

Book Review

The Lover's Curse. A Tiered Reader of Aeneid 4 (edited by Jessica McCormack)

Hurt (C.) Pp. xviii + 323, ills. Independently published, 2023. Paper, US\$16.99, £13.95 (Cased, US\$29.99). ISBN: 978-0-6459236-0-5.

Brian J. Zawiski

Don Bosco Prep School, Ramsey, NJ, USA
bzawiski@donboscoprep.org



Carla Hurt has performed a great service for Latin teachers everywhere with her tiered reader of the fourth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, entitled *The Lover's Curse*. Several versions of each passage are provided with gradually increasing levels of difficulty so that the intermediate Latin student can more easily bridge the gap between elementary Latin texts and authentic Latin literature. Through the use of illustrations and the use of simpler Latin, students are able to engage more enjoyably with the text of the fourth book of the *Aeneid*.

Starting at tier 1 and proceeding through each tier progressively, students can read the same passage in successively more complex Latin until they more comfortably encounter Virgil's original text.

This book bridges the gap between the user-friendly, straightforward Latin of a beginner course or textbook and the precipitously steep leap to surviving Classical Latin texts, such as Virgil's *Aeneid* in this case. Virgil does not limit his vocabulary, as the authors of even the best introductory textbooks would. Instead, Virgil finds the perfect vocabulary to suit his need, just as any author of an authentically timeless piece of literature would. Students attempting to make the leap from even the best introductory course into authentic Classical Latin literature have an uphill battle to contend with both in terms of vocabulary and in terms of complex syntax. Hurt helps to scaffold this leap by breaking up Book 4 into five large sections and then subdividing those five sections into 30 smaller sections (denoted by Roman numerals and Arabic numerals respectively). Each section is divided into three tiers, with a fourth tier being the actual text of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Tier 1 uses the simplest most direct language both in terms of vocabulary and syntax. Tier 2 uses longer sentences, essentially following the structure of the original text with simpler vocabulary or more common synonyms. Tier 3 are the same words as Virgil's original text, but rearranged into a more accessible sentence structure or prosaic word order. Uncommon vocabulary words are described in Latin and often with creative illustrations. Tier 1 and Tier 2 versions often explain background information and allow the student and instructor to stay in the target language much more than a typical textbook version of the *Aeneid* would allow. Hurt also provides two bonus stories in Latin, which explain the overarching themes of the *Aeneid* and the plot leading up to Book 4. There is an extensive glossary at the back of the book, but the design of the text would allow students to largely avoid turning to the glossary when reading each section from Tier 1 through the subsequent tiers to the original text. This book is perfect for the secondary school classroom and will help students and educators alike in moving past the intermediate plateau. It allows students to engage with authentic texts, while working exclusively in Latin with the assistance of illustrations. One is left hoping that Hurt continues this excellent effort through the other books of the *Aeneid*.

doi: 10.1017/S2058631024000552