Content Overview

What’s the story? Well, it depends on your point of view.

Ask any three people who have witnessed an accident — and they will probably tell you three different stories. The stories may be somewhat the same. However, each person would share how things looked from their point of view.

When authors write, they carefully choose the point of view from which they will tell a story. This activity is a chance to see how much of a difference it can make in a story.

Students can choose to look at Poe’s short story through three different lenses. The original story was seen through the eyes of the protagonist, Montresor. Students can also select one of these versions written especially for this activity: the story as seen through the eyes of the antagonist, Fortunato, or the story as seen through the eyes of an omniscient narrator. Students can listen to a special reading of each version of the story by suing the audio bar on each page. They can also change perspectives throughout the tale.

Consider introducing the story with the videoclip located next to the interactive. In the clip, our Poe re-enactor says this: "As you’ll find in the story, revenge has always been an idea that has fascinated me. In an article in the Southern Literary Messenger, I once wrote 'What can be more soothing, at once to a man’s Pride, and to his Conscience, than the conviction that, in taking vengeance on his enemies for injustice done him, he has simply to do them justice in return?' I must admit that it’s a tricky point. What do you think?"

PROTAGONIST
THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

By EDGAR ALLAN POE

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 I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitively 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.

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 wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at

ANTAGONIST
THE CASK OF AMONTILLA DO

An Adaptation

I always welcomed the carnival season. How wonderful to indulge in its frivolity! For once, we could suspend the regular rules of behavior – laugh too much, drink too much, joke too much – all the time hiding behind our masques and costumes. No one would hurry to remind us of the proper way to behave in public. At carnival, this was the proper way to behave.

The crowd swirled around me in a heady perfume of excitement. Several of my friends greeted me warmly, admiring my costume. But they were soon swirled away by the momentum of the evening.

From afar, I noticed Montresor. He alone seemed to be apart from all else, a black and immovable point in all the

NARRATOR
THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

An Adaptation

The square was a swirl of costumed ladies and gentlemen, bathed in the evening light. The vanishing sun brought clear focus to the colorful crowd that filled the square. Hidden behind masks that were both grotesque and beautiful, peasants and nobles strolled as if in a dream. Snake charmers entertained to gasps of delight. The juggling and tumbling of Harlequin and Pantalone thrilled the gathered audience. And the wine. Oh, the wine.

There was only one small blot in this canvas. At the edge of the crowd stood Montresor. His only mask was a deep torment that crowded his features.

Revenge. There was no other word. Revenge for a
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 gemmery, 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 skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

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.

He grasped my hand as if it were life itself and pumped mightily.

I moved unsteadily toward him. "Ah, Montresor, so good to see you."

He spent a few minutes admiring my costume. But, as always, business was on his mind.

"I have received a large shipment of what I am told is Amontillado. At a very good price, I suspect. However, I have my doubts. The quality —

If his plans were to succeed, Montresor thought, he would have to give away nothing.

"My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking today. But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."


Students can continue to read the story from any point of view.

Montresor ignored the tumult around him, torturing his mind to clear itself in preparation for the task ahead. There was no room for anger now. All would be avenged.

Across the square, Fortunato saw his friend and waved crazily.

For his costume, Fortunato had chosen the cap and bells of the fool. Montresor sneered at the suitability of his choice. Fortunato was a fool. He fancied himself the paragon of judgment when it came to the finer things of life — art, gems, and, of course, wine. Montresor thought little of his taste in art and gems, but had to concede that Fortunato did have a good palate for the Italian vintages. Not that it redeemed him in Montresor's eyes. But it was a fact. Both men had excellent taste in their wines, and invested in only the finest from each year's crops.

Montresor set his shoulders as Fortunato lurched to him, the bells on his cap jingling stupidly.

Seeming as if he were pleased to see him, Montresor grasped Fortunato by the arm and shook his hand. Fortunato stumbled a bit from all the attention. The wine he had been drinking all day had made him very unsteady on his feet.

