

Virgil Extracts 3



*haud secus ac iussi faciunt tectosque per herbam
disponunt ensis et scuta latentia condunt.
ergo ubi delapsae sonitum per curva dedere
litora, dat signum specula Misenus ab alta
aere cavo. invadunt socii et nova proelia temptant,
obscenas pelagi ferro foedare volucris.
sed neque vim plumis ullam nec vulnera tergo
accipiunt, celerique fuga sub sidera lapsae
semesam praedam et vestigia foeda relinquunt.
una in praecelsa consedit rupe Celaeno,
infelix vates, rumpitque hanc pectore vocem;*

Aeneas and his companions adopt a strategy to defeat the Harpies. It might have worked with ordinary creatures but these are different!

We will begin with the first two lines which form a complete sentence. There are three actions here and the ...*nt* “they” endings show that subjects of those verbs are Aeneas's companions. Start with the verb each time.

haud secus ac iussi faciunt

Haud, “not at all” or “by no means” *secus*, “differently” *iussus* “having been ordered” i.e. Aeneas's companions do as he orders.

tectosque per herbam disponunt ensis

Can you guess *disponunt*? *Tectum* “hidden”, *herba* (1st declension) “grass”, *ensis* is a poetic word for “sword” and it is accusative plural here.

et scuta latentia condunt.

Condo “hide”, *scutum* “shield”, *latentia* “out of sight” or “in hiding”.

Try this and then look at my attempt on the next page.

They carry out my orders and arrange [their] swords hidden throughout the grass and hide their shields out of sight.

(This is the third time the feast has been set out. I presume this means they hope that the swords, sticking upwards and hidden in the thick grass will injure the Harpies as they fly down to attack again, although I'm not sure how hiding their shields helps. In any case they are doomed to failure: these are *Harpies!*)

ergo ubi delapsae sonitum per curva dedere litora,
delapsus, “descended” *sonitum dedere* “screaming”.

This is tricky. I make it, “Therefore (or “and so”) when they descended screaming along the curved shore”

dat *signum specula Misenus ab alta aere cavo.*

Misenus is the subject. He was a brother-in-arms to Hector in the Trojan War. Later he became Aeneas's trumpeter. *Signum* and *altus* are on the syllabus vocabulary list. *Aere cavo* “hollow bronze” stands for “horn” or “trumpet”.

Translate and compare with my attempt on the next page.

And so when they descended screaming along the curved shore, Misenus gave the signal from on high with his horn/trumpet.

invadunt socii

Socii is nominative plural – see the syllabus vocabulary list. *Invadere* “charge”.

et (nova proelia) temptant,

the subject is still *socii*. Put an “a” in front of *temptant*. The other words are on the syllabus vocabulary list.

obscenas pelagi ferro foedare volucris.

This tells you what they (a) *temptant*, so look for an infinitive “to...”¹

obscenas (guess) and *pelagi* go with *volucris*. *Pelagus* “sea”.



Have a go and then look at my attempt on the next page.

¹*Foedare* “to mutilate”.

The companions charge and attempt, by a new kind of battle, to mutilate the loathsome sea birds.

(Some say the Harpies are “sea birds” because they are descended from the god of the sea, Oceanus. This is a new kind of battle because Aeneas and his companions were used only to fighting with men. These are Harpies. It's not going to work is it?!)

sed neque vim plumis ullam nec vulnera tergo accipiunt,

See the syllabus vocabulary list for *accipere*, *vis*, *ullus*, and *vulnus*. Guess *plumis*. *Tergum* “back”.
Neque.... nec “neither... nor”

celerique fuga sub sidera lapsae

sidera is literally “stars” but stands for the night sky (as it can do in English) It must be getting late now!

semesam praedam et vestigia foeda relinquunt.

Semesam “half-eaten”. You can guess *vestigia*.

Do your best and then check against my attempt.

But they neither receive any force on their plumage/feathers, nor any wound on their backs and they quickly flee, slipping away/gliding under the night sky, leaving the half-eaten plunder and their filthy residue.

There is a subtle figure of speech here called **zeugma**. The verb *relinquunt* applies to the half-eaten food and the filthy residue. But it has a (slightly) different meaning in each case. The food is left in the sense of “abandoned” – it was there already but the Harpies have left it. The residue is left in the sense of “put there” – it was not there already – the Harpies have deposited it there.

But Aeneas and his companions have not heard the last of the Harpies; their leader Celaeno (subject of the next sentence) is about to give them a talking to...

una in praecelsa consedit rupe Celaeno,

Considerere “to settle” *praecelsa rupes* “high rock” or “high cliff”. *Una* goes with *Celaeno* and means “one alone” not “one of them”.

infelix vates, rumpitque hanc pectore vocem;

infelix vates “prophetess” goes with *Celaeno*. *Rumpere* “to burst out with” *vox* is “voice” but also “speech”, *pectus* is chest or breast so perhaps “lungs”.

Translate and check over the page.

One, Celaeno, settles on a high rock and, unhappy/evil prophetic, bursts out with this speech:

(In the next lesson we will find out what Celaeno has to say for herself!)

Note: *una in praecelsa consedit rupe Celaeno,*

This line is a chiasmus: a rhetorical device in which words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order to create an arching structure.

The pattern here is:

consedit
in praecelsa *rupes*
una *Celaeno*

The device is used to emphasise Celaeno's presence.

Don't forget to keep your vocabulary notebook up to date. Also remember to do all your work **by hand on paper**. Otherwise you will be making the exam more difficult for yourself!

My flashcards on Quizlet are here: <https://quizlet.com/gb/617807965/aeneid-cambridge-international-igcse-2023-25-flash-cards/> Someone else has put some up here: <https://quizlet.com/au/217860886/aeneid-iii-line-236-to-end-flash-cards/>