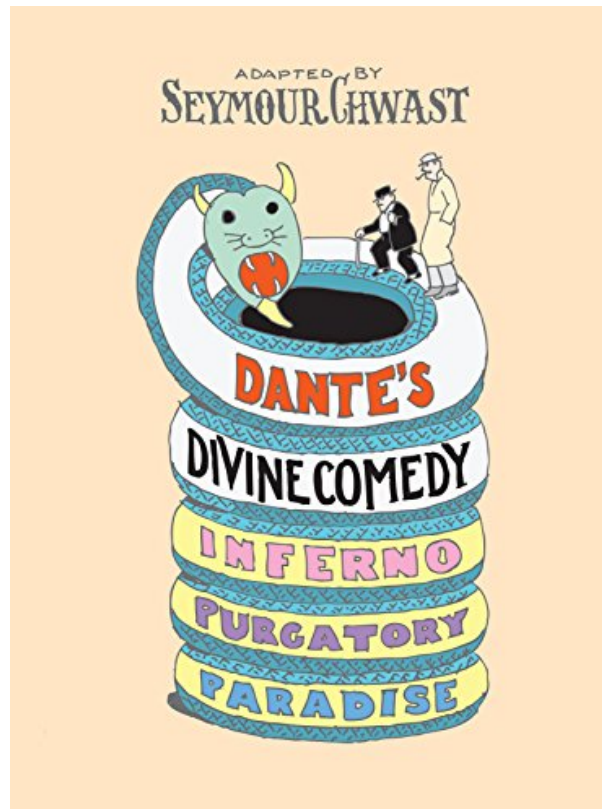


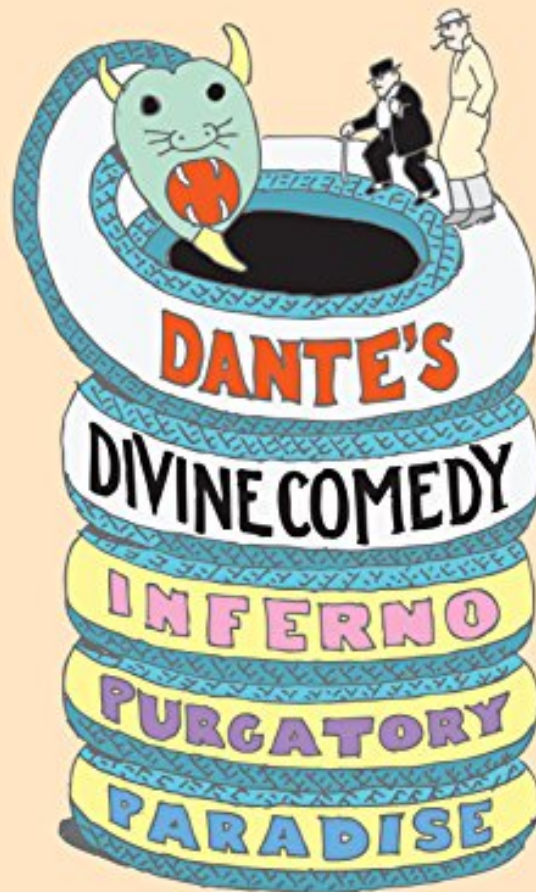
DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY BY SEYMOUR CHWAST



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Most helpful customer reviews

27 of 30 people found the following review helpful.

More for fans of Chwast's art than of Dante's writing

By Aaron Silverman

As a collection of drawings by an iconic illustrator, this is a great book. Granted, Chwast isn't for everyone, but fans will eat this up. As an adaptation of the Divine Comedy, well, it's OK but slight. Chwast's simple, straightforward black and white line drawings provide visual interpretations of the sights described by Dante, but much of the literary value of the work is lost. References to historical characters and their fates are brief at best. It's more like a simple travelogue. I was hoping for much more detail -- this is basically a quick synopsis. So while I didn't get much of the substance of the Divine Comedy from this, I did enjoy it as an art book.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

As a longtime Chwast fan, I can't resist.

By Jim

I've been a fan of Seymour Chwast's illustration and design since the late sixties, which is when I started studying illustration and design at The School of Visual Arts in NYC. At that time, Push Pin Studios (today the Pushpin Group), which Chwast founded in 1954 with acclaimed graphic designer Milton Glaser, was right around the corner from the school, and I once came this close to getting into a night class taught by Chwast.

As a longtime fan of "the left-handed designer" (I too am left-handed), I find Chwast's graphic, black & white adaptation of Dante's Divine Comedy irresistible. It is funny and I laughed out loud several times when reading it. And it is also poignant; I had tears in my eyes when I read the final words about "the love that moves the sun and other stars." One can read the Divine Comedy from a religious or a secular perspective, and from the latter perspective and perhaps the former as well, it can be read as a story about the human condition. For me, the lightheartedness of Chwast's illustrations serve to offset rather than undermine the gravity of the story (if read as a story about the human condition).

This book will certainly be of interest to other fans of Chwast's work, and I think it would make a nice gift for anyone who is interested in (and/or creates) humorous illustration. Do note that as I mention above, the book is in black & white; only the covers are in color.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Cliff Notes Dante with Notebook Doodle Illustrations

By Monty Moonlight

Chwast's version of Dante's Divine Comedy is certainly not going to be for everyone. This graphic novel version is, naturally, more about the illustrations than the text, and this is a very not-too-wordy take. What we get is the poet Dante's journey through the afterlife with his spirit guides, the basic story intact, but only the most simplistic dialogue and narration. Still, this manages to be confusing at times in part by Chwast's choice to dress the characters as though they are from the 20th Century. In my opinion, the medieval man's point of view of a journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise is bizarre enough, even when the dialogue is thoroughly dumbed down, without the need for making it more confusing by illustrating a flashback to the crusades with Sherman tanks and WWII soldiers. Well, that's just my opinion. It's still easy to follow and probably easier to understand than the original work, and though it's 127 pages (black and white), it's a VERY quick read. My biggest disappointment is with the art, and I shudder to go into this, being a much less successful cartoonist/illustrator myself. The art here is consistent, which is tricky no matter what your style, but the style itself, I don't know how to put it except to say it looks like a kid drew the whole thing. I look back on the first graphic novel I illustrated, and as much as I hate to see that crude example of my early work (and as harsh as I am on my current work), one thing I can say about the art here is that it really makes me feel good about my poorest creations and gives me hope for the future, when it doesn't flat out make me mad that I so rarely land a paying gig while this stuff sells.

At any rate, if you are in the market for a simple version of Dante's Divine Comedy, this is... an option. I can't say it's the best option. It may well be, but I don't know what else is out there for that. Look into what his, and keep this one in mind since it may be the simplest version out there, but don't be surprised at the underwhelming feeling you get when you receive your copy and open it up.

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