The trap was set.
"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me ——"

"Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchresi ——"

"I have no engagement; — come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

"I eagerly interrupted. "Amontillado. The very nectar of the gods. And in the middle of carnival. That is much more than luck."

"It might be, if it really is Amontillado. But I have my doubts. I couldn't contact you to get your advice, so I paid full price. I do hope I'm not proven the fool."

"I was just on my way to visit Luchresi ——"

Again, I had to interrupt. "Luchresi? He wouldn't know an Amontillado from an everyday sherry!"

"Perhaps. But some say his taste rivals yours."

I would have none of that. I took Montresor's arm firmly. "Take me to your vaults at once."

Montresor tried to shrug off my grip. "Surely, I cannot impose."

"Nonsense. We're talking about Amontillado. Hurry."

"But you obviously have an engagement."

"No. Nothing as important as the Amontillado."

Montresor pulled back. "But the vaults are insufferably damp. And you have such a severe cold."

"The cold is nothing. Less than nothing, when you consider the Amontillado. Please."

"I guess you are right. I do not trust Luchresi's taste, either."

Thinking he might change his mind if given a chance, I and I have my doubts."

The bait.

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!" Fortunato could almost taste its exquisite softness.

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me ——"

Excellent, Montresor thought to himself. Fortunato could not abide rivals.

"Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

In his mind, Montresor heard the trap snap on its unsuspecting victim.

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an
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.

engagement. Luchresi ——"

    "I have no engagement; — come."

    "My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

    "Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Montresor tightened his grasp on the man's arm. As they walked together into the crowd, Montresor put on a black silk mask and a cape of the same color.

Despite his unsteadiness, Fortunato led the way.

Students can continue to read the story from any point of view.

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.

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.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but

I was surprised to see that none of Montresor's attendants was there to greet us. Montresor merely dismissed it as part of the carnival nonsense that had engulfed the entire world — so it seemed.

Montresor took two torches from the wall and gave me one. He bowed slightly from the waist and extended his arm, inviting me to go forward.

Finally, we came to the vault stairs. My legs, which had been rather wobbly, gave a bit. But Montresor came through, offering me an arm as we began our descent. "Quite the gentleman," I thought. That was Montresor.

The stairs lead to the damp catacombs where the bones of many generations of Montresor's great family lay entombed. But even this gloominess did not dull my enthusiasm. The Amontillado

When the two reached Montresor's palazzo, no one was there to greet them. Montresor knew the reason. When he left his home, he told the servants that he wouldn't be back until the morning and ordered them not to leave. But Montresor was a good judge of men. They must have left as soon as I turned my back, he thought.

If Fortunato had not been so determined to taste the precious Amontillado, he might have noticed their absence as well.

However, greed masks reason many times, especially when one's sense are dulled.

The stairs led to the damp catacombs where the bones of many generations of Montresor's great family lay entombed. But even this gloominess did not dull my enthusiasm. The Amontillado

The two proceeded through several suites of rooms, torches held high to illuminate their path. A cautious journey down a long and treacherous staircase brought them to the catacombs.
observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked, at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"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 Luchresi ——"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is 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 mould.

"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 to your long life."

Montresor stopped to point out the web of a white powdery substance that crowded the walls.

Why did he want me to look at this? Confused by his behavior, I did not know how to respond. I finally grasped what he was saying. "Nitre?" The dampness of the catacombs must have saturated my lungs. I began to cough uncontrollably.

When I could finally get the words out, I reassured Montresor. "It is nothing."

Montresor seemed alarmed. "We must go back. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved. How happy this must make you. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back. I don't want to be responsible. Besides, I can always consult Luchresi ——"

"The cough is nothing. It will not kill me. I won't die of a cough."

"True. Very true. But you should be cautious. Perhaps a bit of Medoc will help us both."

