

THE AENEID

by Virgil



THE AUTHOR

Publius Vergilius Maro (70-19 B.C.), commonly known as Virgil, was born in northern Italy in a farming community near Mantua and became the greatest of Roman poets. Little is known with certainty about his early history. He was born in northern Italy near Mantua and studied in Milan, Rome, and Naples. After considering a career in rhetoric and studying philosophy, he turned instead to poetry. He produced in his career three major poetic works - the *Eclogues* (42-38 B.C.), a series of ten pastoral poems (Eclogue 4, which addresses the “great order of the ages,” was thought by medieval Christians to be a prophecy of Christ because of its references to a maid, the birth of a boy, and the end of the Iron Age that ushers in the Golden Age), the *Georgics* (37-29 B.C.), a long poem containing instructions for operating a farm, and his masterpiece, the epic poem the *Aeneid* (29-19 B.C.), which follows the adventures of Aeneas after the Trojan War as he traveled from his ruined home in Troy to Italy, where his descendants were to found the city of Rome. The last two works were produced in a period when Virgil was highly popular in Rome and worked among those who sought to support the reign of Augustus against his rivals. In fact, during a meeting with Augustus in Athens when Virgil intended to finish editing the *Aeneid*, he caught a fever and died before returning to Rome. Because he never was able to polish the work to his satisfaction, he ordered it burned, but Augustus overruled him and asked a few of his companions to complete the task, changing as little as possible.

The *Aeneid* is said to have been commissioned by Augustus himself and is modeled largely on the epics of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The poem is highly nationalistic, arguing that Rome and the empire it founded were fated by the gods to rule the world. It is full of foreshadowing references, not only to the founding of the city of Rome and the Roman Empire, but also to the Punic Wars in which Rome defeated Carthage. The influence of the poem was so great that many later Roman poets sought to follow its pattern or made extensive allusions to it in their works. His poems were studied in schools and the *Aeneid* became the classic work of Roman literature in much the same way that the plays of Shakespeare became English classics. He continued to be popular in the Middle Ages despite the repudiation of the pagan elements of his work; he was praised by the great Augustine and adopted by Dante as his guide through Hell and most of Purgatory in the *Divine Comedy*. Later, both Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queen* and John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* were influenced by Virgil.

The work has been translated into English many times, but this study guide is based on the translation of the epic by seventeenth-century English poet John Dryden.

PLOT SUMMARY

Book I - The goddess Juno cherishes the city of Carthage, but hears that the city will be subjugated by the descendants of the men of Troy, who will found a great empire. She thus determines to destroy the remnants of the Trojan army, who flee the doomed city in twenty ships, intending to sail for Italy. Juno bribes Aeolus, the god of the winds, to stir up storms and destroy the Trojan fleet by offering him her fairest lady in waiting as his bride. For seven years the ships are tossed about the Mediterranean. Most of the ships strike rocks and sink, while the others are scattered. Finally Neptune becomes aware of what Aeolus is doing in his realm, knows he has been put up to it by Juno, and puts a stop to it, ordering the winds and the storm to cease. The seven remaining ships find safe harbor on the coast of North Africa. While some make a fire and dry themselves out, Aeneas finds and kills seven deer to feed his men. He encourages them, convinced that Jove will enable them to reach Italy and found a new Trojan kingdom.

Meanwhile, Venus complains to her father Jupiter that he has not fulfilled his promise that her son Aeneas would found a new kingdom in Italy that would rule the world. Jupiter assures her that the prophecy would not fail and that Aeneas would succeed to the promised throne and that his descendants Romulus and Remus would found the city of Rome, which would eventually conquer the Greeks who had so ignominiously sacked the city of Troy. He also prophesies the rise of Augustus, who would bring an era of peace and prosperity and restore the worship of the ancient gods. He then sends Mercury to assure that the shipwrecked Trojans would receive a kind reception in nearby Carthage.

As Aeneas explores the region around their landing place, he encounters his mother Venus in the shape of a huntress. She tells him that the city they see in the distance, Carthage is ruled by Queen Dido, a Phoenician who fled to this far-off colony to escape her tyrannical king. She then reveals her true identity and leaves her son to fend for himself. He walks toward Carthage and observes the citizens busy at their various tasks. A temple to Juno occupies the center of the city, and he is surprised to find artworks portraying the events and major figures of the Trojan War. As he stares at the painful reminders of his city's defeat, Queen Dido appears with her train to sit on her throne in judgment. Then the friends of Aeneas appear; those he thought were lost in the tempest were run aground elsewhere on the coast and have made their way to Carthage. They assure Dido that they come in peace and have no designs on her kingdom, but intend to sail to Italy. She invites them to remain in Carthage as her guests; they may choose to stay and join her subjects or repair their ships and continue their journey to Italy. Aeneas, who had been concealed by Venus in a cloud, now reveals himself to Dido and his fellow Trojans. He graciously accepts her offer of hospitality and joyfully embraces his friends. She tells him that she, too, knows what it is like to be driven from her home and cast ashore in a foreign land. Meanwhile, she is clearly impressed with the appearance and manner of her new guest. She then arranges a sumptuous feast for the surviving Trojans. Aeneas calls for presents to be brought from the ship for the queen, including rich garments belonging to Helen of Troy, and Venus sends them by the hand of Cupid, disguised as a Trojan soldier, in order to win the heart of fair Dido for her son Aeneas, largely because she fears the wrath of jealous Juno. By the time Cupid has worked his wiles, Dido can think of nothing by Aeneas. During dinner they discuss the events of the Trojan War, then she asks him to tell her about his adventures during the seven years since he left Troy bound for Italy.

