

## BOOK TWO 'Aeneid'

Book 2 is the second book you need to know really well. It is the chronological beginning of the whole story, when the Trojans wake up one morning to find the Greeks have gone. The ten-year siege of their city seems over, and though at first they find it hard to believe, soon they celebrate wildly and give thanks to the gods. But the gods have other plans, and within 24 hours the Greeks capture and destroy Troy. The book ends with dawn the next day, when a pathetic band of survivors is leaving the looted and burnt city to go into permanent exile.

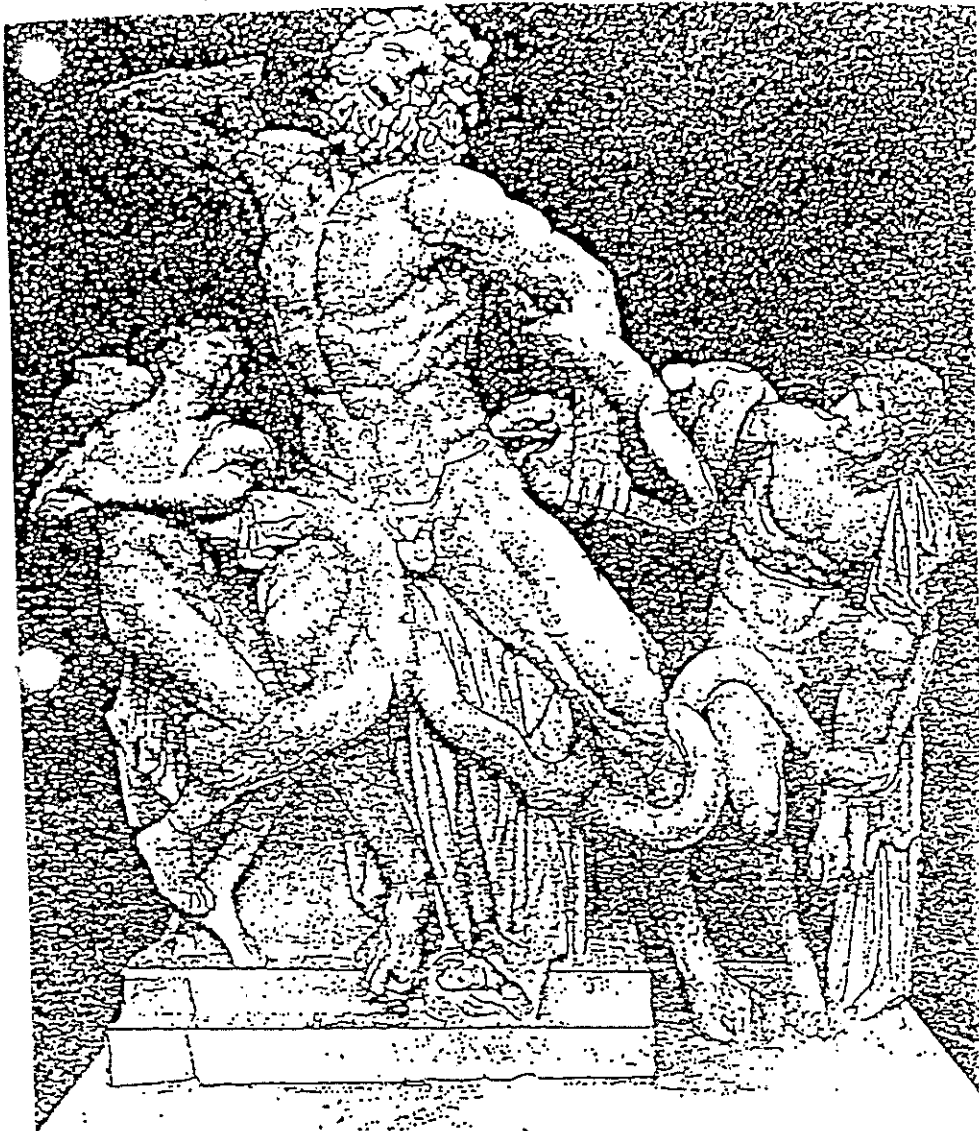
The book opens rather slowly, and the first third may seem rather tedious as the Greek Sinon tricks the Trojans and persuades them to drag the wooden horse into the city. But anyone reading about the fall of Troy always asks why the Trojans were such fools as to break down their city walls and drag inside a 'gift' from their enemies. So Virgil uses this section to make us understand their apparent stupidity, and to make sure we sympathise with their terrible end rather than believe they deserved what they got. Also the slow beginning provides a strong contrast once the action does begin, and the last two thirds of the book are fast-moving and full of tension and drama.

