

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

A Chamber Opera



Adapted from the Short Story
by Edgar Allan Poe

Book and Lyrics by:
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Music and Additional Lyrics by:
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MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act One

SCENE I: A dressing room in the home of Montresor
Sometime around 6 p.m.
SOLILOQUY

SCENE II: Outside the village café on the piazza
CARNIVAL

SCENE III: Inside the village café
BUCO NEL MURO
SAVOUR THE BOUQUET
THE ITALIANS LOVE THEIR WINE - DRINK UP BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

SCENE IV: Alley behind the village café
YOUNG LOVERS
DO YOU STILL THINK OF ME?
AMONTILLADO

SCENE V: Living room in the Montresor estate
YOU NEED ME
AMONTILLADO (reprise)

INTERMISSION

Act Two

SCENE VI: Inside the village café
THE BALLAD OF FORTUNATO

SCENE VII: Catacombs beneath the Montresor estate
DESCENT
CARNIVAL AT TWILIGHT
BUILDING A WALL

SCENE VIII: The dressing room in Montresor's estate, many years later
CARNIVAL AT TWILIGHT (reprise)
EPILOGUE

CASK OF AMONTILLADO

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Montresor:

(54 years old) An importer of various small goods of no real distinction. He is descended from a once powerful family that is now without any real wealth and has left a decaying mansion and tombs as its only legacy. He would appear to be frail, wiry but would probably feel much older. He has known Fortunato for many years. He lives alone with a few ragged, disloyal servants. Smart but not brilliant, with little broad or practicable knowledge. (Baritone Voice)

Fortunato:

(48 years old) A voluminous, overbearing ignoramus. Not more than average intelligence but an unflappable schemer. Amusing to people for short periods of time and essentially harmless. Talks up a good storm but is mostly full of hot air - which in itself may be what is remotely attractive about him. He is employed by the local government as a minor officer to help regulate the traffic of imports and exports. He over-indulges in food and drink. People are not revolted by him but more laugh (not mock) at him in disbelief. (Tenor Voice)

Luchesi:

(44 years old) Local businessman, most likely runs a hardware store or drugstore. Very easy-going, enjoys life. Successful, but not wildly so, just enjoys his work and life. Not into the over-indulgence of Fortunato but not against tying one on every now and then. Medium in build. Most people in the town know him and like him. Smarter-than-average, good common sense. (Tenor Voice)

Anthony:

(mid-twenties) A young businessman, possibly an apprentice for Luchesi. Fairly well built and attractive. Average intelligence. Basically, a good guy who also enjoys a good night on the town. (Bass Voice)

Michael:

(Late teens) Very thin and acts like a young, impetuous kid. Overabounding with energy. Works as a hire hand doing physical labor. Could be Anthony's younger brother. Most likely a well-loved kid by the town's people who know he is just going through a stage. Not exceptionally bright but very funny in an innocent way. (Tenor Voice)

Angelica:

(Mid-40's) Saucy, shrewd, good-natured tavern owner. Can be kind and manipulative at the same time to get her patrons to spend their money on drink. (Mezzo Voice)

Various townspeople

All voice types

CASK OF AMONTILLADO

Orchestra

Flute, Alto Flute, Piccolo

Trumpet, Flugelhorn

Horn in F

Bass Trombone

Violin

Viola

Cello

Piano

Percussion: drum kit, timpani, tubular bells, triangle, glockenspiel, cymbals, congas,
floor toms, metal chain, Mark Tree, maracas, castanets, vibraslap, bass drum

CASK OF AMONTILLADO

PLOT SYNOPSIS

SCENE I:

In his dressing room, Montresor sings of his on-going battle of wit and mind with Fortunato and schemes on his plan for revenge. SOLILOQUY

SCENE II:

Outside the local cafe in the village palazzo immediately following the previous scene. Townspeople celebrating carnival time. CARNIVAL

SCENE III:

Inside the local cafe, Buco Nel Muro. Angelica welcomes everyone to her tavern; more celebrating by townspeople; Fortunato is running his wine drinking scam; Montresor comments on the townspeople's foibles. BUCO NEL MURO, SAVOUR THE BOUQUET, THE ITALIANS LOVE THEIR WINE, DRINK UP BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

SCENE IV:

Montresor 'accidentally' comes upon Fortunato stumbling drunkenly down an alley. Montresor coaxes Fortunato (by reverse psychology and playing to Fortunato's inflated ego) to verify the authenticity of a case of Amontillado he has in his vaults. YOUNG LOVERS, DO YOU STILL THINK OF ME, AMONTILLADO

SCENE V:

Montresor invites Fortunato into his home. During their discussion, Fortunato tries to extort Montresor into paying him money to ease the red tape involved in importing goods. Montresor almost loses his composure (and his chance for revenge) but woos Montresor back again with reverse psychology and the thrill of tasting the Amontillado. YOU NEED ME, AMONTILLADO (reprise)

SCENE VI:

Inside the village café. THE BALLAD OF FORTUNATO

SCENE VII:

Montresor is luring Fortunato deeper into the catacombs to the vault where the Amontillado is 'stored' and to his demise. DESCENT, CARNIVAL AT TWILIGHT, BUILDING A WALL

SCENE VIII:

Montresor reflects on his actions of many years ago. CARNIVAL AT TWILIGHT, EPILOGUE

SCENE I

(Lights are off. Music to overture begins. Slowly lights begin to rise on Montresor as he is moving about in his dressing room. He is playing with a word -- a name -- in front of an imaginary audience which only exists in his mind. The music to "SOLILOQUY" begins.)

SOLILOQUY

MONT: (spoken) Fortunato... Fortunato... Don Fortunato (plays with the pronunciation) Great Fortunato (again, trying to feel it out) Come within ...Fortunato (finally gets to it) Fortunato (repeats it twice to his satisfaction) Fortunato.

A THOUSAND INJURIES OF FORTUNATO
I'D BORNE THE BEST I COULD
A THOUSAND MOCKERIES OF THAT FOOL
I'D TAKEN AND WITHSTOOD
BUT WHEN HE VENTURED UPON INSULT TO ME,
HE CROSSED A SOLEMN LINE
I BEGAN PLANNING REVENGE THAT SOON WOULD BE MINE

IT'S VERY DARK AND DISTURBING,
WHAT THE BROODING MIND CAN SEE
IN DRIVEN CONTEMPLATION,
WHEN THE SOUL'S UNBURDENED AND FREE

BUT YOU WHO KNOW SO WELL THE NATURE OF MY SOUL
SENSE MY MIND'S EVERY THOUGHT, KNOW ITS CONTROL
KNOW MY SOLEMN PATIENCE, KNOW I'D NOT UTTER A THREAT
KNOW MY SIMPLE BRILLIANCE, KNOW I'D HAVE MY REVENGE –
NOT JUST YET
BUT IN TIME.

YOU NEED NOT KNOW THE NATURE OF THE VERY WORDS OF HE
RECALL YOUR EVERY MOMENT OF PAIN AND BURN THEM INTO ME

THE WRONG REMAINS UNREDRESSED
IF THAT FOOL IGNORES HIS CRIME
HE SHALL SERVE HIS FATE EACH DAY
UNTILL THE END OF TIME

"BUT WHERE IS FORTUNATO?", YOU WANT LEARNED
DOES HE HIDE BENEATH EVERY STONE YET UNTURNED?
DOES HE SEEK HARBOR IN OTHERS HE HAS SPURNED?
FEARING THE WRATH HE MUST REALIZE HE HAS EARNED?

NO!!!!

YOU KNOW THE INNER WORKINGS OF MY MIND ALL TOO WELL
AND KNOW THE KEY TO THIS REVENGE OF WHICH I TELL
KNOW NOT BY WORD OR DEED
SHOULD HE DOUBT MY GOOD WILL
KNOW I STILL SMILE AND PROCEED
COURTING HIM EVER STILL
KNOW HE COULD NEVER HEED
THIS PLAN I SHALL FULFILL
KNOW YOU SHALL NEVER READ
OF THIS INVITATION TO A KILL

(Montresor regains his composure, projects a warm and friendly disposition, and exits.)

SCENE II

(Lights up on townspeople in the village square of a typical Italian village, outside the café.)