Book II - Aeneas then launches into a narrative of the siege and fall of Troy. Tired after ten years of war, the Greeks construct a large wooden horse as a gift of peace to the Trojans, but conceal inside their well-armed and strongest warriors. Meanwhile, the Greek navy is hidden in a nearby bay. The Trojans gladly open their city gates and stream out to meet the magnificent gift. Finding the Greek camp empty, they argue about what to do with the horse. Some say to make a hole in the walls to bring it inside the city, while others, not trusting the Greeks, advise burning it or casting it into the sea. The Trojans find a wandering Greek named Sinon and take him prisoner. He weaves a woeful tale, telling them that he had been designated as the human sacrifice that would gain the Greeks favorable winds to return home. He escaped, and now cannot in fear of his life return to his home in Greece. The horse was built by the departing Greeks as an offering to the angered Athena, and Sinon tells them that, should they refuse the offering, their city will be burned, but if they accept it within their walls, they will eventually gain victory over the Greeks. Laocoon, the priest of Neptune who had opposed accepting the horse, offers sacrifices, but soon two enormous serpents rise from the sea and devour him and his two sons. The Trojans believe that Athena sent the serpents and immediately vote to accept the horse. Cassandra the prophetess warns them, but none listen to her. Night falls and the Trojans go to their beds. Meanwhile Sinon unlocks the horse and the men from the waiting navy join the soldiers in the belly of the beast to attack the town. As the Greeks commence their slaughter, the ghost of Hector appears to Aeneas, tells him the city is doomed, and warns him to flee with the statues of his gods, promising that he will one day erect a new city in which to plant them. Aeneas instead leads a band of Trojans into the heat of the battle and finds some initial success. He strikes upon the stratagem of dressing in Greek armor in order to deceive his foes. Soon their ruse is discovered and many of Aeneas' companions fall. The Greeks then breach the doors of the palace and kill all in their path, including Priam, the king. Aeneas finds Helen, the cause of all the carnage, alone and is determined to kill her. The ghost of his mother appears and stays his hand, reminding him that the destruction of Troy had been decreed by the gods and was thus not the fault of any human being; she opens his eyes and shows him Neptune, Juno, Jupiter, and Athena working behind the scenes to bring victory to the Greeks. She then tells him to find his family and rescue them. When he locates them, his father refuses to leave, determined to go down with the city. Aeneas then decides to renew the fight, but his wife begs him to refrain for the sake of his family. Miraculous omens appear that convince Aeneas' father to join them in their flight. Aeneas carries his aged father Anchises, who in his hands carries the household gods, holds the hand of his son Ascanius, and orders his wife Creusa to follow. His servants are to meet them at a temple outside the city walls. They take back streets to the city gate, but soon a band of Greeks attacks them from behind. Creusa is separated from the rest of the family and, a victim of the marauders, never arrives at the designated meeting place. Aeneas rushes back into the city and searches everywhere trying to find her, but all he sees are Greeks carrying away captives and plunder from the burning city. He finally encounters her ghost, who comforts him, insisting that her death was decreed, and prophesying that he will encounter years of danger and hardships but will finally establish a new city on the banks of the Tiber, where he will take another wife. Aeneas then returns to the temple and finds a large company waiting for him to lead them on an unknown journey.

Book III - They construct a fleet of ships from the trees of a sacred grove, then set sail, landing first in Thrace. They intend to construct a city on the shore, but as they seek wood, Aeneas encounters the ghost of Polydore of Troy, the son of Priam. Polydore had been sent to Thrace by his father to purchase arms, but instead had been murdered by the treacherous Thracians. He warns Aeneas and his companions to leave the cursed coast, which they immediately do after paying suitable homage

to the memory of their friend. They land next on Delos, where they are graciously received. Aeneas goes to the temple there and seeks wisdom from the oracle, who tells him to seek the soil from which his ancestors arose and promises them that there they will find success. Aeneas consults his father, who assures him that their race came from Crete, to which they then set sail after offering sacrifices to various gods to ensure their safe passage. They settle there, build a city, and begin to farm the land. Soon, though, their crops begin to fail and the people to die from heat and drought. Aeneas prepares to return to Delos to consult the oracle again, but in a vision his household gods tell him that Crete is not the place where he and his people are to settle and find peace. Instead, they must go to Italy.

After three days and nights of storms and darkness, they land on an island ruled by the fierce Harpies. They find flocks untended and kill some animals to make a feast. Soon, however, the Harpies sweep down upon them from the mountains. They quickly devour the meat and befoul whatever they don't consume. This is soon repeated, so Aeneas prepares his men for war. When the Harpies reappear, the men draw their swords, but find them useless against the leathery skin of the fearsome creatures. One Harpy remains after the battle and prophesies that they will encounter terrible famine before reaching their destination as a penalty for stealing the Harpies' cattle. They then stop at Leucate, where they arrange for a series of games before continuing their journey.

At their next stop, Epirus, they encounter Andromache, the widow of Hector, who had been captured by the Greeks and forced to marry Pyrrhus, more a slave than a wife. Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, killed Pyrrhus and reestablished a diminished Trojan kingdom, after which Andromache married Helenus, the brother of Hector. When Aeneas arrives, she is carrying out suitable rites for slain Hector. Her new husband soon descends from the city and invites them for two days of feasting and merriment, after which the arrival of fair winds sends them on their journey again. Before they leave, Aeneas seeks an oracle from Helenus, who consults his gods and tells him that they must not go directly to Italy because the shores are controlled by their enemies. Instead, they must skirt the Italian coast and make for Sicily, from which they may safely seek their destination. He ensures them that they need not fear the predicted famine because the gods will assist them. They will know the end of their journey when they see a white sow with thirty piglets wallowing in the mud. They must, however, at all costs avoid the strait between Italy and Sicily, where Scilla and Charybdis lie in wait to destroy any vessels that dare approach. They also must take care to propitiate Juno, the angry goddess who seeks their destruction. Helenus warns them to consult the Sibyl, who will tell them of future woes, and how to avoid some and endure others. He then sends them on their way with rich gifts.

The mariners follow the directions of Helenus to the letter and eventually land on Sicily at the foot of volcanic Mount Aetna. Soon a bedraggled Greek staggers from the woods and begs them to take him with them, killing him if they must. They ask him to tell his story. He left Troy with Ulysses and was abandoned in the cave of the Cyclops Polyphemus. He helped to blind the monster, but remains in fear of his life, hiding in the woods lest he be discovered and devoured. Soon the roar of the Cyclops is heard in the distance and they see him descending the mountain with his flock of sheep. They flee for their lives and hastily cast off, taking the terrified Greek with them. Circling the island, they finally find a safe harbor on the west, where Aeneas' father Anchises dies. At this point Aeneas ends his narrative for Queen Dido and all retire to bed.

