DIDO: Anna, the gods would condemn me forever! I made a promise!

ANNA: [Bustling about the room, arranging things] Just make them lavish offerings, beg for their forgiveness! In any case, it is not your fault – it is still winter and the seas are wild, their ships are too battered to make the journey. Wait awhile, treat your guests like kings. Who knows what blessings they might bring! [Tossing an apple to Dido who catches it, still distracted and deep in thought].

Anna leaves carrying the tray and empty dishes out of the room. Dido is left standing, deeply worried. She looks at the apple and then looks out at the audience.

END SCENE.

SCENE 14: VENUS AND JUNO MAKE A PACT, Heaven

VENUS sits amongst the clouds, staring at her reflection in the mirror, humming and combing her beautiful golden hair. JUNO creeps up on VENUS, startling her. [The two talk to each other’s reflection in the mirror]

VENUS: Oh, why must you always do that!

JUNO: Because it’s so fun darling. Lighten up!

VENUS: You can talk.

JUNO: I’m going to ignore that because I’m in such a good mood.

VENUS: [Skeptical] Oh really?

JUNO: [Upbeat] Mmmhmm! I’ve had an idea, a plan if you will.

VENUS: [Muttering sarcastically] That’s unusual.

JUNO: You know, I saw what you did there. With your boy. The whole love thing with Cupid and all? Very clever.

VENUS: [Seeing through JUNO’s poor attempt at charm]. What do you want Juno?

JUNO: [Feigning innocence] Only the peace and harmony of our two peoples, of course – what else?
VENUS: Ah... their complete and utter destruction for a start...

JUNO: Oh don’t be silly! That’s old news now. [Beginning to plat VENUS’ hair in an attempt at affection] Look, I was just thinking – my Dido, your Aeneas – they’d make a lovely pair. [Spinning VENUS’ chair around to face her] Why don’t we wed the two young lovers, hey? Make it a bit more of a ... permanent shebang? We could rule the two nations together, you and I – we’d be best of buds!

VENUS: And why on earth would you want that? I thought you always liked the idea of ... complete dominion...total control... ring a bell?

JUNO: Oh come now, Venus. I don’t know about you but I’ve become a bit tired of the whole eternal vengeance, may your-Trojans-be-condemned-to-hell sort of thing of late. Haven’t you? It’s so exhausting. Let’s see them wed! Let’s join the Trojans and Phoenicians and put an end to it all – all the warring, all the meddling. Doesn’t that sound good?

VENUS sees through JUNO’s words and suspects that she has some hidden plan. Curious, however, she smiles and goes along with the plan.

VENUS: Look, I just want my Aeneas to be safe, and you know I want peace as well. I thought Jove had a plan for my Trojans – to found a great civilisation. But, you are his wife after all. You must know his every thought and whim. [After a pause] I shall take your lead. Tell me though, how are we to go about arranging it all?

JUNO: Oh brilliant! Oh this is going to be great fun! Okay, so... Dido and Aeneas are going on a hunt tomorrow...

END SCENE.

SCENE 15: A DIVINE MARRIAGE, Woods of Carthage

The scene opens with the shrill call to hunt of a bugle. Hunting dogs bound through the scene, followed by Phoenicians and Trojans on horses, hot on the heels of a stag. DIDO rides a noble white horse, AENEAS, a black horse. Both horses are adorned in lavish gold, jewels and silver. DIDO and AENEAS
look striking in their royal outfits. Their faces are flushed with the excitement of the chase and they laugh merrily with each other. The chemistry between the two is obvious. They are followed by a large entourage of servants, scurrying behind them, carrying ridiculous amounts of their belongings to make camp.

Dido is magnificent at riding.

Dido: Come on, Aeneas! Keep up!

AENEAS laughs.

AENEAS: If only I could! [Aside] My god she’s good!

AENEAS’ horse suddenly stops, refusing to go any further. Dido turns when she realises AENEAS has fallen behind. She slows and turns back. The rest of the hunting party continues without them, too caught up in the frenzy to notice their absence.

DIDO: Aeneas, is there something wrong?

AENEAS: I think my horse has been startled. Something’s unnerved him. [AENEAS pats his horse, trying to soothe him]. There boy... there, there.

DIDO: I wonder what it is?

Suddenly the sky lights up with a bolt of lightening and a tremendous peel of thunder deafens them. JUNO and VENUS can be seen in the background concocting the storm.

DIDO: Oh I can’t believe it... The sky was clear just a few minutes ago! What an unholy storm!

AENEAS: Quickly, we must find cover.

DIDO nods. They both dismount their horses and lead them to a nearby cave to take shelter. AENEAS quickly lights a fire which fills the cave with a warm glow.

AENEAS peers out of the cave to see the weather is fiercer than ever.

AENEAS: We’ll have to wait here awhile. It might be some time before the storm passes.

DIDO: [Sheepishly] I can think of worse things...

AENEAS and DIDO smile at each other. Something passes in the silence between them.
AENEAS: You know, I’m beginning to thank the gods for the terrible storm that day. For that darkest of days that brought me here… to you.

