

Dante's inferno critique



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Dante's Inferno is a story about how two men and their travels through hell, the different levels of hell, who was in them, and what they did during their time on Earth. There were nine circles and some of them had different levels inside the circles for example the seventh circle of hell is divided between three smaller circles. Then they eventually emerge back out onto the earth but on the opposite side of the earth from where they had started. The book starts out with Dante wandering through the woods but has strayed off " the right path. " He runs into three creatures that block his path and turns around. Dante flees and runs into Virgil, the great roman poet. Dante tells Virgil of the beasts that stand in his way by saying, " Behold the beast, for which I have turned back. " Virgil then tells Dante that one of the beasts, the she-wolf, will one day be driven back down hell where it originated. Virgil then tells him about the path that will ascend them up the hill into heaven, but warns him that they will have to make it through hell before they can even get to heaven. Dante can only remember two men who made it through hell and came back which gets him a little worried about his adventure he is about to embark on. As they enter through the gates of hell they read the sign on the gate, which reads " ABANDON ALL HOPE, YOU WHO ENTER". The first place they enter is the Ante-Inferno, which isn't really part of hell but is still a place of eternal punishment for those who were neither good nor evil. In this part of hell they were continuously stung and bitten by bees and wasps and were consumed by worms. As they exit this part of the Inferno they pass a river called Acheron, which is the border of hell. As they cross the river Dante sees all the damned souls waiting to be punished and sent into hell he then realizes that only the punished and eternally damned souls enter into hell and faints at the thought of entering

such a place he might not be able to get out of. When he wakes up he sees the first circle of hell called the Limbo. Virgil then explains that the souls in this circle were of those who were never baptized. In this level of hell Dante meets many poets one of whom is Homer, as well as many philosophers including Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato. Now they enter in to the second circle of hell. He then realizes that the circles get smaller but the smaller the circle the more punishment and torture they receive. In this circle Dante saw the souls that were being punished for lust and committing sins of the flesh. They were tortured by being continuously thrown about by fierce winds and rain. In this circle Dante meets Cleopatra. While talking with one woman, Francesca, she tells him her story of how she ended up in hell and Dante faints again. The next circle of hell is the third circle, which is filled with souls convicted of gluttony. Here in this circle they are tortured by rain but of rain of sewage and dirt. In here Dante speaks with one man who asks Dante to remember his name when he returns to earth. They then reach the fourth circle of hell where the people who never spent their money and hoarded it. The souls in this circle of hell included preachers and popes, religious leaders. Their punishment was to walk in a half circle push around weights then falling over and returning walking the opposite direction. Dante then follows Virgil down deeper into hell to the fifth circle where the souls consumed by wrath were punished. They don't meet anyone very important during their travels through this circle of hell. They continue to travel deeper and deeper into the lower levels of hell and Virgil informs Dante that they are now entering the City of Dis or lower hell. They have now entered into the sixth circle of hell where there are burning tombs with red-hot flames. This is where those who were involved with heresy are punished. In this circle Dante

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meets a man by the name of Farinata who was a political leader during Dante's time period. Dante also met Guido a very good friend of his father. They then continue into the next circle, but before they cross into the circle Dante becomes overwhelmed with the smell at the gate to the sixth circle that he sits down and starts to ponder the last three levels of hell they had been through. The next circle of hell is the seventh circle and Virgil explains that this circle is divided into three sub-circles. This is the circle for the punishment of violence, the three sub-circles include; violence against ones neighbor, ones self, and against God. The first ring that they went through in the seventh circle is the ring of punishment for the sinners against their neighbors. These sinners are boiled in a river of blood. One of the souls that were being punished in this ring was Alexander. They continue into the second ring where the sinners against themselves were punished. These sinners were turned into trees. Then through the third ring of the seventh circle of hell was a red desert with scorching flames and fire raining down on them continuously. These are the sinners who were violent towards God. This ring is divided into three sections including; one for blasphemers, those violent towards nature, and those violent towards art. They were then transported down to the eighth circle of hell, called the malebolge, which is divided into pouches where the different punished souls burned. The first pouch is for the pimps and prostitutes, the second pouch is for the flatterers, the third pouch is for the simoniacs, and the fourth pouch is for counterfeiters, the fifth pouch is for the false counselors, and the sixth pouch is for the hypocrites, and the seventh pouch contains thieves. The eighth pouch contains fraudulent, the ninth pouch contains the souls who were unavenged, and the tenth pouch contains falsifiers. The tenth pouch is

