

## P is for Poe...and for Plot

**The Story:** “The Cask of Amontillado”

**Characters:**

*Montresor* - A self-professed wine expert who is a bit sensitive. He has a grudge against Fortunato.

*Fortunato* -- Wealthy wine expert who is popular in the community.

**The Exposition:** This scene is set in Paris in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century during a festival. Many people in the streets are in costumes, and many, including Fortunato, have been drinking heavily. Montresor appears onstage and speaks of his dislike of Fortunato. He feels that Fortunato has insulted him and now he seeks revenge.

**The Rising Action:** Montresor tells Fortunato that he has been able to buy a cask of wine that is supposed to be Amontillado. However, he needs a wine expert’s opinion on whether or not this wine is truly Amontillado. Montresor flatters Fortunato and convinces him to enter the catacombs under his house where the wine is stored. As Fortunato and Montresor go deeper and deeper down, they drink more and more. Fortunato becomes alarmed when he realizes that he has wandered far below the house and into a dead end.

**The Climax:**

**Falling Action:**

**Resolution:**

**Foreshadowing:**

**Irony:**

**Theatrical Notes:**

**The Story:** “The Purloined Letter”

**Characters:**

*Dupin*— A middle aged detective (often cited as a pre-cursor to Sherlock Holmes).

*Daignault*—A long-time friend of Dupin.

*Prefect* – Chief of the Parisian Police. He is self-important and not as deep or intellectual as Dupin.

*His Highness, Her Highness, Prime Minister, and Three Policemen* (silent parts)

**The Exposition:** Dupin and Daignault are smoking and enjoying brandy in Dupin’s study. The Prefect enters and explains that he may need help on a case. He slowly reveals that the Prime Minister has stolen a letter from Her Highness. The Prefect knows that the Prime Minister still has the letter, and therefore has power over Her Highness. The Prefect and his men have searched for the letter, but to no avail.

**The Rising Action:** A month has passed. The Prefect calls on Dupin again.

**The Climax:**

**Falling Action:**

**Resolution:**

**Foreshadowing:**

**Irony:**

**Theatrical Notes:**

**The Story:** “The Fall of the House of Usher”

**Characters:**

*Rhodes* –A long time friend of Roderick Usher.

*Roderick Usher* – Master of the house of Usher, can be bitter, self-centered, and ill-tempered.

*Madeline Usher* – Roderick’s sister who appears to be ill.

*Doctor* –Attends to the family members.

**The Exposition:** Rhodes arrives to visit his friend Roderick and discovers that a doctor is just leaving. Roderick and Madeline have both been ill. Roderick suffers from an acuteness of the senses, and Madeline has catalepsy. This condition puts the sufferer in a coma-like state, and some Usher ancestors have been buried alive because of this condition.

**The Rising Action:** Madeline dies (or appears to die). Roderick chooses to have her placed in a coffin, but kept in the house in case she should awake.

**The Climax:**

**Falling Action:**

**Resolution:**

**Foreshadowing:**

**Irony:**

**Theatrical Notes:**

**The Story:** “The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Feather”

**Characters:**

*Lemonde* – Well-dressed and well off. Visiting France, and wants to see the “Soothing System”.

*Companion* – Takes Lemonde to the Maison de Sante asylum.

*Monsieur Maillard* – Headmaster of the asylum.

*Four men and four women* –Dinner party guests.

**The Exposition:** Lemonde and his companion approach a mental hospital. Lemonde has the companion introduce him to the asylum head. Lemonde asks at length about a system of soothing where the patients were given rights and permitted to wear their own clothes and such. However, Maillard now says that the System of Soothing is out. Instead, the hospital is trying the system of Dr. Tarr and Professor Feather.

**The Rising Action:** Lemonde and Maillard sit down to dine with eight well, but oddly dressed men and women. They tell stories of the patients who once populated the asylum. Their own behavior is strange at times.

**The Climax:**

**Falling Action:**

**Resolution:**

**Foreshadowing:**

**Irony:**

**Theatrical Notes:**

**The Story:** “The Oblong Box”

**Characters:**

*Renelle* – Young, enthusiastic, and talkative.

*Cornelius Wyatt* – A moody artist that knew Renelle in college. He is travelling with his wife and two sisters.

*Captain Hardy* - Ship’s captain. He is the authority on board.

**The Exposition:** Renelle learns from Captain Hardy that the departure of the ship *Independence* has been delayed and that Cornelius Wyatt, his wife, and sisters are on board. Wyatt is using a room originally reserved for a servant to store an oblong box. Renelle believes that the box holds a painting of *The Last Supper*.

**The Rising Action:** Renelle teases Wyatt about his supposed purchase of *The Last Supper*. Wyatt laughs hysterically and collapses.

