

323–340: Juno Summons Allecto

haec ubi dicta dedit, terras horrenda petivit;
luctificam Allecto dirarum ab sede dearum
325 infernisque ciet tenebris, cui tristia bella
iraeque insidiaeque et crimina noxia cordi.
odit et ipse pater Pluton, odere sorores
Tartareae monstrum: tot sese vertit in ora,
tam saevae facies, tot pullulat atra colubris.
330 quam Iuno his acuit verbis ac talia fatur:
‘hunc mihi da proprium, virgo sata Nocte, laborem,
hanc operam, ne noster honos infractave cedat
fama loco, neu conubiis ambire Latinum
Aeneadae possint Italosve obsidere finis.
335 tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres
atque odiis versare domos, tu verbera tectis
funereasque inferre faces, tibi nomina mille,
mille nocendi artes. fecundum concute pectus,
dissice compositam pacem, sere crimina belli;
340 arma velit poscatque simul rapiatque iuventus.’

When she had spoken these words, the dreadful one sought the earth; she summoned grief bringing Allecto from the seat of the fearful Furies in the infernal darkness, dear to her heart are gloomy wars, anger, trickery, and injurious crimes. And her own father Pluto himself hates her, her sisters of Tartarus hate the monster: she changes herself into so many appearances, such savage forms, she sprouts so many black snakes. Juno stirred her up with these words and spoke such things:

‘Do me this service, virgin daughter of the Night, this task, so that our honour and reputation are not weakened and give way, and see to it that people of Aeneas are unable to win over Latinus with marriage and besiege the Italian lands. You can take brothers who love each other and make them take up arms against themselves in battle, and you can upturn homes with hatred and fill them with whips and funeral torches, you have a thousand names, a thousand ways of causing hurt. Shake your teeming chest, shatter the peace they have put together, sow the accusations of war; let the youth long for weapons, demand them, seize them, now!’

341–358: Allecto Attacks Amata

exim Gorgoneis Allecto infecta venenis
principio Latium et Laurentis tecta tyranni
celsa petit, tacitumque obsedit limen Amatae,
quam super adventu Teucrum Turnique hymenaeis
345 femineae ardentem curaeque iraeque coquebant.
huic dea caeruleis unum de crinibus anguem
conicit, inque sinum praecordia ad intima subdit,
quo furibunda domum monstro permisceat omnem.
ille inter vestis et levia pectora lapsus
350 volvitur attactu nullo, fallitque furentem
vipeream inspirans animam; fit tortile collo
aurum ingens coluber, fit longae taenia vittae
innectitque comas et membris lubricus errat.
ac dum prima lues udo sublapsa veneno
355 pertemptat sensus atque ossibus implicat ignem
necdum animus toto percepit pectore flammam,
mollius et solito matrum de more locuta est,
multa super natae lacrimans Phrygiisque hymenaeis:

At once Allecto, steeped in the poisons of the Gorgons, first sought Latium and the lofty roofs of the Laurentine king, and took up position at the quiet threshold of Amata, who was being stirred up by womanly concerns and anger and was seething at the arrival of Trojans and at the wedding of Turnus. The goddess hurled one of the snakes from her dark blue hair at her, and plunged it into her breast deep into her heart, so that maddened by the monster, she would throw into disarray the whole house. It slid between her robes and smooth breasts, it coiled without her any notice, and without her knowing it, breathed its viperous breath into the frenzied one; the giant snake became a necklace of twisted gold around her neck, it became the hanging end of a long ribbon and fastened itself into her hair, slithering along her body. And while the first infection from the clammy poison was agitating her senses and entwining fire in her bones, before her mind perceived the flame in her whole chest, she spoke softly and in the usual manner of mothers, weeping greatly over the marriage of her daughter to the Phrygians.

