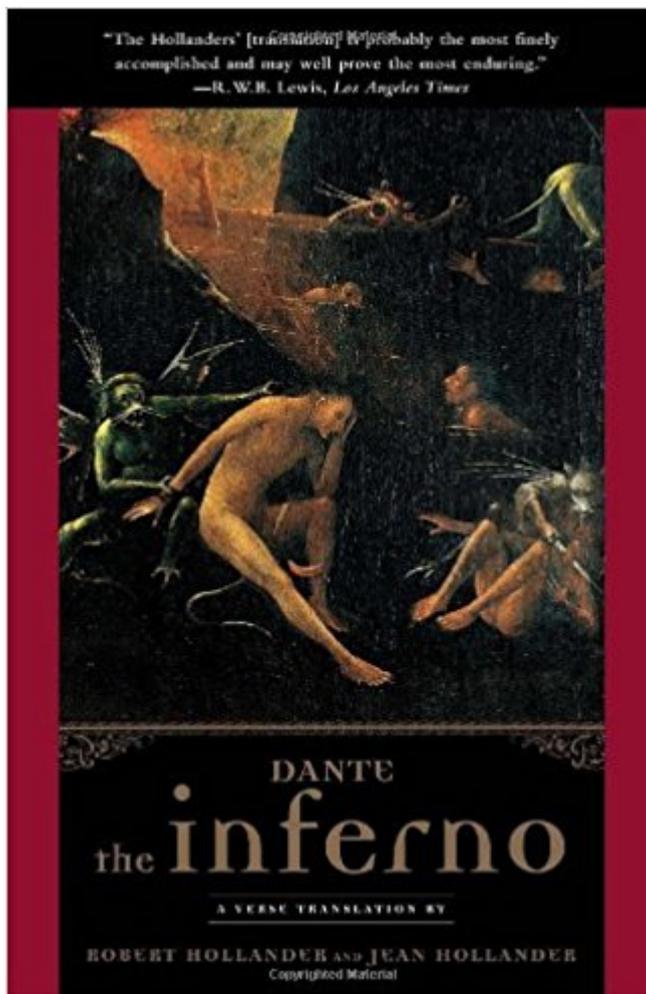


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The Inferno



Synopsis

The epic grandeur of Dante's masterpiece has inspired readers for 700 years, and has entered the human imagination. But the further we move from the late medieval world of Dante, the more a rich understanding and enjoyment of the poem depends on knowledgeable guidance. Robert Hollander, a renowned scholar and master teacher of Dante, and Jean Hollander, an accomplished poet, have written a beautifully accurate and clear verse translation of the first volume of Dante's epic poem, the Divine Comedy. Featuring the original Italian text opposite the translation, this edition also offers an extensive and accessible introduction and generous commentaries that draw on centuries of scholarship as well as Robert Hollander's own decades of teaching and research. The Hollander translation is the new standard in English of this essential work of world literature.

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Customer Reviews

I have started several Infernos and have dropped every one of them at some point, unwilling to continue Dante's journey. This is the first one I have read all the way through, enjoyed, and learned an immense amount without hurting my head at all. I'm no authority on Italian but I am an avid poetry reader and I found the translation to be superb; there is no straining for effect, nor does it sound flat and/or prosaic. It's a subtle and highly admirable balance of the dramatic and scholarly. But it's the outstanding notes that really make this version work for me. Detailed without being overwhelming and referenced by line for ease of use, they bring up the key points of interpretation (as well as a lot of fascinating lesser subjects) in a friendly and enlightening manner. I now envy those who have

been fortunate enough to take Robert Hollander's class on Dante, but take solace that having his and his wife's wonderful work in this handsome volume may be the next best thing to being there. If you have found the Divine Comedy too daunting in the past, I urge you to check out the Hollanders: they provide great poetry for enjoyment and much food for thought, and all without "dumbing down" what is truly one of the greatest works of the human imagination. For me, a revelation.

This translation - the Hollanders' - is rendered by beautifully readable, relaxed, English verse that is remarkably close in meaning to Dante Alighieri's great poem. The music of the poem is a harder thing to imitate, but the Hollanders have given us a lovely sounding diction. Which is to say that it is an excellent translation. But more importantly, here's why you need to own this translation: People REALLY need to know why Dante Alighieri's *Commedia* is great and why they should read it even if they're not assigned it in school. Not only do they need to know why, they also need to experience the poem profoundly, even though its inception is seven centuries past. Anybody who would bring into the world yet another translation of this poem must be able to answer that question in one way or another. These translator's do that in an excellent user-friendly format: beautifully made rendering of the verse, followed by brief, illuminating line-commentary at the end of each Canto. Also, read the introduction. It's not one of those forbidding 77 page monographs that one finds so often at the start of too many wonderful books. This one's fresh, to the point, and gets you into the poem very quickly. This in itself is worth the price of the book.

This translation of *The Inferno*, the first canticle of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, by Robert and Jean Hollander, is one of the best that I've read. Their English version of the *Comedy* is fast and straightforward, sticking close to the original text but adding vigor to what can sometimes be very bland in English. Having read the *Comedy* numerous times in many different translations, I didn't expect to be swept up in it again as I was. The Hollanders have done us a great favor with this translation. The notes are copious and excellent, presenting numerous perspectives on textual, symbolic, narrative, and historical issues in the *Comedy*. A line-by-line breakdown of each canto is at the beginning of each, and charts detailing the layout of Dante's Hell help organize a narrative that can be infinitely confusing to the beginner. Highly recommended for beginners and seasoned fans of Dante alike.

I've read three translations of the *Inferno*, and this one is by far the best. It's very accurate to the original text but also very readable. I found that as well as flowing better than the other translations,

this one is also the most interesting. As well as being the best translation, I also think it has the best notes. The notes and chapter outlines are helpful without being overbearing, and really help through the story. The edition is also beautiful. It's a high quality paperback with excellent art. Simply put, if you want to read *The Inferno*, get this version.

The Hollanders have done a remarkable job in presenting Dante's *Inferno*. The annotations are extensive and varied as they pull from many authoritative sources. If you do not have a strong classics background, reading the *Inferno* is difficult as Dante referenced and copied the great epic poets who came before him. To read it, without the guidance of an experienced teacher or a superb annotation is to ultimately lose the book and wonder why it is a classic. The joy of this translation is that through its notes it opens the whole text to you and if you do get lost it is in mastery of Dante which is how it should be. The Hollanders should be proud and we eternally thankful for their intelligence and care which shine through their *Inferno*.

The *Inferno* translated incredibly well. It has English/Italian side by side. The English reading is translated using the same verse structure and as close a translation as possible. Excellent explanation of the verse and character references in the story. I would highly recommend this work and translation. Hopefully, Mr. Hollander will also offer a translation of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*.

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