

- Mercury then flew down to Carthage passing Atlas on the way. Mercury berates Aeneas for building up a Carthaginian citadel and neglecting Italy, which is owed by him to Ascanius.
- Aeneas wanted to leave, however he didn't know how to approach Dido. He ordered three of his men to ready the fleet in secret and assemble the men for departure, to their delight. He would find the best way to talk to Dido.
- Dido realised something was wrong and found out the fleet was being prepared, sending her into a frenzy around the city. When she finds Aeneas, she bombards him with (angry) questions. She begs him to stay, saying the seas are too rough and he has a home in Carthage. She will be miserable if Aeneas goes. She has sacrificed her image for him and she has been left with nothing; warring tribes and no child.
- Aeneas thanks her for her help, then says he never intended to break her heart or leave. If he had a choice he would have rebuilt Troy, but he has been commanded to go to Italy and the choice of what to do is not his. He sees visions of Anchises at night encouraging him, and thinks of the city he is denying Ascanius, as well as the message of the gods.
- She replies that he is a traitor, in anger. She questions his divine parentage and refuses to address him directly, referring to him as "he" or "him". She reminds him that she accepted him to her city, then tells him to leave if he will. She wishes him death on the ocean and awaits news of his death.
- Dido rushed indoors crying and fainted. Aeneas wished to console her but followed his commands and returned to his ships.
- The Trojans are compelled to work and are preparing the ships. Virgil muses as to what Dido was thinking as she looks to the ocean. Dido, still wishing to keep Aeneas, asks Anna to go to him and tell him she had no part in the destruction of Troy, to ask why he won't listen to her and to wait until there is a good wind before he leaves, for his own safety. She acknowledges he will not stay but asks for him to stay just a little; to lessen the blow of his leaving.
- Aeneas would not accept it. He is compared to an oak tree refusing to be uprooted by the winds, resisting the pleas of Dido. However, he still felt her pain.
- Dido began to wish for death. When she made sacrifices of milk they turned black and her sacrifices of wine turned to gore, unknown to everyone but herself. At night, she heard the voice of her husband Sychaeus coming from his statue, as an owl sung on the roof. At night dreams of Aeneas would send her mad. She resigns herself to suicide.
- She went to speak to Anna, pretending to be happier. She says she has a way to bring Aeneas back to free herself of him; there is an Ethiopian priestess who can use the magic arts to erase the memory of Aeneas. She tells Anna to raise a pyre on which everything to do with Aeneas is to be placed. Dido became pale, but Anna did not notice this as a bad sign.
- When the pyre was ready, Dido hung it with funeral branches and laid an effigy of Dido on a bed on the pyre. The Ethiopian priestess called upon many gods and