saved.

2 At Oxford I was a clever and successful _____. It was an easy way to _____ money. I used special _____, which I hid inside my _____. I only played with _____ people, but sadly, one day I was caught, and so had to leave England.

3 Tonight the Duke Di Broglie's _____ has agreed to meet me in a room _____ we can be alone. She is young, beautiful, and not very _____ – and tonight she will be _____! I shall fight anybody who tries to _____ me.

4 I spend my life searching for _____. Tonight I have planned a _____ meeting with the Duke's wife. She is beautiful, but not clever _____ to recognize an _____ man when she sees one. Somebody _____ warn her about me.

6 In *The Tell-Tale Heart* a neighbour talks to the police (see page 53). Put their conversation in the correct order and write in the speakers' names. The policeman speaks first (number 7).

- 1 _____ 'This old man – do you know him?'
- 2 _____ 'Well, there was a terrible noise tonight from the house next door – like a great shout or a scream.'
- 3 _____ 'Strange? In what way?'
- 4 _____ 'Hmm. I think I should go next door and ask a few questions. Thank you for telling us about this.'
- 5 _____ 'I'm not sure – about two o'clock perhaps.'
- 6 _____ 'I went to the window and looked out. I didn't see anyone, but there was a light in the old man's room.'
- 7 _____ 'Now, sir, what's the problem?'
- 8 _____ 'So what did you do then?'
- 9 _____ 'He talks to himself – and he has really wild eyes.'
- 10 _____ 'Oh yes – he's a very nice man. A younger man lives in the house too – but he's a bit strange.'
- 11 _____ 'No, just one. But after that there was a loud bang – like something heavy falling to the floor.'
- 12 _____ 'Two o'clock. I see. And were there any more screams?'
- 13 _____ 'What time did you hear this scream?'

7 Perhaps this is what some of the characters in the stories were thinking. Which five characters are they (one from each story), and what is happening in the story at this moment?

1 Oh my God! Who is *that*? He looks really terrible. And all that blood! I don't think that's very funny. How can we enjoy ourselves with that in front of us? And how did he get in? Somebody will have to tell the Prince . . .

2 What's happening? Something woke me up. I can't see anything, but I know there's something there. I'm so afraid. I'm listening and listening – it's dark and quiet, but I can feel something terrible, something frightening . . .

3 Now the wall is finished, he thinks he's safe – but he's wrong. He didn't see me climb in here with the body. I'll just sit here and wait until somebody comes – and then I'll open my mouth and scream . . .

4 Soon it will end. On this wild night I will at last be free – free to search for my brother, and take him with me. One more push, and this wood will break. Then the door, and up the stairs. You cannot escape me now, brother . . .

5 I don't know what's wrong with me tonight. I must have unlucky cards – I've *always* won before when I've played against him. Mustn't look worried. Have another glass of wine. He'll make a mistake soon, and then I'll win all my money back . . .

8 Look at these adjectives and nouns from the story. Make three pairs of words – an adjective plus a noun – to suit each story. You can use words more than once.

Adjectives:			Nouns:		
dark	mysterious	anger	gloom	sadness	
deep	sad	animal	house	scream	
evil	silent	castle	idea	sound	
fantastic	strange	disease	murder	storm	
frightening	terrible	face	person	stranger	
ghostly	violent	fear	plan		
loud	wild	feeling	pleasure		

9 Imagine that these stories appear in the newspapers. Here are some headlines for the stories. Which headlines go with which stories? Which headlines do you prefer? Why?

- FANTASTIC PARTY ENDS IN DEATH
- HOUSE DISAPPEARS IN STORM
- KILLER HIDES BODY, THEN TELLS POLICE
- CAT CALLS POLICE TO BODY
- STRANGE DEATHS OF BROTHER AND SISTER
- IS THIS THE MOST EVIL MAN IN EUROPE?
- ANIMAL-LOVER ARRESTED FOR MURDER
- MAN KILLS ENEMY – AND MURDERS SELF
- THE RICH AND THE CRUEL PUNISHED AT LAST
- 'I CAN'T ESCAPE TERRIBLE SOUND,' MAD KILLER TELLS POLICE

10 Which story did you find most frightening? Why?