

“The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe

If you need to reference the story, then click on the following link:

<http://www.literature.org/authors/poe-edgar-allan/amontillado.html>

After Reading Questions “TCOA” pg. 353

After Reading

Comprehension

1. **Recall** Why does Montresor, the narrator, want revenge?
2. **Recall** How does Montresor trick Fortunato into joining him?
3. **Summarize** What does Montresor do to ensure the success of his plan?
4. **Summarize** What happens to Fortunato?

Literary Analysis

5. **Make Inferences About Character** What kind of man is Montresor? Think of four or five character traits that you can infer from Montresor’s words and actions. Record your answers in a chart like the one shown.

Montresor’s Character Traits	Words/Actions
1. <i>shrewdness</i>	<i>He knows how to take advantage of Fortunato’s pride.</i>
2.	

6. **Analyze Mood** What is the overall mood, or atmosphere, of this story? In your opinion, what contributes most to the mood—the setting, the sound and rhythm of the language, or the descriptions of Montresor’s thoughts, feelings, and actions? Provide details from the story to support your opinion.

7. **Make Judgments** Review your **paraphrase** of lines 1–8. Does Montresor achieve the kind of revenge he wants? Cite details to support your answer.

8. **Evaluate Narrator** Consider whether Montresor is a **reliable** or an **unreliable narrator**. Is the reader to believe, as Montresor does, that his revenge is justified? Give evidence from the story.

9. **Evaluate Dramatic Irony** A situation in which the reader knows something that a character does not is an example of dramatic irony. The first paragraph of the story prepares the way for dramatic ironies by giving the reader information that Fortunato does not have. Identify three examples of dramatic irony. What is the effect of the irony on your experience as a reader?

10. **Compare and Contrast** Poe often drew inspiration for his tales of horror from the real world. Compare the details of “The Story Behind ‘The Cask of Amontillado’” on page 352 with the story of Montresor and Fortunato. How similar are these accounts?

Literary Criticism

11. **Critical Interpretations** In defining the short story as a literary form, Poe emphasized that every word should contribute to a “unity of effect or impression.” He believed that a writer should first choose a “unique or single effect” to convey, then invent events “as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect.” How well does Poe achieve a “unity of effect” in this story? Give examples from the text to support your answer.

W2.3d

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

“The Story Behind the Cask of Amontillado” is on the next page

“The Story Behind the Cask of Amontillado” by Edward Rowe Snow p.352

THE STORY BEHIND
The **CASK**
of Amontillado
EDWARD ROWE SNOW

While at Fort Independence, Poe [who was a private there in 1827] became fascinated with the inscriptions on a gravestone on a small monument outside the walls of the fort. . . .

Beneath this stone are deposited the remains of Lieut. ROBERT F. MASSIE, of the U. S. Regt. of Light Artillery. . . .

During the summer of 1817, Poe learned, twenty-year-old Lieutenant Robert F. Massie of Virginia had arrived at Fort Independence as a newly appointed officer. Most of the men at the post came to enjoy Massie's friendship, but one officer, Captain Green, took a violent dislike to him. Green was known at the fort as a bully and a dangerous swordsman.

When Christmas vacations were allotted, few of the officers were allowed to leave the fort, and Christmas Eve found them up in the old barracks hall, playing cards. Just before midnight, at the height of the card game, Captain Green sprang to his feet, reached across the table and slapped Lieutenant Massie squarely in the face. "You're a cheat," he roared, "and I demand immediate satisfaction!" . . .

The duel began. Captain Green, an expert swordsman, soon had Massie at a disadvantage and ran him through. Fatally wounded, the young Virginian was carried back to the fort, where he died that afternoon. His many friends mourned the passing of a gallant officer. . . .

Feeling against Captain Green ran high for many weeks, and then suddenly he completely vanished. Years went by without a sign of him, and Green was written off the army records as a deserter.

According to the story which Poe finally gathered together, Captain Green had been so detested by his fellow officers at the fort that they decided to take a terrible revenge on him for Massie's death. . . .

Visiting Captain Green one moonless night, they pretended to be friendly and plied him with wine until he was helplessly intoxicated. Then, carrying the captain down to one of the ancient dungeons, the officers forced his body through a tiny opening which led into the subterranean casemate.¹ . . .

His captors began to shackle him to the floor, using the heavy iron handcuffs and footcuffs fastened into the stone. Then they all left the dungeon and proceeded to seal the captain up alive inside the windowless casemate, using bricks and mortar. . . .

Captain Green shrieked in terror and begged for mercy, but his cries fell on deaf ears. The last brick was finally inserted, mortar applied, and the room sealed up, the officers believed, forever. . . .

[In 1905, workmen repairing the fort found a skeleton inside, shackled to the floor with a few fragments of an old army uniform clinging to the bones.]

1. **subterranean casemate** (sūb'ter-ē-nē-on kā'smāt'): a fortified underground or partly underground room.