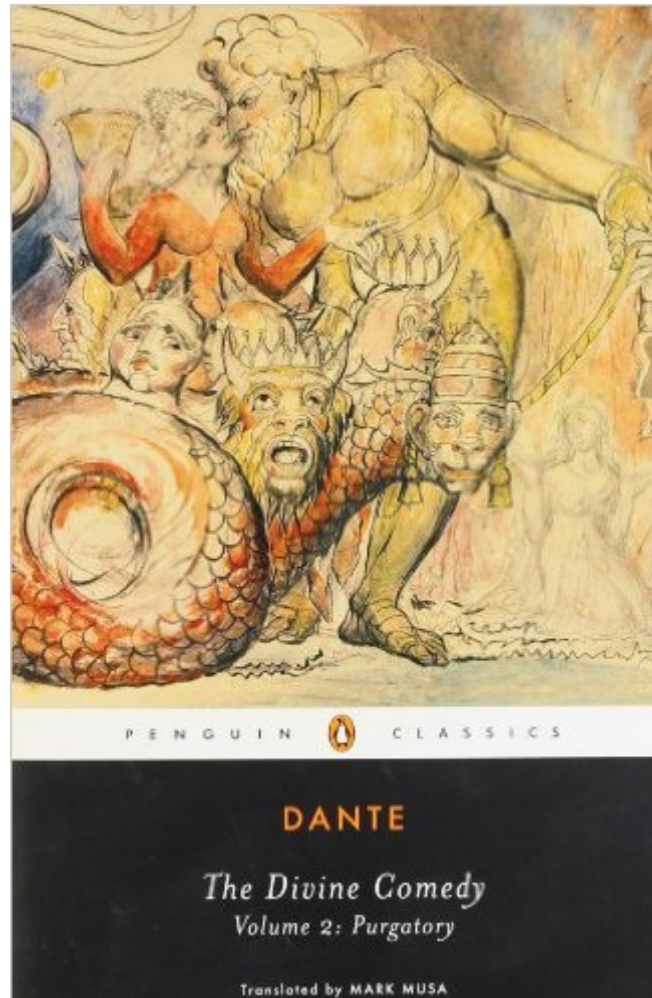


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The Divine Comedy, Vol. II: Purgatory



Synopsis

The second volume in Dante's Divine Comedy— Beginning with Dante's liberation from Hell, Purgatory relates his ascent, accompanied by Virgil, of the Mount of Purgatory - a mountain of nine levels, formed from rock forced upwards when God threw Satan into depths of the earth. As he travels through the first seven levels, Dante observes the sinners who are waiting for their release into Paradise, and through these encounters he is himself transformed into a stronger and better man. For it is only when he has learned from each of these levels that he can ascend to the gateway to Heaven: the Garden of Eden. The second part of one of the greatest epic poems, Purgatory is an enthralling Christian allegory of sin, redemption and ultimate enlightenment. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Inferno is the most famous of the trio of volumes of Dante's Divine Comedy. But don't stop there. Purgatory is a beautiful work, illustrating the rise of the human soul through Purgatory's nine ledges. I found it beautiful how the souls were not hurrying. They waited patiently, yet eagerly. Musa's

translation makes all the difference. The language is accessible, but not irreverent or vulgar. A routine I found helpful was to read the introduction to each canto, read the canto, then read all the notes, checking back to reinforce meanings or double check a name or place. The Pilgrim's journey through this volume is heavily illustrative of God's grace, and yet the idea of each person's responsibilities to God are clear. Don't stop reading after Inferno. These stirring translations by Musa make it possible to read, understand and love the whole Divine Comedy.