CARNIVAL

WELCOME, WELCOME
TO THE TOWN OF MONTOBERE
IN THE HOLIDAY SEASON,
THE WARM TOWN OF MONTOBERE
IN THE CARNIVAL SEASON
IN THE MONTH OF MARCH ~~JUNE~~
IT'S THE CARNIVAL SEASON
IN THE FRIENDLY TOWN OF MONTOBERE
WHICH DOESN'T EXIST FOR ANY GOOD REASON
EVERYONE KNOWS IT'S NOWHERE

IT'S A CRUMBLING RUIN FULL OF BRUNO AND VIC'S
A VERY SANE TOWN FULL OF LUNATICS
RUN BY A MAN PLAYING POLITICS

WELCOME, WELCOME
TO THE TOWN OF MONTOBERE
TO THE JOY OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON
THE SMELL OF THE CARNIVAL SEASON
IN THE OLD TOWN OF MONTOBERE

A BARBAROUS, GLUTTONOUS TIME FOR US ALL
ADULTEROUS, RAPTUROUS CRIME TO OUR FALL
OH, WHAT A MESS WHAT A BLESSED SPRAWL

SUPERFLUOUS, SENSUOUS, SHINING DELIGHT
RIDICULOUS, MAGICAL SHRINE TO UNITE
COME WITH US ALL TO THE CARNIVAL TONIGHT

(music underscores)

SERVANT1: (Not seeing each other, bumps into another servant (Bump . Both scream) Ahhh! Gui--Ahn--Guissepie!
W h - - Wha- What are you doing here?)

SERVANT2: And I suppose I should be asking of you that exact question? Did not I, acting on behalf of our
master, Don Montresor, give you strict orders to remain at the house?!

SERVANT1: Well, why ye--, (reconsiders) well, maybe! I understood him to give the orders to all of his
servants.

SERVANT2: I..uh..had some daughters to chew, eh-- some chores to do for him this evening.

SERVANT1: At the carnival?

SERVANT2: Well no, not at the carnival, but the carnival just happened to be between the town and home...
(sweats a little)

SERVANT1: (Shoots a "tell me another one" look)

SERVANT2: (Struggling to come up with a good excuse) well, alright, the carnival's not exactly between the
home and the town, per se. I mean the town as we know it is maybe a little to the west, about a
mile, or two, you're right, but this is not an altogether untraveled route...

SERVANT1: (Still not buying the story)

SERVANT2: but, well, look, could you give me a little help here? --This is hard. I guess, I just didn't want to be the only one left at home either. Everyone took off the second the door slammed on Montresor's hindquarters. Except for Angelo and Francesca, who are mutually slamming each other's hindquarters.

SERVANT2: It should do us no harm. Don Montresor has paid us little heed, or money for that matter, for the past few months. I hardly think he'd know if we were gone for more than a week!

SERVANT2: True, true. But let us not waste our thoughts on the old man. The night is young and there are still a number of spritely young women to be chased, spanked and generally debauched this evening. (Crowd opens up. Music lifts from underscoring back to the main melody. The servants step up.)

WELCOME, WELCOME
TO THE TOWN OF MONTOBERE
WHICH DOESN'T EXIST FOR ANY GOOD REASON
EVERYONE KNOWS IT'S NOWHERE
A CRUMBLING SLUM OF ITALIAN HICKS
RUN BY A MAYOR AND OTHER SUCH PRICKS
WITH SWELTERING HEAT AND VORACIOUS TICKS

THE TOURISTS ARE LOADED AND LOADED WITH CASH
BY THE END OF THE DAY YOU'RE TRAIPSING THROUGH TRASH
PLENTY OF YOU MEN ARE LOOKING FOR THRILLS
IN OVER THEIR HEAD AND RUN FOR THE HILLS

INDULGE IN YOUR FANTASY JUST NAME YOUR PRICE
HE WANTS IT ALL WITH BOTH OF YOU TWICE
OH WHAT A CHANCE TO LIVE OUR EVERY VICE!

WELCOME, WELCOME
THE CLERGY ARE BOOZING AND CRUISING LIKE PROS
WELCOME, WELCOME
THE MEN PUT ON DRESSES AND PRANCE IN THE SHOWS
WELCOME, WELCOME
EVERYONE SCREAMING AND TRADING BLOWS

THE MIRTH AND THE MADNESS THE FANCIFUL FLIGHT
GIVE BIRTH TO THE RASHNESS, THE PHYSICAL DELIGHT
COME WITH US ALL TO THE CARNIVAL TONIGHT

VIVA ITALIANS
VIVA ITALIANS
IN THEIR EXCESSES
IN THEIR EXCESSES
COME WITH US ALL TO THE CARNIVAL TONIGHT
THE CARNIVAL, TONIGHT

SCENE III

(The village gates and wall swing open and recede upstage. Stage left is a table in front of a local tavern and overlooking the village square. Four people are sitting around it: Luchesi, Fortunato, Michael, and Anthony. All are in colorful garb but Fortunato looks especially silly wearing a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by a floppy conical hat and bells, much like a proverbial lampshade. Over to the side being busy is Angelica, the innkeeper. The tavern is busy and people are loudly having a good time. Montresor is sitting quietly, unseen, (perhaps beside a pillar) in a corner of the tavern.)

ANGELICA: (She's bustling around from table to table. Taking empty glasses, wiping a table, seating some people, pointing to an empty table for another guest, fending off a pinch, etc.) Ahh, carnival season. My (almost) favorite time of year. Everyone's drinking, the wine is flowing, lovers are loving, new lovers are found, (acknowledging) old loves are lost (shrugs), which helps with the drinking, and I get to make a bit of cash. Nice place, huh?

BUCO NEL MURO

(boisterously) Welcome to *Buco Nel Muro*

COME DOWN AROUND THAT CORNER
JUST OFF THE VILLAGE SQUARE
ITS DOWN THE STREET AROUND A TURN
AND VOILA, YOU'RE THERE
A LITTLE PLACE I CALL MY OWN
THOUGH NOTHING MUCH TO BRAG
IT'S A HELL OF A PLACE, BUT ITS MY OWN SPACE
BUCO NEL MURO!

FORTUNATO: (Bellowing.) Gentlemen! The time has come, place your wager! Is there a man or woman who is man enough to put forth a challenge? (Hoots and hollers.) Come forth now. Is there anyone? If so, let him step up. (Whispers out of the side of his mouth to Michael.) How's the gate you little fool?

MICHAEL: Fair, sir. Mostly loose change and a few small wagers from some of the tourists.

ANGELICA:

WHERE MEN RELIVE THEIR GLORIES
A PLACE THAT HAS NO STYLE
WHERE WOMEN CHANGE THEIR STORIES
FORGET LIFE FOR A WHILE
IT'S NOT THAT MUCH, BUT ITS ALL MINE
I MAKE YOU FEEL AT HOME
FEEL RIGHT AT EASE, PAY YOUR BILL IF YOU PLEASE
BUCO NEL MURO

A WOMAN IN A MAN'S JOB
YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY
IT DOES HAVE ITS UPS AND IT DOES HAVE ITS DOWNS
(spoken) But is that something I really have to say?
I NEED TO HAVE A TRICK OR TWO
AND A FEW MORE UP MY SLEEVE
BUT NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS WOULD I EVER DECEIVE

I MIGHT IMPLY
OR SUGGEST
DROP A HINT
A FRIENDLY JEST
I MIGHT INSINUATE

THEY HAVE A CHANCE
THEY MAY GET LUCKY
TO MORE THAN A DANCE

(Burlesque style)

A LITTLE THIS (flashes a body part)
A LITTLE THAT (flashes another body part)
IS ALL YOU NEED TO CHARM A MAN

SOME MORE OF THIS (flashes a body part)
SOME MORE OF THAT (flashes another body part)
IT'S WORKED SINCE TIME BEGAN

A WOMAN IN A MAN'S JOB
HAS TO USE WHATEVER SHE'S GOT
TO GET HIM TO SPEND SOME EXTRA BUCKS
NOTHIN' SINISTER ABOUT MY LITTLE PLOT

IT'S JUST THIS (points to her cleavage)
IT'S JUST THAT (gives a sexy wink/pose)
IT WORKS EVERY TIME
THIS (flashes a leg)
AND THAT (strikes another sex pose)
SO EASY, IT SHOULD BE A CRIME

A LITTLE FLATTERY, A LITTLE CHIT-CHATTERY
LOOSENS THEIR GRIP ON THEIR MONEY
I LET THEM THINK THEY HAVE A CHANCE
IT'S SAD, IF IT WASN'T SO FUNNY

FORT: Perhaps my reputation has gotten around! (Door opens, two patrons stumble in, Carnival music heard. When the door slams shut, Carnival music stops) It appears that greater odds are needed to coax my neighbors' dormant hands from their gilded pockets. Is Don Montresor here? I thought as much. Then since I am running unchallenged in this, the 9th annual wine connoisseurs' contest of Montobere, possibly the degree of difficulty needs to be raised to attract some interest!

