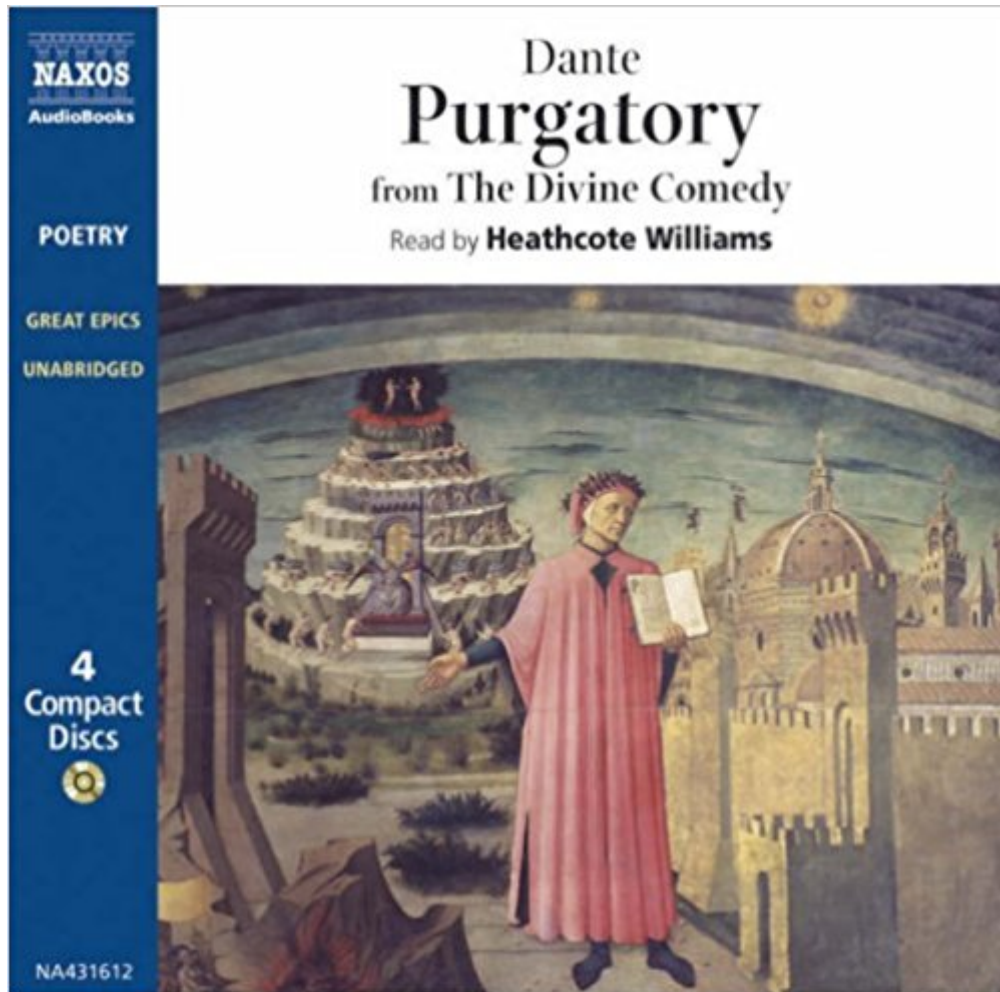




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# Purgatory D



## Synopsis

Originally released on 3 CDs in abridged form. Now available on 4 CDs unabridged. "Now of that second kingdom I shall sing where human souls are purified of sin and made worthy to ascend to Heaven" Purgatory is the second part of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. We find the Poet, with his guide Virgil, ascending the terraces of the Mount of Purgatory inhabited by those doing penance to expiate their sins on earth. There are the proud - forced to circle their terrace for aeons bent double in humility; the slothful - running around crying out examples of zeal and sloth; while the lustful are purged by fire. Though less well-known than *Inferno*, Purgatory has inspired many writers including, in our century, Samuel Beckett, and has played a key role in literature. With music of the period.

## Book Information

Audio CD

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## Customer Reviews

Dante Alighieri was born in 1265 in Florence to a family of minor nobility. He entered into Florentine politics in 1295, but he and his party were forced into exile in a hostile political climate in 1301.

Taking asylum in Ravenna late in life, Dante completed his *Divine Commedia*, considered one of the most important works of Western literature, before his death in 1321. --This text refers to the Kindle Edition edition.