Book IV - Dido is rapidly falling in love with Aeneas. She confides her love to her sister Anna, but is reluctant to break faith with her first husband, whom she worships even beyond the grave. Anna assures her that her dead husband no longer cares what happens on earth and reminds her that her

little kingdom is surrounded by enemies on all sides. Surely a marriage to such a great warrior would benefit the realm as well as satisfying her personal desires. Dido, now convinced, offers sacrifices to the appropriate gods, especially to Juno, the goddess of marriage. She then spends the day showing Aeneas the glories of her city and begging him to narrate the tales of his adventures over and over. Juno, seeing Dido's plight, proposes to Venus that they facilitate a marriage between the two. Venus, however, knows that her son's kingdom is to be established in Italy and is certain that Juno is trying to prevent that by keeping him in Carthage. Venus agrees to Juno's scheme, but hides other plans in her mind. The queen and the visitors are planning to go hunting the next day. Juno intends to send a storm that scatters the participants in such a way that Aeneas and Dido wind up alone in a cave for the night. There the gods will bless and they will consummate their marriage.

The hunt begins, the storm descends, and Aeneas and Dido are trapped in a cave, where human nature takes its course. Venus quickly begins to spread rumors that the queen has given up her virtue to the Tyrian interloper. When the news reaches King Iarbas, who had courted Dido in vain, he beseeches Jupiter to foil Juno's plan and prevent the marriage. Jupiter, seeing what is going on in the cave, sends Mercury to remind Aeneas of his destiny and urge him to leave Carthage as soon as possible. The swift god finds Aeneas, wearing Dido's rich gifts, fortifying Carthage against its enemies. Mercury rebukes him and sarcastically suggests that he might as well turn his crown over to his son now if he has no intention of pursuing it. Aeneas, seeing his duty, orders three of his commanders to prepare his ships in secret to set sail while he looks for the right opportunity to break the news gently to Dido. She discovers his ruse first, however, and confronts him with his intended perfidy. She blames him for leaving her and her kingdom defenseless and says that she could have borne his faithlessness if he had only left her a son. He argues that he never intended to leave secretly, nor did he ever wish to marry her in spite of their dalliance; his unchangeable goal is to establish a Latin kingdom. He tells her of Mercury's visit at the behest of Jupiter and insists that he must leave her realm. She flings insults in his face and moans that men and gods have left her desolate. She hopes his ships sink on the way to Italy and promises that her ghost will haunt him till his dying day. Meanwhile, Aeneas' troops cut down trees to restore their ships and plunder the fields for food for the voyage. Dido begs Anna to go to Aeneas and convince him to delay his departure so she has time to accustom herself to her loss, but he will hear none of it.

Dido is at this point determined to end her life and begins to see omens pointing to her demise in her sacrifices. She tells Anna to prepare a large bonfire in which she intends to burn the gifts she gave Aeneas along with their bridal bed; her innocent sister has no idea what Dido really intends to do. When the pyre is prepared, she invokes the dark arts to aid her in her resolve. At the last moment, she mulls her choices. Should she submit to lustful Iarbas or offer to go to Italy with Aeneas, in either case losing her kingdom. Would she be rejected even if she made the offer? Finally she sees no alternative but to take her own life. Mercury, meanwhile, warns Aeneas that Dido is planning to send her navy to attack his ships, so he must leave the harbor without delay. The queen is tempted to do just that, but instead fumes with regret that she did not kill the Trojans when they landed. She curses Aeneas, wishing him nothing but trouble, powerful opposition, and a lonely and desolate death when he reaches his destination. She then swears that her kingdom will forever be the enemy of the city founded by her unfaithful lover. She sends her nurse away to make final preparations, and while she is gone, Dido lies down upon the marriage bed and plunges the ceremonial sword she had given to Aeneas into her heart. Anna rushes to revive her sister, but to no avail, and Juno, seeing that proper preparations for passage into the underworld had not been made, comes down and cuts a lock of hair and mercifully ends the life of the betrayed lover.

Book V - As Aeneas sails away from the African shore, he sees in the distance the fire set by Dido on her funeral pyre. A fierce storm soon arises and drives the ship onto the coast of Sicily. They are welcomed by Acestes, the ruler of the place, who is of Trojan descent. Aeneas realizes that a year has passed since his father's death in Sicily, so he organizes memorial games in his honor. The games consist of a boat race, a foot race, hand-to-hand combat, archery, and a jousting contest among the youth. While the games are going on, Juno, still determined to foil Aeneas in his quest, sends Iris to convince the Trojan women, tired after seven years of constant travel, to burn the ships so the men cannot leave Sicily. The men see the flames and rush to the shore, but are unable to stem the conflagration. Aeneas, helpless in the face of the carnage, prays to Jupiter to save his navy. Immediately it starts to pour down rain and the fires are extinguished. Four ships are lost, but the rest are spared. A wise old friend then advises Aeneas that, since the ships that remain are insufficient to carry the entire company, he should build a town on the coast of Sicily and leave behind the women and children, the old and feeble, and take with him only the fighting men. The ghost of his father Anchises then appears to second the advice he had received, but tells him that he first must visit the underworld and visit him in the Elysian fields. Aeneas fears that Juno's vengeful power will once again prevent his safe voyage, but his mother Venus convinces Neptune to ensure his safety. Only the pilot Palinurus is lost in the voyage, lured into a deep sleep and cast overboard.

Book VI - When Aeneas and his companions finally land in Italy, his shipmates rejoice and begin to explore the land while Aeneas seeks out the Sibyl. She orders him to offer the appropriate sacrifices, then invites him into the temple to hear his destiny. He begs her to tell all and promises that when he enters into his kingdom, he will build temples and stage games in honor of the twin gods. She, possessed by Apollo, warns him that he faces brutal warfare as he moves up the Italian coast. Aeneas then asks the Sibyl to guide him into the underworld in order to meet his father. She warns him that the path into hell is easy, but the outward journey is so perilous that few succeed in traversing it. She tells him to find a tree with golden leaves and take a branch as a gift for Proserpine. He begs his mother to guide him, and she sends doves to show him the way. He finds the golden bough and takes it to the Sibyl, who leads him into the underworld. Along the way he meets many horrible apparitions. They arrive at the river Styx, where the ferryman Charon rows the souls of the dead across the stream. He sees many of his friends, including Palinurus, who explains that he cannot cross the river because his body never received proper burial. Charon is reluctant to take Aeneas in his boat, since he only transports the souls of the dead, but when Aeneas shows him the golden bough, he accedes to his request. The Sibyl feeds honey to Cerberus, putting him to sleep, so they can safely pass the fierce guardian. They go through various regions of hell where sinners of various kinds suffer their fate. Among them is Dido, who suffers for her suicide; Aeneas explains that he left her only unwillingly at the behest of the gods. They pass through the realm of warriors, observing Trojan and Greek alike. Aeneas sees Tartarus in the distance, where the wicked are tortured for their sins, but he and the Sibyl take the path to the right that leads to Pluto's palace. After turning over the golden bough, they enter the Elysian fields, where the blessed enjoy an existence near to heaven.

