

How *Deadland Rising* compares to Dante Alighieri's "Paradiso"

Loosely based on Dante's "Paradiso," *Deadland Rising* covers the journey of Cash and her guide, Clutch, to discover redemption and salvation. 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, *Deadland Rising* is source of entertainment. Just as the "Paradiso" is the final part of a three-part journey, *Deadland Rising* will bring you through the gates of heaven.

The novel contains "Easter eggs" to stir echoes of "Paradiso" for *Divine Comedy* fans. Below are 147 symbolic similarities between the novel and the classic poem at the micro level (Note: This is not a comprehensive list).

1. Uncertainty

The first sphere, the Moon, represents unfulfilled vows and inconstancy

Chapter 1

1. The story begins atop the Humvee (Mount Purgatory) in sunlight. Cash (Dante) is in awe of the view.
2. They depart the woods and head on their journey.
3. Cash and Clutch's (Beatrice's) gaze meets. Clutch explains why they must continue.
4. Inside the front door of the store, they see a zed flayed, his skin ripped off his entire body.
5. They examine one of the burnt zeds: A zed with two laurel leaves crossed over a book and shepherd's hook. Unable to express in words, Cash invents the word "transhumanize" (to pass beyond the human).

Chapter 2

6. In finding a store not yet looted, they take new roads, i.e. "sail on waves never sailed before."
7. They are amazed at what they see. In a hint toward the tale of Jason and the Argonauts search of the Golden Fleece, Cash selects a shearling coat with a golden fleece lining.
8. Clutch gazes upward (through the open roof). Cash watches as the brilliant pearl moon—the first star—arrives. To reflect upon how quick the journey to the first sphere (Moon) was, Cash mentions how short the days are becoming.
9. Clutch explains that senses and reason are insufficient to grasp the spiritual realities of the heavens.
10. Cash later reflects the moon in a mirror she's found at a hint to Beatrice's explanation of the moon's reflection in 3 mirrors.

Chapter 3

11. Cash sees other survivors, at first thinking it a vision. They speak with Picadilly, a nun representing Piccarda Donati, Forese Donati's sister (i.e. Wes from *Deadland's Harvest*).
12. Picadilly introduces them to Connie (representing the Empress Constance), a woman who stayed with Henry, her husband. She left her son, Frederick. Picadilly mentions that grace does not rain equally from God.
13. Picadilly notes that Cash and they will be happy there but that they still desire to continue moving.
14. When they leave, in the rear-view mirror they watch Picadilly and Connie disappear, like heavy weights under water.

Chapter 4

15. In discussing difficult choices, they talk about going to Camp Fox or New Eden.
16. Cash's first question: If my will to good persists, why should the violence of others cause the measure of my merit to be less? Clutch's response: In this sphere is honor and blame for being influenced. Their normal appearance is due to Dante's limited apprehension. "The Bible condescends to human powers, assigning feet and hands to God, but meaning something else instead." Cash finally broaches the topic of Henry, and her worry about how many innocent zeds she'd killed. Clutch helps tamp down her worry. She refers to Henry's appearance, and Clutch says to just accept it.
17. Cash's second question: Cash is led to doubt because the doctrine Plato taught would find support by souls' appearing to return to the stars. Clutch's response: violence and unfulfilled vows, absolute and relative will. Cash continues with her doubt about the zeds.
18. Clutch notes that a soul can enjoy bliss even at this lowest part of heaven. Clutch looks at Cash with love. Clutch, for the first time, holds Cash's hand.
19. Justin (Emperor Justinian), the leader of New Eden, arrives.

Chapter 5

20. Justin (Emperor Justinian) speaks, but they do not yet know him. The sun shines brightly above him.
21. Clutch (Beatrice) is perfected because she grasps the good.
22. Clutch (Beatrice) has the group vote (free will = treasure). Then, he doesn't speak any more in the chapter.
23. Justin (representing the emperor Justinian) introduces himself.
24. Justin gives a vow that they will all be safe, signifying the sanctity of vows.
25. They arrive at New Eden (Mercury). End of uncertainty & new uncertainty.

