**Before the Amontillado, A Secret**

A prelude to *The Cask of Amontillado*

Chapter 1

"Sir, may I come in?"

"Yes, please do." Answered Joel Brown.

"It is Mr. Gya Gatz the Third's letter."

"I got it. You may leave now."

Brown opened up the letter and it was the contract. Once he signs this contract the whole Stanley Chateau will be sold to him. Brown signed it.

On the next day, Brown flew to Mt. Stanley to see the chateau for himself. The demolition team had already arrived and was ready to make the underground chateau brand new. Brown and the demolition team went underground. Shockingly, there were not only wines but also a cemetery. In the deep end, there was a brick wall covered with moss, which looks so different from other walls.

"Jason, please make this place clean by the end of the day. Oh and, will you knock down that wall for me?"

"Of course boss, we are good at this. Just watch and look!"

Jason took an electric drill and started drilling the wall. Then the rest of the employees used shovels to push down that wall. Brown walked close, and what he saw was what appears in people's nightmares. It was a skeleton, and a scarlet letter A. Brown wondered -- could this be a murdering crime happened hundreds of years ago? Why was there a skeleton and a scarlet letter A?

Brown quickly rode his private jet home, eager to find out the answer.

"The history of Stanley Chateau..." He mumbled while typing.

A blog written by "Ryano The Italiano" appeared on the 13th page. Brown clicked in started reading the story:

Gya Gatz was a millionaire who owned chateaux in Europe and likes to go to parties. He was Italian but had a French boyfriend. One day he flew to France to date his boyfriend as usual, but when he got off the plane, he saw his man kissing another woman. No, this can't be true! Gya ran to another exit and went to the Eiffel Tower, where their date was supposed to be. He ordered a cup of Amontillado, wanted to escape the reality with alcohol. A well-shaped, handsome man walked closer and closer to his direction.

"Sir, are you alone? May I sit here?" said the man.

"I am. Please."

"Well, hi. My name is Fortunado, nice to meet you!"

"Such a cute name. Nice to meet you, I am Gya."

The hot summer wind blew over Fortunado's hair, making him look especially handsome.

"Do you want to go to the top of the tower?" he asked, "We can wait for the sunset together."

"Ye...yeah, that will be, good." Gya blushed.

Fortunado and Gya climbed the Eiffel Tower and finally reached the top.

"Fortunado, I... Can I, call you, you know ummm... Dodo?" asked Gya.

“Yeah, of course...Then, can I call you Gygy?"

"Yeah. Of course."

No one ever said anything later on. They both stared at the sunset; sometimes Fortunado will secretly look at Gya, and then turn his head back around, and, sometimes Gya does it. It was at that moment when they both looked at each other, and their hands touched. Blush.

"Fortunado, I have to go. I am going to catch up on the last flight to Italy," said Gya.

"Ok, but, when and where can I see you again?" asked Fortunado.

"I don't know. Maybe soon, maybe never again. But I will remember you Dodo, I hope to see you around."

"Me too, Gygy."

"Farewell!"

"Farewell..."

From that day on, Fortunado can't stop thinking about Gya. Every day after he lied down, scenarios of him and Gya under the Eiffel Tower appears in his's head. What is the point of life without his Gygy? Fortunado suddenly remembered the bottle of Amontillado that they had. On a gloomy Monday, Fortunado took out an old map and found the chateau that makes Amontillados, and the owner of that chateau was a man named Gya Gatz. Fortunado started packing right away: he pulled out all of the clothes in his closet and stuffed them into his suitcase. He grabbed his wallet, put on his hat, and then left the house -- He was going to move to where Gya was living. Gya lived in the beautiful Mountain Stanley, where streams flow from the melted ice on the mountain top and eventually to the ocean. Fortunado found an old and teeter house on the other side of the stream.

Chapter 2

Every day and night, Fortunato secretly watched the shadow appeared on the curtain of Gya's house from the gap of his curtain. Gya was a party boy, wine and cigar all day, beauty and light all night. For the deeply in love with that glamourous Man, Fortunado admired, but mostly jealous of beauties that surround his Gygy. He promised to himself that one day, that man will be his own. From that day on, Fortunado started planning.

On the morning of a sunny day in summer, Gya was going to try his new hydroplane. Walking along the bay, Gya saw a very familiar person was swimming in the stream. That man with a beautiful facewas swimming like a fish with his glittering muscle and perfect body proportion. Gya knew him, and they met a couple of days ago, the person he missed so much, the person that he had no clue to find. In the next second, he ran, and jumped into That river, for Dodo.

Reading stops here, "Oh, what a lame lovi lovi story again...", said Joel with a long yawn.

They have fallen in love with each other again. Gya loved Dodo for his tame, his body, and the way Dodo looked at him. Fortunato loved Gygy for his tame, his wine, and how Gygy smiled at him. They were sticking to each other 24 -7, but they just never seemed to be tired of this. Until the next Spring, things got messed up.