The Sibyl asks where they might find Anchises, who when they find him joyfully welcomes his son. He then tells him how the underworld works. All, he says, partake of the same spirit. After death, each soul does penance for his various sins for a thousand years, after which they enter the Elysian fields. There they drink of the river Lethe, and having forgotten their previous lives and sins, and ready to enter a new body on earth. They climb a hill and there view the shades that will become Aeneas' descendants, all the way down to Romulus and Remus, and beyond them to the rulers of

Rome, through the Republic to the Empire under Augustus. After leaving his father, Aeneas returns to his companions and they sail up the coast of Italy.

Book VII - Aeneas and his companions sail up the coast of Italy until they reach the mouth of the Tiber. They encounter Latinus, the ruler of the Latian kingdom. He has no sons; his only daughter, Lavinia, is thus the heir to his throne and kingdom. She has many suitors, chief of whom is Turnus, who is supported in his courtship by Lavinia's mother. Seers had already predicted that Lavinia would indeed reign, but would only do so after brutal wars had torn the country asunder. Another oracle warned Latinus not to give his daughter in marriage to any Latian, but instead to await the arrival of a warrior from across the sea who would build an empire greater than any that had gone before.

Aeneas realizes that he and his men have finally reached the end of their journey. After offering copious sacrifices, he sends out scouts to survey the land. They soon encounter the Latian capital, where Latinus receives them hospitably and asks their business. They tell him that Latium is their destination and crave permission to settle in his kingdom. Latinus recognizes that Aeneas is the foreign prince spoken of by the prophets and gladly opens his kingdom to the newcomers, adding that he intends to offer his daughter Lavinia to Aeneas for his bride. Juno, meanwhile, furious that Aeneas and the Trojans have come so far, determines to delay the marriage, though she realizes she cannot foil it indefinitely, by drawing the kingdom into war. She sends Alecto, the Fury who delights in war and devastation, to the bed of Amata, the wife of Latinus, inspiring her to argue with her husband about the arranged marriage. She fears that Aeneas will leave soon, taking Lavinia with him, and begs him to fulfill the earlier pledge to Turnus. He refuses to consider her request and she flies into a rage. Gathering the matrons of the city, they rush to the mountains, taking Lavinia with them.

The Fury then goes to Turnus' bed in a dream and urges him to go to war against the Trojans. He ignores her at first, but when she plunges her fiery torch into his chest, he awakes and cries out for war. While he gathers his troops and calls his allies to battle, Alecto goes to Ascanius, who has organized a hunting party for his friends. They inadvertently kill a stag that is the pet of local Latians. Juno then raises the entire countryside against the interlopers, who soon bring their warriors into the fray. Soon offended and wounded countrymen, ambitious Turnus, and Amata and her matrons descend in a body on Latinus and urge him on to war. Latinus refuses their pleas, but finally realizes that his desire for peace is hopeless. He washes his hands of the matter, retires to his quarters, and leaves the belligerents to their fate. The cry of war spreads throughout the entire region, and soon the whole countryside is in flames. Virgil then gives a long list of the allies who join Turnus in battle.

Book VIII - While Turnus continues to gather allies, Aeneas debates his strategy. He falls asleep by the riverbank, where the god Tiber appears to him in a ream and assures him that he will gain the victory and establish peace. He tells Aeneas that, as a sign, he will see a white sow with thirty white piglets lying beneath an oak. This indicates that Ascanius will, in thirty years, build a city on the banks of that same river. For now, Aeneas is to seek an alliance with Evander, whom the Latians are trying to drive from their land, and offer sacrifices to Juno to propitiate her wrath. When he wakes, Aeneas finds the white sow and her offspring and sacrifices them to Juno. He then goes to find Evander, who welcomes him and, as they feast, tells him the tale of Hercules, who slew the hideous monster Cacus in that place. Afterward Evander shows Aeneas the notable sites in the region. While Aeneas sleeps that night, his mother Venus turns her wiles on her husband Vulcan

and convinces him to forge impenetrable arms and armor for Aeneas to use in the coming wars; the shield is embossed with scenes of the great exploits of Aeneas' descendants, from Romulus and Remus and the wolf to Julius Caesar, Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and the victorious Augustus and his many conquests. The next morning, Evander agrees to supply Aeneas with Tuscan warriors along with his own men, and his son Pallas vows to join the fray. The army forms and prepares to meet the Latian foe.

Book IX - While Aeneas is away seeking the assistance of Evander, Juno sends Iris to advise Turnus that now is the right time to attack the Trojan camp. Having received prior instructions from Aeneas, the men of Troy hide behind the walls of their encampment rather than risking open battle when at a disadvantage. Turnus, finding no gap in the fortifications, is furious, but then notices that the Trojan ships have been left undefended. He and his men set them afire, but Venus pleads to avoid their total destruction; they are turned into sea nymphs instead. Turnus, frustrated, plans to storm the Trojan encampment the next morning. That night, Nisus and Euryalus approach the council to ask permission to slip through the Latian ranks in order to retrieve their absent commander. Impressed with their boldness and bravery, Ascanius promises them rich treasures at the successful completion of their mission and sends them off with the best arms and armor in the Trojan camp. As the two men wend their way through the Latian ranks, they kill many sleeping enemies. Euryalus covets the plunder of their slain foes and dons the helmet of one of the dead, but Nisus warns him that they need to move quickly because dawn approaches. As they leave the camp, three hundred horsemen appear and spot the pair when moonlight reflects off the stolen helmet. Nisus escapes, but Euryalus is captured. Nisus singlehandedly attacks the Latian captors, who promptly dispatch Euryalus, but Nisus continues the assault until, seriously outnumbered, he too meets his demise. When Turnus awakes, he orders the heads of the two Trojans cut off and raised on pikes to terrify those within the enclosure.