ANGELICA:
SO COME TO MY SMALL KINGDOM
BEWARE OF WHAT YOU LUST
ITS NEVER GONNA HAPPEN
AND YOUR JEWELS WILL START TO RUST
WHEN YOU STUMBLE OUT MY DOOR
TO FIND YOUR WAY BACK HOME
BY CLOSING TIME, YOU'LL HAVE SPENT YOUR LAST DIME
AT BUCO NEL MURO

FORT: Not only will I correctly identify the region the wine is from, but its owner and year as well. (Uninterested murmuring. Again, to Michael.) It appears that my reputation has gotten around.

MICHAEL: (Nonchalantly.) Everyone knows a cheat, sir.

SAVOUR THE BOUQUET

FORT: RELISH THE BOUQUET
YOU CAN'T LEARN THIS FROM A DIPLOMA
LET IT BREATHE
SAVOR THE AROMA

PERSON 1: What about the lineage?

FORT: And that for a price.

PERSON 1: 1,500 lira!

FORT: My lord! My lord! I cannot hear! My lord, what have you done?!

PERSON 2: 2,000 !

FORT: Everything is so faint, so murky, cluttered noise!

PERSON 1: 5,000!

FORT: Save praise to you most almighty, it is but a partial affliction; what little—I thank you for what little.

PERSON 2: 10,000

FORT: Yer on! (Pause.) Ah the defiance, the challenge.

HOLD THE GLASS BY THE STEM
GIVE IT A SWIRL
THIS IS NOT CHILD'S PLAY
LET THE FLAVOR UNFURL

PERSON 1: Shaddup and drink for chrissakes!

FORT: (After an elaborate series of motions he drinks.) Bordeaux... '68... from the crop of the Zottola Family. Could it be, dare I say, a (Gasps from audience. After savoring,) (to those who bet against him.) And now you know, my contemptuous doubters, why so many have benefited from backing my palette.

PERSON 2: For sure! I gathered nearly 20,000 liras on the Travesio competition.

FORT: A princely sum!

LUCESI: Second only to what the judges must have made.

ANTHONY: If it wasn't for these gullible tourists, he'd make no money at all

FORT: Angelica, a round for everyone on me. (Cheers. Angelica gives him a stone-cold stare.) Now! (Claps twice, impertinently. Angelica claps twice in return to mock him and then holds out his hand gesturing for money.) Pah! I balk at so insolent a suggestion. (No movement.) Here! (Throws money, still no movement.) You ungrateful slob. (Stews, throws out even more money. Angelica takes it and as he walks past, he is held by Fortunato.) Water it down. (Fortunato turns to a table stage left where his three acquaintances sit.) Well yet another unopposed victor y. I imagine Montresor is still quivering under his sheets in fear. Do you suppose he lives in the dim glow of his one chance victory at the competition, or

is it the fear of embarrassment that resolves him not to even appear at this challenge?

ANTHONY: Oh, clearly fear.

LUCESI: Or the fact that you switched the time of the contest last night and did not tell him.

FORT: It's a small town, word travels. I have said it before, the man lives off of long dead family reputation and the current good graces of others

LUCESI: Like yourself.

FORT: He has burdened them many a time but do I show annoyance? Do I not show compassion?

ANTHONY: No

FORT: He could not have made it in the world I have come up in.

ANTHONY: Fortunato, sewer rats have not made it in the world you've come up in.

FORT: (Laughs) Luchesi but there are no favors; no relying on long dead ancestors. I have made it on my strength and wits.

MICHAEL: What's wit?

FORT: Its elusive -- shut up. Take my success in the political field.

LUCESI: Clerk to the Assistant Import Inspector?

FORT: Do not burden me with titles. You know who runs that office. Better, what of my authority of the wines. A bourgeoisie sport. There is more guile in my toenail than in his whole self.

MICHAEL: What 's guile?

FORT: It's a gift -- shut up! I purport right here and right now that through my own skill and shrewdness I have amassed a winery that would embarrass Montresor.

ANTHONY: Amassed or embezzled, Fortunato?

FORT: Some were gifts.

LUCESI: Yes, that famous wine cellar. And when shall we be invited to tour it? We only get to sample a small, chosen selection on those few times when you have been gracious enough to invite us over. Let's see, it will be eight years in--

FORT: Luchesi, (Pauses on the previous comment, finally, remarks coyly.) are you doubting my stock or my skill.

LUCESI: Doubt you! No, no my dear friend, never "doubt". "Wonder". One just wonders when you will share your prime acquisitions with us.

ANTHONY: Possibly he's been collecting so much he hasn't had time to sample each and decide which would be most befitting to share?

FORT: Ahhh, I see, you are doubting my generosity?

LUCESI: Well, no—

ANTHONY: Well, yes—

FORT: Or is it you are doubting the existence of . . . (ends in an outraged and intimidating tone. Then, seeing an opening, pounces) Your thoughts on this Michael?

MICHAEL: I, ah, well . . . um . . .

FORT: Profound. Well that clears it up. (Suddenly with open benevolence.) My friends, I wager that I can identify any of the wines that our gracious host Angelica has in her stock just by its aroma.

ANTHONY: 2,000 lira says you can't

FORT: Done!

MICHAEL: Hey Angelica! Bring over a bottle of wine but cover-up the label with that rag on your arm. (Angelica does. Michael cautiously picks up the bottle almost afraid to touch the filthy towel.) Gee, I said cover it Angelica, not infect it. (Returns it to Angelica who opens the bottle and offers the cork to Fortunato, who gallantly waves it away. Angelica pours. Fortunato plays with the glass very melodramatically and then inhales.)

FORT: WHAT MOST FOLKS DON'T KNOW
THE SECRET'S HOW YOU POUR
RELEASE ALL ITS SECRETS
LET THE NOTES SOAR

ANTHONY: The moment is here, sound the trumpets please!

FORT: Ah yes, a bit dry but with a somewhat satisfying bouquet. This one would be simple for a child. I'd say it is a Port, from the northeastern part of the country, probably Udina or Travesio. (The three all gasp/chuckle in amazement and exasperation.)

ANTHONY: I didn't think he could do it.

LUCESI: (Droll) How surprising.

FORT: Boys, this reminds me of a joke. Did I ever tell you about the time Montresor .. (His voice fades as Montresor begins to sing, "THE ITALIANS LOVE THEIR WINE".

THE ITALIANS LOVE THEIR WINE

MONT:
THE ITALIANS LOVE THEIR WINE
WITH DEEP FELT SINCERITY, BY THE GALLONS AS THEY DINE
BUT MY BROTHERS CAN'T DISTINGUISH A CHAMPAGNE FROM MOONSHINE
WHICH COULD EXPLAIN OUR CURRENT STATE OF POLITICAL DECLINE
THE ITALIANS KNOW LITTLE ABOUT THEIR WINE

BUT IT'S FOR FUN, ISN'T IT? THAT'S WHY DRINKING'S A BALL
THE MERRIMENT, THE EXCITEMENT
THE FORGETTING OF IT ALL

THE ITALIANS LOVE THEIR WINE

Montresor and the music fade into the background and attention is once again shifted to the four in the tavern.

FORT: (His voice fades back in) ..so she says, Montresor, if I knew the sap would run so soon I wouldn't have tapped the tree! (Laughs loudly--stony silence comes from the rest of the table). And what are your problems?

LUCESI: Nothing, sorry. (Looks down.)

ANTHONY: Why must you always mock Montresor? I mean, I don't love the guy, but his name doesn't deserve to be tagged on so crude a story as that. Don't you think you've caused him enough public embarrassment?

MICHAEL: (Almost laughing to himself.) Still, ...that time Fortunato had him —

LUCESI Enough! I don't want to hear it. Sure, he's a sullen, odd character; I'll admit that. But that shouldn't invite the perpetual, feverish antagonism that Fortunato's pranks have bred. What do you have against him?

FORT: Bah! Nothing! He is just a convenient target always worming around and ingratiating himself on me.

ANTHONY: Ah, I don't know.

FORT: Look gentlemen, it was only meant as a harmless little joke. A drink for everyone on me ... and a toast! Everyone, (Gets on chair again and announces to everyone else in the tavern.) a toast to Don Montresor. Angelica, bring us a round. (Elicits a roar from the unseen crowd and the table.) The four begin to sing, "DRINK UP BEFORE ITS TOO LATE".)

