

# Irony in the cask of amontillado by edgar allan poe

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The irony in “ The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe Introduction

Throughout Edgar Allan Poe’s gothic short story, “ The Cask of Amontillado”, there is obvious, subtle, verbal, and dramatic irony. According to fatherryan.org, the author’s “ Single Effect” theory in the story is pure irony, and all elements from, setting, to largely every word uttered by Montresor contribute to the ironic effect. The author uses different forms of irony to create suspense, add a sense of macabre humor, and foreshadow the story’s ending (Cummings para. 12). This discourse aims to highlight how the writer uses irony to achieve this.

## 2. Obvious Irony

There are several instances where the author uses obvious irony in the story. For instance, fatherryan.org notes that Montresor uses the word “ friend” to refer to Fortunato. Ironically, he uses this term to refer to a man that he hates so much that he wishes could be dead. Another use of irony is obviously evident in the motto on Montresor’s coat of arms. Ironically the motto is an explicit warning to Fortunato, but Fortunato does not fully comprehend this fact. Other instances where the author uses irony include when Montresor toasts to Fortunato’s long life. Additionally, the masonry dialogue is obvious to the use of irony (fatherryan.org para. 4).

## 3. Subtle Irony

The author also uses subtle irony in several instances. For instance, towards the end of the story, Montresor felt his heart had grown sick. However this was not due to the remorse he felt from the cruelty of his actions, but due to

the extreme dampness of the catacombs, which had become too much for him. The subtle irony is also evident almost throughout the story's dialogue. The story's conclusion is evidently ironic in the sense that irony fails to be possible any longer when Fortunato is finally aware of everything that is going on (fatherryan. org para. 5).

#### 4. Other Uses of Irony

The author uses verbal and dramatic irony in numerous instances in the story to develop suspense, add some sense of macabre humor, and foreshadow the story's ending. This is evident in the title, Fortunato's name, Fortunato's costume, and the author's reference to mansions. The story's title, cask, means a wine barrel. It is derived from a similar root word that forms casket, which means coffin. Therefore, the story's title figuratively represents his casket. Another example of irony in the story is in Fortunato's name. The name literally translates to luck or good fortune in Italian. Ironically, Fortunato is always unfortunate and headed to his death. Similarly, Fortunato's costume is ironic because he dresses like a court jester, yet his festive outfit is a contradiction to the ghastly fate awaiting him. On many occasions, the bell on Fortunato's hat jingles, a rather pleasant comic touch by the author. Last but not least, the irony is evident in Poe's short story in how he refers to masons. Fortunato enquires from Montresor if he is a mason, referring to a member of the Freemasonry. Indeed, Montresor admits that he is a mason. Nevertheless, he uses the word to imply someone whose profession is building with mortar and stone (because he shall be building a " tomb," stone wall, for Fortunato (Cummings

para. 12; Lorceher para. 17).

## 5. Conclusion

Throughout Edgar Allan Poe's gothic short story, "The Cask of Amontillado", there is obvious, subtle, verbal, and dramatic irony. The author uses different forms of irony to create suspense, add a sense of macabre humor, and foreshadow the story's ending.