

The cask of amontillado by edgar allen poe essay examples

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The narrator, in Poe's "the cask of Amontillado" says that he will punish Fortunato with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser." present an argument that Montresor in fact does not punish Fortunato with impunity.

This is one of those truly classic Poe stories which reveals the depth of human revenge and depravation to right a wrong which is obviously something which rankles extremely deeply. It is loosely based upon the story of Romeo and Juliet with two rival families, involving Montresor and Fortunato, two supposed friends but in their heart of hearts, they are indeed sworn enemies.

Montresor has vowed to destroy Fortunato once and for all for the various wrongs which he perceived were done to him over the years. Naturally enough, he chooses the carnival time to carry out his dastardly deed and one has to argue that the punishment meted out to Fortunato was far from appropriate as being buried alive is definitely the worse kind of death ever. Even if Montresor felt wronged by Fortunato, the retribution of burying him alive was obviously not conducive with the crime. It is a case where the man was obsessed with the ruinous invectives that the other has imposed over him and the end result is a punishment which is not one with impunity but one full of horror and bestiality.

Even as Montresor works and lures Fortunato down to his wine cellars, one has a feeling of foreboding that something is going to happen and that this happening will be worse than terrifying. Here is a prelude to what will be about to happen:

" 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."

Here we can sort of feel that something dreadful is going to happen as Montresor lures Fortunato down into the dank depths of the wine cellar to perform his dastardly deed.

Yet again one comes closer to the actual punishment when Montresor begins musing on how he will eventually bury Fortunato alive although he is constantly attempting to lure Fortunato back to safety upstairs:

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

" The nitre!" I said: see it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back here it is too late. Your cough" -

Montresor's feigning of concern for Fortunato's cough is rather hypocritical although one can also sense that the situation is turning ominous and terrifying. Undoubtedly the punishment being meted out to Fortunato will be so diabolical, so horrifying that one cannot even contemplate it.

As we arrive close to the bitter end, the situation gets tensed up and the climax being reached is something almost out of this world:

" 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 clamoured. I reechoed -- I aided -- I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still".

How Montresor can remain unmoved by the terrible deed he is carrying out is something which the human mortal cannot really comprehend. As the sounds of the chained Fortunato continue to rattle and the wall of bricks is slowly built up, the sense of tension is palpable and unbelievably gripping. Death and murder can never be a substitute punishment to what was meted out beforehand. In his actions, Montresor is doing Fortunato an incredible wrong, the ultimate wrong one can argue. The concluding lines of the story are also highly gripping when he says, ' In Pace Requiescat' which gives a finite sense to everything as a conclusion to the story. On a personal note, one feels that Fortunato received the most terrible punishment for his sins and even if he atoned for them in another world, then he deserved a second chance in this one. As for Montresor, one wonders how he lived out his last years, wracked by the guilt of the terrible deed he did. That surely demonstrates that the punishment was definitely not the appropriate one.

Works Cited:

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