

# ENGLISH READER



*Mark Twain · Stephen Crane · Ambrose Bierce · Joseph Rudyard Kipling  
William Shakespeare · Arthur Conan Doyle · Edith Wharthon · Frank Stockton  
Kate Chopin · Charles Dickens · Eleanor Potter · O'Henry*

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*Robert Burns · Washington Irving · Nathaniel Hawthorne · Jack London  
Ellis Parker Butler · William Saroyan · Edgar Allan Poe · Hamlin Garland  
George Gordon Byron · Emily Dickinson · Jerome K. Jerome*

Ichabod kicked and hit his old horse with all his power. Away they rushed through bushes and trees across the valley of Sleepy Hollow. Up ahead was the old church bridge where the headless horseman stops and returns to his burial place.

"If only I can get there first, I am safe," thought Ichabod. He kicked his horse again. The horse jumped on to the bridge and raced over it like the sound of thunder. Ichabod looked back to see if the headless man had stopped. He saw the man pick up his head and throw it with a powerful force. The head hit Ichabod in the face and knocked him off his horse to the dirt below.

They found Ichabod's horse the next day peacefully eating grass. They could not find Ichabod.

They walked all across the valley. They saw the foot marks of Ichabod's horse as it had raced through the valley. They even found Ichabod's old hat in the dust near the bridge. But they did not find Ichabod. The only other thing they found was lying near Ichabod's hat.

It was the broken pieces of a round orange pumpkin.

The town people talked about Ichabod for many weeks. They remembered the frightening stories of the valley. And finally they came to believe that the headless horseman had carried Ichabod away.

Much later an old farmer returned from a visit to New York City. He said he was sure he saw Ichabod there. He thought Ichabod silently left Sleepy Hollow because he had lost Katrina.

As for Katrina, her mother and father gave her a big wedding when she married Brom Van Brunt. Many people who went to the wedding saw that Brom smiled whenever Ichabod's name was spoken. And they wondered why he laughed out loud when anyone talked about the broken orange pumpkin found lying near Ichabod's old dusty hat.



EDGAR ALLAN POE  
(1809 - 1849)

Edgar Allan Poe wrote stories and poems of mystery and terror, insanity and death. His life was short and seemingly unhappy.

He was born on January nineteenth, eighteen hundred and nine in Boston, Massachusetts. His parents were actors. He was a baby when his father left the family. And he was two when his mother died. At that time they were in Richmond, Virginia.

Edgar went to live with the family of a wealthy Richmond businessman named John Allan. John Allan never officially adopted him as a son, but the boy became known as Edgar Allan Poe.

He attended schools in England and in Richmond. He also attended the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. He was a good student. But he had a problem with alcohol. Even one drink seemed to change his personality and make him drunk. Also, he liked to play card games for money. Edgar was not a good player. He lost money that he did not have.

John Allan refused to pay Edgar's gambling losses. He also refused to continue paying for his education. So the young man went to Boston and began working as a writer and editor for monthly magazines.

Poe served in the Army for two years, before entering the United States Military Academy at West Point to become an officer. He was dismissed from the academy in eighteen thirty-one after six months. By then he had already published three books of poetry.

He began writing stories while living with his aunt in the city of Baltimore, Maryland. In October of eighteen thirty-three, he won a short story contest organized by a local newspaper. He received fifty dollars in prize money and got a job editing the Southern Literary Messenger in Richmond. He published many of his own stories.

In eighteen thirty-four, Poe married his cousin Virginia Clemm, the thir-

teen year old daughter of his father's sister. They moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in eighteen thirty-eight. There, Poe served as an editor of Burton's Gentleman's Magazine and continued to write.

He published many of his most frightening stories during this time. These included "The Black Cat," "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Pit and the Pendulum."

Edgar Allan Poe did something unusual for writers of his time: he used a narrator in a story to describe what was happening. A good example is the short story "The Tell-Tale Heart."

#### THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

Fortunato and I both were members of very old and important Italian families. We used to play together when we were children.

Fortunato was bigger, richer and more handsome than I was. And he enjoyed making me look like a fool. He hurt my feelings a thousand times during the years of my childhood. I never showed my anger, however. So, he thought we were good friends. But I promised myself that one day I would punish Fortunato for his insults to me.