As Dante continues his pilgrimage with Virgil as his guide, Heathcote Williams's distinction between characters blurs. The dialogues with Casella and Cato and other shades are sometimes unclear in terms of who is speaking. The departure of Virgil and the arrival of Beatrice is read too evenly, too dispassionately for the sudden absence of Dante's guide and the arrival of his love. As the blank

verse translation transforms pretty phrases like "What dost thou muse on?" (Henry Cary translation, Harvard Classics edition) into stock phrases like "What are you thinking?", Williams's placid voice morphs into a reading, rather than a dramatic performance. R.F. Å Å© AudioFile 2005, Portland, Maine-- Copyright Å Å© AudioFile, Portland, Maine

Many readers enjoy the Inferno but proceed no farther. Late in the Inferno (canto xxx), Virgil admonishes Dante to stop watching and enjoying the brawling damned. Rather than fixate on the entertainment of hell, readers also should lift their attention and go with the poets to Purgatory. The Purgatorio "is arguably the product of Dante's most brilliant poetic conception," Esolen says, because although "there were visions of Hell before Dante's, however far they fall short of his[, t]here were no visions of Purgatory." Dante captures well the meaning of the doctrine of Purgatory, the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and joyful suffering, portraying them with great understanding, artistry, and depth. Esolen's notes are respectful and explanatory, complementing and complimenting Dante. Purgatory is an easier read than is the Inferno, and it should be as we move from the heavy darkness of hell into the light. While Esolen's translation of the Inferno would have benefited from a schematic of hell, the ascent of Mount Purgatorio is more easily visualized and needs no such aid. I found Å Å The Dore Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy (136 Plates by Gustave Dore) Å Å (a few small examples from Dore are in Esolen's volume) a valuable aid in reading the Inferno, but the illustrations added less benefit to Purgatory; the black and white illustrations that helped capture the sense of the darkness in hell were even a bit of a handicap when considering the symbolism of the colors in Purgatory. I wouldn't however go as far as Ciardi did in his translation, where he cautions readers "to visualize Dante's scenes in terms of Dante's own details rather than in terms of Dore's romantic misconceptions." (Ciardi note to Canto xiii, l. 61-66.) Permit me a quibble. In his note to canto xxiv, l. 124-125, Esolen says that when Gideon separated his troops at God's instruction before routing the Midians, those who cupped their hands to drink were sent away and that those who lapped like dogs were selected. But Judges 7:4-7 says that those who cupped their hands were the same ones who lapped like dogs and were the ones selected; those who were sent away were those who knelt or laid down to drink.

A friend and I read the whole of Dr. Esolen's beautiful translation of Dante's Divine Comedy (I am copying this review to the other two canticles) over a few months, along with the DVD lecture series on it that Dr. Esolen has made, which is available through different vendors. I HIGHLY recommend the project to anyone, particularly Catholics, because while the footnotes and endnotes are

outstanding, the lecture series really brings it home to our lives and spirituality. We did this exercise because Bishop Barron had commented how fruitful the Divine Comedy was for his spiritual life and ministry. Having a lecture series and set of matching translations by a consummate scholar and faithful Catholic, who translated Dante's great Catholic opus into a work that can be appreciated by today's students, is a precious pearl beyond price, and I am so grateful I was able to have and use it. (The OCD in me wishes that the books had coordinated covers, but I don't judge a book by its cover!)

This was an excellent version of Purgatory. It was very readable, and I found the extensive notes on each canto to be very helpful. My questions were frequently answered there, like how Cato got into purgatory while Virgil was excluded. I liked that the translator didn't force everything into an awkward rhyme, although there were many rhyming lines. He decided to do rhymes when they worked but not to force it and instead stick with the original meter. That choice worked very well. Purgatory isn't exactly a quick read, but this translation was comparatively quick. I was able to move through it at a good pace because it was so readable.

Stunning cover and interior design. I'm very peeved they didn't release Paradiso to match the first two, as now I have an incomplete set. Esolen's translation is excellent, and it's side by side with the Italian for more serious scholars. Esolen's notes are fantastic and show a deep understanding of the text that makes me trust him with the translation. And the story, of course, is as enduring as Dante is. Highly recommended.

Anthony Esolen offers the best English translation of this masterpiece

Esolen does an excellent job through his translation and in the notes to make Dante's Purgatory accessible to the modern reader who lacks an education in the classic or in Latin. His notes help place this great poem in context. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to read a modern translation of Purgatory.

Great Translation. Im not an expert but i do know that who does the translation always has the capability of skewing the outlook of the readings. I think this is very well done.

I am still loving it. The performer is so outstanding. I have always been interested the Divine

Comedy, but this is the first time I have delved into Purgatory. This is a really perfect, clear, sonorous, and well paced reading.

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