

If Great Literary Works Had Been Written By Lawyers

Kevin Underhill

EDGAR ALLAN POE THE TASK OF AMONTILLADO

THE THOUSAND INJURIES of the young associate I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured to park in my allotted space, I vowed revenge. It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given him cause to doubt my good-will. I continued to smile, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his impending inundation.

He had a weak point, though in other regards he was to be respected: he prided himself on his connoisseurship of civil procedure. It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the hiring season, when I encountered him. He greeted me with excessive warmth, as befitted his obsequious nature.

I said to him: "Well, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a motion for change of venue in *Amontillado v. Usher*, and

I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "*Amontillado?* Impossible! Venue is incontrovertibly proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(a)(2)!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to rely on a different associate without consulting you in the matter."

"Let us go," he cried, and we proceeded to the inner ring of offices.

It was in vain that he, adjusting his small round glasses, endeavored to pry into the depths of his tiny office. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the desk, and finding his progress arrested, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had pushed him into his chair, and fettered him to his desk.

"*Amontillado!*"

“True,” I replied; “*Amontillado*.”

As I said these words I busied myself among the stack of boxes I had before prepared. I soon uncovered a quantity of briefing projects and documents to review. With these materials, I began vigorously to create stacks upon and about his desk. Soon there came from within the cavelike stack a sad voice, which I had difficulty recognizing as that of the young associate. The voice said –

“Ha! ha! ha! – he! he! – a very good joke indeed – an excellent jest. I cannot possibly

finish these before Monday. We will have many a rich laugh about it – he! he!”

“I must be gone.”

“*For the love of God, counselor!*”

“Yes,” I said, “for the love of God!”

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. There came forth in return only a rustling of papers. I hastened to put an end to my labors. I tossed the last few motions onto the credenza and restacked the boxes outside the door. For days no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace litiget!*



JOHN MILTON
PARADISE LOST, NEW BUSINESS FOUND

*Of Man's first inconvenient slip and Fall
Upon the ice, and the party whose petition
Brought the hourly bill into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of joy, till a Judgeship may
Sustain us, and inspire more blissful work,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of downtown's height, didst inspire
That Partner who first sowed the holy seed
Of business and brought forth the fabled green
From out of Chaos; or, if oral argument
Delight thee more, and thy advocate that holdeth
Fast unto the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my most friv'lous brief,
That with no better voice will never soar
Above appellate mount, though it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or headnote.*



JAMES JOYCE
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... I remember the day we were sitting in the big conference room he in his grey tweed suit and his new wingtips the day he got me to sign the engagement letter yes first we discussed expenses and then I touched the pen yes and he asked me to sign and I wouldnt answer first only looked out the big glass window and saw the lawyers and messengers and assistants and receptionists and of counsels and the devil knows who else from the ends of the earth and from the other window the sun crimson across

the long table like Manhattan as a girl when I was a Flower of the mountain yes and I put the pen in my hair like the legal assistants did or shall I wear a red yes and how he offered me a contingent fee agreement and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and I took the pen and signed yes and dated it and we had it notarized and he asked if I could advance expenses yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes. *JB*