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| Dido and Aeneas – LIFrom The Aeneid Book 4 Lines 381 - 392 |

*Dido’s reply: she curses Aeneas*

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| ‘i, [sequere Italiam](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22381a%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1) [ventis, pete](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22381b%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1) regna per undas.[spero equidem](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm#382c) mediis, [si quid](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22382b%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1) [pia numina](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22382a%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1) possunt[supplicia hausurum](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm#382f) scopulis et nomine “[Dido](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm#382g)”saepe vocaturum. [sequar](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22384a%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1) [atris ignibus](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22384b%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1) absenset, cum frigida mors [anima](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm#385) seduxerit artus,[omnibus umbra locis adero](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm#386a). dabis, [improbe](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22386b%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1), poenas.audiam et haec Manis veniet [mihi](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22387%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1) fama sub imos’[his medium](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm#388) dictis sermonem abrumpit et aurasaegra fugit [seque ex oculis auertit et aufert](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22389%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1),linquens [multa metu cunctantem](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22390%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1) et multa volentemdicere. suscipiunt famulae conlapsaque membramarmoreo [referunt thalamo stratisque reponunt](http://www.uq.edu.au/hprcflex/lt1240/aencom3.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22392%22%20%5Ct%20%22view1).‘Go, seek Italy on the winds, seek your kingdom over the waves.Indeed I hope that if the virtuous gods have power, You will drain the cup of punishment among the rocks, and call my name ‘Dido’again and again. Absent, I shall follow you with smoking fires,and when cold death has divided my soul and limbs, my shade (ghost)will haunt you in all places. Wretch, you shall receive punishment.I shall hear (of it) and this news will reach me in the shades of the dead below.’Thus having spoken, she breaks off her speech mid-way, and fleesthe light in anguish, she turns away , tearing herself from his sight, leaving him fearful and hesitant, though he wished to say more.Her servants support her her and carry her swooning bodyto her marble chamber, and lay (her) on her bed. |  |
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**Glossary:** *(words in the number, case and gender in which they appear in this extract)*

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| Line 1 sequere Italiam: Dido retorts with Aeneas’ own expression - ‘Seek your Italian goal!’Line 2 equidem: indeed numina (numen) a god or divine beingLine 3 supplicia (supplicium) punishment haurusem (haurire) to drink or drain scopulis (scopulus) rockLine 5 artus: limbs seduxerit (seduce): divided | Line 6 improbe (improbus) wretchLine 7 manes: shades of the deadLine 9 aegra (aeger) sick, wretched, anguishedLine 11 famulae (famula): maids, maidservantsLine 12 thalamo (thalamus): bedroom stratis (stratum) bed |

**Notes:**

The use of the letter 'p' gives force to her words, and she seems to hiss out her curse with the frequent letter 's'.

Line 2:. pia numina: The use of pia here may indicate a ‘bitter sneer’ (thus Austin) on Dido’s part. Since pietas is a concept by which Aeneas sets such great store, Dido surely delights in taking this opportunity to imply that he has failed to show this quality in his treatment of her.

Line 4: atris ignibus: ‘with d’ - like an Avenging Fury. Vergil perhaps also wants us to look ahead to the time when the smoke from Dido’s funeral pyre blows out over the waves (Book V).

The ancients believed that wrongdoers were pursued and persecuted, and sometimes even driven mad, by the avenging spirits (Furiae in Latin, Erinyes or Eumenides in Greek), who were represented as brandishing blazing torches in their hands. So Dido says that she will be as a fury to Aeneas while he lives, pursuing him ‘with smoking torches’. In Greek tragedy, Orestes is haunted by the Furies after he has killed his mother, Clytaemnestra: their pursuit of him and his final deliverance from them is told in the Choephoroe and Eumenides of Aeschylus.Line5: The Latin suggests that death has taken the limbs away from life, whereas we would put it the other way round.

With lines 382-87 Dido seems for the moment to have fully regained her self-composure. In a cold, calculated manner she utters what amounts to a curse upon Aeneas. The most terrifying feature of this pronouncement is the deadly serious, emotionless manner in which it is made.

Dido finishes abruptly as she began - in mid-utterance. Her subsequent behaviour clearly shows that the emotional conflict within her is by no means resolved. One critic refers to the piling-up of words in line 389 to show her anger, grief, and scorn.

Aeneas is nonplussed by this outburst. Clearly he has not appreciated the intensity of Dido’s feelings, or the violence of their expression. Why metu? Does Aeneas fear the consequences of Dido’s wrath? This hardly does him credit. More likely it is, as the same critic suggests, fear of himself; ‘his logic is beginning to desert him, and he is fighting desperately against temptation’.