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| page 51 | <p>Myrmidons: a Greek tribe from Thessaly. They were Achilles' troop at Troy.</p> <p>Dolopian: Greek</p> <p>Ulysses (Odysseus) King of Ithaca, one of the leading chieftains of the Greeks and the hero of the <i>Odyssey</i>. He is represented by Homer as wise, eloquent and cunning. Virgil makes him cruel, deceitful and treacherous.</p> |
| page 52 | <p>Tenedos: a small island near Troy, to the south-west.</p> <p>Laocoön: a Trojan priest of Neptune who warns his people, in book 2, that the wooden horse left by the Greeks is a trap. They aren't sure if he is right or not, and he is killed by sea serpents sent by the gods.</p>   |
| page 53 | <p>Sinon: a Greek spy, pretending to be a deserter, who convinces the Trojans that the wooden horse is an offering to Minerva and makes it possible for the Greek army to capture the city.</p> <p>Palamedes: a Greek hero, executed on a false charge of treason through the trickery of Ulysses during the siege of Troy.</p>                 |
| page 54 | <p>The man from Ithaca: Ulysses</p> <p>Calchas: a prophet with the Greek forces at Troy.</p> <p>Atreus: King of Mycenae, father of Agamemnon and Menelaus.</p>  |
| page 56 | <p>Pallas: another name for Minerva</p>   |
| page 57 | <p>Tydeus: father of Diomedes, a Greek warrior who stole Minerva's statue with Ulysses.</p> <p>Larissa: a city in Thessaly, the home of Achilles. (Larissaeon Achilles.)</p>  |
| page 58 | <p>Ilium: another name for Troy.</p>  |

- page 59 Sthenelus: a Greek warrior mentioned in the *Iliad*.  
 Thoas: In book 2, a Greek warrior at Troy.  
 Neoptolemus: Also called Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles. In book 2, Aeneas tells the many bloodthirsty deeds of this Greek warrior during the sack of Troy, including the killing of King Priam.  
 Peleus: a mythical Greek hero, father of Achilles.  
 Dardanus: the mythical founder of Troy who according to legend, had migrated to Asia Minor from Italy. The Trojans are frequently called Dardanians, Dardans or Dardanids after him.
- page 60 Deiphobus: a Trojan prince, son of Priam and married to Helen after the death of Paris; killed by the Greeks when Troy fell.  
 Sigeum: a port near Troy; the 'Straits of Sigeum' are the Dardanelles.
- page 61 Cassandra: daughter of Priam and Hecuba, gifted with the power of prophecy by Apollo. But because she refused to be his lover, he made sure no one would ever believe her, though she was always right.
- page 62 Androgeos: a Greek warrior.
- page 63 Ajax: the same Ajax mentioned on page 28 of your text.  
 Nereus: "The Old Man of the Sea": a sea-god of Greek mythology represented as a very old man. He was the father of the Nereids (sea-nymphs) and his special domain was the Aegean Sea.
- page 65 Scyros: an island in the Aegean where Achilles' contingent mustered on the way to Troy; the birthplace of Neoptolemus, also called Pyrrhus, Achilles' son.
- page 66 Hecuba (Hecabe): wife of Priam and mother of 19 children, including Hector. When Troy was taken, she became the slave of Ulysses.
- page 67 Creusa and Iulus: daughter and grandson of Priam, Aeneas' wife and son.
- page 68 Tyndareus: father, or supposed father of Helen. She is thus called 'Tyndarid' or the 'Spartan Tyndarid'.  
 Scaean: 'left-hand', the name of a gate in the walls of Troy.  
 Triton: son of Neptune and Amphitrite, represented as a fish with a human head. It is this sea-god that makes the roaring of the ocean by blowing through his shell.  
 Gorgon: In classical mythology there were three gorgons, with serpents on their heads instead of hair. Medusa was killed by Perseus, the others, Stheno and Euryale, were immortal. They also had brazen claws and monstrous teeth. Their glance turned their victims to stone.
- page 71 Mount Ida: a mountain or ridge of mountains in the vicinity of Troy.
- page 72 Ceres (Demeter): the protectress of agriculture and of all the fruits of the earth, goddess of corn.
- page 73 Phoenix: the son of Amyntor king of Argos, tutor to Achilles.
- page 74 The Great Mother of the Gods: Cybele, a Phrygian goddess.

Answer the following questions on book 2.

- 1 What did Laocoon think about the horse? (p52)
- 2 Sinon claimed the Greeks were going to kill him. Why? (pp54-55)
- 3 Who was responsible for Laocoon's death? (p58)
- 4 Why did his death make the Trojans take the horse into their city? (p58)
- 5 What did Hector tell Aeneas to do, in his dream? (p60)
- 6 What did Aeneas do instead? (p60)
- 7 What convinced Aeneas the situation was hopeless? (p67)
- 8 What did Venus tell Aeneas to do? (pp68-69)
- 9 Whom did Aeneas get safely out of Troy? (p73)
- 10 What happened to Creusa? (pp74-5)



"Two giant arching  
sea snakes ...  
siezed  
Laocoon... and  
bound him in the  
giant spirals of  
their scaly length"  
Aeneid P57

*Laocöon and his Sons.* Marble group from the workshop of HAGESANDROS, ATHENODOROS and POLYDOROS of Rhodes. Made about 25 B.C. Vatican, Museum