2. Ambition

Mercury, justice, achievements for the sake of glory

Chapter 6

26. Justinian (Justin) is a talented orator, driven to worldly achievement by the desire for honor and fame. He comes across as active, as does everyone in New Eden. Justinian learned "true faith" (after the outbreak) and is inspired to take a "high task." His wife Theodora is there, too. Justin tells of his own life and the story of New Eden (represents Rome).
27. The New Eden flag ("sacred standard" with a Roman Eagle) is proudly flown.
28. Romeo is a modest yet talented political advisor. Poor and old, Romeo took to a life of begging.
29. Everyone is busy, symbolizing Mercury. Hints of Justin/New Eden of being overly ambitious.
30. Two unnamed "just men" work for Justin.
31. They meet Charles & his wife and become friends.
32. Beasts howl at night. Someone counts six and mentions 666, the mark of the beast/apocalypse.

Chapter 7

33. Everyone is busy, symbolizing Mercury. More hints of Justin/New Eden of being overly ambitious.
34. Beatrice's discourse. Incarnational Theology. Beatrice answers the question, "Why did God become a man?" by saying it's part nature/divine direction and part free will.
 1. Other theories include the ransom theory (payment to the devil for release of mankind); the church's penitential system, and feudal law.
35. To parallel the story of Jerusalem being destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE as punishment to the Jews crucifying Christ, Justin turns away the remaining Black Sheep as punishment for their past crimes ... i.e. original sin was punished with the crucifixion, but Christ was divine, so the crucifixion was unjust and rightly punished with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. "just vengeance was justly punished"
 1. "If you hadn't shot at us, we wouldn't have shot at you," Justin said.
36. Overly ambitious, Justin announces, "Anyone who attacks New Eden will experience the same fate!"
37. As they discuss how their pathway to their redemption was divine, they choose to stay at New Eden.

3. Temptation

Venus, irrepensible ardor, love marred by wantonness (The stores in Omaha are a temptation they can't resist)

Chapter 8

38. Clutch begins to find happiness (representing Beatrice's growing beauty) as they ascend to the third sphere.
39. Venus = irrepensible ardor. Cash and Clutch become closer in their relationship, kissing in public.
40. Charles Martel addresses the role of providence (over heredity) in determining talents and inclinations in society. Charles was a generous spirit, genuinely concerned about societal wellbeing. The need to respect men's natural dispositions. Do not twist to religion one who is more fit to gird a sword, and make a king of one more fit for sermoning. Cash says that she's best fitted to be a scout, and Justin relents (sort of). I.e. everyone must take a job at New Eden.

Chapter 9

41. Charles (Charlie) dies during an epidemic, along with his wife (Sarah).
42. Cunizza (Connie) loved several men in her life, each died. She mentions this after Sarah's death.
43. Folco (an unnamed zealot) condemns the failings of church leaders (i.e. Justin).
44. Earth's Shadow (envelopes the first 3 spheres: Moon, Mercury, Venus, separating them from the rest of paradise). The dreariness continues.

4. Prudence

Sun, wisdom, knowledge, honesty, theologians

Chapter 10

45. Ascent to the sun (sunny day). They see the "lofty wheels" of the sun (a wind farm). Air so full of vapor it forms a halo (sundogs).
46. St. Thomas Aquinas (Tom) is educated and speaks of harmony and reconciliation. He talks of how all things created by the Creator (including the zed virus).
47. Their eyes never depart from their journey (the trio stay focused).
48. From straight line its departure is distant (when the truck starts to fail, they have to branch off to reach the squadron).
49. With the equinox, the sun will rise earlier each day now. Cash mentions how she looks forward to spring.
50. Beatrice conducts from good to better so swiftly; Beatrice smiles, brighter than the sun. They see the squadron (Clutch waves from the roof).
51. "Suns circled three times around us." Three days pass in this chapter.
52. They learn of the 11 souls in the canto, in addition to Thomas (i.e. they find the squadron).
53. This chapter centers on thanksgiving to God, so they find the squadron on Thanksgiving.

Chapter 11

54. Lights encircle Beatrice and Dante, like candles in candlesticks (they have solar lights in the store).
55. The vanity of worldly desires ((senseless cares of mortals: law, medicine, priesthood, rulership, plunder, politics, labors, sin, indolence). Jack is bitten by a sick dog because the squadron was greedy and tried to take too many things from the store.
56. St. Thomas says, "where one may fatten well; if one does not stray off." (In leaving the store, Clutch also mentions that they should only take what they need; don't be greedy.)
57. The eulogy of St. Francis and St. Dominic (the church is St. Dominic; Cash finds a printing of the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi in the store).

