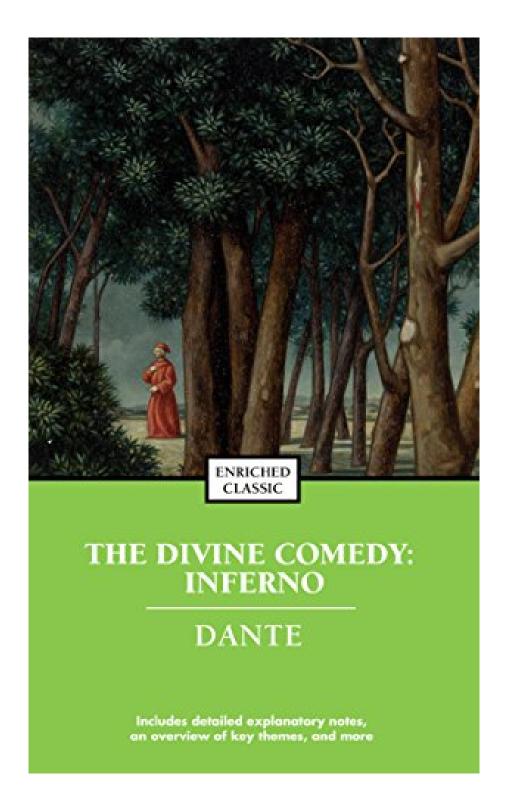


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"Singleton's edition of the Divine Comedy will certainly be the edition for readers in English. The translation is much the most satisfactory one I know. The commentary is the most complete and authoritative in English. It is clear that Singleton's work on the Inferno supersedes everything else of the kind."--Francis Fergusson

#### About the Author

Durante degli Alighieri, simply called Dante, was a major Italian poet of the Late Middle Ages. His Divine Comedy, originally called Comedìa and later christened Divina by Boccaccio, is widely considered the greatest literary work composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature.

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50 of 53 people found the following review helpful.

Divine Comedy

By A Customer

This is a fantastic edition of the Inferno. It is the 1st time I've ever read the Divine Comedy besides excerpts attempting to ape the terza rima. While such exerpts are gratifying the way a 3rd generation video tape of a movie may be, it is far more fullfilling to read a 'literal' representation of the Italian text in English and then frame that within the borders of the original Italian. Singleton's notes are also exceptional and lead to a very complex reading of the text. In short, for someone who cannot speak a word of Italian but wants to have the richest reading of the text, from language to content to the culture the poem draws upon, this is the text to purchase. When I complete the Inferno I plan to complete the rest of the Dante's masterpiece with Singleton holding my hand.

57 of 65 people found the following review helpful.

CHARLES SINGLETON's translation of Divine Comedy

By Gak

I capitalize CHARLES SINGLETON because amazon.com pile their customer reviews into one long list, admitting no differences between translations. SINGLETON's very literal prose best serves the reader who would read the original Italian, and clarify his reading by referring to the facing English translation. You needn't have studied Italian for this, though some skill in another Romance language is very helpful. But if you insist on getting your terza rima secondhand, read Pinsky's Inferno(Pinsky has yet to bring over the Purgatorio and Paradiso).

10 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Go to hell

By E. A Solinas

"Midway upon the journey of our life, I found myself in a dark wood, where the right way was lost..." Those eerie words open the first cantica of Dante Alighieri's "Inferno," the most famous part of the legendary Divina Comedia. But the stuff going on here is anything but divine, as Dante explores the metaphorical and supernatural horrors of the inferno.

The date is Good Friday of the year 1300, and Dante is lost in a creepy dark forest, being assaulted by a trio of beasts who symbolize his own sins. But suddenly he is rescued ("Not man; man I once was") by the legendary poet Virgil, who takes the despondent Dante under his wing -- and down into Hell.

But this isn't a straightforward hell of flames and dancing devils. Instead, it's a multi-tiered carnival of horrors, where different sins are punished with different means. Opportunists are forever stung by insects, the lustful are trapped in a storm, the greedy are forced to battle against each other, and the violent lie in a river of boiling blood, are transformed into thorn bushes, and are trapped on a volcanic desert.

If nothing else makes you feel like being good, then "The Inferno" might change your mind. The author loads up his "Inferno" with every kind of disgusting, grotesque punishment that you can imagine -- and it's all wrapped up in an allegorical journey of humankind's redemption, not to mention dissing the politics of Italy and Florence.

Along with Virgil -- author of the "Aeneid" -- Dante peppered his Inferno with Greek myth and symbolism. Like the Greek underworld, different punishments await different sins; what's more, there are also appearances by harpies, centaurs, Cerberus and the god Pluto. But the sinners are mostly Dante's contemporaries, from corrupt popes to soldiers.

And Dante's skill as a writer can't be denied -- the grotesque punishments are enough to make your skin crawl ("Fixed in the slime, they say, 'Sullen were we in the sweet air that is gladdened by the Sun, bearing within ourselves the sluggish fume; now we are sullen in the black mire..."), and the grand finale is Satan himself, with legendary traitors Brutus, Cassius and Judas sitting in his mouths. (Yes, I said MOUTHS, not "mouth")

More impressive still is his ability to weave the poetry out of symbolism and allegory, without it ever seeming preachy or annoying. Even pre-hell, we have a lion, a leopard and a wolf, which symbolize different sins, and a dark forest that indicates suicidal thoughts. And the punishments themselves usually reflect the person's flaws, such as false prophets having their heads twisted around so they can only see what's behind them. Wicked sense of humor.

Dante's vivid writing and wildly imaginative "inferno" makes this the most fascinating, compelling volume of the Divine Comedy. Never fun, but always spellbinding and complicated.

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