He offered me a bottle from the many that crowded the vault.

I raised it to my lips, but paused at once. "To the buried that repose here," I toasted.

"And to your long life," Montresor replied.

Fortunato pressed forward. "The pipe?" he asked.

"Farther on," Montresor replied. "But wait, look at all this web-work."

Fortunato turned to face Montresor, confused by the delay. He began to cough. At first, it was a mere annoyance that he shrugged off. "Nitre, I suppose." The cough escalated.

"Nitre," Montresor responded. "How long have you had that cough?"

The cough consumed his body in spasms. Slowly, it subsided. "It is nothing."

Montresor inhaled deeply. A better trap, he thought, is the one that snares its prey after you have warned him away. "Come," he said steadily "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 Luchresi ——"

"Enough," Fortunato said. "The cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

Montresor paused a moment. No, he thought. The cold will not kill you. However, now was not the time. He held back. "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."

Montresor retrieved a bottle from his cache. He cleanly removed its cap and presented the bottle to Fortunato.

Greatly pleased, Fortunato raised the bottle to his lips. He paused and nodded to his host,
He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"I drink," he toasted, "to the buried that repose around us."

Montresor replied, "And I to your long life."

The irony was almost palpable. But Montresor covered a slight twinge in the corner of his mouth by hastening Fortunato along the passage.

---

**Students can continue to read the story from any point of view.**

| "These vaults," he said, "are extensive." | As we walked, seemed quiet. His mind, I could tell, was somewhere else. I tried to bring him out of the storm that brewed in his eyes. | At last, Fortunato broke the silence. "These vaults are extensive." |
| "The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family." | "These vaults are extensive." | "The Montresors were a great and numerous family." |
| "I forget your arms." | "The Montresors," he replied, "are a great and numerous family.” | "I forget your arms,” Fortunato said casually, his cap bells jingling ever so slightly. |
| "A huge human foot d’or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel." | "Yes. I’m afraid I’ve forgotten your 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.” |
| "And the motto ?" | "A golden foot in a blue field. The foot is crushing a serpent whose fangs are embedded in the heel.” | "And the motto ?" |
| "Nemo me impune lacessit." | "And your motto?” I urged. | "No one attacks me with impunity,” Montresor responded. |
| "Good !" he said. | "Nemo me impune lacessit." | "Good !” he said. |
| The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow. | "No one attacks me with impunity.’ Excellent.” | Under his breath, Montresor echoed the words of his family crest. “No one.” |
| "The nitre!” I said : "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough — —’" | The two continued along, Fortunato leading the way eagerly. They passed long walls of skeletons crowded incongruously among old casks and barrels once filled with the finest vintages. | The two continued along, Fortunato leading the way eagerly. They passed long walls of skeletons crowded incongruously among old casks and barrels once filled with the finest vintages. |
| "It is nothing," he said ; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc.” | Montresor broke my reverie. He grabbed my arm abruptly and pointed to the dripping walls. "The nitre! See, it increases. We are below the river bed. Come, we must go back before it is too late. Your | Montresor paused again, catching Fortunato’s sleeve to stop him, if only momentarily, from his quest. |
| | Montresor broke my reverie. He grabbed my arm abruptly and pointed to the dripping walls. "The nitre! See, it increases. We are below the river bed. Come, we must go back before it is too late. Your | |
| | | "The nitre!” he exclaimed. |
I broke and reached him a flacon of De Grâce. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

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."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our rout [route] in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

Montresor was perplexed. I made the gesture again. "Don't you understand?" I asked.

"Not I."

"Then you are probably not of the brotherhood."

He looked perplexed.

"The masons. You are not of the masons," I explained.

I thought that was impossible. I asked my host for some sign to prove what he said.

He pulled a small trowel from the folds of his cape.

It was a clever pun. At last, I thought, Montresor knows the meaning of the season. "Let us proceed to the Amontillado."