Because these two love birds were not hiding at all, and not everyone was ok with this, they were sued. This got on all the papers, and they have nothing to say for its rock solid. They both got into jail, and Gya Did not even try to use his relationship. Gya was happy, as long as they're together.

"Now, we can spend happy five years in prison together, my Dodo!" Gya said in a happy tone.

But there was no response. Fortunato stared at this person he knew from his soul to his hand, now seemed eerie and far. How could he become a person like this? This was not the Gygy he used to love! Or maybe, Fortunado only loved that Gygy who was far away from him. Deeply from Fortunado's heart, there was an emotion of discussed raised. He could not stand this anymore, he did not want to spend any time with this sticky man anymore. Just look at his face, listen to his words! That is not the Gygy I knew and loved!

Fortunato refused to stay with Gya anymore, but he did not want Gya to know this. He started planning.

During a roof cleaning event, Gya saw his Dodo secretly hand red stuff to the Jail manager. That Jail manager was shocked, then scared, at last respectful. Gya knew what it is, but he cannot explain where Dodo got this. At the end of the day, Fortunado was able to get out of the prison, a group of people with tall paper hats were waiting for him to pack his stuff. Fortunato was out of the prison. In the whole process, he never explains or said anything to Gya, not even look at him. They are like strangers.

From that day, Gya lost everything, even his soul. He ate very little and rarely talks, all he did was sitting on his bed. He was planning.

5 years was a very long time, people can change very fast. 5 years can let people learned to see through people, can let people learned to hide his emotions, can let people give up love. With a black suit and a scarlet letter A in his pocket, Gya walked out of that ghastly red gate. Now, he's free. Dodo, wait for me.

Chapter 3

“Nemo me impune lacessit.” He mumbled with every of his cell with a feeble breath that almost inaudible when he put his family badge into his pocket this time and put it into his pocket with his unique imperceptible tremor that as the same as his voice.

A complex emotion was surrounding him whenever he breathed in and out. He had doubted for a long time about the reason his ancestor engraved these words and claimed him to engrave these too, but in the meantime, he realized something and again back to confused. He knew what it was, just didn't want to admit it.

After a few years without Gya's clue, another white-suited, black-leather-shoed man replaced that place with his whiskey and Rolex watches, who seemed to be a more legitimate man that having more legitimate relations between Fortunado. They sometimes party together, get drunk together and laughs together, and they just never seemed to be tired of this. And even the scarlet letter A in their hands never seemed to be tired of this. Gya evaporated from the earth but it led to nothing.

Once after a party in summer, it led to something. Fortunado eventually admitted to the existence of Gya.

"I don't love him," he said, "the only thing I loved was his Amontillado."

"And can you believe it?" He said, "the taste of Amontillado could make you surrounded by illusory dreams of everything for five years and more." ——For some person, but not for him. In that case, when that glamorous, wealthy person was arrested to prison, Amontillado evaporated from the earth, and it did lead to something.

"Nemo me impune lacessit." The white-suited man mumbled when he got back from the party.

He realized something, maybe about the scarlet letter A, maybe about the dreams, which we couldn't know. Above his family coat of arms, the Montresors, a huge human foot door, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel. However, when he could react, the times of years had already passed by. To identify his motivation without prejudice or confusion, Gya put it into his pocket once again to give him a chance. But what did Dodo give him? One more time of suspicion, one more time to reveal the truth himself. What did Gya expect was his allegiance, however, he revealed his deceitfulness —— Adultery!

Reconsidered it, Gya mumbled to himself. If the judgment of court did not happen, they would back to the Eiffel Tower with their amontillado; in other words, if the scarlet letter A did not come to his hands, if his amontillado cannot bring him good dreams, they would be fine, and this story won't become creepier. After a few months the man with white suit out of his mind, and the only one in the earth that know his condition was Gya Gatz himself. He told himself to act normally and keep his planning for revenge.

Joel closed his laptop and sighed. He started to get confused. On the side of his left hand, three books laid aside. The Scarlet Letter, The Great Gatsby, and a book with an inconspicuous number of pages. A more inconspicuous title marked in its inconspicuous front cover: *The Cask of Amontillado*. It's not even a book, it is a letter with an autobiography type that maybe wrote its confession or maybe not. In a blog written by no name, he proposed this book and saying the story is about a secret creepy wall inside Stanley Chateau.

And the point that Joel confused the most was after knocked down that wall, the skeleton buried the Amontillado and a scarlet letter A with him.

*On afield, sable, the letter A, gules.*

Authors' Note

This is a prelude to *The Cask of Amontillado*, written by Elina Zhu, Nancy Shen and Sabrina Cao.

* Chapter 1 by Sabrina Cao
* Chapter 2 by Nancy Shen
* Chapter 3 by Elina Zhu

We put a lot of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Great Gatsby* references, and one little *Shining* reference.