

Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" Symbolism

Names

- The antagonist's name, Fortunato, is Italian for fortunate or the lucky one. When considering these names with the story, one can see the irony in Fortunato's name, as he does not come out of the story as the fortunate one.
- The protagonist's name, Montresor, can be broken down into the two French words *montrer*, to show, and *sort*, fate. Another translation of Montresor to keep in mind is my treasure. The story is based on Montresor's treasure: Amontillado. Wine is Montresor's treasure that he uses to lure Fortunato into the catacombs with. Montresor shows Fortunato how fortunate he really is, or rather is not, by showing him his true fate.

Family Crest "A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel"

- The foot represents Montresor and the serpent represents Fortunato. The serpent is biting the foot causing offense just as Fortunato causes offense by insulting Montresor's family. The foot then steps on the perpetrator to quell him as does Montresor to Fortunato.
- Blue represents calmness. Throughout the entire story, Montresor stays calm even though he is angry with Fortunato and leading him to his death.
- "Nemo me impune lacessit" motto, which translates as "No one attacks me with impunity." This is exactly what Fortunato does to Montresor. The reader does not know exactly what Fortunato did, but we get the sense that it is of the caliber of an insult that has destroyed his family's name in society. The crest on the ring symbolizes the entire story and plan Montresor uses to kill Fortunato. It is also the motto of a country.

Montresor's Costume Montresor puts on a mask of black silk and drawing a roquelaire closely"

- Black symbolizes evil and death, which are two important themes in "The Cask of Amontillado". Killing another human being for any reason is evil. It is even worse when it is premeditated murder.
- The Cape represents the deceptive nature and mood of the story. It along with the mask allows Montresor to hide his true self and intentions.
- The Trowel of Montresor; Fortunato tells Montresor that it is not possible for him to be a Mason. Montresor says he is and pulls out a trowel, a tool a mason uses to lay brick. The play on words gives them both a laugh, but the trowel is also creates dramatic irony. The reader knows that Montresor has the trowel on him to brick him in the wall and, ultimately, kill him. Fortunato, however, thinks of it as only a play on words and not his true fate. Montresor draws it out from inside the cloak, which, as mentioned before, hides the true intentions of the wearer. The trowel is proof that Montresor plans to kill Fortunato. This shows the clever deception utilized in Montresor's plan.

The Cask of Amontillado Montresor uses it to lure Fortunato into the catacombs.

- The cask is the secret that Montresor has carried around with him for 50 years. A fine wine must be aged nicely and served at the right time just as Montresor's story has been kept a secret for a while and was delivered at the time he felt was right.
- It also represents Fortunato's insult that Montresor is avenging. Montresor uses Fortunato's feeling of being a better wine connoisseur to lure him down into the catacombs as a way of using the insult he delivered against him.

_____ 1. Trowel

O. Lucky one

_____ 2. Cask

L. Object that conceals

_____ 3. Fortunato

A. Color of evil

_____ 4. Montresor

S. Freemason tool used to set bricks

_____ 5 Cape

T. My treasure, fate

_____ 6. Black

N. Calm

_____ 7. Blue

D. Montresor and Fortunato

_____ 8. Foot and Serpent

C. The secret of Montresor