DRINK UP BEFORE ITS TOO LATE

FORT: UNO

ANTHONY: DUE

MICHAEL: TRE

LUCHESI: SOON YOU'LL FIND YOU'RE OLD AND GRAY

ANTHONY: QUATTRO

MICHAEL: CINQUE

LUCHESI: SEI

FORT: YOUR WOMEN FRIENDS NOW MAKE YOU PAY

MICHAEL: SETTE

LUCHESI: OTTO

FORT: NOVE

ANTHONY: SOON THEY'LL COME TO CART YOU AWAY

ALL: HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH
HERE'S TO MY HEALTH
THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE
LET'S DRINK!
DRINK!
DRINK UP BEFORE ITS TOO LATE!

LUCHESI: NOVE

FORT: OTTO

MICHAEL: YOU WILL HAVE NO WHERE TO GO

ANTHONY: SETTE, SEI

LUCHESI: CINQUE, QUATTRO

FORT: YOUR STASH OF MONEY HAS RUN LOW

MICHAEL: TRE

ANTHONY: DUE

FORT: UNO

LUCHESI: YOUR LIFE'S ALL BUT GONE NOW, SO

ALL: HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH
HERE'S TO MY HEALTH

THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE
LET'S DRINK!
DRINK!
DRINK UP BEFORE ITS TOO LATE!

(music under)

LUCESI: (Slightly tanked, grandly.) My dear Fortunato. I will make you a wager that you cannot identify a wine by taste alone if I select--

FORT: Bah, why waste your own money.

LUCESI: -- it from my own stock. (Appropriate oohs and ahhs.)

FORT: (Nervous.) W-why, w-waste your time and your own stock. Let's just have Angelica fetch another bottle. (Waves madly for Angelica. Angelica waves back mockingly.)

LUCESI: (Intercepts the wave. Warmly places Fortunato's hand back down. Soothing.) What challenge is his cellar for you? How do you think young Michael is going to learn to avoid those preposterous imitations of the foreigners if you do not teach him what it is like to identify real wines! Michael fetch something quickly.

FORT: (Panicking, but can't really show it.) And what, then, are the stakes sir?

LUCESI: A case of the bottle Michael picks or, if it is more to your liking, a case of any wine of your choice from my cellars -- a bit more varied than Angelica's meager stock, eh?

FORT: (With no choice, resolutely Done, sir. (Freeze, lights still up. Music begins again -- The Italians Love Their Wine the scene fades over to Montresor.)

MONT:
BUT IT IS LIFE, ISN'T IT?
SO MUCH A PART OF OUR WAYS
AT DAWN OR EVE
A CALM REPRIEVE
THE STUPOR THAT LASTS FOR DAYS

LUCESI: (Looking at the bottle underneath its cover.) An excellent choice Michael, you are learning! (Pours.) Don Fortunato, your opinion please.

FORT: (Takes a drink. Pauses. Takes another. Goes through his whole show. He is beginning to sweat. Suddenly spits out the wine.) Hey, look! Isn't that eunuch mounting the statue of Eros?! My God, what is he doing! (Reaches across the table and slyly attempts to move the rag covering the label. Before he can do it, Luchesi catches Fortunato's eye but not his hand. Fortunato's hand slinks back.)

LUCESI: (Confidently.) Well, Fortunato, make your decision!

ANTHONY: The moment we've all been waiting for.

FORT: (With a look of resigned defeat, he wildly guesses.) Yes, well I don't usually dabble in wines of this nature but it seems to me to be a-a-um a (Blurts out any old guess.) a 9-year old Braida Zinfendel!

LUCESI: (Pause. Shocked.) I don't believe it.

MICHAEL: He's right! What a nose!

FORT: (Just as, if not more shocked than the rest of the table.) I, I am? I mean, well of course I am! Gentlemen, you amaze me sometimes with the frail challenges you pit me with. Next time I would hope you could devise a real challenge.

Perusal Copy

MONT:

THE ITALIANS LOVE THEIR WINE
WE DO KNOW AND PRACTICE MUCH
THE DELICATE ART OF SCHEMING
AND HOW TO GET RESULTS IN
WAYS MOST UNSEEMING
EVEN IF IT SOMETIMES TAKES A LITTLE
PERSUASIVE LEANING
THE ITALIANS MAKE "OFFERS"
IF YOU GET MY MEANING

FORT:

RELISH THE TASTE
GIVE IT A SWIRL
THE BEAUQUET
LET IT BREATH
SAVOR
THE INTENSE FLAVOR

(music under)

ANTHONY: (Begins to get up.) Oh brother, I've heard enough. I have been sitting here far too long. I think I shall attend the Carnival's fireworks and then find my way home.

MICHAEL: With or without your wife?

ANTHONY: That depends on whether yours is free tonight!

FORT: (Begins to quickly look around and gets up to leave, picking up a bottle.) Yes, good evening, Angelica. (As he makes a break to follow the others Angelica blocks his way and folds her arms. Fortunato looks around sheepishly and Angelica clears her throat in an expectant manner. Seeing he is not going to get anywhere, Fortunato looks carefully around, pulls money out of his pocket and gives it to Angelica.) Next time step in if Luchesi tries to pull something like that second bottle stuff. (Angelica exits, Fortunato picks up and drinks from another bottle.) For fees like that it only seems right that this residual is mine. (Drinks.) Now which way was the carnival? (Also picks up a bottle from another table and proceeds to get drunk in the background as the music to **THE ITALIANS AND THEIR WINE** begins again.)

MONT: BUT IT'S FOR FUN, ISN'T IT? THAT'S WHY DRINKING'S A BALL
THE MERRIMENT, THE EXCITEMENT
THE FORGETTING OF IT ALL

THE ITALIANS LOVE THEIR WINE

(music under)

(During the song Fortunato drinks in the background, getting slowly inebriated. Montresor begins to speak to himself and the same imaginary audience as he did in the opening. Pretending to address Fortunato.) Don Fortunato, renown expert -- (To the side.) by his own volition, of course, -- in the art of the wines. How "fortunate" it is to come upon you. Ha, ha! (Now speaking to himself, mulling, sarcastic.) Renown expert? I like the ring of that. It sounds gullible.

(Fortunato has staggered out of the bar and offscreen. A few moments, Montresor follows him out the door.)

SCENE IV

Outside the bar, leaning against the wall.

FORT: THERE GO YOUNG LOVERS WRAPPED UP IN YOUNG LOVE
 COUPLES IN LOVE, OR THEY THINK THEY'RE IN LOVE
 THEY CAN'T IMAGINE THE BLISS JUST BEGUN
 WHEN SHARING YOUR LIFE WITH A SOUL WHO'S YOUR ONE
 LIKE I DID
 LIKE I DID

And then, it's over. She's gone. And yet. . .

DO YOU STILL THINK OF ME?

NO MATTER WHERE I GO,
NO MATTER WHO I SEE,
I STILL THINK OF YOU,
DO YOU STILL THINK OF ME?

AS SEASONS COME AND GO
AS RIVERS FLOW TO THE SEA,
I STILL THINK OF YOU,
DO YOU STILL THINK OF ME?

I LOVE YOU

THE WAY YOU ALWAYS SMILE,
THE WAY YOU SOMETIMES FROWN.
THAT CERTAIN SPECIAL LOOK,
THAT MEANS DESPAIR.
THE WAY YOU TRY TO SING,
THE WAY YOU SOMETIMES YELL.
THAT CERTAIN SPECIAL LOOK,
THAT MEANS BEWARE

THROUGH ALL OUR UPS AND DOWNS,
THE CHANGES WE'VE BEEN THROUGH,
DO YOU STILL THINK OF ME?
THE WAY I THINK OF YOU?

THE WAY YOU MAKE ME LAUGH,
THE WAY I MAKE YOU CRY.
THAT CERTAIN SPECIAL LOOK,
WE'VE COME TO SHARE.

AND SO I'LL NEVER KNOW
WHAT MADE US GROW APART
NOW I'LL NEVER HAVE THE CHANCE SO SAY
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE IN MY HEART

(gets quiet and melancholy)

(underscoring)

(Fortunato stumbles from stage left where the tavern was to the alley set on far stage right. He makes lots of noise as he stumbles about stepping in garbage pails, etc. He pauses and gets ready to relieve himself.)

Montresor sees him and can hardly retain his excitement. He approaches Fortunato and begins to sing,

A MONTILIADO

MONT: DON FORTUNATO, GREAT MAN AND WISE
IS THAT YOU AMONG THE GARBAGE AND FLIES?
I COME HUMBLY UPON YOU
FOR I SEEK YOUR EXPERTISE
I'VE A PIPE OF AMONTILADO
OF WHICH I FEEL ILL AT EASE

A PIPE OF WHAT PASSES
WITH THE COMMONPLACE MASSES AS AMONTILLADO
WHAT DO YOU THINK? (Does not register)
AMONTILLADO - A DRINK? (Entices, but still does not register) AMONTILLADO (Tries snapping
fingers!)
AMONTILLADO! (Yells in Fortunato's ear)

FORT: AMONTILLADO? (Groggy)

MONT: I HAVE SOME DOUBT

FORT: AMONTILLADO (Confused)

MONT: SHHH, DON'T LET IT OUT

FORT: AMONTILLADO?

