

A peasant died and was sent to hell...

by Victor Aguilar

A peasant died and was sent to hell. He told the devil that he would not mind the fire as long as he knew that the other sinners' fires were just as hot as his. The devil agreed to give him a tour so he could see for himself how hot their fires were.

First the peasant was taken to the pit for carpenters and he saw them writhing in the flames. But, in spite of the terrible pain from their burns, the peasant saw that they were using their lumber to make ladders. Even though the wooden ladders immediately caught on fire, the carpenters ran up them before they burned away, and they would have escaped too if it were not for a ring of demons who pushed the ladders back.

"Oh, that's awful!" the peasant said, "I can't imagine my fate could be worse. But show me some of the other pits."

Next the devil took the peasant to the pit where the tile layers were kept. Here the fire was just as hot, but the peasant saw that the condemned were using their tile to build a road up the side of the pit. A crew of demons was busy prying up the tiles with the tips of their pitchforks and it was all that they could do to keep the road from reaching the rim.

"Show me another." said the peasant, recoiling from the heat of the fire.

Next, the peasant was taken to the pit for plumbers. Here he saw that they had tapped into a water line and used their pipe to construct a sprinkler system. Demons ran back and forth with wheelbarrows full of magnesium, which cannot be extinguished with water, but it was all they could do to keep the fire burning.

Finally, the peasant was taken to the pit where he was to be condemned. Before pushing him in, the devil inquired if he was satisfied that his fate was no worse than any of the others.

"The fire here is no hotter than elsewhere," agreed the peasant as he looked down on his comrades writhing in the flames, "But I don't understand why this pit is left unguarded. What prevents the peasants from climbing out?"

"Oh, we don't need demon guards here. Whenever a peasant tries to climb out of the hole he is in, the other peasants grab his ankles and pull him back into the fire." the devil replied and, without more ado, shoved the peasant into the pit.