

Exercises in Analysis and Interpretation

“The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe

1. According to Montresor, what makes a perfect crime?
2. At what point in the story do you find Montresor most disturbing? Explain.
3. How does Montresor lure Fortunato into the catacombs?
4. What **character traits** in Fortunato make him fall prey to Montresor?
5. Part of the story’s most horrifying effect comes from Poe’s use of **irony**. What do we know that Fortunato does not know about why he has been invited into the vaults? When did you figure out what Montresor was up to? Why?
6. Which of Montresor’s comments to the unsuspecting Fortunato are **ironic**-that is, which ones mean something different from what they seem to mean? Be specific.
7. This story is full of other examples of **irony**. Explain the ironic use Poe makes of the following: Fortunato’s name, his costume, and the fact that a carnival takes place in the streets above the murder.
8. To whom could Montresor be talking, fifty years after the murder, and for what reasons? Use specific references from the story to support your answers.
9. Montresor from “The Cask of Amontillado” and General Zaroff from “The Most Dangerous Game” share certain qualities, yet they are different in many ways. How are their actions, attitudes, and personality traits alike and different? Use two interlocking circles (a Venn diagram) to list them. Also, use similar strategies to attract Rainsford and Fortunato. How does each man use a shared interest to lure and trap his “guest”?