

How *100 Days in Deadland* compares to Dante Alighieri's "Inferno"

Loosely based on Dante's "Inferno," *100 Days in Deadland* covers the journey of Cash and her guide, Clutch, through zombie apocalypse hell. At the macro level, both the novel and epic poem is the story is a study of the cause and effect of the human condition and a persevering theme of hope. However, where the *Divine Comedy* is ultimately a political entreaty, *100 Days in Deadland* is source of entertainment. Just as the "Inferno" is only the first part of a three-part journey, *100 Days in Deadland* will bring you through the circles to hell and up to the gates of Purgatory.

Cash, like Dante had in the "Inferno", begins the story with a complete reliance on her guide and ever so slowly begins to accept accountability for her own life (and sins). As Dante and Virgil did in the "Inferno", Cash and Clutch discover the three types of sinful beasts: the self-indulgent (zombies), the violent (survivors), and the malicious (Doyle).

While the novel stands on its own, it also contains "Easter eggs" to stir echoes of "Inferno" for *Divine Comedy* fans. Below are 125 similarities between the novel and the classic poem at the micro level (Note: This is not a comprehensive list).

1st Circle: Limbo

Chapter 1

1. The story begins on Thursday before Good Friday.
2. Mia (Cash) represents Dante. The story also begins with Mia experiencing a crisis, where she faces a terrifying "she-wolf" (zombie), symbolizing consummate greed.
3. As her world crumbles around her, Cash suffers confusion about what's happening.
4. When Cash and co-worker Alan hit the roadblock, they are surrounded by the first of the three proverbial beasts: the self-indulgent (zombies).

Chapter 2

5. Slightly later than in the "Inferno", Clutch (i.e. Virgil) makes an appearance. And, like Virgil, he demands that Cash does what he says or else she must find her way alone.
6. When Cash joins up with Clutch, her fears are somewhat dampened believing herself in good hands.
7. Clutch saves Cash by killing the last zombie in their vicinity (Alan) in a manner reminiscent of Virgil splitting the monster's face in half: Clutch shoots Alan in the face.
8. When Clutch allows Cash to stay with him, it is the first sign of finding faith in each other.
9. As the sun lowers in the sky, Cash begins to gird herself against the approaching night.

Chapter 3

1. Clutch's truck represents Charon, Cash and Clutch's transport through Limbo.
2. Rather than seeing a blatant sign like Dante had seen in the "Inferno", Cash thinks to herself, "Abandon all hope all ye who enter here" as they approach Clutch's farm, which is secluded and far from what she knows.
3. Clutch's farm is in a valley and surrounded by woods. His house, surrounded by a large green yard, represents the castle holding the wise. In a slight translation, his house is full of food, gear, and books.
4. A tabby cat in the yard watching Cash and Clutch arrive represents the creatures that watched Dante arrive.

Chapter 4

5. Cash awakens to the sound of a "thunderous blast": a shotgun blast rather than a thunderclap.
6. As Cash and Clutch enter Fox Hills, they come across friends of Clutch's who are also farmers (representing fellow poets).
7. When they've had their fill, Cash and Clutch leave the pharmacy so that they can continue their journey. For Cash, a sense of foreboding kicks in.

2nd Circle: Lust

Chapter 5

8. Here, Cash and Clutch discover the second of the three proverbial beasts: violent survivors.
9. Like Dante, this is the first time Cash begins to acknowledge her own accountability. Up until this point, she's completely reliant on her guide (as she is through much of *100 Days in Deadland*).
10. Violent winds hit when the lustful are near, and storms wreck this chapter.
11. The rapists represent the darkest side of the lustful, being both licentious and unrestrained.
12. The victim woman's lips are pale like Cleopatra's, bringing Cash to kill her first uninfected human. Cash weeps at the tragic unfairness of it all.
13. The corn bin where the victim lies represents the carnal tower, a witness to the sins that took place there.

3rd Circle: Hunger

Chapter 6

14. Nasty storms (hail, winds, mud, cold rain) continue to batter Cash and Clutch throughout the chapter.
15. The school represents those with "insatiable hunger."
16. A schoolgirl with "pigtails" is a tiny hint at the "hogs" prevalent in the canto.
17. The school cafeteria is full of corpses covered in maggots, similar to the worms in the canto.
18. Cash struggles in the air ducts, not knowing which direction to go.
19. In the parking lot outside the school, Cash shoots a trio of zombies representing Cerberus.
20. Together, Cash and Clutch will journey into the next circle.

