

quicker than getting everyone to turn to the relevant page in their grammar books. This ability to keep checking on the details of how Latin works could be used to improve students' confidence in the technicalities of the language so they become a natural part of their approach to reading Latin.

The comments on content include literary terms (which are defined in an appendix), and extend to the bigger themes as well as the immediate context. They are generally clear, informative and engaging. They help build up a student's appreciation for the skill of the author, particularly for the verse selections. They can also be quite fun: I particularly enjoyed the note on *Amores* 1.1 line 1 where it comments that 'Ovid lets us sneak behind the curtain, to see him waging a different kind of war with the gods...', or the comment on Livy's use of *immo* as 'sarcastic, the equivalent of 'Yeah, right' '.

There is a brief introduction to each theme (between one and two sides) and to the individual authors. There is also a list of 'Commentaries for further reading'. Both left me feeling a little short-changed and wanting more information. I would have liked a longer discussion of themes and works, and a suggestion for further secondary reading for pupils rather than a list of other, more advanced, commentaries. The explanation of metre is similar: it sets out clearly the various metrical schemes met in the book, but assumes that the basics of scansion are already known, which is unlikely to be the case. There again, most people will have their own, well-honed method of teaching this.

For those taking the IB, this book should be seriously considered. Others may also want to consider it as a reader for first year of the A level course. It gives a good variety of authors and, at 360 pages, a lot of text for the money. It could be used to prepare the way for an author of one of the set texts at A level or to give experience of a different genre. It could be a good way to help consolidate the grammar and syntax of the language and to build up students' literary awareness prior to tackling examined authors. It could also be used as a reader to consolidate language for first year university students or for teachers wishing to focus on getting more fluency and confidence in their own Latin reading.

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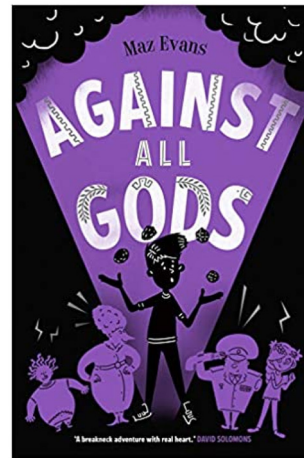
Against All Gods

Evans (M). Pp. 314. Frome: Chicken House Books, 2019. Paper, £6.99. ISBN: 978-1-911077-00-8.

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The fourth and final book of the *Who Let the Gods Out?* series, *Against All Gods* is an enjoyable and humorous introduction to the world of the Olympian gods. Following the story of 13-year-old Elliot Hooper, the book opens in the Underworld as Elliot attempts to retrieve the fourth and final Chaos Stone. Once brought together, the Chaos Stones give the user a variety of powers which of course Elliot must prevent from getting into the wrong hands, notably Thanatos and Hypnos who want to end the world as we know it. Unfortunately, they have promised Elliot the return of his deceased mother, and so we watch him wrestle with his desire for a reunited family versus saving the world.



Although the last in the series, *Against All Gods* is easy enough to read as a standalone – there is enough exposition to allow the reader to catch up and enjoy the story. Written in large font and with illustrations at the start of each chapter, the book would be an easy and enjoyable read for most secondary school-aged children, though I suspect it would most be enjoyed by those under 11. I particularly enjoyed the drawings of Achilles as a general at the bottom of each page – when flicked through, he gets up to all sorts of activities and regu-

larly falls apart as does his character within the narrative.

The characterisation of the gods is a quick way to allow children a greater understanding of the Olympian gods' roles and background stories – Demeter is forever trying to feed everyone and Zeus and Hera have recently had a nasty divorce on account of Zeus' relationships with a few Miss World contestants. There were times when this characterisation did not always seem obvious – Hermes as a stereotypical 'gym bro' with an obsession with dieting, working out, and using youthful slang would not have been my first choice, but nevertheless there are links and perhaps these were explained in the preceding books. As an adult, I did find Hermes' colloquialisms somewhat grating, but I can see that younger readers would see the humour.

The story also allows the reader to gain an understanding of key myths – Elliot's mortal nemesis, Patricia Porschley-Plum eventually gets her just desserts in the Underworld, where she sees evildoers such as Sisyphus carrying out their punishments. Although these prisoners are not named, they could help form a background knowledge for later study of Classics.

The book ends with a 'What's What' of characters, places, and objects mentioned in the story, allowing the reader to learn a little more about the classical world and fill in gaps if the previous books have not been read.

Overall, *Against All Gods* is an enjoyable read that allows children to gain a general understanding of and interest in the classical world through a humorous and fast-paced story.

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Author Unknown: The Power of Anonymity in Ancient Rome

Geue, (T). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 320 Hardback ISBN 978-0-67498-820-0 £33.25

Andrea Allman

This book seeks to explore the power of names – and moreover, the power of no names – in Classical literature. The texts considered