



I took from their sconces two flambeaux,¹⁰ and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as
70 he strode.

“The pipe?” said he.

“It is farther on,” said I; “but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls.”

He turned toward me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.¹¹

“Niter?” he asked, at length.

“Niter,” I replied. “How long have you had that cough?”

“Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!”

80 My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

“It is nothing,” he said, at last.

“Come,” I said, with decision, “we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. 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—”

“Enough,” he said; “the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough.”

“True—true,” I replied; “and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily; but you should use all proper caution. A draft of this Medoc¹²
90 will defend us from the damps.”

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle that I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mold.

“Drink,” I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

“I drink,” he said, “to the buried that **repose** around us.”

“And I to your long life.”

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

“These vaults,” he said, “are extensive.”

100 “The Montresors,” I replied, “were a great and numerous family.”

“I forget your arms.”

“A huge human foot d’or,¹³ in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel.”

10. **from their sconces two flambeaux** (flām'bōz'): from their wall brackets two lighted torches.

11. **filmy . . . intoxication**: eyes clouded and glazed over from drunkenness.

12. **Medoc** (mā-dōk'): a red wine from the Bordeaux region of France.

13. **d'or** (dōr) *French*: colored gold. (Montresor is describing his coat of arms, the distinctive emblem of his family.)

COMMON CORE RL.5

IRONY

Verbal irony occurs when a character *says* one thing but *means* another. Another kind of irony, **situational irony**, is when a character or reader expects something to happen but the opposite takes place. Look back over lines 74–92. What is ironic about the conversation between Fortunato and Montresor?

repose (rĭ-pōz') v.
to lie dead or at rest