

A Telling Heart

By Julia Arias De Liban

An adaption of Edgar Allen Poe's A Tell-Tale Heart

There is a place metal table and a plain metal chair place in the center of the room.

BONES, a worn, withered man, sitting in the chair with his head in his hands. He jerks his head up and stares crazily at the camera.

BONES

TRUE! nervous - very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad!? the disease had sharpened my senses - ha! - not destroyed, not dulled them... My hearing became the best! HA! HA, ha... I heard all things in the heaven in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How am I mad!? Listen! and watch how healthily - how calmly i can tell you the whole story

(He leans back, relaxed, with a fantastic smirk)

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, never given me insult. I had no desire for his gold. HA! It. Was. His. Eye! Yes! it was his eye - his vulture of an eye. A pale blue eye with film over it. Whenever it landed on me, my blood ran cold... By degrees - very, very, very gradually - I made my mind to take the life of the old man, and so rid myself of that eye forever! HA HA Ha ha ha... 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 as I as during the week before I killed him...

2 INT. OLD MAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

2

Bones oh, so slowly, oh, so gently opens the old man's bedroom door. Once the gap was large enough, Bones snuck his head in the room, followed by a covered lantern. He watched the old man sleep before he cautiously and slowly uncovered a bit of the lantern to have a stream of light shine on the vulture eye.

OLD MAN, a small, wrinkled, kind old man, is asleep - unaware of Bones watching him, unaware of the light shining on his blind eye.

BONES

(Voice over)

Every night at midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it - so, so, so gently. And then, when I had made a sufficient opening for my head, I thrust my head in and then I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, closed, so that no light shone out. I moved it slowly - so slowly so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me at least an hour to to place my entire head in the opening... HA HA! would a madman have been so wise as this!? And, then, when my head was well into the room, I uncovered the lantern cautiously, cautiously, cautiously - the hinges creaked - I uncovered it just so much that a single thin ray of light fell on that vulture of an eye

3 INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

3

Bones is sitting, unbalanced, in that plain metal chair. He looks wild.

BONES

And this I did for seven long nights... every night just at midnight... but I found his eye always closed... so it was impossible to do the work; for it was NOT the old man who vexed me... but his Evil Eye - HA! And every morning, when day broke...

RETURN TO THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE. IT IS BRIGHT AND EARLY IN THE
EERIE MORNING.

(CONTINUED)

Bones is tiredly making coffee for both the old man and himself.

The Old Man walks groggily into the kitchen.

OLD MAN
G'morning Bones.

BONES
(Turns to face the Old Man)
Morning... how was your night?
Slept well I hope?

OLD MAN
Yes, quite well thank you

RETURN TO THE POLICE INTERROGATION

4 INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

4

Bones is oddly pacing behind the fallen chair.

BONES
Upon the eighth night I was more,
more, more cautious in opening the
door. A watch's minute hand moved
faster than I did. Never, never,
never before that night had I felt
the extent of my own powers. I
could scarcely contain my feelings
of triumph, of victory! of success!
to thing that there I was, opening
the door, little by little by
little, and he not even to dream!
of my secret, secret, secret deeds
or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at
the idea...

RETURN TO THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE. IT IS MIDNIGHT AND THERE IS
NO NOISE, NO ANIMALS MAKING A SINGLE SCRATCH.

Bones, slow as can be, opens the old man's bedroom door.
Once the gap was large enough, Bones snuck his head in the
room, followed by a covered lantern. He giggled.

The Old Man jerked awake. He sat staring straight ahead -
straining to hear anything. Bones fingers moved on the
lantern.

OLD MAN
(Jumping out of bed)
Who's there!?

(CONTINUED)

BONES

(Voice over)

I kept quite, quite, quite still
and said nothing, nothing, nothing.
For a whole, complete, total hour,
I did not move a muscle, and in the
meantime I did not hear him go back
to bed. He was still standing next
to the bed listening, listening,
listening - just like I have done
night after night after night...
Now, I heard a slight groan, and I
knew, I knew, I knew it was the
groan of mortal terror! HA Ha ha...
It was not a groan of pain or grief
or sorrow - oh NO! - it was the low
stifled sound that arises from the
bottom of the soul when overcharged
with awe.

RETURN TO THE POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM.

5 INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

5

Bones pauses his narration to calmly fix the fallen chair.
He slowly sits. He stares at the camera with a crazed
triumph.

He gives a wild laugh and continues his story.