Many years passed. Fortunato married a rich and beautiful woman who gave him sons. Deep in my heart I hated him, but I never said or did anything that showed him how I really felt. When I smiled at him, he thought it was because we were friends.

He did not know it was the thought of his death that made me smile.

Everyone in our town respected Fortunato. Some men were afraid of him because he was so rich and powerful. He had a weak spot, however. He thought he was an excellent judge of wine. I also was an expert on wine. I spent a lot of money buying rare and costly wines. I stored the wines in the dark rooms under my family's palace.

Our palace was one of the oldest buildings in the town. The Montresor family had lived in it for hundreds of years. We had buried our dead in the rooms under the palace. These tombs were quiet, dark places that no one but myself ever visited.

Late one evening during carnival season, I happened to meet Fortunato on the street. He was going home alone from a party. Fortunato was beautiful in his silk suit made of many colors: yellow, green, purple and red. On his head he wore an orange cap, covered with little silver bells. I could see he had been drinking too much wine. He threw his arms around me. He said he was glad to see me.

I said I was glad to see him, too because I had a little problem. "What is it?" he asked, putting his large hand on my shoulder. "My dear Fortunato," I said, "I'm afraid I have been very stupid. The man who sells me wine said he had a rare barrel of Amontillado wine. I believed him and I bought it from him. But now, I am not so sure that the wine is really Amontillado."

"What!" he said, "A cask of Amontillado at this time of year. An entire barrel? Impossible!"

"Yes, I was very stupid. I paid the wine man the full price he wanted without asking you to taste the wine first. But I couldn't find you and I was afraid he would sell the cask of Amontillado to someone else. So I bought it."

"A cask of Amontillado!" Fortunato repeated. "Where is it?"

I pretended I didn't hear his question. Instead I told him I was going to visit our friend Lucreci. "He will be able to tell me if the wine is really Amontillado," I said.

Fortunato laughed in my face. "Lucreci cannot tell Amontillado from vinegar." I smiled to myself and said "But some people say that he is as good a judge of wine as you are."

Fortunato grabbed my arm. "Take me to it," he said. "I'll taste the Amontillado for you." "But my friend," I protested, "it is late. The wine is in my wine cellar, underneath the palace. Those rooms are very damp and cold and the walls drip with water." "I don't care," he said. "I am the only person who can tell you if your wine man has cheated you. Lucreci cannot!"

Fortunato turned, and still holding me by the arm, pulled me down the street to my home. The building was empty. My servants were enjoying carnival. I knew they would be gone all night.

I took two large candles, lit them and gave one to Fortunato. I started down the dark, twisting stairway with Fortunato close behind me. At the bottom of the stairs, the damp air wrapped itself around our bodies.



"Where are we?" Fortunato asked. "I thought you said the cask of Amontillado was in your wine cellar."

"It is," I said. "The wine cellar is just beyond these tombs where the dead of my family are kept. Surely, you are not afraid of walking through the tombs."

He turned and looked into my eyes. "Tombs?" he said. He began to cough. The silver bells on his cap jingled.

"My poor friend," I said, "how long have you had that cough?"

"It's nothing," he said, but he couldn't stop coughing.

"Come," I said firmly, "we will go back upstairs. Your health is important. You are rich, respected, admired, and loved. You have a wife and children. Many people would miss you if you died. We will go back before you get seriously ill. I can go to Lucreci for help with the wine."

"No!" he cried. "This cough is nothing. It will not kill me. I won't die from a cough." "That is true," I said, "but you must be careful." He took my arm and we began to walk through the cold, dark rooms. We went deeper and deeper into the cellar. Finally, we arrived in a small room. Bones were pushed high against one wall. A doorway in another wall opened to an even smaller room, about one meter wide and two meters high. Its walls were solid rock.

"Here we are," I said. "I hid the cask of Amontillado in there." I pointed to the smaller room. Fortunato lifted his candle and stepped into the tiny room. I immediately followed him. He stood stupidly staring at two iron handcuffs chained to a wall of the tiny room. I grabbed his arms and locked them into the metal handcuffs. It took only a moment. He was too surprised to fight me.

I stepped outside the small room.

"Where is the Amontillado?" he cried.

