



Reading Dante: From Here to Eternity

Prue Shaw

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The best and most eloquent introduction to Dante for our time.

Prue Shaw is one of the world's foremost authorities on Dante. Written with the general reader in mind, *Reading Dante* brings her knowledge to bear in an accessible yet expert introduction to his great poem.

This is far more than an exegesis of Dante's three-part *Commedia*. Shaw communicates the imaginative power, the linguistic skill and the emotional intensity of Dante's poetry—the qualities that make the *Commedia* perhaps the greatest literary work of all time and not simply a medieval treatise on morality and religion.

The book provides a graphic account of the complicated geography of Dante's version of the afterlife and a sure guide to thirteenth-century Florence and the people and places that influenced him. At the same time it offers a literary experience that lifts the reader into the universal realms of poetry and mythology, creating links not only to the classical world of Virgil and Ovid but also to modern art and poetry, the world of T. S. Eliot, Seamus Heaney and many others.

Dante's questions are our questions: What is it to be a human being? How should we judge human behavior? What matters in life and in death? *Reading Dante* helps the reader to understand Dante's answers to these timeless questions and to see how surprisingly close they sometimes are to modern answers.

Reading Dante is an astonishingly lyrical work that will appeal to both those who've never read the *Commedia* and those who have. It underscores Dante's belief that poetry can change human lives.

34 illustrations

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