

# The Cask of Amontillado

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

## Before Reading

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### Summary

Perhaps Poe's finest story, "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846) takes place in Italy during the spring. The narrator, Montresor, describes his plan of revenge on a "friend" named Fortunato.

## Vocabulary

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**borne**—put up with.

**destruction**—being destroyed, ruined.

**vain**—overly proud.

**carnival**—a time of feasting and merrymaking in Italy in the spring before Lent. During carnival, both children and adults wear costumes.

**palazzo**—large, imposing building (such as a museum, palace, or house), especially in Italy.

**cask**—barrel.

**vaults**—underground passages or rooms.

**torches**—burning sticks of wood used to give light and usually carried in the hand.

**cavern**—cave.

**leer**—sly smile.

**grotesque**—odd or ugly; bizarre.

**mortar**—type of cement.

**noble**—grand.

(Tested vocabulary used in the online vocabulary quiz is underlined.)

## During Reading

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Use the **Study Guide** on the next page as a way to work through the selection and improve your comprehension.

## After Reading

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Answer the questions below as a way to deepen your interpretation of the selection.

1. Describe Montresor's plan of revenge. What is it about Fortunato (and Montresor himself) that is causing him to do it?
2. How does Poe's use of settings and class contribute to the excitement of the story? How do you think readers in the nineteenth century reacted to these elements?
3. How do Fortunato and Montresor react to each other once the plan is finally made clear? How do you feel about the way the story ended?
4. What did you find unsettling or scary about this story? What kinds of messages, if any, do you think Poe is trying to convey in "The Cask of Amontillado"?

5. Name and explain the 7 motifs used in this story.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Cask of Amontillado

by Edgar Allan Poe

Use the Building Comprehension exercise below as a way to improve your comprehension of the selection.

### Character Study—Montresor

Give your impressions of Montresor's relationship and encounter with Fortunato, giving his and your own reactions to his plan of revenge.

1. How does Montresor act and feel? Why?

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2. How does Fortunato feel about him? Why?

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3. What do the events in this story tell you about Montresor?

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4. How do you feel about Montresor and what he does?

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