4th Circle: Greed

Chapter 7

21. The Fox River is flooded, the waters wild and muddy, representing a dark, boiling fountain. The ground had given way into the river (representing threatening cliffs) and mud. Smearred zombies are stuck in the mud, including a naked zombie/sinner.
22. At the Pierson farm, Cash sees money left on table, signifying that money can't buy peace.
23. Also at the farm, Cash and Clutch scare off a dog, representing the wolf.
24. While on a looting run, they run into the Dogs—men with shaved heads and carrying heavy stuff off the back of Clutch's truck(symbolizing great stones on their chests and pushing boulders). They yell out insults when Clutch and Cash approach. Cash & Clutch are forced to leave after the Dogs take some of their property.
25. Here, Cash and Clutch learn of the third of the three proverbial beasts: the malicious Doyle (who portrays Satan).

5th Circle: Wrath

Chapter 8

26. The zombies stuck in the Fox River (i.e. the River Styx) mud are waving their arms as they drown eternally.
27. Cash and Clutch rescue Mutt (i.e. Virgil is sent to the lowest circle of Hell to bring back a spirit), which actually takes place in canto 9.
28. On their drive, they pass a zombie still in his tractor in the middle of the marshland, representing the tiny vessel with single pilot.
29. Doyle's Iowa Surplus represents the City of Dis (DIS: Doyle's Iowa Surplus), which is guarded by Doyle's Dogs (fallen angels). DIS holds deepest secrets and worst violent and treacherous sinners. It is surrounded by prairie/marshland. Smoke from a silo (i.e. the tower) represents the giant flaming demon. Within Dis are active (rather than passive) sinners. Flames burn throughout Dis, and red is a common color.
30. Cash and Clutch are unable to enter Dis and are threatened by four raiders (representing the three furies & Medusa).
31. The sinners here are eternally fixed in the state they have chosen (i.e. the Dogs have chosen their path and will be punished).

6th Circle: Arrogance

Chapter 9

32. Cash and Clutch are allowed entrance to DIS. They enter through the tall fences (representing the high walls).
33. Cash refuses to look at one of raiders (representing Medusa) who watches her; he's the same guy who ogled her at the greenhouse.
34. A large cross is painted on a silo, symbolizing markings on the land. A wall has names of lost loved ones, showing that there are those who suffered from all lands.
35. "Cries" and "smoke" come from a smaller silo, where they realize humans are trapped inside (i.e. heretics locked in burning stone coffins).

Chapter 10

36. The Dogs revere Doyle (i.e. worship who they want, not God)
37. Cash and Clutch dine with Doyle in his windowless office (i.e. a tomb).
38. Doyle reveals that he sees the future, brags of his numbers, and treats Clutch like his son, wanting him to join. Doyle shows disdain to Cash because she has different ancestors, although eventually concedes that he may have "misjudged" her. Cash feels dismay at Doyle's thinking.
39. On a walk, they see a giant hole of stench, with bodies piled high.

Chapter 11

40. Doyle tells them how things are, thus foretelling the next circles. He asserts that he has both sources of wealth needed for survival: resources and his leadership abilities.
41. Cash is becoming aware of her own sin: she has accepted that she would do anything to protect Clutch and Jase. Which is exactly what she does by killing the rapist.
42. When Tyler takes Cash, Doyle warns them that punishment will befall anyone not with him. And, in a break from the "Inferno", Cash and Clutch split up for now.

7th Circle: Violence

Chapter 12: The Outermost Circle (Violence against neighbors)

43. As Cash enters Camp Fox, she sees a bull, representing the Minotaur. Camp Fox is well-guarded (by armed centaurs who shoot anything that gets too close) and has a creek along one side (representing the boiling river of blood). It is growing dark (to represent the Camp in a dark valley).
44. Cash is escorted into the camp by Nick, who leaves to return outside again. She "climbs down" from the Humvee to enter this circle.
45. Camp Fox is zed-bombed by Doyle as he fulfills his promise to commit violence (against his neighbors).

Chapter 13: The Middle Circle (Violence against one's self)

46. Zombies (with human faces) rip apart and dismember people like taloned harpies.
47. Cash "hears cries everywhere but couldn't see the source" because it's too dark.
48. During the battle, soldiers squander ammo. Cash sees bodies that look like "gnarled stumps, with dark blood oozing."
49. Nick commits suicide, thus committing violence against himself.
50. Appearing a chapter early, in the aftermath of the battle, Cash sees zombies lying on the ground, flat on their backs. Some are still, others are moving incessantly, one even has a knife/shaft through it). The bombed barrack is on fire, with embers and soot showering down. Cash hears a woman crying (i.e. a weeping soul) who's using her "wretched hands" to pull herself to her baby. Cash places the dead child in its dying mother's arms (to represent gathering up scattered boughs and giving them back to a soul).
51. Tyler takes Cash's hand and escorts her past the gallows and away from the scene.

