

# A perfect place for a perfect crime: creating the impeccable setting essay

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



Mysterious and almost frightening, the stories of Edgar Allan Poe are filled with the air of tragedy. One of his unsurpassed specimens of a thriller, *The Cask of Amontillado*, creates a distressing impression of pain and sorrow spiced with the chilling legend of an awful crime. Although the writer's descriptions of places and people are almost deprived of any emotions, Poe manages to create the perfect backdrop for the perfect crime, creating mystic atmosphere and leaving all to the imagination of the reader.

It must be admitted that with his unusual gift of depicting the most petrifying environment so that it immediately rises in front of the reader's eyes, Poe creates the perfect setting in *The Cask of Amontillado* - with just a few strokes of his pen the author made the image of the gloomy cave as real as it can be. Each of the details which the two fellows encounter on their way contributes to the overall impression of the increasing fear.

The growing tension within Montresor's soul is completely evident - it oozes out onto the pages of the book and becomes visible and palpable. To prove this, it is enough to compare his relatively calm remark " I said to him - " My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts"" (Poe) with these hectic words: " For a brief moment I hesitated - I trembled" (Poe).

In addition, the timing of the crime is quite important. It is not accidental that the crime takes place as the sun sets behind the horizon. A perfect example of Poe's symbolism, this can mean several things. On the one hand, the sun

setting behind the horizon can be associated with the sunset of Fortunato's life.

On the other hand, the time setting in the story sets the right atmosphere and creates the mysterious murky environment, all shot through with something terrible to happen: " 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" (Poe).

Another piece of setting to consider in Poe's story is the venue of the crime. Adding to the overall impression of the petrifying atmosphere, the cave also triggers claustrophobic associations, another detail which is common for a number of Poe's works. Because of the closed space and the dark, morose shades of the cavern, the claustrophobic impression doubles and grips the reader: " At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious.

Its walls had been lined with human remains piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris" (Poe). Creating the air of hopelessness, Poe's story literally sends shivers down the reader's spine. A cadence of frightening details, the description makes the tension grow as the plot unwinds: " Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size". (Poe)

Imagining the setting as if the cave was right in front of his/her eyes, the reader understands that discovering the corpse would be practically impossible, which makes this crime perfect indeed.

Thus, The Cask of Amontillado offers a perfect setting for a perfect crime. With help of tiny details that inflame readers' imagination, Poe created an ideal setting for a classic thriller. Scary and intriguing, exciting and sad, The Cask of Amontillado is a real masterpiece. If a scheme for a perfect crime timed impeccably and planned flawlessly could exist, this would be Montresor's terrifying and cruel plot.

Poe, E. A. The Cask of Amontillado. n. d. Literature. org. Web.