BONES

I knew the sound well... Just at
midnight, when all the world slept,
it had welled up from my own bosom,
deepening, with its dreadful,
dreadful, dreadful echo, the
terrors that distracted me, me...
ME! I say I knew it well. I knew
what the old man felt, and pitied
him, although I chuckled at
heart... he, he. 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, growing,
growing upon him. He had been
trying to fancy them causeless, but
could not, could not, could not.

RETURN TO THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE. IT IS MIDNIGHT AND THERE IS
NO NOISE, NO ANIMALS MAKING A SINGLE SCRATCH.

6 INT. OLD MAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

6

OLD MAN

It is nothing but the wind. It is only a mouse crossing the floor... it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp...

BONES

(Voive over)

Yes, yes, yes, he had been trying to comfort himself... but he had found all in vain, in vain... 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, within the room, within the room.

Bones waiting, waiting, waiting. He stealthily opened the door so slowly it felt an eternity, until a single, dim ray of light hit the blind eye.

Bones focuses on the eye. After an very long, very strained time with the beating of the Old Man's heart getting louder and louder, he eventually emits a strangled war cry and jumps into the room. Old Man manages a shriek before Bones tackles him to the ground and drags the heavy bed over him.

He smiles in triumph and waits, happily, for the beating heart to stop. Once all is quiet, he moves the bed was meticulously examines the body. Bones places his hand on the heart and waits. He sighs knowing the eye is no longer a torment.

RETURN TO THE INTERROGATION ROOM.

7 INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

7

BONES

If you still think me mad you will think no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body.

RETURN TO THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE. IT IS MIDNIGHT AND THERE IS NO NOISE, NO ANIMALS MAKING A SINGLE SCRATCH.

(CONTINUED)

Bones dismembering the corpse in the bathtub. He returns to the bedroom and removes three planks from the floor. He proceeds to shove the body bits into the floor. He scrupulously replaces the floor

BONES

(Voice over)

The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs. I then took up three! planks from the floor of the room and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, so wisely that no human eye - not even his vulture of an eye! - could have detected anything wrong! HA HA! There was nothing to wash out! no stain of any kind! no blood-spot whatsoever! HAHAAHA... HA! ha... By the time I finished it was four A.M. And then you lot arrived!

RETURN TO THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE. IT IS 4A.M.

8 BONES OPENS THE FRONT DOOR- EARLY MORNING

8

Three officers, tired and annoyed - one is of medium height and rail thin (1), one is short and very wide (2) and the third is tall and muscular (3) - standing on the front porch. Bones calmly walks to the front door and opens the door.

BONES

Hello. What can I help you with?

POLICE OFFICER 1

Mornin... a shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night.

POLICE OFFICER 2

suspicion of foul play had been aroused

POLICE OFFICER 3

information had been lodged at the police office and we were dispatched to search the premise. Mind if we enter?

(Eyes Bones)

(CONTINUED)

BONES

No, no, no... come in! Come in!
Come in! The shriek, I'm sorry to
say, was my own. I had a nightmare.
And the Old man is out of the
country.

Bones guided the police throughout the house. Easily
chatting to the rail thin officer. The group paused in the
Old Man's room. Bones easily answered their questions.

POLICE OFFICER 3

Where exactly is the old man?

BONES

He is visiting a relative

POLICE OFFICER 3

What is the relative's name?

BONES

Billy!... or something like that. I
was not paying too much
attention....

The Old Man's heart starts beating

POLICE OFFICER 3

Are you alright? You are very
pale...

BONES

Yes, yes, yes... I am fine, fine...
fine.

POLICE OFFICER 3

You sure?

BONES

Yes! Of course... of course...
of... course

POLICE OFFICER 3

How... close... were you to the
man, who is out of the country
visiting a relative possibly named
Billy.

The beating of the heart become overwhelming

BONES

Villains! dissemble no more! I
admit to deed! tear up the planks!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BONES (cont'd)
Here! Here! Here! it is the beating
of his hideous heart!

Bones drops to his knees and starts tearing at the floor.
The police officers look at one another. Police Officer 3
takes his cuffs out and cautiously approaches the wild
Bones, still tearing up the floor.

FADE TO THE ROOM BEHIND THE ONE-WAY MIRROR.

9 INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM BEHIND THE ONE WAY MIRROR - 9
TIME UNKNOWN

The room is dark. The only light coming from the computers
and the interrogation room.

The three officers watching Bones talking to himself. The
three look at each other

POLICE OFFICER 1
Well... umm... yeah...

CUT TO BLACK