

“The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar A. Poe – Questions

1. What do you think Montresor is thinking as he says, “*In pace requiescat?*” To whom could Montresor be talking, fifty years after the murder, and for what reason?
2. Part of the story’s 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? Which of Montresor’s comments to the unsuspecting Fortunato are ironic?
3. The story is full of other examples of irony. Think about these uses of irony and how they made you feel: Fortunato’s name, Fortunato’s costume, the fact that a carnival takes place in the streets above the murder.
4. Think about whether or not Montresor is a reliable narrator. Do any details suggest that he might have imagined “the thousand injuries” and the insult – or even the whole story? Can you find evidence in the story to support Montresor’s claim that Fortunato did in fact injure and insult him?
5. Is this just a gripping horror story told only for entertainment, or do you think it reveals some truth about life and the way people sometimes behave?
6. What do you think of the way the story ends? Do writers have an obligation to punish murderers for their fictional crimes?
7. Some people feel that violence in fiction and on TV results in real-life violence. How do you feel about this?
8. According to Montresor, what makes a perfect crime?
9. How does Montresor lure Fortunato into the catacombs?
10. What does Montresor admit is his motive for this crime?
11. According to Montresor, what kind of person is Fortunato?
12. What evidence suggests that Montresor committed the perfect crime?

Explain all answers:

13. If Robin loses her passport, is her trip to Japan *precluded*?
14. Should bank robbers be free to do their work with *impunity*?
15. Do you expect *retribution* if you never do your homework?