359–377: Amata Laments Lavinia's Marriage

‘exsulibusne datur ducenda Lavinia Teucris,
360 o genitor, nec te miseret nataeque tuique?
nec matris miseret, quam primo Aquilone relinquet
perfidus alta petens abducta virgine praedo?
at non sic Phrygius penetrat Lacedaemona pastor,
Ledaemque Helenam Troianas vexit ad urbes?
365 quid tua sancta fides? quid cura antiqua tuorum
et consanguineo totiens data dextera Turno?
si gener externa petitur de gente Latinis,
idque sedet, Faunisque premunt te iussa parentis,
omnem equidem sceptris terram quae libera nostris
370 dissidet externam reor et sic dicere divos.
et Turno, si prima domus repetatur origo,
Inachus Acrisiusque patres mediaeque Mycenae.’
his ubi nequiquam dictis experta Latinum
contra stare videt, penitusque in viscera lapsum
375 serpentis furiale malum totamque pererrat,
tum vero infelix ingentibus excita monstribus
immensam sine more furit lymphata per urbem.

‘Must Lavinia be led and given in marriage to Trojan exiles, O father, do you have no pity for your daughter or for yourself? Nor do you pity her mother, whom the treacherous pirate will abandon, seeking the high seas as soon as the North wind blows, taking away our virgin? But is this not how the Phrygian shepherd made his way into Lacedaemon, and dragged Helen, the daughter of Leda, off to the cities of Troy? What of your sacred pledge? What of your ancient care for your people, and your right hand so often given to your kinsman Turnus? If a son-in-law is being sought from a people foreign to the Latins, and that is decided upon, if the commands of your father Faunus weigh upon you, then I personally think that all land that is free and separate from our rule is foreign, and such is what the gods say. And if the first origin of the house of Turnus was traced back, his fathers were Inachus and Acrisius and the middle of Mycenae.’

When having tried in vain with these words she saw that Latinus was standing against her, and the snake's maddening venom had soaked into her flesh and was coursing through her whole body, then indeed the unlucky queen, driven by the monstrous horrors, raged frantically from end to end of the city without regard for convention.

378–396: Amata Rages Through the City

ceū quondam torto volitans sub verberē turbo,
quem pueri magno in gyro vacua atria circum
380 intenti ludo exercent—ille actus habena
curvatis fertur spatiis; stupet inscia supra
impubesque manus mirata volubile buxum;
dant animos plagae: non cursu segnior illo
per medias urbes agitur populosque ferocis.
385 quin etiam in silvas simulato numine Bacchi
maius adorta nefas maioremque orsa furorem
evolat et natam frondosis montibus abdit,
quo thalamum eripiat Teucris taedasque moretur,
euhoe Bacche fremens, solum te virgine dignum
390 vociferans: etenim mollis tibi sumere thyrsos,
te lustrare choro, sacrum tibi pascere crinem.
fama volat, furiisque accensas pectore matres
idem omnis simul ardor agit nova quaerere tecta.
deseruere domos, ventis dant colla comasque;
395 ast aliae tremulis ululatibus aethera complent
pampineasque gerunt incinctae pellibus hastas.

Just like sometimes a spinning top, flying under the whirled whip, which boys, engrossed in their game, make go in a great circle around an empty court—driven on by the whip it speeds in circular courses; the childish group hang over it in wonder, mesmerised by what they have never seen before, gazing at the twirling boxwood; their strokes give it life: no slower than the spinning top she is driven through the midst of the cities and proud peoples. And moreover she flew into the forests feigning the spirit of Bacchus, she rose to a greater evil and greater madness, and she hid her daughter in the leafy mountains hoping to snatch the marriage away from the Trojans and delay the marriage torches, ‘euhoe, Bacchus!’ she screams, ‘you alone are worthy of the virgin! For you in truth she lifts the soft thyrsus and moves around you in ritual dance, she grows her sacred hair for you.’ Rumour flew, and the same flame in their breasts drove all the mothers, inflamed with frenzy, to seek new homes. They abandoned their houses, baring their neck and hair to the winds; some filled the heavens with tremulous wailing and clad in animal skins, took up vine-draped spears.