Student Essay

Setting and Character of Canto XXV- Circle 8 (Malebolge) Fraudulence in "Inferno." by Dante Alighieri

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Canto XXV- Circle 8 (Malebolge) - Fraudulence:

Bolgia 7- The Thieves

Setting:

o In Circle 8, Bolgia 7

-a Bolgia is a ditch or pouch of evil within the actual circle

o a deep chasm filled with tons of serpents

o within the pit of vipers were people (the thieves) running about naked, getting turned to ash by the bite from one of these creatures, turning to ash, and then reforming again

Characters:

o Vanni Fucci- a thief who prophesies that the White Guelphs will be defeated by the Black Guelphs; he also curses God and is immediately attacked by swarms of serpents and Cactus

o Cacus- a centaur who had previously stole cattle from Hercules and was then clubbed to death for it; he is banished to a lower pit of hell to than his fellow centaurs (who guard Phlegethon) for his crime

o Five Noble Thieves of Florence- Agnello Brunelleschi, Buoso delgi Abati, Puccio Sciancato, Cianfa de' Donati, and Francesco dei Cavalcanti; as their punishment for stealing they share endless, painful transformations from human to six-legged lizard; their bodies get stolen and the must steal back another human form from a fellow sinner

Plot Summary:

o The Seventh Bolgia is where the thieves are located, in a chasm of hideous serpent creatures. They are punished with an endless cycle of transformation, not knowing what is rightfully their own, a just punishment for those who stole things that belonged to others.

Role of Narrator:

o Dante observes the occurrences in this Circle and does not interact with the sinners. He instead looks to Virgil for answers.

Allegory:

o the Five Noble Thieves symbolize all thieves; they are not important as individuals, but instead represent all of those who unrightfully take something that does not belong to them