MONT: WE ARE LUCKILY MET, I FEEL DECEIVED
I AM IN YOUR DEBT
FOR AS YOU KNOW AND I NEVER FORGET
WHAT IS OFTEN RECEIVED
IS NOT WHAT ONE IS MEANT TO GET!

(spoken) Still, it was a bargain.

FORT: AMONTILLADO, HA! (Spits it out, begins to move on)

MONT: I'D SAY ALMOST A STEAL

FORT: AMONTILLADO? A FAKE.

MONT: AND SUCH A WORTHY MERCHANT
AN HONORABLE CROOK
IN CREDIT HE DEALS NO CASH AT STAKE

FORT: AMONTILLADO (Interested)

MONT: I HAVE SOME DOUBT (Leaning back, playing hard to get) (some doubt)

FORT: AMONTILLADO! (Pressing)

MONT: NO NEED TO SHOUT! (Quickly shuts him up with his hand)

FORT: AMONTILLADO?! (Muffled)

MONT: BUT YOU ARE ENGAGED
AND YOUR HEALTH IS WORSE THAN I HAD WAGED
AND LUCHESI IS SO EASILY PAGED
HE HAS TALENT AND SKILL THAT IS RARELY UPSTAGED

FORT: LUCHESI! (Angered)

MONT: A WARM MAN OF LOCAL REKNOWN (Sincerely defending)

FORT: LUCHESI? (More outraged)

MONT: WELL RESPECTED ALL ABOUT TOWN (Blithely defending)

FORT: LUCHESI, KNOWS LESS OF WINES THAN MOST PEASANTS DO

MONT: AND YET OFTEN I'VE HEARD
PLEASE DON'T MARK MY WORD
HE'S EVEN A MATCH FOR YOU

FORT: MAY I REMIND YOU, OF THE REASON WE MEET
IS AMONTILLADO, SUCCULENT AND SWEET
IT WOULD BE VERY ODD
THAT FOR SUCH A SMALL PRICE
A CLOD LIKE YOU COULD HAVE TROD
UPON THAT BOTTLED PARADISE!
AMONTILLADO...

(Slams his hand down, picks up the pace)

COME, WE MUST GO!

MONT: I WOULDN'T INSIST

FORT: NOW! WE MUST GO

MONT: I MUST RESIST

FORT: YOU WILL NOT THOUGH

MONT: BUT YOU HAVE PLANS

FORT: I SHALL FOREGO

MONT: IMPORTANT DEMANDS

FORT: THE AMONTILLADO!

MONT: I WILL NOT IMPOSE
UPON YOUR GOOD WILL
LUCHESI IS FOUND
OF ADEQUATE SKILL
AND I PERCEIVE YOU
HAVE MANY ENGAGEMENTS
ARE BURDENED BY

FORT: YOU BEGIN TO TEST
MY PATIENCE FRIEND,
LEAD ME ON,
LET THIS BICKERING END.
LUCHESI IS LOST IN
VINEYARD OR CELLAR
HIS TALENTS QUITE LESS

OTHER ARRANGEMENTS
LUCESI IS FREE
AND CERTAINLY ABLE

THAN STELLAR
AND I AM NOW FREE
AND VERY ABLE

MONT & FORT:

TO TASTE AND SENSE
AND SMELL AND JUDGE
THAT SWEET AND FINE
SUCCULENT WINE

FORT: AMONTILLADO (Nods at Montresor)

MONT: AMONTILLADO (Nods at Fortunato)

WON'T YOU COME (Both proffering)

FORT: LET US GO!

FORT & MONT:
AMONTILLADO

(They exit offstage, arm in arm.)

SCENE V

The scene opens in Montresor's house. Fortunato is still wearing his silly carnival outfit, hat ringing away like the bell of a displaced cow. They are finishing a conversation.

FORT: ...which is why I propose—

MONT: Shhhh.

FORT: Don't

MONT: Quiet.

FORT: I hear nothing.

MONT: Precisely! Peace.

FORT: But where are your attendants? Has business been that bad?

MONT: No, quite the opposite my friend. I told them I should not return until the morning and gave them explicit orders not to stir.

FORT: Well there you have it you fool! You should know that was sufficient notice to insure their immediate departure.

MONT: Yes, I know. You sound very familiar with this type of problem. I didn't know you had servants.

FORT: Surely!

MONT: Really? Many?

FORT: We have... thirteen!

MONT: Thirteen! For a one room home?

FORT: (Steaming) Listen Montresor, if you wanted your servants gone, why not just give them the day off?

MONT: Wine?

FORT: Prego

MONT: Because as you know, one never shows benevolence to his lower class. Besides, it would only arouse suspicion.

FORT: Suspicion?

MONT: Of course. Why do you think I brought you here? No ears, no witnesses, far from town, eh? I could not let the whole world know of my intentions, I needed you here alone.

FORT: Montresor?!

MONT: For the Amontillado! What a moment this would be if it were genuine! A gleaming beacon radiating over a long quest! This is what it is all for Fortunato! What good are those trivial carnival contests, they're just frivolous rites for the commoners. No, those of us who care about the wines, understand the flow of life which resonates through them, know that the only real challenge for us is the sojourn to discover the neglected and the buried. Only we can see them and save them -- let them live, and flow.

FORT: Which is why you came to me.

MONT: Precisely. I do not want to risk announcing my acquisition until I am certain of its sanctity.

FORT: And what am I to receive out of this arrangement?

MONT: Out of respect, I can only humbly offer you whatever it is that you wish.

FORT: Good. For that brings me back to what we were discussing before we came in.

MONT: More?

FORT: Yes, yes.

MONT: Which was -- I'm sorry. I've forgotten.

FORT: Our business relationship.

MONT: Business relationship? (Pours the wine.)

FORT: Prego. Yes, it's delicious mmmmm, good wine. Where did you find a cask of sauvignon so early in the season?

MONT: You mean the Beaujolais.

FORT: No, no, this, the sauvignon. It has a fine texture.

MONT: Ha, ha, ha, Fortunato, very good! Very good! How do you keep a straight face! You almost had me fall for your prank this time. But I have learned!

FORT: I do not know what--

MONT: Gigio, ha , ha, ha! (Almost an uncontrollable, but very staged, laugh.)

FORT: (indignant, overblown.) I don't like your tone, Montresor! Are you challenging my knowledge of wines--?

MONT: (Seems to pay Fortunato's last words no serious heed.) Even my lowly servants know that the Beaujolais are a red wine! I am not that much of a novice, Fortunato! Tsk, tsk.

FORT: (Catches himself in his blunder.) Yes, well, ah-- ha , ha-- good one, eh? (Self-amusement.) Well look, as I was saying, about our business relationship, Montresor. I think the proper time has come for us to refine it and formalize our transactions.

MONT: Business relationship! (Good natured surprise.) Whatever are you talking about my friend? What business relationship?

FORT: You know what I speak of, Montresor. The close involvement of our work almost presumes it. It is just a matter of ironing out a few details.

MONT: Well, you are correct. Our work is closely intertwined. I am an importer of select materials. I know you are a government official involved in the processing of exports and imports.

FORT: Yes, yes. Exactly.

MONT: You are the regulator and I, the regulated. That in itself is a business relationship I suppose. Yes, we do seem to have one (pours wine). Then what more do we need?

FORT: You're not getting my drift, are you? Don't you see? (He begins to sing, "YOU NEED ME").

YOU NEED ME

FORT: YOU ARE JUST A PEG
INSIDE A WHEEL THAT IS SPUN
BY THOSE WHO DEAL AND YOU SUBMIT
TO THOSE WHO RULE TO MAKE YOUR JOB "POSSIBLE"

WHICH IMPLIES YOU NEED ME
I'M THE MAN WITH THE MISSING LINK
YOU'D BE WISE TO PLEASE ME
OR THINGS WON'T HAPPEN
AS EASILY AS YOU THINK

(spoken) Get what I'm talking about?

MONT: HOW CAN YOU HELP ME WITH MY WORK?
YOU'RE JUST A MINOR CLERK.

