

Rationale:

I am writing a pastiche of The Tell Tale Heart, by Edgar Allan Poe. I am striving to recreate his use of the style of his writing, which is of course a morbid, gloomy style. Edgar Allan Poe also uses an object which drives the protagonist to become crazy. The pastiche will of course have a theme, and it is a horror gothic one with a hint of dark romanticism. I am writing in the style of gothic, with the most recurring themes dealing with problems faced by mortal men such as infidelity as well as death and mourning. I incorporate elements that Poe used, such as elements of popular pseudo sciences such as physiognomy. A study of the psychology of guilt incorporates that a murder carefully conceals the narrator's crime and he believes himself unassailable, but eventually breaks down impelled by a nagging reminder of his guilt. The narrator of The Tell Tale Heart has questionable sanity, which I replicate in my pastiche, The Disembodied Limb. This pastiche features the protagonist who is obsessed with a twitching leg which tortures him. It drives him insane, although he questionably was before. He even starts to believe that the leg can sense when he begins to plot some dastardly thing which will harm the body it is attached to. Overall, since Edgar Allan Poe incorporates several elements in his writing, which is what I have done. However, like The Tell Tale Heart the protagonist did not have a justified reason for murder. He was not concerned with his wife's infidelity, but with a twitching limb. I have opened with a similar line to The Tell Tale Heart, but one concerned with the plot of the pastiche.

The Disembodied Limb

SENSELESS and irrational, people used these words often. How could those words describe one such as I though? I only wanted to dismember the jerking leg of Fortis. I had encountered it before; it haunted me in my sleeping as well as waking state. The day started off as it always does in this dreary, morbid suburb. The drizzling rain turned the morning sky to grey, dampening my spirits while I pondered what my next move was to be. The sky was ashen and sober, and in lonesome October, I was withering. I passed the day weak and weary, watching the day's sorrowful events unfurl from behind the curtains. I developed a plan over the course of that stagnant day. It was to be that afternoon that I would go face that wretched Fortis and tear his limb out of its socket.

I left the house with the sole aim of confronting that dastardly convulsing leg. My face expressed extreme hatred which was enough to keep people away as I made my way to his place of residence. My thoughts were preoccupied with the limb of Fortis. It bothered me, and tortured me. I wanted to detach the limb from the socket. I walked briskly with my head focused on the ground, thinking of the leg as motionless so as not to lose my nerve. Once I looked up I saw the house which held the man with that bloody twitching leg and of course, that woman I had promised to live with.

I walked up to the door and banged on it with my fist. The door opened almost immediately, and before I could say anything, not that I could at that moment, a revolver was pointed at my face. That wretched Fortis didn't even give a man a chance, except it was not a calloused man's hands

holding the weapon, it was a woman. Oddly, this didn't bother me. A gun pointed at my face probably should have, but all I thought was, splendid; since she cared about Fortis enough to hold a gun steady, I'd hurt her through that damned leg of Fortis, instead of having to kill her.

I took one more look behind me, before I crossed the threshold. I probably resembled a pessimist, especially as I took in the surroundings. The skies were sober, and the trees held withering leaves. Even from a distance, they looked crisped and sere. This was a world of moan, and my soul was a stagnant tide. My blushing bride from years ago still held the gun. She beckoned me in, with one jerked motion of her hand.

I walked not as one would walk towards an execution, but one with a fixed goal. Fortis was sitting presumptuously on the armchair, his right leg extended. It seemed as soon as it recognised me, it twitched with anticipation. It could tell I was here. When I moved forward, it twitched again, and Fortis did not even seem to notice. I wondered if he was born an imbecile, but then the leg moved so the foot was pointed to where I stood. I couldn't take it! It was like it sensed me, and what I wanted to do. Fortis spoke then.

- So, you have finally come. I've been enjoying myself here.

A menacing smile appeared on his pompous face.

- I seem to have lent out my revolver, and something else decidedly pointed but of the same size. Care to guess who was the recipient?

Blind rage enveloped me, but I held my position while thinking of the best way to kill. However, then the leg twitched again. I was so unnerved all I could do was look at it, as if I would someone I despised but couldn't say out loud. I needed to tear it out, leave him with a phantom limb. How though? HOW? Fortis had said something. I turned my head back to look at him, annoyed that I had been dragged from my reverie. I needed a plan. THERE! The leg twitched. Oh no, you aren't getting out of this. There's no way he'll figure it out until it's too late.

He spoke again

- You must have been lonesome lately and drowned in tears.

For the first time, I replied

- Stop twitching

Decidedly not the best comeback, but it provided an opening. The woman walked towards Fortis with a calming look on her face as if to say, pay him no heed. Then the mistake was made; she put the gun on the table next to the chair. I only had seconds to act. I charged forward and grabbed the gun, flicked the safety off and held the gun between Fortis' eyes. Now that the power had shifted, that leg twitched. I immediately shot 3 bullets straight into it. Fortis writhed

on the floor in pain. I concentrated on the leg; it was moving so I put 2 more bullets into it. It was finally still. So was Fortis after one final convulsion because of all the blood loss. The woman was bending over him, sobbing and grasping the leg which was finally motionless.

The reality of what happened sunk in. In trying to get rid of a leg, I had got rid of a person. I couldn't bear to think about that. The disembodied limb seemed to come alive. It turned to me again, it pointed to the gun this time. I couldn't take it! I had killed a man to get rid of one thing, and I didn't succeed! The leg moved closer, and closer. I had to get out! My eyes strayed to the gun and then back to the approaching limb. I chose the less frightening option. I fell to the floor with two bullets lodged in my chest, and the woman's words of guilt hanging over me.

- You will never be free from this guilt

Death did not approach and the leg returned

- It's back, it's the twitching of the hideous leg, I screamed.