Chapter 12

58. They are surrounded by two alternating circles/wheel of dancing souls. (In the candlelight, they surround the Marshall survivors, who then surround them).
59. The symbol of the Christ's Army (a lion) is a statue at the entryway of the church.
60. The leader is St. Dominic of Caleruega, a teacher (Prof. Caler, teaches psychology at SMSU). The souls quit dancing when he comes forward (he calls for a truce). At his birth, St. Dominic's mother foresaw a black-and-white dog holding a torch in his mouth. Prof. Caler carries a lamp and has a small dog (named Boy). He was successful enough that the "gardens" became abundant through his knowledge and energy (Prof. Caler helps settle folks down).
61. Good wine makes a crust, bad wine mold in the cask. (They drink bad-tasting church wine as Thanksgiving ends).
62. A few of the souls include: St. Bonaventure (played by Bonnie, a Marshall survivor), Peter Book-Devourer (an avid reader, played by Peter, a SMSU student), Nathan the prophet (played by Nathan, a SMSU freshman), and Abbott Joachim of Flora (played by Joachim, a SMSU student).

Chapter 13

63. The constellations of Great Bear and Lesser Bear (wild dogs), which is shaped like a horn, is circling Dante (also, she looks up and sees the constellations).
64. Nature is to blame why things aren't a perfect reflection of God. Solomon asked God for the ability to distinguish right and wrong, which is why no one can match King Solomon's wisdom. (sleets and snows)
65. Chiana is a sluggish stream (Cash's dream of trying to flee the zed kids; they also drive slowly down slushy roads).
66. Per St. Thomas, hasty opinions often turn out to be wrong. I.e. Don't judge too quickly, because things which appear bad can turn out to be good, and vice versa (a thorny rose bush all winter will bear a rose in the spring). Prof. Caler sacrifices himself so they can escape the dogs, he tangles in a rose bush and dies. Prof. Caler, in a reflection of Dominic's real life, also was gravely ill.
67. Cacciaguida (Dr. Gidar arrives 2 chapters early). Dante's ancestor, Dr. Gidar plays a doctor acquaintance of her father's. He remembers her as a child)

5. Fortitude

Mars, Courage, Diligence, Steadfastness

Chapter 14

68. Appearance of new spirits (Marshall survivors arrive at New Eden)
69. "Whoever weeps because on earth we die that we may live on high, has never seen eternal showers that bring refreshment there." (They mourn the dead: Jack, Prof. Caler).
70. Beatrice (Clutch) speaks from within a circle (that the zed kids are not to be harmed).
71. Verses are sung three times for three spirits (three gas explosions). Radiance increases (fire grows).
72. Beatrice (Clutch) shows herself to Dante (Cash) to regain senses in the flames.
73. See bodies moving through the sunbeam (see Marco die in flames).
74. The cross burns in radiance (the church burns).
75. Sound of a harp, strung in harmony of many strings, rapt Dante (the church's organ burning)
76. Dante finds pleasure in seeing Beatrice (Cash is consoled by Clutch).

Chapter 15

77. "Through tranquil evening skies, a sudden fire shoots from time to time." (more gas explosions in the distance)
78. Beatrice knows what Dante says even without voicing the words (they make eye contact and words aren't needed)
79. At one time, Florence had no necklace, nor adornment. Naked. (New Eden stands bare).

Chapter 16

80. Beatrice (Clutch) is withdrawn.
81. The Romans (Saskatchewan) no longer show respect to those worthy of it (they can no longer reach the government)
82. Coal quickens to flame in the blowing wind. (New fires erupt for days)
83. Cacciaguida (Dr. Gidar) says he had a good life. He talks of those undone by pride (Marshall), forced to give up their strongholds and leave. He mentions that cities (this new world) are longer lived than families; great families fall or become extinct.
84. "There was nothing to have caused her (Florence) sorrow... nor was it made bloodred by factious hatred." I.e. Florence's pride is a red lily in a white field (a comparison Cash makes when Dr. Gidar injects himself with the untested vaccine).

