Principal Characters
in the Epic

AENEAS, a Trojan prince through his marriage to CREUSA, the daughter of PRIAM, king of Troy, is the son of ANCHISES, a former Trojan warrior, and VENUS, the Goddess of Love.

ASCANIUS, or IULUS, the son of Aeneas, saved as a boy by his father from the destruction of Troy, is brought by him to Italy, where he will continue the royal line.

JUNO, the Goddess-and-sister-and-wife of JUPITER, King of the Gods, opposes Aeneas and the Trojans generally because of a former judgment against her beauty by PARIS, a Trojan. She sometimes enlists the aid of IRIS, the Rainbow-Goddess, and ALECTO, an avenging force (or FURY) from the Underworld.

DIDO, former princess of Tyre, is now queen of Carthage, a city reached by Aeneas and his people on their way to Italy.

SINON, a Greek warrior, managed to deceive the Trojans into bringing a large, apparently ritualistic horse into Troy; the horse was actually filled with Greeks like ULYSSES.

PYRRHUS, who led the Greek forces attacking the palace of Troy, was the son of ACHILLES, the great warrior of Homer’s Iliad. He killed POLITES, one of King Priam’s sons, then Priam himself. He enslaved and married ANDROMACHE, the former wife of HECTOR, Achilles’ principal opponent in the war at Troy.
NEPTUNE, God of the Sea, and PHOEBUS, or APOLLO, the Sun-God, are often helpful to Aeneas, but (like other Gods and Goddesses) not always predictable.

HELENUS, a son of Priam who survived the war, was enslaved by Pyrrhus. He actually comes to rule a small Greek city when Pyrrhus dies. He predicts the future for Aeneas.

NISUS and EURYALUS, two Trojan warriors, the latter a beautiful but impulsive youth, compete in the sprint in the funeral games in honor of Anchises at Sicily, and later volunteer for a dangerous mission at night in the war with the Latins.

DEIPHOBUS, commonly called the SIBYL, an elderly virgin priestess and prophet of Apollo at Cumae (a small city south of Rome), guides Aeneas down through the Underworld.

LATINUS, King of Latium, rules a broad area of central Italy where the Trojans under Aeneas wish to settle. His daughter, now of marriageable age, is LAVINIA.

TURNUS, King of Rutulia, another district in central Italy, is the principal opponent of Aeneas when war breaks out. Favored by AMATA, Queen of Latium and wife of Latinus, he also seeks the hand of Lavinia.

CAMILLA, an ally of Turnus and queen of a band called the Volscians, is a favorite of DIANA, Goddess of the hunt.

EVANDER, King of Pallanteum, an ancient town he founded on the site of Rome, supports Aeneas in the war in Italy and sends his son PALLAS to fight alongside the Trojan leader.

MEZENTIUS, an Etruscan king, opposes Aeneas in Italy together with his son, LAUSUS.

VULCAN, the God of Fire and husband of Venus, helps Aeneas in the war in Italy by constructing weapons, including a supremely hard and beautiful shield.

CYBELE, a mysterious Goddess, Mother of Jupiter, brings about a transformation of the Trojan ships to prevent their being fired by Turnus at one point in the Italian war.