FORT: YOU NEED TO SEE HOW YOU WILL GAIN
IT'S QUITE CLEAR LET ME EXPLAIN
YOU WILL CONCEDE THAT TRADE IS BAD
I CAN MAKE IT THRIVE AS YOU SEEK
YOU ARE IN NEED AND I CAN BE HAD
FOR THE SUM OF ONLY ONE THOUSAND LIRA A WEEK

MONT: 1000 lira!

FORT: That's net of expenses.

MONT: You are deluded!

FORT: You need my help.

MONT: You need (raises fist, stops) a drink! (Pours more for Fortunato.)

FORT: IT'S TIME WE DISCUSSED AN ARRANGEMENT
A SUITABLE MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT
TO ENSURE EACH OF YOUR SHIPMENTS
FLOW THROUGH CHANNELS I INFLUENCE
WITH JUST A WORD I DETERMINE SUPPLY
AND ANYONE'S GOODS COULD BE DELAYED
THIS COMPETITIVE EDGE COULD BE YOURS, MY FRIEND
AS LONG AS I'M TIMELY PAID

Our relationship just requires a formalization.

MONT: But it is formalized, isn't it? I mean isn't it your offices' duty to ensure that I receive my proper shipping and that these abide by the laws?

FORT: Precisely my point, Montresor. Do you not always receive your goods on time?

MONT: As a matter of fact-

FORT: Do you not always have effortless trade channels made open to you?

MONT: Well, n--

FORT: And why do you think you have these? Do you think they come without effort?

MONT: No, well of course not. But--

FORT: It is not easy to ensure that the large amounts of trade being bartered by my customers are efficiently maintained. Do you think that this is easy, that it comes without effort!

MONT: No. But, Fortunato, that's your job!

FORT: It is not as simple as that you fool. There is a much deeper element which regulates this whole process.

MONT: Yes--
IF I GET THIS RIGHT, AS YOU DECLARE
I COULD BE RICH, THOUGH MY POCKETS BARE
I NEED YOUR HELP?

FORT: MY INFLUENCE
TO MAKE YOU MONEY

MONT: AT MY EXPENSE!
SO YOU BELIEVE I NEED YOU
FOR THE "POWER" WHICH COMES TO YOUR DOOR
BUT WHO NEEDS TO SPEAK TO
AN AID TO THE CLERK OF THE ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR?

FORT: BAH, MONTRESOR, THE OTHERS ARE FOOLS
I'M THE ONE TO PULL IT OFF
NO ONE POSSESSES THE TOOLS
THE REPUTATION FOR HONESTY THE SKILLS
THE STEALTH

MONT: THE MODESTY!

FORT: THE CONNECTIONS

MONT: THE DELUSIONS

FORT: THE INSIGHT!

MONT: THE CONFUSION

FORT: THE POWER

MONT: THE GREED
THE DISREGARD

FORT: TO SUCCEED!

YOU FOOL NO ONE MY NAIVE FRIEND
WE ALL KNOW YOUR PATHETIC STATE
SURE, YOUR REPUTATION WAS GRAND
BUT YOUR CREDIT AIN'T SO GREAT

MONT: (Furious) I THINK ITS TIME WE DISCUSSED AN ARRAIGNMENT
A SUITABLE MEANS OF DETAINMENT

TO ENSURE THE IMPORT OF MY GOODS
IS KEPT AWAY FROM ALL YOUR HOODS

THE VERY THOUGHT
YOU POMPOUS FOOL
THAT I WOULD JOIN YOUR FOOLISH PLAN
INDICATES OUR DELUDED CLERK

IS A TOTAL FARCE OF A MAN

FORT: (Abrupt halt and change, music underscores.) Oh, my dear friend, I sense that you grow upset. I humbly apologize. I never meant such a small matter to incite such hostility between us. Let us banish the thought, we shall never speak of that horrendous notion of mine again. Fine?

MONT: (Confused, humbled and caught off-guard by attitude.) oh, no, it is I who should be sorry. I should not have reacted as I did. Please, let us cont-

FORT: No more shall be said. I will not tread upon your good nature as such. Let us lighten the evening (pours) and remember some better times. Then we will venture towards the cask. Eh, my friend? (Montresor is almost catatonic from his outburst and immediately calms down.) That should be pleasant and diverting. (Slightly more sinister tone) There are so many memories to recall. (The music comes up from underscore.)

FORT: I REMEMBER
SLOWLY WITHERED FLOWERS
AS YOU STOOD ALONE
WAITING THERE FOR HOURS
WAITING FOR MISTRESS CAPPEZO
OR YOUNG MISTRESS GEPPETO
OR ANY QF THE OTHER MAIDS
YOU COULD NOT QUITE SEEM
TO PERSUADE
TO MARRY...
DO YOU REMEMBER?

MONT: (trance like, almost
seeming to answer)

ALL OF THEM SILLY
ALL HAD OTHER CLAIMS

ALL NOW OLD AND FAT
UNDER OTHER NAMES

MONT: Y-yes, I remember each one. You have always been gracious enough to jog my memory when ever it has laid dormant too long. (Obviously Fortunato has hit a sensitive chord and Montresor is shaken. Montresor tries some derogatory retort which will only force Fortunato to probe deeper.) Perhaps if I could have been more gallant, I could have spared Madame Fortunato from her fate.

FORT: (More vehemently.)
I REMEMBER
THE MONTRESOR FORTUNE
AN INHERITANCE
WASTED ALL TOO SOON
SQUANDERED ON WORTHLESS, BARREN LANDS
LOST THROUGH IGNORANT, ZEALOUS HANDS
ON EXPEDITIONS NEVER TO RETURN

MONT: (menacingly)
WAIT, FORTUNATO
CONTINUE TO LAUGH
BUT I SHALL HAVE YOU
AND BUILD A WALL
TO HOLD YOU AND SILENCE YOU
REDRESS YOU
AVENGE YOU...

ON VINTAGE WINES
NO ONE COULD DISCERN
OR AFFORD...

(Fortunato has accomplished what he wants - to put Montresor in his place.) But enough, I must be going.

MONT: (Still trance like, preoccupied) Yes, yes. You must. I'll see you to the door. (Awakening) No! Wait! No, no you mustn't go yet!

FORT: Really Montresor, it's gotten quite late.

MONT: But the wine! (Trying hard to conceal his apprehension.)

FORT: No, thank you. I've had enough. Perhaps some other time.

MONT: No, no, Fortunato, the Amontillado.

FORT: Yes Montresor, (wishing to leave) some other time.

MONT: (Regaining himself and catching on) Very well, you are right. It has gotten very late and you have not been well. The door is this way. Oh, and if you should happen to see Luchesi in town, please tell him I shall be waiting for him.

FORT: Luchesi? (Forgetting, and now suspicious.)

MONT: Hmm, hmm. For the wine. To test it. (Helping Fortunato to the door.)

FORT: Luchesi? To test wine? You wish to waste your time like that? Have I ever told you how poor his sense of taste is?

MONT: (With the same staged laughter as before.) Ha, ha, how you kid Fortunato! Always at it, eh? (Trying to push him out the door.) Possibly some other time. Ha, ha. Yes, well we all know that Luchesi is considered the best by most who know their wine.

FORT: But not by I! What an absurd thought! (Barrels his way back in, throwing off his coat.) Although it is late and I am tired, I cannot allow yourself to be put upon as such.

MONT: Well, what do you suggest? I mean, who . . . where can we find someone at this at this hour?

FORT: Don't insult me my friend. My patience wears thin. Where are your casks?

MONT: You mean you-- , oh great Fortunato I couldn't, I mean it is such an imposition, I, I--

FORT: Enough! Which way?

MONT: (Overcome with excitement.) Oh, ah, this way. Here, let me take your cloak (Does not think, is in euphoria, leaves it on enough. I don't know how I can repay you--

FORT: We will talk about fees later.

MONT: Yes, yes, and about our partnership.

FORT: Our what? (Forgotten already. His ego is so encompassing and his brain so small that the former has squeezed out all of his previous thoughts in his current overwhelming desire to show off.) The music to "**AMONTILLADO**" begins again.)

AMONTILLADO (Nodding.)

MONT: AMONTILLADO
WON'T YOU COME

FORT: YES, LET US GO

FORT & MONT: AMONTILLADO!

(They exit off stage.)

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO

SCENE VI

Opening of second act. Lights come up in the tavern, everyone is just finishing Drink Up Before it's Too Late. Door opens and we hear the Carnival music. Luchesi walks in and slams the door shut. Carnival music stops. He walks to a table of his friends. Annabell Lee saunters over and greets him.

ANNABELLE: Good evening, Luchesi, the usual?