DIDO blushes.

DIDO: But, what about Troy? What about Rome? That great civilisation you’re destined to create. Isn’t this just … an inconvenience? Some… irritating stopover on your path to greatness?

AENEAS: You know what? Damn Italy! Damn the Fates! What is a civilisation, in the face of… love.

DIDO: Love?

AENEAS takes Dido’s hand and nods.

AENEAS: Yes… love.

DIDO blinks back at AENEAS in disbelief.

Now AENEAS has said it out loud it’s like something’s changed inside of him. He’s almost mad, a tidal wave of emotions inside of him that he can no longer keep in.

AENEAS: Dearest Dido, I’ve spent my whole life doing my duty – what other people want – regardless of the cost. But where has that gotten me? Thousands of miles from home, battered and bruised… alone, with no one by my side, no one to share this road. I’m done. Done with it all!

AENEAS laughs, enjoying how free he finally feels.

AENEAS: Look… I know this must seem completely crazy but… I love you!

AENEAS picks DIDO up and twirls her around. The two laugh together.

AENEAS: I love you Dido! And I don’t care for the consequences.

AENEAS suddenly notices DIDO has been silent this whole time. He steps back.

AENEAS: But wait. How silly I am! Oh I’m so sorry Dido. I don’t even know if you feel the same. I’m so sorry if I said too mu-
DIDO places a hand over AENEAS’ mouth, hushing him.

DIDO: You don’t need to. You know how I feel. I think I’ve been in love with you ever since I first laid eyes on you. My heart has been on fire for days...I’ve barely slept! I cannot eat. I think the whole city seems to have stopped since I met you – I have thought of nothing else [DIDO trails off, lost in AENEAS’ eyes]

The two embrace.

AENEAS: Let’s... let’s run away.

DIDO: [Laughing] You’re mad.

AENEAS: I am.

AENEAS and DIDO dance and sing together.

Sail Away

AENEAS: COME WITH ME, ACROSS THE SEA
SAIL AWAY, FROM ALL OUR FEARS
WE’LL BE TOGETHER, WE’LL BE FOREVER
JUST YOU AND ME

AENEAS: I WAS A LOST BOY
YOU FOUND ME ON YOUR SHORE
WE’LL BE TOGETHER, WE’LL BE FOREVER
JUST YOU AND ME

[DIDO and AENEAS next sing the two verses at the same time in harmony]

DIDO/AENEAS: WE WILL BRAVE THE STORMY WEATHER
THOUGH THE WAVES COME CRASHING DOWN
AND WE WILL SEE THE WORLD TOGETHER
THOUGH WE BOTH WILL LOSE OUR CROWNS
‘COS NOTHING IN THE WORLD’S WORTH MORE THAN
LOVE IN THE END

DIDO: MAN THE SAILS AND SET OUR COURSE
BEFORE THE GODS MAY USE THEIR FORCE
WE’LL STEAL AWAY UNDER THE STARRY NIGHT
STARS HIDE YOUR FIRES

AENEAS: WE’LL SEE THE SUN RISE
I’LL WATCH ITS GLOW IN YOUR EYES
WE’LL STEAL AWAY UNDER THE STARRY NIGHT
STARS HIDE YOUR FIRES
DIDO/AENEAS:  WE WILL BRAVE THE STORMY WEATHER
THOUGH THE WAVES COME CRASHING DOWN
AND WE WILL SEE THE WORLD TOGETHER
THOUGH WE BOTH WILL LOSE OUR CROWNS
‘COS NOTHING IN THE WORLD’S WORTH MORE THAN
LOVE IN THE END

A deafening crack of thunder rings out through the cave and the stage goes black. The two huddle together amidst the storm and kiss as the lights dim.

END SCENE.

SCENE 16: RUMOUR, Carthage

[Dance scene about Rumour goddess spreading rumours in Carthage of DIDO and AENEAS’ forbidden love affair out of wedlock and their neglect of their civic duties]

SCENE 17: JOVE’S DISAPPROVAL, Heaven

On one side of the stage, AENEAS and DIDO sleep peacefully in each other’s arms – but this side only softly lit up in deep blues.

On the other side of the stage, fully lit up, JOVE sits in his palace in the sky and listens to the rumours flying in Carthage about DIDO and AENEAS. His brow is furrowed in worry as he rests his head on his hand and sighs. He calls out to MERCURY, the winged god of messages.

JOVE:  Mercury!

Nothing happens. JOVE is impatient.

JOVE:  MERCURY!

MERCURY bustles onto the stage in a hurry. He is out of breath and trips over his own feet.

MERCURY:  I’m… I’m here sire!

JOVE:  About time. Where on earth have you been?

MERCURY:  Well, I’m afraid Hercules was in a bit of trouble and then Odysseus ran into those awful Harpes so I’ve really been quite busy. You wouldn’t believe what happened to –

JOVE:  [Interrupting] – I need you to send another message for me.