

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Started: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Learning Activity Sheet

## A Valuable Life Lesson

A. Read the selection. Then, complete the given table by (1) expressing the theme of the excerpt from *The Cask of Amontillado*, (2) identifying its elements, and (3) explaining how the various elements contribute to the theme of the selection.

**The Cask of Amontillado**

Edgar Allan Poe

Plot summary by Michael J. Cummings

It is dusk on a day during the annual carnival celebration in an Italian city. People are eating, drinking, and making merry before the beginning of the 40-day Lenten season.

But one of the city's residents, Montresor, is not at all merry. Some time ago, a man named Fortunato—a wine connoisseur—wronged Montresor. In fact, according to Montresor, who is the narrator of the story and the *avenger*, Fortunato had committed numerous offenses against him—the last one an intolerable insult. Montresor now plans revenge against Fortunato. A man can stand only so much.

When he encounters Fortunato on the street, Montresor does not let on that he is angry or means harms to Fortunato, who, in keeping with the carnival festivities, is tipsy. Fortunato is wearing a court jester's motley outfit and a cone-shaped hat topped with a bell that sometimes rings when he moves his head. After Montresor greets Fortunato and shakes his hand, he tells Fortunato that he recently came into possession of a pipe (126 gallons) of Amontillado, a prized amber dry wine from Spain. However, Montresor says, he is not sure whether the wine is the genuine article. Proud Fortunato, eager to demonstrate that he is a *virtuoso* in tasting of wine, immediately agrees to take up the challenge of determining whether the Amontillado is the real thing.

After they arrive at Montresor's palazzo (a sumptuous private residence), they descend into the cold, damp vaults where the wine is kept. The vaults are part of a network of catacombs containing the bones of long-dead members of the Montresor family. Several times, Montresor pretends to be concerned about the health of Fortunato, who has cough, and suggests that they turn back. But Fortunato says, "The cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me."

"Tru-true," Montresor answers without outward show of the inner glee he must have been feeling.

Montresor takes a bottle of Medoc from a shelf, opens it, and gives Fortunato a quaff against the cold. He toasts Fortunato, saying, "To your long life." Moments later, Montresor presents Fortunato a *flagon* of De Grave (an interesting name for a deadly occasion). Fortunato empties it. His mind now swims in groggy joy. He is *intoxicated*.

When they arrive at a wall at the end of their subterranean journey, Montresor quickly claps his drunken companion in chains attached to iron staples in the wall, then turns the key if a padlock attached to the chains. "The Amontillado!" Fortunato says, failing to comprehend his predicament.

With stone and mortar that had been ensconced nearby, Montresor walls up Fortunato. There are screams from the niche, then laughter. Fortunato thinks he is the victim of a joke. Montresor continues to work on the vertical tomb. When he completes his task, he throws the *flambeaus* on the other part of the wall then he hears the jingling of bells on Fortunato's cap. Then Montresor erects a rampart of bones against the wall.

Fifty years pass, Fortunato remains behind the wall, resting in eternal peace.

What is the Theme of the <i>The Cask of Amontillado</i> ?		
The <b>theme</b> of the selection is:		
Literary Elements	Answers	How do the elements contribute to the theme?
Characters		
Setting		
Plot		
Conflict		