Chapter 14: The Innermost Circle (Violence against nature)

52. Cash runs through "woods" and "stream" as she heads back to the farm.
53. Cash cuts herself on a culvert, representing the red blood flowing in the stream.
54. Cash comes across a zombie with a logo T-shirt (a gentle face, sits with ornaments upon his chest) still wearing his "gold" glasses and "silver" wristwatch.
55. Cash comes out from the woods into Zed City.

Chapter 15: The Innermost Circle (Violence against nature)

56. Cash jumps short fences to get from yard to yard to find a house to break into, representing defenses not built high and wide enough.
57. A herd of zombies find her (company of spirits stared from beneath the moon).
58. One zombie reminds her of Jase, with its outstretched arms and baked, brown features.
59. When she returns to the farm, she discovers everything is burned to the ground, representing the fiery sands beneath a rain of fire.

Chapter 16: The Innermost Circle (Violence against nature)

60. Cash hears the the zombies coming (like a murmur/beehive hum), then sees them (with wounds upon their skin, burned by flames).
61. When the three zombies surround her like a wheel, Cash takes out one by its neck, another by its feet, before finally taking out the last one.
62. Cash descends into the bunker for safety.

Chapter 17: The Innermost Circle (Violence against nature: The Usurers)

63. The Dog tells Cash and Clutch they are wrong and will be punished.
64. Cash kills a pregnant zombie that's carrying a purse around its neck.
65. Clutch kills the Dog because he is from DIS, where all sinners must be punished because they chose that way of life.
66. At the Fox Park office, Cash and Clutch face Geryon, a zombie with filthy stench yet the look of a just man. The zombie falls down the stairs, where its head breaks open. Cash and Clutch drop the corpse down a slope where it disappears.
67. Cash and Clutch climb the stairs to overlook the park.

8th Circle: Malice

Chapter 18: The Flatterers Leave the park to get gas (warm weather, bad smells)

68. Cash listens to Hawkeye's broadcasts and hears of new misery, tortures, and torturers.
69. Cash and Clutch go to a gas station with a slate/stone exterior the color of crude iron.
70. At the gas station, they are attacked by zombies that were walking in various directions. There are several zombies, including a single woman, a naked zombie, a zombie plunged in excrement.
71. Inside the gas station, two zombies watch them. Not explained in the novel, the two zombies represent the sinners, the boy being the one who bit his sister (i.e. one who "sold his own sister").
72. At the end of the chapter, Cash and Clutch find that they want to leave, echoing Dante's words, "and now our sight has had its fill of this."

Chapter 19: The Simonists

73. After awaking from a nightmare, Clutch gathers Cash into his arms and holds her fast against his chest. Only when he regains his composure, he gently releases Cash.
74. When Clutch confesses that he killed Doyle's wife, Cash says that her punishment was just.
75. At the end of the chapter, Cash is found looking out over the valley.

Chapter 20: The Diviners

76. At the church, Cash and Clutch fight zombies, including an old woman with her head twisted and a priest.
77. Afterward, they drink and clean up in the baptismal fountain, echoing the "Inferno's" "springs flowing out of the waters of that lake to bathe" under a statue of the Virgin Mary (i.e. "tears of anguished sorrow bathed the ground").
78. The church is next to a cemetery, i.e. a city built over dead bones.
79. Cash notes that zombies tend to disappear at dark, except at full moons.
80. When talking to Griz, Clutch accusing him of making foolish assumptions about hunting Doyle. Cash acknowledges Clutch's wisdom, and she follows him when he says it's time to go.

Chapter 21: The Politicians

81. Clutch prefers to just journey with Cash and doesn't want to meet with Captain Tyler Masden. However, Cash is slowly taking on more and more authority in the relationship.
82. Tyler assign ten soldiers to help in the attack, representing the ten assigned to help their march.
83. When the zeds corner them at the apple orchard ("The looks they cast at us were less than kind", "See how those demons grind their teeth, menacing brows, promising trouble."), Cash yells at Clutch to watch out ("Take care, take care!").

Chapter 22: The Hypocrites

84. Lights and sirens come on in the Dog's camp as a signal to prepare for a storm.
85. Zombies are chained around the perimeter in short pits
86. Mutt attacks a Dog by setting her "talons right into him, so you can flay his flesh".
87. But many of the Dogs escape. Furious, Dog reinforcements come and Cash and Clutch are forced to flee.