We continued on our quest, going down many staircases before we came to the deep crypt. Even our torches were affected by the dank air here. There flames were all but extinguished.

"See, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back before it is too late. Your cough ——"

"It is nothing." Fortunato broke away. "Let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

Montresor gave him another bottle. He emptied it in one long gulp. Then, laughing, he thrust the bottle upward. Montresor was puzzled by this gesture. How like Fortunato, to try to make himself grander, more puffed up, Montresor thought.

Fortunato seemed to gloat in Montresor’s discomfort. He thrust the bottle again, and looked at his guide with a bit of mischief in his eyes. "You do not understand?"

"Not I," Montresor replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"What do you mean?"

"You are not of the masons," Fortunato said drunkenly.

Montresor’s eyes narrowed. "Yes, yes. I am."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason." How could this person before him, Montresor thought, have galloped so eagerly into such a trap?

Fortunato pressed for a sign that is commonly given when two members of the secret organization meet.

Montresor produced a trowel from beneath his cape.

Fortunato laughed at what
he considered a fine joke, befitting of the season. He could not see that, beneath his smile, Montresor showed no glee.

“On to the Amontillado,” Fortunato urged, starting once again on the journey.

The two passed down several staircases. Montresor carried himself carefully. His plot was about to come to its rightful conclusion. Fortunato’s fate was sealed.

They finally arriving at a crypt deep in the ground. There was so little air in this place that the torches flickered and died to a tentative glow.

Students can continue to read the story from any point of view.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students can continue to read the story from any point of view.</th>
<th>he considered a fine joke, befitting of the season. He could not see that, beneath his smile, Montresor showed no glee.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the farthest reaches of the crypt, there seemed to be another smaller crypt. Three of its walls were lined with human remains, like the great catacombs of Paris. It seemed as if the bones on the third side had been pitched into a pile, revealing another smaller recess within.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depths of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond that, I could not see. Montresor had made extraordinary efforts to protect his Amontillado.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Proceed,” I said; “herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi——.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He’s a fool.” My words echoed back strangely as I bumped into the wall. Suddenly Montresor sprang at me. I could feel the cold iron of chains. In an instant of flurry, he had shackled me to the wall. I was dumbfounded. What did this have to do with the Amontillado?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When he spoke to me, I knew. The words were colder and more forbidding than any I had ever heard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Pass your hand over the crypt bulged into another smaller recess at the end farthest away from the two men. There was little of human comfort here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of its walls were lined with human remains, piled to the ceiling, resembling the great Parisian catacombs. The fourth wall was strangely bare but Fortunato scarcely noticed. Its bones had been removed and seemingly scattered about. However, a more careful observer would have noticed they formed a considerable mound at one point.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a smaller niche in this fourth wall, about four feet deep and six or seven feet high. Fortunato approached, holding his torch higher to see into the gloominess. But the dull light of the torch was no help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montresor urged his guest onward. “Proceed. The Amontillado is within. As for Luchresi——.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| “He is an ignoramus,” Fortunato said with a slur. His next unsteady step was suddenly halted. Putting his hands out to help him balance,
instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I will positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of my masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which he felt only the slime that covered the wall. At first, this event confused him mightily. Had Montresor been mistaken? Perhaps they had taken a wrong turn.

But Montresor had not made even the slightest error. In an instant, he sprang, catching up a chain and throwing it around Fortunato. He slapped the padlock at the chain ends, twisted the key defiantly, and stepped back. Fortunato was too surprised to do anything.

Montresor’s voice was maddeningly even. "Pass your hand over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I will positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" Fortunato’s voice was a strange mixture of fear and confusion.

"True," Montresor replied, "the Amontillado."

Students can continue to read the story from any point of view.

I could hear him as he scattered the bones madly. My mind searched for answers. I did not want to believe what I was experiencing. It seemed so evil. Why would a good friend such as Montresor do this? I had not wronged him in any way.

