



Dante in Love

A. N. Wilson

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For William Butler Yeats, Dante Alighieri was "the chief imagination of Christendom." For T. S. Eliot, he was of supreme importance, both as poet and philosopher. Coleridge championed his introduction to an English readership. Tennyson based his poem "Ulysses" on lines from the *Inferno*. Byron chastised an "Ungrateful Florence" for exiling Dante. The *Divine Comedy* resonates across five hundred years of our literary canon.

In *Dante in Love*, A. N. Wilson presents a glittering study of an artist and his world, arguing that without an understanding of medieval Florence, it is impossible to grasp the meaning of Dante's great poem. He explains how the Italian states were at that time locked into violent feuds, mirrored in the ferocious competition between the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. He shows how Dante's preoccupations with classical mythology, numerology, and the great Christian philosophers inform every line of the *Comedy*.

Dante in Love also explores the enigma of the man who never wrote about the mother of his children, yet immortalized the mysterious Beatrice whom he barely knew. With a biographer's eye for detail and a novelist's comprehension of the creative process, A. N. Wilson paints a masterful portrait of Dante Alighieri and unlocks one of the seminal works of literature for a new generation of readers.

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