Turnus calls for an assault and battle is joined. The Latians attempt to scale the walls but are driven back, though many brave Trojans fall in the encounter. Turnus then orders his men to set fire to the barricades. Ascanius, a skillful hunter, had never turned his bow against a man, but now is prepared to do so. He begs Jupiter to grant him success, and his first shaft pierces the skull of Numanus, a Latian commander who had loudly mocked the Trojans. Apollo then descends and blesses the youth, promising that from him will spring the Julian line. The Trojans, reenergized, rush from their town to engage in hand-to-hand combat. They drive back the Latians at first, but soon a counterattack sends them fleeing back within their city gates. Turnus pursues them, and many Trojan heroes fall before his fury. The defenders finally overwhelm him and force him back from the city until, badly wounded, he dives into the river and escapes.

Book X - Jupiter calls a council of the gods. He is angry with the gods and goddesses who have interfered with his decree that the Latian lands be given to Aeneas, thus causing this bloody war. He insists that they stay out of the conflict, promising that in the years to come, when Carthage challenges the hegemony of Rome, they will have plenty of opportunities to assist their favorites. Venus objects that Juno and her allies have already done great damage to the Trojan cause and begs her father at least to allow her to spare Ascanius, even if he never inherits the promised kingdom.

The Trojans, meanwhile, are trapped inside their fortifications. Their cause seems hopeless without the presence of Aeneas, though the best of their warriors fight boldly to defend their town. Aeneas by this time has concluded the alliance with the Tuscans and rushes to join the battle. He sends his ships ashore and Turnus leads his men to meet them. The encounter produces great

carnage on both sides as the poet names the mighty ones who slay and are slain. Among the fallen is Pallas, son of Evander, who is killed by Turnus, who then seizes the youth's jeweled belt as plunder. Aeneas, furious at the death of Pallas, wields sword and spear and cuts a broad swath through the Latian army. While Aeneas leads the slaughter, Ascanius and the other Trojans break the siege and emerge from their fortifications to join the battle. Juno, seeing the tide turning against the Latians, begs Jupiter to spare the life of Turnus a little longer, though she knows he is destined to die. Juno sends a storm that allows Turnus to escape to a nearby ship and cast off. At sea, Turnus is ashamed of his cowardice and tries several times to commit suicide, but Juno prevents it and steers the ship safely back to the land of his father. In the absence of Turnus, Mezentius leads the Latian troops, killing many Trojans in the process. Aeneas wounds his thigh with one cast of his spear and pursues the limping Mezentius as he tries to flee. Lausus, the young son of Mezentius, intervenes to try to protect his father, but Aeneas reluctantly kills him, at the same time admiring his courage. Mezentius drags himself to his faithful charger and mounts, carrying a handful of javelins, and goes in search of Aeneas. He casts spear after spear at the Trojan hero, but all are deflected by the shield that had been the gift of Venus to her son. Finally Aeneas casts a spear through the temples of Mezentius' horse, which throws the rider to the ground and lands on top of him. As Aeneas prepares to deliver the fatal blow, Mezentius asks only that he be buried next to his son.

Book XI - Aeneas builds a memorial to the slain Mezentius and sends the body of Pallas home to his father. The two sides then call a truce to allow them to carry out proper funeral rites for their dead. Drances, the Latian commander, is prepared to end the war by making peace with the Trojans and joining them in building their city. Meanwhile Evander mourns the death of his son and charges Aeneas to bring him the head of Turnus in revenge. Latinus, recognizing that defeat is inevitable, calls a council to determine what they should do. He advises that they give land along the Tiber to the Trojans to build their city and live side by side in peace. Drances agrees and suggests that Latinus give to Aeneas Lavinia as his bride, while placing the blame for the bloodshed on the shoulders of Turnus, whom he challenges to meet Aeneas in single combat. Turnus calls Drances a coward and vows to continue the conflict, citing the number of allies who are willing to fight with him. As the Trojans approach the town, Turnus and his men prepare their defenses. Camilla offers to lead her Amazons into battle while Turnus holds back his troops in reserve. The ensuing battle pits one cavalry against the other, and soon the Latians are forced to retreat back toward their city. They force the Trojans back, and for a while the tide turns, first for one side and then for the other. Throughout the conflict, Camilla rides fearlessly into the midst of danger, striking down enemy Trojans on every side. While Camilla pursues a fleeing warrior in hopes of capturing his valuable armor, Arruns hides in ambush, hoping to strike down the Amazon unaware. After praying to Apollo to give him success without glory, he flings his javelin, which penetrates the breast of the warrior maiden. Arruns flees, and Camilla, with her dying breath, tells her most trusted companion to fetch Turnus and call him to battle. Meanwhile Opis, an Amazon warrior, pursues Arruns and brings him down with a well-placed arrow. The Latians, thrown into chaos, rush in disorderly retreat for the gates of their city. Turnus, looking on from a distance, sees his army in disarray and plots his next move as the sun sets.

Book XII - Turnus, seeing his army fleeing the battlefield, goes to Latinus and proposes that the war be settled by single combat between him and Aeneas, with the winner earning both crown and bride. The king argues that peace can be obtained without further shedding of blood. Seers have already proclaimed that Aeneas will win the throne, so why should Turnus die when he is sure to lose? He

can take another equally beautiful bride and rule over an adjacent land if he merely yields to the unstoppable force of the Trojan army. The queen disagrees, urging Turnus to pursue the war rather than seeking resolution in single combat. Lavinia breaks down in tears, and one glance at her lovely face convinces Turnus to pursue his original plan. He sends a messenger to challenge Aeneas to single combat the next morning.

At dawn the ground is prepared, altars erected, sacrifices offered, and crowds from both sides gather to watch the contest. Juno, displeased with what she sees but unable to interfere because of Jupiter's decree, seeks out Juturna, the sister of Turnus, whom she had turned into a water nymph after she had been violated by the king of the gods. She begs the nymph to rescue her brother. Aeneas prays to the gods for victory, swearing that he will not take the crown from Latinus, but will build a new city and establish a new kingdom with Lavinia as his queen. The Latians, certain that their champion will be defeated, break the truce and attack the Trojan forces. Soon all-out war breaks out once again. Aeneas rushes into the midst of the fray, crying out to his men to stop fighting and observe the agreed-upon peace. He bears no weapon and is wounded by an arrow, though no one knows by whom it was shot. Seeing his opportunity, Turnus mounts his chariot and gives chase to the wounded and retreating Aeneas, slaughtering Trojans as he races through the armies.

