

“The Cask of Amontillado” (p. 207)

Catacombs: *long, winding, underground tunnels; burial vaults; wine vaults;
Dark & cool place*

Setting: *Carnival time; party at Fortunato’s home; catacombs at
Montresor’s mansion*

Characters:

Montresor — *narrator is planning revenge;
dressed in black mask and cape*

Fortunato — *a quack; an expert in wine tasting; dressed as a clown*

Faults of Fortunato (easy prey): *proud of wine tasting;
jealous of Luchesi; drunk; naïve about Montresor’s anger*

Eerie details: *white web-work of nitre; dripping water, bottles lying on mold;
Walls of piled bones; moisture that trickles in bones; foul air*

Masons: a secret society

Foreshadowing — *trowel along*

Steps of Montresor’s Plan:

Story about Amontillado

Servants forbidden to leave (so they do)

Pretends to discourage Fortunato (sick, cold air) knowing he’s stubborn

Trowel along

More wine along to drink

Bones cleared out that can be replaced

Examples of Irony throughout:

Verbal: *Urging Fortunato not to go into catacombs when that is what
Montresor really wants him to do*

Dramatic: *Fortunato doesn’t realize Montresor wishes him harm*

Situational: *There’s a carnival going on above and a murder is done
below.*

Telling of story: *occurs 50 years later*

Poe's desire to create "a single effect": This is **Edgar Allan Poe's** theory about what makes up a good short story. According to **Poe**, a good short story achieved its unity by achieving a **single** emotional **effect** on the reader. The single effect in "The Cask of Amontillado" is deception

Author: Edgar Allan Poe (p. 194)

- * **Orphaned; raised in upperclass** (*well-educated; privileged*)
- * **Military experience**
Expelled from West Point
- * **Admired in Europe/U.S. for short story writing**
Compare to Stephen King; Detective story success
- * **Poor; gambling debts**
- * **Questionable death** (*drunk? rabies?*)

Opinion Questions:

1. **Your evaluation of Montresor –**
Is he insane or very sane? Is he justified or evil?
Explain.

2. **Why does Montresor (and Poe) leave out the details about the original insult?**
What effect does it have on the story?

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