divided into four rings inside the pouch for fraud of coins, metals, words, and of other people. They meet many people in these pouches including Caiphus, who was a high leader under Pontius Pilot and Ulysses a king during the Trojan War. Finally they make it through the eighth circle of hell into the ninth circle where the traitors are located. This circle is also divided into four rings. The first call Caina is where the traitors to their family are punished by freezing, the second ring called Antenora is where those who betrayed their party or homeland, the third ring only contains two souls who were so bad on earth they went to hell early and their bodies on earth are run by demons, and last of all the fourth ring the bottom of hell called Judecca is where sinners are frozen into ice that Dante was walking on. Inside the deepest part of hell Lucifer lies. He is huge with three faces and long arms and wings coming out of the bottom part of his shoulders, which is generating the wind that makes the Cocytus so frigid and cold. In Satan's mouths there are three souls one in each mouth. These three people are the people referred to as the greatest sinners of all time. They are Judas Iscariot, betrayed Jesus, Brutus and Cassius, who betrayed Julius Caesar. Although all you can see of Lucifer is his upper body his feet and lower body dangle out the other side of hell, from when he fell from heaven. They then travel upward towards the surface of the earth except they emerged on the opposite side of the world from where they began. As for what I thought about the book, I thought that the book was good in some ways but really hard to understand. Because the book was written in a poem form it got a bit confusing. It was written a long time ago so a lot of the words we don't use anymore plus the style is different than how we speak now. The book seemed to effectively get the point across and the people mentioned in the book as far as the souls that

Dante met were accurate descriptions of them at least from what I know about them. I think that the author, Dante Alighieri, achieved his aim in that he wanted which was to show how hell isn't a very inviting place to be. I don't know if the point of the story was to scare people about how hell will feel or to inform them. Also this book is the prelude to, The Purgatory and The Paradiso, which is one of the reasons that Virgil told Dante they had to travel through hell before he could get to paradise or even heaven. The author didn't exaggerate anything in the book, the way it was put was for they better of the book. If the author had put the book in terms that are said to be nice and not so gory then the book wouldn't have had the same effect that it has with all the details. The punishments were fair if not too light for each of the different circles of hell. I imagined the punishments a lot worse than it was described in the book, even though I'm not exactly sure how they could be any worse. Although I didn't really think that hell would have levels and different sections for each type of sin and I did think that Lucifer or Satan would be there, but I do think that it was interesting how Dante said that Lucifer was plunged into hell head first when he fell from heaven which is why the only visible part of the body of Satan was his upper torso and his feet and legs were in the other part of hell. The book was very interesting however there were a lot of parts that I didn't care for however most of the book I liked. Some parts were boring to me because of the talking between Dante and whoever he would meet in the level of hell they were in at that point in time, mainly because I had absolutely no idea who any of these people are. The main people inside the major parts or harshest parts of hell I didn't know so I had to do a little research to figure out who they were, which personally I don't like to do research for a book because a think the author

should have explained it more in the book. For example two of the people who were of the greatest sinners and were dangling from Lucifer's mouths were Brutus and Cassius, I didn't know that they had betrayed and killed Julius Caesar. If the book had explained a few more things then the story would have been a little clearer. Because of this book I've become more interested in the study of what philosophers and some people think that not only hell but also heaven and paradise will be like. I think that this book has definitely sparked my interest in this topic. In one way I think the book was interesting but I think it could have been written in a different way or revised and worded in today's " language" where it would be easily understood by anybody who tried to read it. Personally I think that this was a great book but could've been presented in a better way. There is a ton of information in the book and is not lacking in any details. The exquisite details and imagery help the reader to be able to picture hell in a way that would help them understand the story better. The pictures were obviously a plus to go along with the imagery. I feel as if I'm satisfied with the book because it did give a pretty clear story line but a little more information would have been nice. It was pretty obvious I mean they were traveling through hell so you would have to be the type of person to acknowledge this and actually enjoy reading the book. It was also satisfying because you knew that even though the book left off with the two of them, Dante and Virgil, coming back up to earth you know that there are two other books that will explain the rest of the places that you could be spending your afterlife. It wasn't just another cliffhanger. Something that I noticed about this book is that there was a lot of historical importance in this book. For example the souls that Dante met in the Inferno all had a specific purpose and place of higher interest in the living mortal

world. Dante had to have known personally or known a lot about a lot of what are now historical figures of our time. These are the main reason that I thought Dante's Inferno was a pretty good book although it could have been better. Bibliography 1. Alighieri, Dante. The Inferno New York, NY: Barnes and Noble Classics. Published 2005 2. Spark Notes: The Inferno Spark Publishing New York, NY. Published 2007 3. [http://en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Marcus_Junius_Brutus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcus_Junius_Brutus)