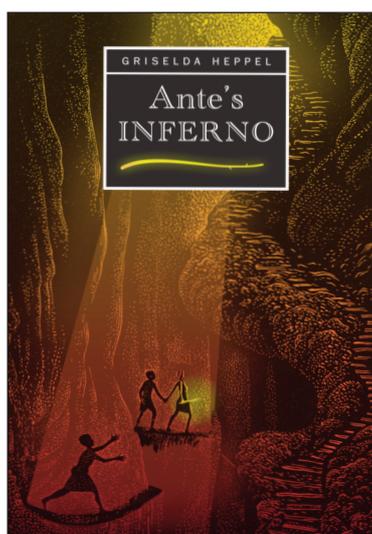




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ANTE'S INFERNO

Griselda Heppel

'Scared of me, are you?' jeered Florence. The rail moved slightly but she didn't notice. 'You should be,' she added softly. Ante gasped. I must warn her! But it was as if her throat had closed and she couldn't breathe, couldn't form the words.

Crack. A tremor seemed to go through Florence. The smile vanished from her face. And in that moment, Ante saw what she hadn't seen before. They were not alone. Next to Florence stood the dim, shadowy figure of a boy. No time to think who he was or how he'd got there.

'Get back from the hand rail,' she cried, her voice suddenly free. 'It's not safe!'

The next moment came a crash and a scream. Then all was darkness...

Twelve year-old Ante (Antonia) Alganesh has a problem. It's lunchbreak and Florence's gang are after her. Desperate for a place to hide, she climbs the forbidden staircase to the old organ loft, where a hundred years ago a boy tumbled to his death. No one will think of looking for her there... Except Florence. Petrified, Ante watches her enemy approach, leaning on the rotten hand-rail. She shouts a warning, but it's too late. There's a crash – and a boy appears from nowhere, just as a door opens in the wall behind them. All three find themselves in a tunnel leading to a river bank where people queue to be rowed across by a filthy old ferryman...

Forced to bury their differences, Ante and Florence accompany the strange boy, Gil, on a journey he should have taken 100 years ago through the Underworld. Making their way past the Shopping Maul and Multivice Complex, attacked by Cerberus, Harpies, Furies and the Minotaur, all this is bad enough: far worse is the doubt gnawing at Ante's heart...

Ante's Inferno is a gripping combination of fantasy, Greek mythology and adventure, for children aged 9-12 years old. Author Griselda is inspired by C. S. Lewis and Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

'A really clever idea.... I see it as a movie!' Caroline Lawrence, author of *The Roman Mysteries*.

GRISELDA HEPPEL read English at Cambridge and worked in publishing for a few years before moving to Oxford with her husband to bring up their four children.

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