Aeneas, hardly able to stand let alone fight, is borne to his tent by Ascanius and others, where a physician seeks to draw the arrow from the wound, but without success. Venus invisibly intervenes, providing a poultice that not only frees the arrowhead, but also restores Aeneas to full strength. The appearance of Aeneas turns the tide of battle, as the Trojans again go on the attack and the Latians flee while Aeneas seeks out Turnus. Juturna takes on the form of Turnus' charioteer and guides him far from the pursuing Trojan warrior. Turnus, however, tired of running, turns to advance on his foe. In the process, the two massacre untold numbers of their enemies as they draw near to one another. Unable to reach Turnus, Aeneas gathers his commanders and orders them to storm the undefended city and burn it to the ground should they refuse to surrender. The queen, seeing the city under attack and blaming herself for inciting Turnus to war, hangs herself.

Turnus long ago recognized his charioteer as his sister in disguise. He now blames her for inciting him to flee the battle. The fires of the city in the distance convince him that he is the only remaining hope for the Latian forces. He knows he is fated to die, but is determined to give his all for the sake of his people. He rushes to the city gate and cries for both armies to cease their fighting. Finally the two champions meet in hand-to-hand combat while the rival armies look on in awe. Aeneas disarms Turnus, and the latter flees with the former in hot pursuit. Aeneas attempts to free his javelin from the tree in which it is embedded, while Turnus' sister gives him another sword while Aeneas is otherwise occupied. Both are now again armed, Aeneas with a lance and Turnus with a sword. Looking down from above, Jupiter rebukes Juno for getting Juturna to do her dirty work and postponing the fated outcome of the war. She finally submits to the inevitable, but insists that the victors no longer be called Trojans, but retain the Latin name and language. Jupiter then unleashes the Furies, who confuse Turnus and send Juturna diving back into the water from whence she came. Turnus then seizes an enormous rock and rushes toward Aeneas, intending to crush him, but the weight is too great and the stone falls to the ground. Whatever he attempts, the Furies confound. Finally Aeneas drives his spear through the thigh of Turnus and pins him to the ground. Turnus begs for his life, but when Aeneas notices that he wears a golden belt taken from the body of Pallas, he plunges his sword into his enemy's heart.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Aeneas - The title character, the son of Venus, flees from the siege of Troy and, after many adventures, is washed ashore in Carthage where the queen, Dido, falls in love with him, then travels to Italy, where, after a bloody war, he prepares to establish the city that later became Rome.
- Dido - The queen of Carthage who falls in love with Aeneas and commits suicide when he deserts her.
- Anna - Dido's sister and confidante.
- Juno - The consort of Jupiter, she loves Carthage and, knowing that Fate decreed that the city would be destroyed by the scions of Troy, determines to prevent the remnant of the Trojan army from reaching Italy. In order to do so, she schemes to promote a marriage between Aeneas and Dido. Later, she tries to prevent the marriage between Aeneas and Lavinia of Latium by stirring up war between the Trojans and the Latians.
- Aeolus - The god of the winds who is coerced by Juno, who offers him her fairest attendant as his bride, into exposing the Trojan fleet to seven years of storms on their way to Italy.
- Venus - The mother of Aeneas who assures him of a good reception in Carthage and works to assure his eventual arrival in Italy. Later she heals him of a wound given by treachery and enables him to defeat Turnus in combat.
- Sinon - A Greek warrior who tricks the Trojans into bringing the wooden horse into their city.
- Anchises - The father of Aeneas who is carried by his son out of the burning city of Troy. He dies on the island of Sicily, but Aeneas later visits him in the underworld and learns of his destiny.
- Ascanius - The young son of Aeneas who escapes with him from Troy.
- Creusa - The wife of Aeneas who attempts to escape with him from Troy, but soon is separated from the rest and dies.
- Latinus - The ruler of the Latian kingdom who promises to give his daughter Lavinia to Aeneas in marriage.
- Amata - The queen of Latium who opposes her daughter's marriage to Aeneas and urges Turnus to make war on the Trojans.
- Lavinia - The only daughter of Latinus, she is the heir to his throne and kingdom.

- Turnus - The chief of Lavinia's many suitors, his courtship is supported by Lavinia's mother and forwarded by Juno, who continually seeks to frustrate Aeneas' destiny. He raises troops to drive the Trojans from the region and thus starts a bloody conflict that occupies much of the epic. In the end he is killed by Aeneas in single combat after Aeneas sees that he is wearing the belt taken from Pallas.
- Evander - The king of a region in Arcadia who has been displaced by the Latians and thus forms an alliance with Aeneas and the Trojans.
- Pallas - The son of Evander who joins the Trojan army and is killed in battle by Turnus, who takes his valuable belt as plunder.
- Jupiter - The king of the gods, he forbids the gods and goddesses to interfere once the war between Trojans and Latians begins.
- Drances - A Latian commander who blames Turnus for causing the war and advocates peace with the Trojans.
- Camilla - A female warrior who fights bravely on the Latian side but is finally killed in battle.
- Juturna - The sister of Turnus who, after being violated by Jupiter, is turned into a water nymph by Juno. Juno recruits her to save Turnus from certain defeat at the hands of Aeneas, though she ultimately fails to deliver him.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Arms, and the man I sing, who, forced by Fate,
 And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,
 Expelled and exiled, left the Trojan shore.
 Long labours, both by sea and land, he bore,
 And in the doubtful war, before he won
 The Latian realm, and built the destined town;
 His banished gods restored to rites divine;
 And settled sure succession in his line,
 From whence the race of Alban fathers come,
 And the long glories of majestic Rome.” (Book I)

“Not Helen's face, nor Paris, was in fault;
 But by the gods was this destruction brought.” (Ghost of Aeneas' mother, Book II)

“From this ill-omened hour, in time arose
 Debate and death, and all succeeding woes.” (Book IV)

“Of man's injustice why should I complain?
 The gods, and Jove himself, behold in vain

Triumphant treason: yet no thunder flies;
Nor Juno views my wrongs with equal eyes:
Faithless is earth, and faithless are the skies!
Justice is fled, and truth is now no more!" (Dido, Book IV)

"O Jove! (he cried) if prayers can yet have place;
If thou abhorr'st not all the Dardan race;
If any spark of pity still remain;
If gods are gods, and not invoked in vain;
Yet spare the relics of the Trojan train!
Yet from the flames our burning vessels free!
Or let thy fury fall alone on me;
At this devoted head thy thunder throw,
And send the willing sacrifice below." (Aeneas, Book V)