**The Climax:**

**Falling Action:**

**Resolution:**

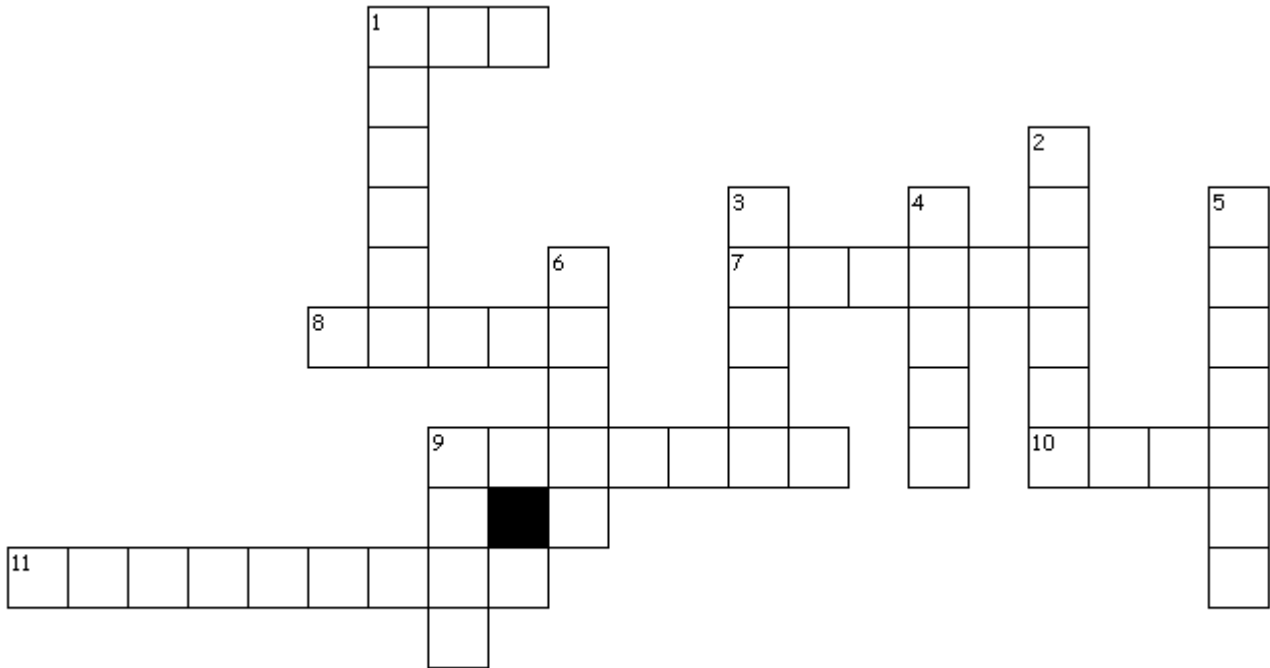
**Foreshadowing:**

**Irony:**

**Theatrical Notes:**

# Knowledge Master: Theater Behavior

*Knowing how to behave in a theater is essential for the sophisticated patron, and important for someone who wants to be welcome at future performances. Demonstrate your own knowledge of the theater do's and don'ts by completing the puzzle below.*



## **Across**

1. Clap at the end of a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Good theater behavior falls between that expected for a \_\_\_\_\_ and for a movie theater.
8. Always remember to \_\_\_\_\_ new things.
9. Clap after an especially amazing part in the play called a "show-\_\_\_\_\_."
10. The only time you should leave your \_\_\_\_\_ is during intermission.
11. Your \_\_\_\_\_ should always be turned off.

## **Down**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ on time.
2. If you are unsure of when to clap, clap when \_\_\_\_\_ do.
3. Clap at the end of a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Never eat or \_\_\_\_\_ unless refreshments are sold in the theater.
5. Pay attention during the production. Even if you are not interested, sit \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid disturbing others.
6. Always remember to \_\_\_\_\_ yourself.
9. Do not \_\_\_\_\_ along at an opera or musical.

## Knowledge Master: Theater Behavior – Answer Key

### Across

1. Clap at the end of a Act.
7. Good theater behavior falls between that expected for a church and for a movie theater.
8. Always remember to learn new things.
9. Clap after an especially amazing part in the play called a "show-stopper."
10. The only time you should leave your seat is during intermission.
11. Your cell phone should always be turned off.

### Down

1. Arrive on time.
2. If you are unsure of when to clap, clap when others do.
3. Clap at the end of a scene.
4. Never eat or drink unless refreshments are sold in the theater.
5. Pay attention during the production. Even if you are not interested, sit quietly to avoid disturbing others.
6. Always remember to enjoy yourself.
9. Do not sing along at an opera or musical.