



As we read Dante's *Inferno*, we might think it's a risky place for Dante (the narrator) and Virgil (his guide). After all, they are traveling in a place where the entry sign warns:

Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.

What might happen, for example, if demons threaten the two men?

Dante sets-up that very occurrence, which Gustave Dore illustrates with the engraving depicted here. We can coordinate the picture with the text, from Canto 21, line 70.

To compare the words of the story with the impact of the picture, we'll use [Henry Cary's translation](#) (which is the original edition containing Dore's engravings):

*Me then my guide bespake: "Lest they descry,
That thou art here, behind a craggy rock
Bend low and screen thee; and whate'er of force
Be offer'd me, or insult, fear thou not:
For I am well advis'd, who have been erst
In the like fray." Beyond the bridge's head
Therewith he pass'd, and reaching the sixth pier,
Behov'd him then a forehead terror-proof.*

*With storm and fury, as when dogs rush forth
Upon the poor man's back, who suddenly
From whence he standeth makes his suit; so rush'd
Those from beneath the arch, and against him
Their weapons all they pointed. He aloud:
"Be none of you outrageous: ere your time
Dare seize me, come forth from amongst you one*

*"Who having heard my words, decide he then
If he shall tear these limbs."*

The drawing illustrates "Be none of you outrageous." In today's vernacular, that might sound like: "Don't even try it!"

And ... they don't.

Notice, in the drawing, that the demons' pitchforks are poised for harm, but none of them touch Dante and Virgil.

Click on the image for a better view.

Credits:

Gustave Dore created this engraving to be included in a version of the "Divine Comedy" which was published in 1890. It is from "Dante Alighieri's Inferno from the Original by Dante Alighieri and Illustrated with the Designs of Gustave Doré" (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1890).

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Devils-with-Pitchforks-in-the-Inferno-0>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Devils-with-Pitchforks-in-the-Inferno-0>