**“The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe**

**A Close Reading of the text**

As you read “The Cask of Amontillado”, underline or highlight important details that inform you about the story and its meaning. In the right-hand column, note any questions, conclusions, or confusion that you will bring to your discussion.

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| Text from “The Cask of Amontillado” | Annotations (Here is where you interact with the text: Conclusions, questions, confusion. |
| **1** THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely, settled --but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.  **2** It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my in to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my to smile now was at the thought of his immolation.  **3** He had a weak point --this Fortunato --although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially; --I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.  **4** It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.  ----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------  **5** Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a roquelaire closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.  **6** There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honour of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.  **7** I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.  **8** “Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi --"  **9** "Enough," he said; "the cough's a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."  "True --true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily --but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps.  Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mold.  "Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.  He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.  "I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."  "And I to your long life."  ----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------  **10** I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement --a grotesque one.  "You do not comprehend?" he said.  "Not I," I replied.  "Then you are not of the brotherhood."  "How?"  "You are not of the masons."  "Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."  "You? Impossible! A mason?"  "A mason," I replied.  "A sign," he said, "a sign."  "It is this," I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my roquelaire a trowel.  "You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."  ----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------  **11** "For the love of God, Montresor!"  "Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"  But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud --  "Fortunato!"  No answer. I called again --  "Fortunato!"  No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. In pace requiescat! | Why does the narrator want revenge? What does it mean that he seeks to “punish with impunity”?**(1)**  Who is the audience? How do you know?**(1)**  Montresor describes Fortunato’s knowledge of different topics. What does Montresor mean when he says, “In painting and gemmary Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack--but in the matter of old wines he was sincere”? Why is this important? **(3)**  What is ironic about Fortunato’s costume? (**4)**  What is important about the setting? How does Poe build suspense in this scene? **(4-7)**  Why does Montresor put on a mask? **(5)**  During Fortunato’s coughing fit, Montresor insists they return to the festival, as he is worried about the cold and damp surroundings making Fortunato ill. Fortunato responds by saying, “Enough...the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough.” What is ironic about these lines? How is Montresor persuading Fortunato? **(8-9)**.  What is ironic about this toast? (**9)**  What play on words is occurring? Why is this important? **(10)**  How would you describe Montresor’s and Fortunato’s final interaction? What mood does Poe leave lingering with these lines? (**11)** |