

# The Cask of Amontillado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Adapted for the stage by KT Turner  
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## **CAST**

Montresor, male

Fortunato, male

Echo 1, any

Echo 2, any

Echo 3, any

Echo 4, any

Echo 5, male subconscious of Montresor

## **Setting**

Italy during Carnival season

Mid to late 1800s, or now.

*Montresor stands alone, masked. ECHOS mill about him silently, keeping their distance, but staying close.*

**MONTRESOR**

Injury upon injury from Fortunato I took as best I could, but he ventured upon insult, and I vowed revenge.

**ECHO 1**

*(whispers)* Revenge...

**ECHO 2**

*(louder)* Revenge...

**MONTRESOR**

*(BOLD)* I would be avenged! But I must steer clear of risks...

**ECHO 3**

One must punish but punish with impunity.

**ECHO 4**

*(warning)* A wrong is not corrected when punishment overtakes the corrector...

**MONTRESOR**

But it is equally uncorrected when the avenger fails to make himself known as such to the one who has done the wrong....

It must be understood that neither by word nor by deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile was at the thought of his demise...

**ECHO 1**

Revenge...

**ECHO 3**

Impunity...

**ECHO 2**

Fortunato...

**MONTRESOR**

Fortunato had a weak point, although he was a man to be respected and even feared. The Italian prided himself as a connoisseur of wines. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit,

and like his countrymen, Fortunato was a quack in paintings and gemmery -- but in the matter of old wines, he was sincere. I did not differ from him materially, in that respect. I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself and bought largely whenever I could.

**ECHO 1**

Revenge...

**ECHO 2**

Punish...

**ECHO 3**

Impunity...

**ECHO 4**

Fortunato!

*ECHOES pause to reveal carnival masks. The mood becomes lively. They chatter and laugh and dance in pairs. Echo 5, the subconscious of Montresor (and wearing the same mask), enters from the shadows. This echo will narrate action as it happens.*

**ECHO 5**

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He approached me with excessive warmth, for he'd been drinking too much. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have stopped wringing his hand.

**MONTRESOR**

My dear Fortunato! How remarkably well you are looking!

**FORTUNATO**

My dear Montresor!

**MONTRESOR**

I have received a cask of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts.

**FORTUNATO**

How? Amontillado? A cask? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!

**MONTRESOR**

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

**FORTUNATO**

Amontillado!

**MONTRESOR**

I have my doubts...

**ECHO 1**

Amontillado...

**MONTRESOR**

...and I must satisfy them.

**ECHO 2**

Amontillado...

**MONTRESOR**

As you are engaged, I am on my way to visit Luchresi. If anyone has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me --

**FORTUNATO**

Come, let us go.

**MONTRESOR**

Go where?

**FORTUNATO**

To your vaults.

**MONTRESOR**

My friend, no. I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. And I perceive you are afflicted by the cold. Luchresi --

**FORTUNATO**

Let us go! The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon.... And Luchresi? He cannot distinguish Amontillado from sherry.

*ECHOES 1-4 retreat to shadows.*

**ECHO 5**

And with that, I suffered him to hurry me to vaults of my palazzo. Before leaving, I had done my diligence to make sure the house was empty. Thus, at length we had come together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

**FORTUNATO**

*(coughing)* The... the... the cask.

**MONTRESOR**

It is further on.... Come. We will go back. Your health is precious. You are a man to be missed. This trip will make you ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi...

**FORTUNATO**

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

**MONTRESOR**

True -- true. How's this? A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps.

*They drink.*

**ECHO 3**

Amontillado

**ECHO 4**

Amontillado

**FORTUNATO**

These vaults are extensive.

**MONTRESOR**

The Montresors were a great and numerous family.

**FORTUNATO**

*(labored and drunkenly)* I forget your arms and... and motto.

**MONTRESOR**

A huge human foot, in an azure field, treads a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel. The motto emblazoned reads "Nemo me impune lacessit."

**ECHO 5**

That is to say, "No one challenges me with impunity."

**FORTUNATO**

Good, good!

**ECHO 5**

Nitre salts clung to every surface; from the moist walls to the piled skeletons. After another drink, his eyes flashed with a fierce light, and I... Well my fancy began to grow. As we walked, we drank and discussed my *masonic* background. At length, we passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descended again. We arrived at a deep crypt in which there was another at the rear, less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead. At the far wall, there was yet a smaller recess, in depth of about four feet, in width of three. In the wall there were two iron stables set apart but two feet. Hanging from one was a small chain...

**MONTRESOR**

Proceed. Herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi --

**FORTUNATO**

He is an ignoramus! (*Enters niche unsteadily. Comes to nothing; looks around, confused*)

*ECHOES* reappear slowly as *MONTRESOR* quickly shackles *FORTUNATO* about the waist.

**ECHO 1**

Amontillado

**ECHO 2**

Revenge

**ECHO 3**

Punish

**ECHO 4**

Impunity

**FORTUNATO**

The Amontillado! (*not recovered*)

**MONTRESOR**

Yes. The Amontillado...

**ECHO 5**

At this, I busied myself with a pile of bones wherein I uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With the aid of my trowel, I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in 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...

**ECHO 1**

Revenge...

**ECHO 2**

I will be avenged...

**ECHO 3**

Punish with impunity...

**ECHO 4**

*(mocking)* Amontillado...

**ECHO 5**

I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth. The cry I heard was followed by a long obstinate silence and then a furious shaking of chain. As the chain rattled, I rested until it was still. I then resumed through the seventh tier without interruption. I ventured to peer over the mason-work...

*FORTUNATO screams. MONTRESOR falls back at first and then begins to match the screams, and even goads them on. MONTRESOR continues to build.*

**ECHO 2**

Amontillado...

**ECHO 3**

Impunity...

**ECHO 5**

I had but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled beneath its weight. When at last it was at least partially in position, a low laugh came out from the niche that erects the hairs on my head. It was succeeded by such a sad voice, that I had great difficulty recognizing as the great Fortunato.

**FORTUNATO**

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!

**MONTRESOR**

The Amontillado.



**FORTUNATO**

He he he... 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 be gone...

**MONTRESOR**

Yes. Let us be gone.

*Beat.*

**FORTUNATO**

*For the love of God, Montresor!*

**MONTRESOR**

Yes. For the love of God!

Fortunato!

Fortunato?

*ECHOES begin to close in, frenzied.*

**ECHO 1**

Revenge...

**ECHO 2**

Amontillado...

**ECHO 3**

For the love of God...

**ECHO 4**

Over our wine...

**ECHO 2**

Amontillado...

**ECHO 1**

Punish...

**ECHO 3**

For the love of God!

**ECHO 4**

A very good joke indeed...

**ECHO 1**

Impunity...

**ECHO 2**

Amontillado...

**MONTRESOR & ECHO 5**

FORTUNATO!

*Beat.*

**ECHO 5**

When no answer came a thrust a torch through the remaining opening and let it fall within. There came forth only a ringing of bells. My heart grew sick. I hastened to make an end of my labor and fled. Only the sound of my throbbing heart and the jingling of bells in my ears. Sometimes, I believe I can still hear them, and his gentle call.

**FORTUNATO & ECHO 2**

Amontillado...

**ECHO 5**

Against the new masonry I had re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century, no mortal has disturbed them.

**MONTRESOR**

*In pace requiescat.*

**ALL ECHOES**

May he rest in peace.

***END OF PLAY***