

Name: _____

Period: _____

“The Cask of Amontillado” Vocabulary

Word	Definition
1. cask	
2. precluded	
3. impunity	
4. connoisseurship	
5. virtuoso	
6. surmounted	
7. sconce	
8. flambeaux	
9. rheum	
10. azure	
11. flagon	
12. gesticulation	
13. niche	
14. immolation	
15. rampart	

Background:

Much of this story is set in the catacombs of the Montresor family, which were also used as a wine cellar. Catacombs are underground cemeteries. The walls of the narrow passageways are lined with niches where bodies are placed.

Carnival is an often uninhibited celebration involving costume parades, feasting and other festivities. It takes place mainly in roman Catholic regions during the weeks before lent, a holy season of abstinence and prayer.

Mood: Mood is the emotional quality of a literary work. A writer’s choice of language, subject matter, setting and tone, as well as such sound devices as rhyme and rhythm, contribute to creative mood. As you read the story ask yourself, “What emotions does the writing make me feel?”

Questions for Study:

1. How does Montresor get Fortunato to come with him to his vaults? What is Montresor’s motive for leading Fortunato there?
2. Describe the conversation between Montresor and Fortunato as they walk in the catacombs. What is ironic about Montresor’s concern for Fortunato’s health?

3. What happens to Fortunato at the end of the story? In what ways is this a “perfect” crime?
4. What details does Poe include to show Montresor as a cold-blooded killer? Do you think his portrayal is effective? Why or why not?
5. What method of narration does Poe use for this story? Why do you think he chose this method?
6. Describe the overall mood that Poe creates in the story. In what way does the mood contribute to the story’s suspense?
7. How does Poe create the mood? Point to specific examples throughout the story to support your answer.
8. What impact does the Carnival setting have on the mood of the story?
9. Paraphrase: Paraphrasing is putting a text into your own words. Unlike a summary, a paraphrase does not highlight the main points of the text. It restates a passage to make it clearer.

Paraphrase the following quotations:

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.	I must punish the person, but I must not get caught or have any bad consequences. A wrong isn't righted if the avenger gets caught. It also isn't righted unless the object of the revenge knows who is taking revenge and why.
“The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge.”	
There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time.	
From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size.	
Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. <i>In pace requiescat!</i>	

10. Think about how Poe creates different moods in the story. Read each passage below and, in the box on the right, identify the mood. Then underline words and phrases within the passage that help create that mood.

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.	Mood:
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<p>A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated—I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed—I aided—I surpassed them in volume and in strength.</p>	
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11. Fifty years have elapsed between the events of the story and the time that Montresor narrates them. Why do you think he chooses to tell his story such a long time after the events occurred instead of right after they happened? Do you think Montresor's life after the events of the story gave him an enriched perspective into what happened?