



## Aeneid: Books I-VI

*Virgil , Clyde Pharr*

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### **Aeneid: Books I-VI Details**

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I emerged from an abyss of darkness and entered a new world illuminated by the dazzling brilliance of Vergil's immortal poetry.

Even more satisfying to me now is to witness my own students responding to Vergil in the same way, decades after my own first reading of the poem. I see in them the same wonder and admiration for his extraordinary artistry, their delight in discovering the remarkable poetic techniques that lie at the heart of his inimitable style.

To read Vergil in Latin is one of the most serious undertakings a young student can hope to achieve. It is a literary training of the first rank. Unlike in English classes, where students blow through several "great works" in the course of a year, in an upper level Latin class students will read Vergil, and only Vergil, over the entire year. And this means close reading: parsing each word in each line, admiring complex sentence structures, unusual word choices, richly figurative and rhetorical language. Through his unforgettable characters and their actions, Vergil never fails to provoke in his readers a means of contemplating the deepest mysteries of human existence. Honor, duty, sacrifice, the ties that bind human beings within their families and a larger political community -- all this and so much more is what Vergil has to offer. He is, in short, a serious writer for serious readers.

How many students, perhaps many years later, have recalled the famous bee simile as Aeneas gazes down upon Carthage when he sees it with Achates for the first time? Or summoned up a recollection of Laocoon and his two sons devoured by the fearsome snakes coiling over the sea and heading straight to them with deadly ferocity? Or called to mind the shocking violence of Pyrrhus (Neoptolemus) as he smashes his way into the innermost sanctuary of Priam's palace to slaughter Polites before his father's eyes, a moment before butchering Priam himself as he cowers helplessly at an altar with Hecuba and their daughters and daughters in law? Then there is Dido, the descent to Avernus, the encampment in Italy, and the inevitable death of Turnus.

Nowadays the word "epic" is used to describe just about anything that is big, or perhaps anything that is big and spans several generations. In its true sense, however, "epic" means much, much more. It is a word that describes a work of art that is universal, that narrates a story which fully embodies all of the most cherished values of an entire civilization. This is the Aeneid.

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### **Rachel says**

This was actually the copy I think I had in high school. One of the best classes I have ever taken, thanks to my Latin teacher, who was practically immortal and unfathomably wise. I wish I could still read Latin, because The Aeneid in Latin is like Anna Karenina---there's so much there, it would take more than a lifetime to get everything out of it that was possible to get. The part with Dido breaks my heart, especially about how "they fondled through the winter, forgetful of their kingdoms." I know you like fondling guys, we all do, but don't forget your kingdoms!! Something bad is going to happen!

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### **kate says**

I read this in Latin. I am a nerd.

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## Lydia says

This was the first full books I ever translated myself and read entirely in another language. It really expanded my idea of poetry because it is an epic poem, as well as an extremely old text, and an amazing plot. One of my favorite things that I learned from reading this poem so indepth was how to arrange words. Latin sentences have very few order requirements so authors are able to amazing things with sentence structure, and Virgil is a master. One of my favorite scenes is when he describes a storm that Aeneid is trapped in and the adjectives describing it actually swirl through the poem and encircle all the nouns and adjectives describing Aeneid and his ship. Ever since, I've been a lot more aware of my sentence structure.

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