But the truth was inescapable. He was building a wall . . . a wall to what was to become my tomb. A wall escaped my lips. I could not give it words.

He stopped for a moment and then continued in this satanic task. If I were to escape, I had to act fast. I pulled at the chains with all my might. Perhaps the old walls were

Once Fortunato was subdued, Montresor began his macabre task. Throwing aside the bones, he uncovered the building stone and mortar he had buried there earlier that week. Taking out his trowel he began to wall up the entry to the niche.

The first row of stone was expertly laid. Montresor was indeed a skilled mason.

The pleasant euphoria of the wine disappeared as Fortunato looked around, desperately seeking release from the chains. He moaned when none could be found.

Montresor laid four solid
Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us awaiting us at the palazzo — the getting late? Will not they be yes, the Amontillado. But is it not "He! he! he! — he! he! he! — he! he! he! — over our wine — he!

rich laugh about it at the palazzo — excellent jest. We will have many a very good joke, indeed — an "Ha! ha! ha! — he! he! he! — a very good joke, indeed — an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo — he! he! he! — over our wine — he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he! — he! he! — yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo — the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us
damp enough to allow them to lose their foothold.

For a blessed moment, he stopped again. Surely, he would release me now. My knees buckled with relief.

But, it was not to be. Montresor began again, working steadily as if he were building a garden wall. He paused only briefly to thrust his torch into my abyss. Perhaps he wanted the insane satisfaction of seeing me in such a state.

It was too much. I began to scream. My unearthly sounds cut through the dank air. I could not stop.

His work continued. I could sense his diabolical work was about to end.

I had but one more chance to end this all.

I forced a laugh. "A very good joke, indeed — an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo over our wine."

"The Amontillado." I had trouble recognizing his voice as that of the noble Montresor.

Perhaps he was breaking. I continued, "Yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will they not be waiting for us at the palazzo — the lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us go now."

"Yes," he said, "Let us be gone."

But nothing happened. It was over.

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes, for the love of God!"

rows of stone before the noise began—the horrific sound of the shaking chains as Fortunato tried to pry them from the wall. Montresor sat back, savoring the noise as validation that his prisoner now realized fully the certainty of his fate.

When Fortunato grew silent, he began to painstakingly lay more stone. By the seventh row, the wall stood chest high to its creator. He paused again, thrusting his torch into the recess of the niche to observe his enemy's defeat.

Fortunato screamed shrilly. His desperation was real and forceful. Montresor shrunk back from the wall. He pulled his sword from its sheath and plunged it into the niche, gropping for his target. Frightened by his weakness, Montresor fought back to calmness. He felt the cold granite of the wall, and felt satisfied. And he matched his captive's screams in length and sound until Fortunato at last stopped.

Assured, Montresor continued. The eight, ninth, tenth, and eleventh tier were forged in silence. The wall was complete except for a single stone. Hefting the stone almost above his head, Montresor carefully fitted it. He was almost completed when a low laugh made the hairs on his neck stand on end.

Fortunato knew he had nothing to lose. With a grim laugh, he started to reason with his captor.

"A very good joke, indeed — an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo over our wine — he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" Montresor could not understand why the fool was still intent on the wine.

"Yes, the Amontillado."
"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"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!*

I resigned myself to my fate.

Fortunato’s voice quavered. "But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo — the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," Montresor said with finality, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," Montresor replied, "for the love of God!"

His words were met by silence.

"Fortunato," he screamed. He pushed his torch through the last remaining hole into the abyss.

Fortunato raised his head only briefly at the light. The embers scattered about, and there was nothing. He shook his head slowly, and the bells on his cap jingled mournfully. It was done.

The bile rose violently in his throat. But he would not give in. He forced the last stone into place and plastered it in position. Working steadily, he replaced the wall of bones.

For a half century now, no mortal has ever disturbed them.

*In pace requiescat!* May he rest in peace. May we all rest in peace.