Chapter 17

85. Cacciaguida (Dr. Gidar) warns that Dante (Cash) must leave Florence (New Eden), leaving everything he loves dearly.
 1. He says to stop at the first inn for refuges, which bears a holy bird. Await the man. Dante will share scheming, senseless (insane, ungrateful, profane) company in his exile. They will have their foreheads bloodred, but Dante will survive. Dante should trust Henry (the other zed), whose generosity will be great. Dante will be a great success.
86. Beatrice and Cacciaguida urge Dante to fulfill his poetic mission. (He asks Cash and Clutch to fly his research to Saskatchewan).
87. Words were said to Cacciaguida on his death bed re: his future life (and he then speaks words on his death bed)
88. Cacciaguida disappears (Dr. Gidar dies).
89. When Cacciaguida leaves, one by one, eight warriors appear (the remaining Fox survivors). They sing the battle cry to "rise up" and "conquer". I.e. the Fox survivors say they will go with Cash and Clutch to Saskatchewan.

6. Justice

Jupiter; Proper moderation between self-interest, versus public-interest, and against the rights and needs of others.

Chapter 18

90. Dante (Cash) sees love in Beatrice's (Clutch's) eyes, for only a moment.
91. Mars is replaced by white Jupiter (Christmas lights, snow)
92. Jupiter is the sphere of just rulers (Justin?)
93. The spirits in the sphere of Jupiter spell out, like cheerleaders (residents at church service), Latin words "cherish justice, you who judge the earth" and the symbols of the eagle (eagle seen flying) and the lily (peace lily at Connie's house) are shown

Chapter 19

94. The eagle (Justin) speaks, the words forming an acrostic for LUE, Latin for "plague" or "pestilence" (Hodge's sentencing is to be injected with Bonnie's changes). The eagle (Justin) rebukes Albert I of Austria (Hodge) for his ruthless invasion.

Chapter 20

95. Dante is told to watch the sun (the dog packs walk in the sunlight)
96. The salvation of the Trojan Ripheus, a pagan who lived long before the advent of Christianity, conveys to Dante the extraordinary power of predestination, the idea that certain souls are chosen—or predestined—to be saved. (Just like some people survived the outbreak, some dogs will survive)
97. A major lesson of the episode of Jupiter is the idea that no one—not even prophets—can probe completely the depths of divine knowledge and justice. (Hodge survives but is killed by a mysterious vigilante)

7. Temperance

Saturn; Restraint; Self-Control; Contemplatives

Chapter 21

98. Beatrice (Clutch) refuses to smile
99. Dante (Cash) looks into Beatrice's (Clutch's) eyes to see Saturn. Rising from it is a tall golden ladder (they take off with the fiery sun shining). They are surrounded by silence (as the dogs stalk them).
100. Climbing down the ladders are flocks of thousands of flaming souls (vapid dogs surround the plane).
101. "Three beasts" stand under the ample cloak: priest, horse, and concubine (3 dogs attack Zach).
102. The spirits/flames gathered round, making thunder that overcomes Dante (Cash cries)

8. Hope

Fixed Stars, Faith, Love, accepting the grace to forgive

Chapter 22

103. They see how small the earth looks (from the air) as they fly up the ladder (through the skies)
104. They meet St. Benedict but cannot see his face (a faceless zed), who says greedy popes will get what's coming to them (zeds die by what they caused)
105. Dante sees the fixed, bright stars of Gemini (all the zeds in the FEMA camp)
106. Dante (Cash) turns his gaze onto Beatrice (Clutch)

Chapter 23

107. Beatrice (Clutch) smiles: "There you see the troops of the triumphant Christ—and all the fruits gathered." They made it to the capital. Dante says, "O Beatrice, sweet guide and dear!" (Cash is excited when they land as well)
108. Beatrice stands erect, intent, without haste; Dante watches in longing and suspense (when they land at the capital)
109. The spirits sing out to Mary (the control tower feeds them commands)
110. "Here, he triumphs in his victory—he who is the keeper of the keys of glory." (they meet Peter, Aline's second-in-command)

Chapter 24

111. Spirits form companies of spheres around fixed poles, flaming like comets. The wheels turn so fast, they're a blur. (lots of people moving around the capital)
112. Peter asks Dante (Cash) about the coin (cooler) he carries.
113. Peter talks of faith (i.e. to have faith in Aline, the president)