"Know, first, that heaven and earth's compacted frame,
And flowing waters, and the starry flame,
And both the radiant lights, one common soul
Inspires and feeds, and animates the whole.
This active mind, infused through all the space,
Unites and mingles with the mighty mass.
Hence men and beasts the breath of life obtain,
And birds of air, and monsters of the main.
The ethereal vigour is in all the same;
And every soul is filled with equal flame:
As much as earthly limbs, and gross alloy
Of mortal members, subject to decay,
Blunt not the beams of heaven and edge of day." (Anchises, Book VI)

"The war henceforward be resigned to fate:
Each to his proper fortune stand or fall;
Equal and unconcerned I look on all.
Rutulians, Trojans, are the same to me;
And both shall draw the lots their fates decree.
Let these assault, if Fortune be their friend;
And if she favors those, let those defend:
The fates will find their way." (Jupiter, Book X)

"Thus while he spoke, unmindful of defence,
A winged arrow struck the pious prince.
But, whether from some human hand it came,
Or hostile god, is left unknown by fame:
No human hand, or hostile god, was found,
To boast the triumph of so base a wound." (Book XII)

“Sister! the Fates have vanquished: let us go
The way which heaven and my hard fortune show.
The fight is fixed; nor shall the branded name
Of a base coward blot your brother’s fame.
Death is my choice; but suffer me to try
My force, and vent my rage before I die.” (Turnus, Book XII)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Virgil’s *Aeneid* is clearly modeled on the Homeric epics. Critics have argued that the first half of the poem, narrating the travels and adventures of Aeneas, is related to the *Odyssey*, while the second half, which described the war between the Trojans under Aeneas and the Latians under Turnus, is more like the *Iliad*. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Support your arguments with references to all three epics.
2. Book II of Virgil’s *Aeneid* provides a narrative of the closing days of the Trojan War. This conflict is also the subject of Homer’s *Iliad*. Compare and contrast the two accounts in the part of the story where they overlap. Consider not only the contents of the two narratives, but also the points of view from which they are told. How did the Greeks and the Trojans view the last days of the war differently?
3. Aeneas, the protagonist of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, is also a character in Homer’s *Iliad*. Compare and contrast the ways in which the two poets present the character of Aeneas. Which presents him as more admirable? Why? Support your analysis with specifics from the two poems.
4. In both Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Homer’s *Iliad*, the gods are often in conflict, with some fighting on one side and some on the other. What are the consequences of the internal squabbles on Mount Olympus for the lives of the mortals who are engaged in combat below? Consider the extent to which the disagreements among the gods cause confusion on the human level and the ways in which conflicts among the deities open the door for manipulation by clever humans. From a biblical perspective, why might one argue that such gods are not worthy of the name?
5. The wars described in the second half of Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Homer’s *Iliad* both begin when a woman is taken from her rightful partner - the Trojan War begins when Paris kidnaps Helen, the wife of the Greek general Menelaus, while the conflict that occupies the latter part of Virgil’s epic begins when Aeneas is promised marriage to Lavinia, who had already been promised to Turnus. Compare and contrast the two events. Consider who was really at fault in each case for starting the war and the extent to which the outcomes indicate which side the respective poets considered more righteous.

6. Both Virgil's *Aeneid* and Homer's *Odyssey* tell of the adventures of a participant in the Trojan War after the fall of Troy. The former follows Aeneas, a Trojan warrior, while the latter traces the movements of Odysseus, a Greek hero. Compare and contrast the two narratives. Consider the adventures they experience, the character qualities of the two men, and the roles of the gods in their travels and destinies.
7. Both Virgil's *Aeneid* and Homer's *Odyssey* tell of the adventures of a participant in the Trojan War after the fall of Troy. Aeneas' adventures involve a quest on the part of him and his companions to establish a new home after his old home has been destroyed, while the quest of Odysseus is to return home at the end of a successful war. How do these very different directions of the narratives affect the motives of the protagonists and the ways in which they approach the challenges set before them? Be sure to cite specifics from the two epics in your analysis.
8. The Bible contains two stories of storms in the Mediterranean Sea that threaten to sink the ships in which central characters are sailing - Jonah 1 and Acts 27. Book I of Virgil's *Aeneid* also describes a Mediterranean storm that sinks many of the ships in Aeneas' flotilla. Analyze the three accounts in terms of how those on the ships interact with their respective deities. What does this tell you about the differences between a Christian and secular understanding of God or the gods and their activity in the world?
9. In Book VI of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the hero ventures into the underworld in order to seek out his father. More than thirteen hundred years later, Dante chose Virgil to guide him in his travels through Hell in his *Inferno*. Though the former was a pagan writer and the latter a Catholic, their accounts of the underworld bear many similarities. Compare and contrast the portrayals of Hell found in the two poems.
10. Many critics over the years have noted similarities between Virgil's *Aeneid* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In the same way that Aeneas is forced out of his home after losing a battle and sets out to establish a new residence where he can reign, Satan in Milton's epic is ejected from Heaven after a failed rebellion and looks to set up a new kingdom for himself in Hell. The problem with this analysis, of course, is that Aeneas is the hero of the poem that bears his name while Satan is the antagonist of Milton's epic. Discuss how the difference between the pagan and Christian perspectives of the two poems essentially make Satan the anti-Aeneas despite certain surface similarities.
11. Discuss the role played by the gods in Virgil's *Aeneid*. To what extent do they control the action of the story? To what extent are Aeneas and the other characters free moral agents, and to what extent are they subject to powers beyond their control? What does this tell you about the author's views of the gods, human beings, and the relationship between the two?
12. Compare and contrast the power of the gods and goddesses in Virgil's *Aeneid* with that of the God of the Bible. Consider the existence or non-existence of genuine sovereignty, the significance of the difference between polytheism and monotheism, and the relationship of divine power to human responsibility in the two systems of thought.

