

The Story of Romulus and Remus

Nearly three thousand years ago, in a place called Alba Longa in Italy, lived King Numitor. All was fine until the king's younger brother, Amulius, wanted the throne for himself and took it. Amulius also made sure that nobody would take the throne back off him, so he had Numitor's sons killed and made his only daughter, Rhea Silvia, become a Priestess of Vesta, which meant that she was not allowed to marry or have children because Amulius worried that she might have a son one day who could become king.



However, the plan went wrong because Rhea Silvia fell in love with Mars, the Roman God of War, and they had twin sons. Breaking the rules of the Priestesses of Vesta usually meant death, but Mars was a hugely powerful man and Amulius was scared of him. Instead, he put Rhea Silvia in prison and ordered a servant to take the twins and put them in the River Tiber.

What Amulius did not know was when the servant came to the river, he felt sorry for the boys, so he left them in their basket and let them float down the river, where he hoped they would be rescued.

The servant's hopes were right, as a she-wolf found the boys and pulled them to safety, where she protected and cared for them. The wolf looked after the twins until a shepherd came along one day and took them home to be cared for by him and his wife. They gave the boys names: Romulus and Remus.

The shepherd and his wife loved and cared for the two boys as if they were their own sons and Romulus and Remus became shepherds like their father.



One day, while the boys were with their sheep, they met some shepherds of King Amulius and the men ended up fighting. Remus was caught and taken back to King Amulius, who did not recognise him.

Meanwhile, Romulus gathered a group of shepherds to go and rescue Remus. Eventually, Romulus managed to free Remus but not before killing the king.

The people of the city were not angry with the boys when they found out who they were but instead wanted to crown them as joint kings. Surprisingly, the boys turned down the offer because they wanted to build their own city.



After a journey, Romulus and Remus found the place they wanted as their city. However, they disagreed on which hill the city should be built. Romulus wanted Palatine Hill whereas Remus preferred Aventine Hill so they decided to wait for a sign from the gods to tell them which hill they should use.

The sign from the gods was a group of vultures but each brother believed they had won. Still not managing to agree, Romulus went on to build a wall around Palatine Hill, but Remus was jealous and taunted his brother. They fought and Remus was killed by Romulus.

Romulus, was now free to build his city, which was finished on the 21st April 753BC. He made himself king and named the city 'Rome' after himself. This was the beginning of one of the most powerful cities in the world for the next thousand years.



- 1) Name Romulus and Remus' birth father and mother.
- 2) Who was the city of 'Rome' named after?
- 3) What did Rhea and Silvia become after Amulius became king?
- 4) In the text, the author uses the word **'taunted'**.
Which word or words closely match the word **'taunted'**?
 - a) complimented
 - b) cheered
 - c) teased
 - d) shouted at
- 5) Who was Mars?
- 6) What did the two brothers disagree over?
- 7) Who gave Romulus and Remus their names?
- 8) What happened to the twins after they were born?
- 9) How come there was only one brother who built a city?
- 10) Do you think the servant of Amulius did the right thing? Give reasons for your answer.