

Hell and Damnation: A Sinner's Guide to Eternal Torment

Marq de Villiers

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Marq de Villiers's *Hell and Damnation* is a comprehensive guide to all things Hades, not to be left behind on the next trip to the underworld.

Broken into four parts, *Hell and Damnation* answers standard journalistic questions to provide as much information as possible about a place that no one has yet proved actually exists. Who invented hell, and who is in charge? Where is it, and what is it like? Cultures and religions all over the world are probed. Each question has a multitude of answers based on religion and geography. To further confuse things, many poets and writers developed their own versions of hell. De Villiers determinedly explains every answer in harrowing detail.

This information is relayed in a hilariously dry tone, making for the perfect juxtaposition of knowledge and humor. Religious texts and literary works are sourced and quoted to aid in answering ever-burning questions about hell, helping to form a proper idea of the fires that await in the afterlife.

Pope Innocent III, the Bible, Dante, several Greek gods, and a monk named Genshin are among those who supplied their own information about hell. De Villiers leaves nothing to assumption, explaining each detail with depth. Eyewitness accounts bring the investigation to a close, with interviews and dialogue with those who claim to have been to hell and who miraculously came back to share their experience.

It seems that the entirety of *Hell and Damnation* may be a not-so-slight jab at everyone who believes hell to be a real and actual place, giving obsessive detail to a mythical abyss. Satirical and snarky, the book is thorough and borders on exhaustive. Written as if hell were a real and true place, it is the best guidebook to a horror that no one hopes ever to experience.

KATIE ASHER (March/April 2019)

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