13. Discuss the protagonist's treatment of Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid*. What were his reasons for leaving her? Were these reasons legitimate? Did she have any right to expect him to marry her? Why or why not?
14. To some extent, Virgil's *Aeneid* is a work of political propaganda in support of the regime of Caesar Augustus. Discuss the ways in which this is true. Be sure to cite specific references to the Augustan age in the poem and point out how Virgil provides justification for Julio-Claudian rule.
15. While most interpreters of Virgil's *Aeneid* have viewed it as an apologetic for the Roman Empire established under Augustus, some have argued that it is instead a sly critique of empire-building - one which sets forth in powerful ways the costs of imperialism, both to the victors and the vanquished. Analyze this interpretation of the poem. Can Virgil credibly be thought to raise questions about the validity of imperialism? Consider the vacillations evident in the behavior of the protagonist as you write your essay.
16. Evaluate the ending of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Some critics complain that ending the poem with the death of Turnus is unsatisfying because it omits the marriage between Aeneas and Lavinia and the founding of the city that would become Rome, both of which are important for dynastic and historical reasons to support the apologetic for the Julio-Claudian line. Some suggest that this is because the poem was unfinished at the time of Virgil's death, but the structure and the fact that his editors changed virtually nothing both indicate that what we have is close to what Virgil intended. Do you agree that the poem, even if it reflects the author's intention, is incomplete, or do you find the ending satisfactory?
17. On twenty occasions in Virgil's *Aeneid*, the protagonist is described as "pious Aeneas." In what sense could he be considered pious? Think of piety not only in terms of his relationship to the gods, but also of his loyalty to his friends and his duty. Be sure to cite specific examples from the poem in your analysis.
18. The gods and goddesses of ancient Greece and Rome were no more than "humans writ large." Discuss the extent to which this is true in Virgil's *Aeneid*. In what ways are they more human than divine in the way they are portrayed by the poet? How does their humanity, such as it is, influence the plot of the narrative?
19. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas from the early stages of the story knows his eventual fate, as do the gods and goddesses. If this is the case, why do the deities continually try to interfere in order to forestall the inevitable when they know their attempts at intervention are doomed to fail?
20. Virgil's *Aeneid* is full of violence, as was the world in which the poet lived. He had experienced the series of civil wars that brought Augustus to the throne of Rome and knew the consequences of violence in the life of the nation and its people. To what extent does his epic demonstrate that violence only begets more violence? What does he propose as the path to lasting peace?

21. The Bible warns against pursuing vengeance and advocates love for enemies. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, many characters are driven to their actions by a desire for revenge. Consider Dido, Turnus, and Aeneas himself and discuss the extent to which they seek vengeance and the consequences of their motivations. Does the poet believe vengeance to be a noble motive? Why or why not? Be sure to cite specifics rather than dwelling on generalities in your analysis.
22. In Romans 12:19, Paul quotes God as saying, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." In Virgil's *Aeneid*, the gods also assume the right to seek vengeance, especially Juno in her attitude toward the Trojans and Venus, their protector. Why is God's exercise of vengeance justifiable while that of Juno is downright wicked?
23. One of the greatest flaws in the world of ancient Greece and Rome was *hubris*, or excessive pride, particularly that which leads one to challenge the gods or defy Fate. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, a number of characters exhibit *hubris* and suffer the consequences. Choose three such characters, describe the nature of their excessive pride, and analyze the consequences to them and those around them.
24. The Bible presents its heroes realistically, warts and all. Men like Abraham, Moses, and David all sinned in significant ways and suffered the consequences. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, the protagonist may be a heroic figure, but he also is far from perfect. Discuss the character flaws displayed by Aeneas and how they influence the arc of the story and hinder his efforts to fulfill his destiny.
25. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas is very careful to take with him from Troy his family's household gods, to whom he frequently pays homage. This is somewhat reminiscent of the behavior of Rachel in Genesis 31, who steals her father Laban's household gods and sits on them in her tent when Laban comes looking for them. Compare and contrast the two situations. Consider the behavior of Aeneas and Rachel and the roles of the household gods, both in the minds of the two characters and in the literature in which the accounts are found.
26. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dido is one of only two mortal female characters to be given significant attention. Later readers saw her as a tragic romantic heroine like Juliet or a feminist icon who rules her nation with efficiency and skill. Which of these is a more accurate reading, or do both involve reading later sensibilities into an ancient text? Support your assessment with specifics from the poem.
27. Some critics argue that the protagonist in Virgil's *Aeneid* is intended to mirror the career of Virgil's patron, Caesar Augustus. For example, both fought and won civil wars in Italy and brought peace to a land shattered by violence and both were seduced by beautiful African queens (Octavian was said to have been the object of Cleopatra's wiles before she turned her attention to Mark Antony). From what you know of Augustus, how accurate is this parallel? Are the critics justified in their assessment, or is Virgil more intent on portraying Augustus as the most recent in a long line of heroes descended from Aeneas?

28. One of the reasons that Aeneas, the protagonist of Virgil's *Aeneid*, is so much admired is his willingness to put duty to his gods and his family and people above personal interest and emotional desires. Many look upon these as quintessential Roman virtues. To what extent is this an accurate description of Aeneas' character? Are the actions he takes in pursuing his priorities always admirable, or does he sometimes do harm in the attempt to do good?
29. The paradox involving divine sovereignty and human responsibility is one with which Christians often struggle, but Scripture clearly affirms both without explaining how they may be harmonized. Christians are not the only ones who must deal with that dilemma. Consider Virgil's *Aeneid*. Fate plays a major role in the story, and the poet makes it clear that the ultimate outcome is inevitable. To what extent does this undermine human responsibility? In the pagan society of ancient Rome as it is reflected in the greatest of Latin epics, how does Virgil resolve the paradox? Be sure to support your argument with specifics from the poem.
30. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dido commits suicide when Aeneas leaves Carthage and sails for Italy. Who is responsible for her death - Aeneas, Dido herself, or the gods? Why? Support your conclusion with specifics from the poem.
31. Aeneas' journey to the underworld in Book VI of Virgil's *Aeneid* is compared by some critics to death and rebirth. To what extent is Aeneas a different person after his visit to the nether regions? How do these alterations equip him for the task he must undertake in order to fulfill his destiny?
32. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas and Turnus are both described as great warriors. Compare and contrast the two, both in their attitudes and in their behavior. Be sure to include specific details in your analysis.
33. At the end of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Turnus kneels helpless and defeated before the victorious Aeneas and begs for his life. Aeneas is prepared to spare him, but then changes his mind and plunges his sword through his enemy's heart. Does this denouement represent a final victory or defeat for Aeneas? Why do you think so?
34. Is Aeneas, the protagonist of Virgil's *Aeneid*, a happy or even content person? His single-minded pursuit of duty comes with great personal cost; he only survived three years after his defeat of Turnus and the Latians. Would he have been wiser to enjoy peace and prosperity in the lovely kingdom of Carthage offered to him by Dido? Why or why not?
35. One critic of Virgil's *Aeneid* argued that the protagonist is "in some ways the dullest character in epic literature." What might have been the basis for his assessment? Do you agree or disagree? Support your analysis with details from the poem.