



The Divine Comedy: Volume 1: Inferno (Pt. 1) (English and Italian Edition)

By Dante Alighieri

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The first part of Dante's epic poem *The Divine Comedy*, revealing the eternal punishment reserved for such sins as greed, self-deception, political double-dealing and treachery

Describing Dante's descent into Hell midway through his life with Virgil as a guide, *Inferno* depicts a cruel underworld in which desperate figures are condemned to eternal damnation for committing one or more of seven deadly sins. As he descends through nine concentric circles of increasingly agonising torture, Dante encounters doomed souls including the pagan Aeneas, the liar Odysseus, the suicide Cleopatra, and his own political enemies, damned for their deceit. Led by leering demons, the poet must ultimately journey with Virgil to the deepest level of all. Portraying a huge diversity of characters culminating in a horrific vision of Satan, the *Inferno* broke new ground in the vigour of its language and storytelling. It has had a particular influence on Modernist writers and their successors throughout the world. Printed in English with facing pages in Dante's Italian, this edition offers commentaries and notes on each canto by Robert Kirkpatrick.

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Review

"Kirkpatrick brings a more nuanced sense of the Italian and a more mediated appreciation of the poem's construction than nearly all of his competitors. . . . There is much to recommend here—certainly the intelligence, the energy, the linguistic range. . . . His introduction and canto-by-canto notes are remarkably level and lucid, as attentive to structure as to syntax, language and motif, and deftly cross-reference the whole poem. On their own, they would justify the price."

-*The Times* (London)

"We gain much from Kirkpatrick's fidelity to syntax and nuance, and from the fact that the Italian is on the facing page for our inspection. . . . His introduction . . . tells you, very readably indeed, pretty much all you need for a heightened appreciation of the work. . . . Kirkpatrick edges us, smoothly, into Dante's mind, and shows just how and why his influence has seemed to grow with the passage of time. We even get a map of *trecento* Italy (nestling against a map of hell). . . . If the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* are as good as this, then English readers will, I hope, start familiarising themselves with the two-thirds of the work most never get round to reading."

-Nicholas Lezard, *The Guardian*

"The perfect balance of tightness and colloquialism... likely to be the best modern version of Dante.

-Bernard O'Donoghue

"This version is the first to bring together poetry and scholarship in the very body of the translation—a deeply informed version of Dante that is also a pleasure to read."

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About the Author

Dante Alighieri was born in 1265. Considered Italy's greatest poet, this scion of a Florentine family mastered in the art of lyric poetry at an early age. His first major work is *La Vita Nuova* (1292) which is a tribute to Beatrice Portinari, the great love of his life. Married to Gemma Donatic, Dante's political activism resulted in his being exiled from Florence to eventually settle in Ravenna. It is believed that *The Divine Comedy*—comprised of three canticles, *The Inferno*, *The Purgatorio*, and *The Paradiso*—was written between 1308 and 1320. Dante Alighieri died in 1321.

Robin Kirkpatrick is a poet and widely-published Dante scholar. He has taught courses on Dante's *Divine Comedy* in Hong Kong, Dublin, and Cambridge where he is Fellow of Robinson College and Professor of Italian and English Literatures.

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