"Ah yes," I said, "the cask of Amontillado." I leaned over and began pushing aside the pile of bones against the wall. Under the bones was a



basket of stone blocks, some cement and a small shovel. I had hidden the materials there earlier. I began to fill the doorway of the tiny room with stones and cement.

By the time I laid the first row of stones Fortunato was no longer drunk. I heard him moaning inside the tiny room for ten minutes. Then there was a long silence. I finished the second and third rows of stone blocks. As I began the fourth row, I heard Fortunato begin to shake the chains that held him to the wall. He was trying to pull them out of the granite wall.

I smiled to myself and stopped working so that I could better enjoy listening to the noise. After a few minutes, he stopped. I finished the fifth, the sixth and the seventh rows of stones. The wall I was building in the doorway was now almost up to my shoulders. Suddenly, loud screams burst from the throat of the chained man. For a moment I worried. What if someone heard him? Then I placed my hand on the solid rock of the walls and felt safe. I looked into the tiny room, where he was still screaming. And I began to scream, too. My screams grew louder than his and he stopped.

It was now almost midnight. I finished the eighth, the ninth and the tenth rows. All that was left was a stone for the last hole in the wall. I was about to push it in when I heard a low laugh from behind the stones.

The laugh made the hair on my head stand up. Then Fortunato spoke, in a sad voice that no longer sounded like him.

He said, "Well, you have played a good joke on me. We will laugh about it soon over a glass of that Amontillado. But isn't it getting late. My wife and my friends will be waiting for us. Let us go."

"Yes," I replied, "let us go."

I waited for him to say something else. I heard only my own breathing. "Fortunato!" I called. No answer. I called again. "Fortunato!" Still no answer.



I hurried to put the last stone into the wall and put the cement around it. Then I pushed the pile of bones in front of the new wall I had built.

That was fifty years ago. For half a century now, no one has touched those bones. "May he rest in peace!"

#### THE PURLOINED LETTER

One evening in Paris, during the autumn of 1845, I went to visit a friend, Auguste Dupin. We were smoking our pipes and talking when the door of his apartment opened. Mr. Germont, the head of the Paris police force, came into the room.

"I came to ask your advice," Germont said to my friend Dupin. "I am trying to solve a very important case. It is also a very simple case, so I really need your help. But I thought you would like to hear about it, because it is so strange."

"My men and I have worked on this case for three months," Germont said. "It is a very simple case of robbery. But we still cannot solve it."

Dupin took the pipe out of his mouth. "Perhaps the mystery is too simple," he said.

Germont began to laugh. "Too simple?" he said. "Who ever heard of such a thing?"

I looked at Germont. "Why don't you tell us the problem?" I said.

Germont stopped laughing and sat down.

"All right," he said. "But you must never tell anyone I told you this."

"The wife of a very important person needs help. I cannot tell you her name, because her husband is a powerful man in the French government. Let us just call her Madame X. Three months ago, someone stole a letter from Madame X. She is offering a large amount of money to anyone who can return the letter to her."



"We know that her husband's political enemy, Mr. D'Arcy, stole the letter. We also know it is somewhere in his apartment. D'Arcy plans to use the letter to embarrass Madame X's husband and destroy his political power.

"As you know, I have keys which can open any lock in Paris. For the last three months, my men and I have spent every evening looking for the letter in his apartment. But we cannot find it."

Dupin stopped smoking. "Tell me how you looked for it," he said. Germont moved forward in his chair.

"We took our time," he said. "First, we examined the furniture in every room. We opened all the drawers. We looked under the rugs. We searched behind all the paintings on the walls.

"We opened every book. We removed the boards of the floor. We even took the tops off the tables to see if he had hidden the letter in the table legs. But we cannot find it. What do you advise me to do?"

Dupin puffed on his pipe. "What does the letter look like?" he asked.

"It is in a white envelope with a red stamp," Germont said. "The address is written in large black letters."

Dupin puffed on his pipe again. "I advise you to go back and search the apartment again," he said.

About one month later, Germont came back to see us.

"I followed your advice," he said. "But I still have not found the letter."

Dupin smiled. "I knew you would not find it," he said. Germont became very red in the face. "Then why did you make me search the apartment again?" he shouted.