LUCESI: Ah, Anabelle Lee, my favorite hostess. Yes please. (Annabelle saunters away and Luchesi sits down. Greets the people at the table. Looks around. Seems puzzled. Looks around more exaggeratedly. Maybe half rises from his chair.)

LUCESI: SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT
WHEN I LOOK AND SEE THIS VIEW
IT FEELS AS IF THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG
BUT I CAN'T FIND A CLUE
WITH EVERYBODY DRINKING
SOMETHING FEELS SO OUT OF PLACE
I'D LIKE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S WRONG BEFORE I PASS OUT ON MY FACE

ANTHONY – hmm, (looking around) you're right:
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE
IT DOESN'T FEEL QUITE RIGHT
I CAN'T QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON IT
WILL BOTHER ME ALL NIGHT!

MICHAEL (nodding his head in agreement):
SOMETHING IS SUSPICIOUS

Another patron: SOMETHING'S OUT OF WHACK

Women customer Patron:
HOLD THAT THOUGHT ONE MINUTE
WHILE I FINISH THIS SMALL SNACK (crams the food into her mouth)

ANNABELL LEE comes back with Luchesi's drink. Places it on the table:
THERE'S SOMETHING I CAN TELL YOU
AND OFFER UP A HINT
I'D BE HAPPY JUST TO SHARE
IT WON'T COST YOU A MINT

LUCESI: SO TELL ME WHAT'S THE SECRET
WHY THINGS FEEL SORT OF WEIRD
IF YOU DRAG THIS OUT MUCH LONGER
I'LL HAVE GROWN A BRAND NEW BEARD

(Annabell Lee pantomimes Fortunato. Luchesi looks confused, scratches his head, looks to his drinking partners for help. They look equally confused. Annabelle pantomimes Luchesi again. The men still look

confused. Two to three women customers are looking on in amazement. They roll their eyes, shaking their heads, wondering how the men can be so thick-headed. They push through the men. The women and Annabell Lee sing.)

WOMEN PATRONS AND ANNABELLE LEE:

WHERE IS YOUR FOOLISH FORTUNATO?

WHERE CAN HE BE ITS HALF PAST NINE (men start understanding)

SOMETHING'S AMISS IF HE'S GONE MISSING

LUCESI, ANTHONY, MICHAEL:

THAT JUST MEANS WE WILL HAVE MORE WINE!

General cheering and laughing

ANNABELLE: WHEN THE WINE IS FLOWING FREELY
AND FORTUNATO'S NOT AROUND

A WOMEN PATRON:

SOMETHING CAN'T BE RIGHT

'CAUSE HE WOULD NEVER MISS A ROUND

ANOTHER WOMEN PATRON:

SOMETHING FEELS SO WRONG

ANNABELLE AND TWO WOMEN PATRONS:

SOMETHING HAS A STINK

LUCESI: THEN HE'LL SHOW UP WITH A CRAZY FIB AND HIT US FOR A DRINK (General cheering and laughing)

MICHAEL: WHAT CAN HE BE DOING
IS HE PASSED OUT ON A PARK BENCH

ANTHONY: COULD HE HAVE FOUND A NEW PLACE TO DRINK

MALE PATRON:

OR IS HE HITTING ON SOME PRETTY WENCH

WOMAN: SOMETHING SEEMS REAL SHADY
IF HE'S NOT IN HIS USUAL PLACE

LUCESI: SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG FOR HIM TO
VANISH WITHOUT A TRACE

EVERYONE: WHERE IS OUR FOOLISH FORTUNATO?
WHERE CAN HE BE, WE DO NOT KNOW
WE'LL GO ON DRINKING WITHOUT HIM HERE
OPEN THAT BOTTLE OF BORDEAUX

MICHAEL: PERHAPS I SHOULD GO LOOK FOR HIM
I FEEL IT'S ONLY RIGHT

ANTHONY: WHY WOULD YOU GO DO THAT
AND MISS THE FUN WE'LL HAVE TONIGHT

ANOTHER PATRON:

to walk, arm in-arm.) But wait, observe the white web-work which gleams from the cavern walls.

FORT: (Glazed looking.) Nitre? (starts coughing)

MONT: (Gravely) Nitre. How long have you had that cough? _

FORT: Ugh! ugh! ugh!--ugh! (Long, drawn out coughing spree, Fortunato bounds back and forth and then keels over appearing to be dead. After a pause, with Montresor looking him up and down, he speaks from the face down position.) It is nothing.

MONT: ('Frozen' while Fortunato sings)

FORT: (still face down) :53
WHAT THE HELL HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?
FACE PLANTED HERE ON THE (FILTHY) FLOOR
HOW DO I GET MYSELF OUT OF THIS MESS (~~HOW'D I GET INTO THIS MESS~~)
(I WONDER IF THERE) IS THERE A BACK DOOR?

AND WHAT'S WITH MONTRESSOR?
HE'S BEEN SO NICE
HERE I THOUGHT WE WERE GETTING ALONG
DAMN! DID I JUST HEAR MICE?

(acting back to normal)

MONT: But are you sure?

FORT: I've had worse.

MONT: Come, we will go back, your health is precious. You are respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as I was once. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi--

FORT: Enough, the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me!

MONT: (Gags as if almost giving away something.) True, true, and indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily--but you should use the proper precaution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damp. (Knocks off another bottle from the racks.) Drink. (Proffers the bottle.)

FORT: I drink to the buried that repose around us.

MONT: And I to your long life. (They drink.) Let us proceed. (They begin to walk again.) You know these vaults are the home of my ancestors. The Montresors were a great and numerous family. These vaults represent my history. These vaults hold seventy generations of my family.

FORT: ('Frozen' while Montresor sings) :60

MONT: THE ONCE MAJESTIC NAME
OF THE HOUSE OF MONTRESSOR
HAS SEEN BETTER TIMES
THAN THE ONES WE'RE IN TODAY

THE ONCE SPLENDID NAME
OF THE HOUSE OF MONTRESSOR
LIES AT OUR FEET
SQUALID, PUTRID WITH DECAY

(acting back to normal)

(Townsppeople sing while Montresor and Fort pantomime their continued journey deeper into the vaults)

CARNIVAL AT TWILIGHT

CARNIVAL AT TWILIGHT, TRIES TO GIVE US CHEER
WHILE SOFT WINDS TRY NOT TO HEAR
WHAT'S HIDDEN FROM SIGHT AND SOUND
'CAUSE WHAT IS LOST CANNOT BE FOUND
WHAT IS LOST CANNOT BE FOUND

(sound effects soundtrack)

FORT: These vaults . . . (Groping) are extensive. I forget your arms.

MONT: A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

FORT: Charming. And the motto?

MONT: "Nemo me impune lacessit."

FORT: Good! Very good! (Pause, mumbles) Don't know what it means, but it sounds very good.

MONT: ('Frozen' while Fortunato sings) :25

FORT: I ALWAYS THOUGHT HIM A POMPOUS BORE
SO HUNG UP ON HIS FAMILY'S REPUTATION
OF LATE HE'S BEEN SO NICE, HOW CAN I SAY NO
TO CONFIRM HIS SPECTACULAR LIBATION
AMONTILLADO

(acting back to normal)

MONT: (After a few more feet) We must wait.

FORT: No, we proceed. I am tired of all this stopping and starting. Let us move - -

MONT: Yes, but--

FORT: Hurry, hurry, hurry!

MONT: But the nitre.

FORT: Don't rush me.

MONT: The nitre, 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. Feel it. Come, we will go back before it is too late. Your cough--

FORT: Coughing . . . Ugh! ugh! ugh!--ugh! Ugh! ugh! ugh!--ugh!

MONT: ('Frozen' while Fortunato sings) :28

FORT: I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THIS WASN'T SUCH A GREAT IDEA
GOTTA MAKE MY EXIT, A QUICK ESCAPE AND LEAVE
SAY I NEED TO RELIEVE MYSELF TAKE A QUICK PEE

AND RUN BACK TO THE FUN OF CARNIVAL EVE

(acting back to normal)

FORT: Coughing . .Ugh! ugh! ugh!--ugh! Ugh! ugh! ugh!--ugh! Ugh! ugh! ugh!--ugh! let us go on. But first, perhaps another draught of the Medoc.

(townspeople)

FIREWORKS ARE MAJESTIC IN THE BEAUTY THEY SPAWN
YET DISTRACT US FROM TRUTHS IN THE DAWN

(*sound effects soundtrack*)

MONT: Why certainly my friend. (Reaches for a bottle and begins to pop the cork. With the opening of the bottle of Medoc in the catacombs. Fortunato reaches for the bottle and empties it in one swoop. His eyes flash with a fierce light. Suddenly Fortunato laughs and throws the bottle upwards with a gesticulation. Montresor is sincerely baffled and looks at him in surprise. Fortunato repeats the movement, which is a grotesque one.)

