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Imitation Piece (Edgar Allan Poe - Tell-Tale Heart)

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The Stepper

Before I might begin this tale, I must make a point of explaining a sensation altogether extraordinarily different from many I have been so fortunate as to encounter before. Not more than three weeks ago, while I was resting inside my usual hours, I found myself in that most pivotal stage of dreaming, within the last embrace of sleep and comfort, when there came upon me a most profound sense of disassembly. That is to say, a sense of being taken apart; having my legs and arms and indeed, even my head, removed slowly, effortlessly, and with no trace of pain from my body. Such a sensation I have found it yet impossible to faithfully put to words, but the idea, the concept innate, is ever-present in my waking hours, yet may only truly resurface as I sleep.

With no exceptions this sensation had led me nowhere but to the light of early morning. But during this night just passed, I again entered this so delicate stage, and found myself remembering the sensation, and now, with my awareness, did not wake after I had been disassembled, and found my mind traveling onwards. Onwards, through the grasp of the impenetrable darkness, to a bedchamber, as bright with life as it was dim with the dark.

It took my eyes what seemed to me many hours to adjust accordingly that I might discern one thing from another. At first, I spied the slight edges of a considerably large, most comfortable looking bed. Then, the unlit light at its side, and a few small hints of what seemed to me to be no more than a lump, a ruffle of feathers, in the blanket of the bed. Aside from the door, left closed but not latched, and the smallest of windows which allowed no light to find shelter, there was little to tell of this room, save for the unceasing tremble of a consistent, and most resilient, life. Something was very much alive, though I had much time to doubt my mind as taking fancy in something which did not exist. For, with no mirrors around, how was I to know whether my ears had not earlier parted with my eyes?

As I watched in silence the dark of the room with the bed, the door, having at some time escaped my mind and since lost my attention, began to open. So slowly the door crept that I did not notice until I perceived it to be four or more inches away from where my eye last left it.

Imagine, if you will, my amazement, and to a greater extent, my horror, as I watched the door steal another inch, and then a head, a most sickeningly pale and worried looking head, work its way slowly between the door and the frame.

The life! Immediately, the lump on the bed, the ruffle of feathers, sprung to life, and an old man shot up from under the covers yelling "Who's there?! Who's there?!"

But there was no reply from the skull in the doorway. He, or rather it, was content to stare, and wait. Finding I had no means of alerting anything, nor of disposing of the wretch hiding in the doorway, I was forced to stare, and wait. Eventually, a hand stole through and at length opened a lantern so that a slight slant of light fell upon the old man, directly onto his wide, staring eye.

Immediately I was taken aback, reeling in a sickening way. That eye, a piercing blue, was undoubtedly the reason the intruder was present. Such eyes, no ordinary man could ever possess. Yet before I could recover, the man in the doorway, yelling and screaming, leapt out from hiding and onto the old man, smothering him, beating him, and when I'd regained some control of my position, I found the old man dead, and the other man smiling. That smile was the smile of madness itself.

My recovery could not have been full, for at once rage, irrepressible and sweltering, burst forth from every pore of my essence. My mind whirled and my heart, where did it come from, my heart, beat the torrid belch of my boiling blood outwards into the room. I watched as this man, this horrid sorry excuse for a man, removed the limbs from the slain and buried him then below the plank of the floor. What a shock to see limbs removed while in my state! All my energy increased ten-fold, and my heart, my angry, shocked and uneasy heart, did beat louder and louder.

Yet I was fading. "Villian!" I shouted. "Fiend! Murderer! Wretch!" Louder I commanded, louder I beat and shouted. Louder until the moment I awoke, sweating, heaving, and hoarse. If you'd only have seen me, you would have known no dream I'd had before was so intense.

I awoke to the beat of my own heart, thumping and throbbing with life, much life, and so I crept for pen, paper, and a lantern. I awoke, and for you, by my bed beside the window, I wrote to tell this tale.