This is the second volume of Alighieri Dante's classic Divine Comedy. It tells the tale of Dante's journey through Purgatory, led by his guide, Virgil. Having passed through the depths of Hell (the Inferno) in the first volume, Dante and Virgil ascend the mountain of Purgatory, passing its many allegorical characters and observing the penances they must fulfill. The Divine Comedy is a beautiful, epic poem that takes the reader through a wide emotional spectrum and many vivid, picturesque scenes from Dante's fictional afterlife. This translation was wonderful. Each of the 33 Cantos (Chapters) is set up in this sequence: 1) a short summation by the translator, 2) the poem, and 3) notes on names, characters, and items referenced by Dante. The translator, Mark Musa, even explains in his notes when he has a differing interpretation of a word or phrase than other translators' have had. Dante used so many references to Greek mythology and events that were common knowledge to educated people of the 13th-14th Century that this poem, without notes, is entirely esoteric and fully appreciated only by the most erudite modern-day readers. Mark Musa brings every reader up to par with his thorough, easily-read notes; thereby making this classic poem a very entertaining and profound experience.

Mark Musa has produced an extremely readable translation of a text that at times can be next to inaccessible. As a non-Dante scholar, I have struggled with other translations. The notes accompanying each canto also are well done: thorough and very illuminating. Musa's deft pen has turned Purgatory into a pleasure.

IF you want to read Dante, this is the edition to choose. Penguin has fantastic translation with notes at the beginning and the end of the chapter, to explain what you are about to read and then at the end, what certain lines meant. really comprehensive.

This translation is outstanding!! And the notes are very helpful as well. This text is one of the richest texts I've ever read. Dante is amazing. This is like a Cathedral in verse, or, as someone said, it is

like Aquinas' Summa in verse. The fundamental lesson from Dante's Purgatory is not that Purgatory is a literal place (though D. may have thought so) with these literal punishments, but he wants his reader to see the true, destructive, nature of sin, and how it pulls us away from the full pleasure of God's presence, and causes us to seek pleasure in a perverted way in various other things that cannot satisfy. It has a powerful spiritual lesson. It also conveys (to me, a Protestant) the most attractive elements of Catholicism: a rich spirituality that ties all of life together through spiritual practices (liturgy, prayer, sacraments, etc.). This work is truly breathtaking.

Mark Musa has done wonders with this book. I read it as a class participant. The first version I had purchased was by Henry W. Longfellow and that was a big mistake! Do not purchase that version, as it is extremely difficult to understand. This version, however, was easily readable with an appropriate amount of helpful notes and I was well pleased with it.

I bought these 3 volumes for a course, which was then postponed indefinitely. But since I'd already started reading, I kept at it. I'd tried reading/studying the Divine Comedy before, without success - too dry. The translator of this version is just excellent, presenting the text in a beautiful flowing, readable English.

Dante the Pilgrim continues his journey through the afterlife. Having slogged his way through Hell and come out on the other side of the earth, he and his guide Virgil (author of the Aeneid) begin their ascent of Mount Purgatory. Instead of the circles in Hell, Purgatory has various terraces where sins and the punishment due to sin are expiated. All souls have to ascend through every terrace, but some terraces are passed more quickly--if envy or sloth weren't a particular problem, an individual would travel through them quickly. Dante learns more about the fates of famous historical figures and of Italians who died in the 1200s (the past century when the poem was written). He also learns some theology on the way and hears many prophecies. At the top of the mountain is the Garden of Eden where he finally meets Beatrice, the love of his life, who will lead him through Heaven. Like the Inferno, the volume packs in a lot vivid descriptions of the place. The sinners are inspired by examples of the virtues they have failed at (e.g. the prideful see the Virgin Mary humbly accepting to be the mother of God at the Annunciation) and of their particular vices (e.g. the covetous or avaricious see King Midas's greed for gold). The blending of Christian and pagan examples gives a richness to the text and shows how we humans have been falling into these same sins for thousands of years. When Dante gets to Eden, the imagery is allegorical and

prophetic. Musa's notes are very helpful throughout, filling in many gaps in my knowledge and understanding of the text. The text itself is very readable. The blank verse keeps the poetic form of the poem without the translator having to force rhymes or use archaic phrasing and word order to keep the rhythm. This edition is very reader-friendly. I can't wait for the big finale! A Good Story is Hard to Find podcast has a commentary on this, as well as their previous Inferno discussion.

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