Chapter 23: The Hypocrites

88. Clutch runs over a zed wearing gaudy, dazzling clothes.
89. As they drive through town, they pick up more zombie company with every block.
90. They head to Tack's girlfriend's house to conceal themselves so that they are not hunted down like hares. However, the zombies find them, and they are forced to run (i.e. take "giant strides") for their lives.

Chapter 24: The Thieves

91. The sun rises and zombies come from everywhere, showing how the "world changed face in a few hours."
92. They make it to an old, ruined industrial park.
93. They are exhausted from running.
94. They kill an inked biker zombie, representing the centaur with a fire-breathing dragon on his shoulders and snakes on his back and a "farmer" zombie.
95. When they see the road-blocked bridge, Clutch's "brow is deeply furrowed." They decide to try to climb under it.
96. The Dogs waiting on the other side represent the Pistolia and the other Thieves, intent on causing Cash and Clutch grief.

Chapter 25: The Thieves

97. The trio kills five zombies, representing the five thieves and two Dogs, representing two serpents. After being shot, one of the Dogs hisses and spits blood.

Chapter 26: The Frauds

98. Unknown to the Camp, the two Dogs are a Trojan horse.
99. A "sea" of zombies come across the field. Dogs throw a Molotov cocktail onto the zeds so that they are "wrapped in flames."

Chapter 27: The Frauds

100. The Dogs throw another Molotov cocktail, which draws even more attention from the zombies.
101. After they escape, Cash bears new visions (i.e. "loads to carry") of horror.
102. Hawkeye's broadcast warns his listeners to not trust.
103. At Camp Fox, they have Italian for dinner, while they quarrel over what to do with the two Dogs. Cash and Clutch (and Jase) leave.

Chapter 28: The Scandals

104. Cash uses Jase's machete as they kill zeds at the tree. One zombie is pierced, its nose and ear hacked off, Another is ripped from neck to groin, while another has its throat slit, its head limp.
105. Cash reflects on what they've done (or haven't done, in regards to the two non-violent zombie kids) and the repercussions. But they must "carry the news" so that others may live.
106. Clutch has another nightmare because of the death he's caused.

Chapter 29: The Imposters

107. There are 22 miles between the park and camp.
108. Several are killed in the bombing, their bodies mutilated, left in scattered heaps.
109. There is finger pointing on who's to blame. Clutch says they will search for the Dogs and Cash. Cash & Clutch search the camp in silence, where they find two zombies propped against each other, their bodies cut open.
110. Camp Fox's town hall is blasted with zombie-soaked grenades, perverting every aspect of good and socially acceptable.

Chapter 30: The Falsifiers

111. Cash and Clutch leave behind the two reeking zombies.
112. In the chaos after the bombings, a zombie sinks its teeth into a survivor's neck. A wretched, sad woman "drowns herself" at the truck under the stampede.
113. Cash kills the Dogs, employing rigid justice. Still, she cries at the horrors taking place.

9th Circle: Betrayal

Chapter 31

114. Cash lies with Clutch each and holds his hand.
115. The park is ringed by giant trees.
116. Griz comes for Cash and they drive through the morning fog to Jase & Eddy's cabin.
117. Eddy's betrayal led to his mother's death (traitor to kindred). When Eddy reveals Smitty as another traitor, the room feels colder as Smitty's terror grows. The two are heavily restrained.
118. In his final radio broadcast, Hawkeye (Doyle) speaks freely and accusatory.

Chapter 32

- Smitty/Eddy are brought to the camp and killed by zeds. They realize Doyle has been at Dis all along
119. As they drive into the Camp, they drive slowly to not run over their loved ones who'd died or been turned during the attack.
 120. Eddy's tears wet the ground when he sees his mother. Eddy is eaten alive. Smitty is shot in the leg so that he is "stuck." Eddy turns into a zombie and gnaws on the head of his fellow traitor.
 121. After carrying out the execution, Cash notices that someone is watching/staring at them from DIS.

Chapter 33

122. Being forced to hide, the Dogs are slowly starving at DIS, reflective of the story of Ptolemy and Simon Maccabaeus. The Dobs are being punished more harshly than all others, since they continue to follow Doyle (one incapable of repentance) by choice.

Chapter 34

123. After Cash attacks DIS, injured/dead Dogs are contorted and dying.
124. She confront Doyle (Satan) at DIS. Doyle has red cuts on his soot-covered face and is wearing yellow hat, the three colors symbolizing the three heads of Satan, i.e. inverted trinity of impotence, ignorance, and hate. Cash defeats Doyle with a grenade "sphere" and who tries to hide behind his desk but that only further ensures his demise. Cash escapes the blast by climbing down into his bunker. Once awake, she climbs onto the roof.
125. The last word of novel is "stars." The story is left incomplete as she is only a third of her way through her journey.