



Dido, Queen of Carthage
Christopher Marlowe, adapted by LAMDA

Following a storm at sea, Trojan soldier Aeneas finds refuge in Carthage, which is ruled by Queen Dido. Although Aeneas thinks himself safe, the Gods decide to interfere. Goddess Venus sends Cupid - disguised as Aeneas' son (Ascanius) - to prick Dido with his arrow, forcing her to fall madly in love with Aeneas. Dido and Aeneas' all-consuming relationship begins. However, fate dictates that Aeneas must build a new Troy in Italy. In this speech, Hermes - the messenger God - arrives with the real Ascanius and urges Aeneas to attend to his fate in Italy.

(Enter Hermes with Ascanius)

HERMES: Aeneas, stay! Jove's herald bids thee stay.
Why, cousin, stand you building cities here,
And beautifying the empire of this queen,
While Italy is clean out of thy mind?
Too, too forgetful of thine own affairs,
Why wilt thou so betray thy son's good hap?
The king of gods sent me from highest heav'n,
To sound this angry message in thine ears:
Vain man, what monarchy expect'st thou here?
Or with what thought sleep'st thou on Lybia's shore?
If that all glory hath forsaken thee,
And thou despise the praise of such attempts;
Yet think upon Ascanius' prophecy,
And young lulus, more than thousand years,
Whom I have brought from Ida, where he slept,
And bore young Cupid unto Cypress Isle.

(Aeneas tries to speak to Ascanius.)

Spend'st thou thy time about this little boy.
And giv'st not ear unto the charge I bring?
I tell thee, thou must straight to Italy,
Or else abide the wrath of frowning Jove.

(Hermes exits.)

Act 5, Scene 1