Chapter 25

114. Before Dante proceeds further in his journey, Beatrice instructs him to prepare himself (Clutch says they're nearly done)
115. St James and St John circle like doves, praising the banquet offered them. (Aline, with James and John, have a feast ready)
116. Dante says that hope is necessary for the future
117. Dante (Cash) is blinded and can't see Beatrice (they drink wine—their goblets tainted with tranquilizers—and pass out)

Chapter 26

118. John tells Dante to make up for his blindness with colloquy (they speak to Cash blindfolded)
119. Dante's sight returns (he turns the lights back and she can see)
120. Adam talks of the eternal garden (escorts Clutch and Griz back to Cash and talks of Moose Jaw)
121. Dante says he always has a fire burn for Beatrice (Cash confesses her love to Clutch)
122. He says that fruit can only be brought forth when ripe (Clutch says they'll bide their time)

9. Courage

Primum Mobile, Angels (angelic orders), Crystalline, The Untainted, Creation, Change, Action, Foundation, Shift

Chapter 27

123. Starts: "Unto the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, glory!" (Three more to join the cause)
124. From up here (on the roof), they can see rapacious wolves clothes in cloaks of shepherds, the Gascons and Cahorsines who prepare to drink our blood (reference to Aline and her co-leaders)
125. The Primum Mobile has total transparency (they look across the capital from a roof). Beatrice: "The nature of the universe, which holds the center still and moves all else around it, begins here..." (he says the new world will start here, today)
126. Peter glows red with anger (Peter's face reddens in anger)
127. Dante burns more than ever for Beatrice (a passionate kiss before the coup)

Chapter 28

128. Fire (they start a fire to burn the highly flammable toxin to cause chaos)
129. Dante sees nine fiery rings whirling about a central point of intense light (all 9 tanks explode). The power of the circling rings of angels burns bright and fast (the orange toxin makes for bright, quickly spreading fires).
 1. 1-Seraphim, 2-Cherubim, 3-Thrones, 4-Dominions, 5- Virtues, 6-Powers, 7-Principalities, 8-Archangels, 9-Angels. St. Gregory had thought different but was wrong and smiled at his mistake (Gregory, an airport guy, joined the capital to help, not realizing it was a mistake).

Chapter 29

130. Beatrice (Clutch) is silent for a bit, before she speaks (on the radio)
131. Angels have been around longer than man. Some angels rebelled (violent disturbance to heaven (Aline)) while others remained faithful (Cash, Clutch, Griz, etc.).
132. Beatrice reproves those who sow perversion of the Holy Scripture, which costs blood to the world (Aline). Wretched sheep follow these (Peter, John, James).
133. There are so many angels that they are uncountable (all the city-states reply on the radio; success! CDC in Helena MT is still operational to make the vaccine)

10. Redemption

CHARITY, Empryeen, Acceptance, Knowledge, Understanding, Beyond, Light, Illumination

Chapter 30

134. Dante (Cash) is in awe of Beatrice's (Clutch's) beauty.
135. Dante sees a light taking a river's form (flooding river in the sunshine)
136. Beatrice (Clutch) tells Dante (Cash) to drink of the water, and he hurries to drink.

Chapter 31

137. The holy legion arrives in the formation of the white Rose (Cash arrives in a white dress with roses on it)
138. Beatrice is replaced by St. Bernard a gentle figure (he's healed the scars on his soul and can fully love Cash now).
139. Dante (Cash) thanks Beatrice (Clutch) for drawing him out of slavery and into freedom
140. Dante (Cash) sees Mary (Deb) smile at the legions (Deb is ready to give birth).

Chapter 32

141. Bernard points out the ranks of love and of martyrdom (Deb demands to save her baby, not herself; thus becoming a martyr out of love)
142. Bernard points out twins moved to anger within their mother's womb (Deb has twins)

Chapter 33

143. Dante sees the light within a dream, leaving an imprint on his heart; wakes but still feels the pleasant sensation on his heart, like snow under a warm ray of sun (Cash dreams of Fox Park)
144. Dante recalls the Argonauts and their expedition to acquire the Golden Fleece (return to Fox Park)
145. Dante sees three circles of holy trinity (Cash, Clutch, Jase)
146. Their journey ends on Easter Sunday. Spring has arrived.
147. Last word: "stars."