FORT: You do not comprehend?

MONT: Not I.

FORT: Then you are not of the brotherhood?

MONT: Come again?

FORT: You are not of the masons.

MONT: Yes, yes.

FORT: You? Impossible! A mason?

MONT: A mason.

FORT: A sign, a sign.

MONT: It is this. (He produces a trowel from beneath the folds of his cloak.)

FORT: You jest but let us proceed to the Amontillado. (He grabs a bottle out of the wall and drinks it. As they walk Fortunato now leans very heavily upon Montresor, possibly providing some good visual humor.) Are we almost there?

FORT: ('Frozen' while Montresor sings) :32

MONT: HE'S SO CLUELESS
WHAT'S ABOUT TO UNFOLD
HE'LL SERVE HIS TIME AND I WILL BE SET FREE

NO MORE WISE CRACKS
HE CROSSED THE LINE
AND ALL MY PLANNING FOR THIS DAY, REVENGE IS FINALLY MINE
ANYTHING HE SAYS RIGHT NOW CAN'T HURT ME TO MY CORE
HE'S HAD HIS CHANCE TO CHANGE HIS VOW, SO SWEET WHAT'S SOON IN STORE

(acting back to normal)

(townspeople)

CARNIVAL AT TWILIGHT NEW FRIENDS ARE MADE
WHILE ENEMIES PLAY THEIR LITTLE CHARADE

(*sound effects soundtrack*)

MONT: Yes my friend, right in this way. (They take a few more steps) Proceed, herein is the Amontillado. Your just reward. (They walk into a small enclosure) Please, sit right down here. (Fortunato falls into place.)

FORT: Amontillado? (Drunk)

MONT: Yes, yes. It is coming. Now, as for Luchesi-- He is an ignoramus! Ha, ha! Yes, I agree! (With this he fetters the drunken Fortunato firmly to the stone and withdraws the padlock key. Fortunato is much too astounded to resist.) Pass your hand over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is very damp.

FORT: The Amontillado?! (Astonished and worried.)

(townspeople)

SOFTLY HEAR THE BELLS TOLL
CRYING OUT FOR A LOST SOUL, LOST SOUL

Montresor chuckles and pays no heed as he busily goes about preparing to build a wall. He begins to sing, "**BUILDING A WALL**"

BUILDING A WALL

MONT: DON FORTUNATO,
WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER IS IT THIRTY, FORTY YEARS? (Raises hand) ..
NO, DON'T BOTHER
REMAIN IN SILENCE
FOR WE MUST SPEAK
AS I BUILD A WALL

DON FORTUNATO, MAN OF LOCAL REKNOWN
WHY HAVE YOU SOUGHT TO HOLD ME DOWN?
WHAT WERE YOUR REASONS
PLEASE TELL ME
AS I BUILD A WALL

I TAKE THIS STONE,
TRODDEN AND WET
IT'S YOUR EVERY TRESPASS
THOSE COMMITTED
THOSE NOT THOUGHT YET
EACH STONE AS EACH CUT
EACH INCISION YOUR WORDS HAVE MADE
EACH SUBTLE BLOW
LIVES IN EACH STONE
AS I BUILD THE FIRST ROW

DON FORTUNATO, YOU'VE SAID WE WERE FRIENDS
AND SO YOU HAVE MY ATTENTION 'TILL THE END
I IMPLORE YOU TO RETURN
NO? THEN I MUST LEAVE

ONCE I BUILD THE WALL

I PLACE THE STONE TO WHERE IT'S BEEN
IT'S YOUR EVERY THOUGHT
THAT HURT WITHOUT
THAT HURT WITHIN
EACH STONE AS EACH CUT
EACH INCISSION YOUR WORDS HAVE MADE
EACH SUBTLE BLOW
LIVES IN EACH STONE
AS I BUILD THE FOURTH ROW

(Montresor takes a momentary respite from his mad work to contemplate. He sits on a pile of the stones to the side.)

COULD YOU EVER IMAGINE
THE SAD, AND EMPTY FEELING
OF WANTING JUST TO TOUCH ANOTHER
YET DUE TO EVERY PERSON YOU HAVE HAPPILY DECEIVED WITH EVERY LIE YOU HAVE
CARELESSLY WEAVED
IT'S FORBIDDEN TO ME FOREVER
COULD YOU?!
COULD YOU?!
COULD YOU?!

(music under)

FORT: (Sad, almost unrecognizably.) Ha! ha! ha!--he! he! he!--a very good joke, in deed. An excellent jest. We shall have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo--he! he! he!--over our wine- he ! he! he!

MONT: The Amontillado!

FORT: He! he! he!--he! he! he!--yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo? Let us be gone.

MONT: Yes, let us be gone.

FORT: For the love of God, Montresor!!

MONT: Yes, for the love of God (He continues building the wall)

DON FORTUNATO, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU FEAR?
YOU HAVE YOUR AMONTILLADO, A VERY GOOD YEAR
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR LIFE?
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR HOME
THAT I BUILD WITH A WALL?

I TAKE THIS STONE
TRODDEN AND WET
IT'S YOUR EVERY TRESPASS THOSE COMMITTED
THOSE NOT THOUGHT YET
EACH STONE AS EACH CUT
EACH INCISSION YOUR WORDS HAVE MADE
EACH SUBTLE BLOW
LIVES IN EACH STONE
AS I BUILD THE LAST ROW

(Montresor reaches down and heaves the last stone into place, suddenly a low laugh emits from the niche that raises the hairs on Montresor's head.)

REQUIESCAT IN PACE (and then runs offstage.)

Perusal Copy

SCENE VIII

(townspeople)

SOFTLY HEAR THE BELLS TOLL
CRYING OUT FOR A LOST SOUL

(The lights go up on a stage completely darkened except for an old man in a lone chair in the center of the stage. It is an aged Montresor and we see he is sitting in a dilapidated version of his old dressing room. Offstage the sounds heard spoken by Montresor at the beginning of the show are echoed in a slightly different form.)

VOICE: (From offstage.) Fortunato...Fortunato... Don Fortunato Great Fortunato. Welcome Fortunato. Come within Fortunato. Oh, Fortunato

(The music begins to "EPILOGUE".)

EPILOGUE

MONT: THOSE WORDS HOVER AROUND ME LIKE BELLS TOLLING IN THE NIGHT
THEY HAUNT ME IN THE SHADOWS LIKE SOME ETHEREAL PARASITE
DURING HIS LIFE I FEEL AS THOUGH I DIED A THOUSAND TIMES
NOW I LIVE A THOUSAND DEATHS EACH NIGHT AS THE CHURCH BELL CHIMES

THROUGH THE SEASONS THE TOWN STILL FLOWS
ON WITH ITS DAILY WAYS
YOU'RE GONE BUT STILL ALIVE IN EACH GAME THE "POLITICO" PLAYS
I FOUGHT FOR THE PEOPLE, IT WAS IN THEIR NAME I HAD WON
WHY DOES NO ONE SEEM TO CHEER FOR THE SERVICE I HAVE DONE?

FORTUNATO ... FORTUNATO
EACH DAY I SIT CLOAKED WITHIN THE ECHOES OF A LIVING PAST
WHICH HAVE SPUN THEMSELVES UPON ME LIKE AN ELABORATE OLD CASK
TILL I SEE THE CLOCK AND IT TICKS ONE FURTHER MINUTE
TILL I HEAR THE TOLL OF THE BELLS RESIDING WITHIN IT
TILL EVERY BREATH AND EVERY BEAT
SERVE ONLY TO REMIND ME MORE
OF YOUR EVERY CURSE AND YOUR EVERY BOAST
THAT ONCE I THOUGHT I RID YOU FOR

FOR IN THESE DAMNED FIFTY YEARS
SINCE THE FINAL TIME WE CROSSED
MY DAYS HAVE BEEN SHORTER
AND MY LIFE'S MEANING'S BEEN LOST
IT SEEMED WITH THAT FINAL STONE
I SEALED YOU IN THAT HELL
YET NOW I THINK WITH THAT STONE
I BURIED MYSELF AS WELL...

REQUIESCAT IN PACE
REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Montresor bends forward in anger and pain and then gets up and runs backstage. The sound of a door opening is heard. It is identifiably the same sound as when Fortunato and Montresor went down to the vaults. Montresor is seen carrying a torch as he continues into the catacombs – the sound of footsteps and strained breathing. The torch light goes out and we hear a spine-tingling scream.