

# Character of montresor in the cask of amontillado

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“ The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” The meaning of this statement is that without a full expression of what must be said between communicators, the compatibility they hold can lead the members of the relationship in a negative direction. This quote by George Bernard Shaw proves true in Edgar Allan Poe’s “ The Cask of Amontillado.” Montresor and Fortunato’s affiliation is doomed because they both lack proper communication skills, resulting in their individual negative characteristics to monopolize their minds and actions.

Edgar Allan Poe begins the narrative with a gut wrenching and characteristic revealing pledge from Montresor: “ 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;” (Poe, 108). It is clear that Montresor’s hunger for revenge is a product of his pride. He is so insulted that Fortunato has the audacity to mock him that he vows to end his existence. Montresor hates to be mocked, so instead of resolving his personal issue with Fortunato by explaining this to him, he instead jumps the gun and seeks revenge. This translates into how millions of broken hearts and terminated friendships everywhere could be avoided with a simple conversation. What is most regrettable about this is that Montresor most likely does not believe that he can talk to Fortunato. If he made the attempt to speak to him maybe he could have terminated the conflict and prolonged their relationship. Who knows, the possibility remains that they could have become friends. However, all the blame cannot be placed on the shoulders of

Montresor, because Fortunato plays a vital role in the relationship's demise, as well.

Like Montresor, Fortunato's pride and ego is extremely strong, making him an large target for destruction. Although it is not revealed, it can easily be assumed that his ego is the reason as to why he berates Montresor. In fact, Montresor even mentions his pride being a weakness: " 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 practise 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," (Poe, 108). Because he can maintain a somewhat rational mind on the matter, Montresor is able to differentiate his adoration for fine wine from Fortunato's. It is clear to Montresor that Fortunato's boastful pride for wine makes him vulnerable to his tricks, whereas Montresor's appreciation for wine is moderate, allowing him to use it as bait. Further along, he uses this information to entice Fortunato.

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

" Luchesi 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. Luchesi——”

“ 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 Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado.” (Poe, 109). Here, Fortunato is blinded so thoroughly by his ego that he almost becomes Montresor’s puppet, allowing him to use his verbal deception to dance Fortunato all the way down to his dungeon. Montresor mentions Luchesi because he is aware of Fortunato’s egotistic competitiveness. He reels him in through means of flattery, telling him that Luchesi’s taste for wine is inferior to Fortunato’s. If Fortunato wasn’t so full of himself, he would see that Montresor is just egging him on, but he falls for his trap. Even when Montresor uses his forms of reverse psychology, like mentioning the “ engagement” and the “ cold,” Fortunato cannot tell that

this is just a type of manipulation. Without seeing the bigger picture, Fortunato eats up every word of Montresor's act as truth and is eventually killed.

Every bond starts and ends with some form of contact. The condition of a relationship can only be controlled by means of proper communication. Without a precise comprehension of what is being communicated, the relationship will be led down a course of disbandment. This is further expressed in the conflict between Montresor and Fortunato in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado." Dominated by pride and egoism, the two lead each other onto a path of revenge and selfishness, while only one leaves alive.