"My dear Germont," Dupin said. "Let me tell you a little story. Do you remember the famous doctor, Louis Abernathy?"

"No!" Germont shouted. "Get to the point, Dupin!"

"Of course! Of course," Dupin said. "Once, a rich old man met Abernathy at a party. The old man was not feeling very well. He decided

he would get a medical opinion from the doctor without paying for it. So he described his problems to Abernathy. "Now doctor," the old man said, "suppose you had a patient like that. What would you tell him to take?"

"Oh, that is quite simple," said Abernathy. "I would tell him to take my advice."

Germont looked embarrassed. "Look here, Dupin. I am perfectly willing to pay for advice."

Dupin smiled at Germont. "How much money did you say the reward was?" he asked. Germont sighed. "I do not want to tell you the exact amount. But I would give fifty thousand francs to the person who helps me find that letter."

"In that case," Dupin said, "take out your checkbook and write me a check for fifty thousand francs. When you have signed the check, I will give you the letter."

Germont looked at Dupin with his mouth open. His eyes seemed to jump out of his head. Then he took out his checkbook and pen, and wrote a check for fifty thousand francs. He gave it to Dupin.

My friend examined the check carefully and put it in his pocket. Then he unlocked a drawer of his desk, took out the letter, and gave it to Germont.

The policeman's hands shook as he opened the letter. He read it quickly. Then he put it in his pocket and ran out of the room without saying a word.

"Dupin!" I said, as I turned to my friend. "How did you solve the mystery?"

"It was simple, my friend," he said. "Germont and his policemen could not find the letter, because they did not try to understand the mind of the man who stole it. Instead, they looked for the letter where they would have hidden it."



"Mr. D'Arcy is not a policeman. He is, however, very intelligent. He knew the police would search his apartment. He also knew how police think. So, he did not hide the letter where he knew they would look for it.

"Do you remember how Germont laughed when I said the mystery was difficult for him to solve because it was so simple?"

Dupin filled his pipe with tobacco and lit it. "Well, the more I thought about it, the more I realized the police could not find the letter because D'Arcy had not hidden it at all.

"So I went to visit D'Arcy in his apartment. I took a pair of dark green eyeglasses with me. I explained to him that I was having trouble with my eyes and needed to wear the dark glasses at all times. He believed me. The glasses permitted me to look around the apartment while I seemed only to be talking to him.

"I paid special attention to a large desk where there were a lot of papers and books. However, I saw nothing suspicious there. After a few minutes, however, I noticed a small shelf over the fireplace. A few postcards and a letter were lying on the shelf. The letter looked very old and dirty.

"As soon as I saw this letter, I decided it must be the one I was looking for. It must be, even though it was completely different from the one Germont had described.

"This letter had a large green stamp on it. The address was written in small letters in blue ink. I memorized every detail of the letter while I talked to D'Arcy. Then when he was not looking, I dropped one of my gloves on the floor under my chair.

"The next morning, I stopped at his apartment to look for my glove. While we were talking, we heard people shouting in the street. D'Arcy went to the window and looked out. Quickly, I stepped to the shelf and put the letter in my pocket. Then I replaced it with a letter that looked exactly like it, which I had taken with me. I had made it the night before.

"The trouble in the street was caused by a man who had almost been run over by a horse and carriage. He was not hurt. And soon the crowd of people went away. When it was over, D'Arcy came away from the window. I said good-bye and left.

"The man who almost had an accident was one of my servants. I had paid him to create the incident."

Dupin stopped talking to light his pipe. I did not understand. "But, Dupin," I said, "why did you go to the trouble of replacing the letter? Why not just take it and leave?"

Dupin smiled. "D'Arcy is a dangerous man," he said. "And he has many loyal servants. If I had taken the letter, I might never have left his apartment alive."

"The Purloined Letter" was written by Edgar Allan Poe and adapted into Special English by Dona De Sanctis. The storyteller was Shep O'Neal. The producer was Lawan Davis.

#### THE TELL-TALE HEART

True! Nervous — very, very nervous I had been and am! But why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses — not destroyed them.

Above all was the sense of hearing. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in the underworld. How, then, am I mad? Observe how healthily — how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! He had the eye of a bird, a vulture — a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell

